



St. Clair Region Conservation Authority Meeting Highlights – October 24, 2024

Below is a list of highlights from the SCRCA board meeting held in October. For details, please refer to the entire meeting package which can be found at www.scrca.on.ca/about-us/board-meeting-packages.

Great Lakes Freshwater Ecosystem Initiative (GLFEI): Following a successful funding application, the SCRCA has secured \$7.85 million over 4 years through GLFEI (administered by the Canada Water Agency) to operate the Sydenham Phosphorus Reduction Initiative (SPRI). The Sydenham River watershed is the third largest Canadian contributor of phosphorus loads in the Lake Erie Basin. Building off the Sydenham River Watershed Phosphorus Management Plan, SPRI will aim to decrease overall non-point source phosphorus loads in the Sydenham River watershed and St. Clair River tributaries by adopting and implementing agricultural and rural best management practices, strategic water quality monitoring, and outreach, engagement, and education.

Watershed-Based Resource Management Strategy: Under new regulations prescribed under the *Conservation Authorities Act* in early 2022, the SCRCA has completed a draft Watershed-Based Resource Management Strategy. The strategy sets out the guiding principles, objectives, and resources of the SCRCA, its categories of programs and services, and the knowledge base for the work the SCRCA conducts on a day-to-day basis. The Board of Directors directed staff to begin the public and Indigenous consultation period that will occur over the next two months.

2025 Draft SCRCA Budget: Staff presented the draft 2025 budget to the Board of Directors. The proposed total budget for the SCRCA in 2025 is \$11,179,180 with a municipal general levy of \$1,675,950, constituting a 4% increase. The Board directed staff to circulate the budget booklet to member municipalities for information and input and post it on the Governance section of the SCRCA website.

Watershed Conditions: The current flood threat in the St. Clair Region is low due to low precipitation experienced throughout the month of September. Stream flows and levels are seasonal for this time of year, however, water levels in Lake Huron and St. Clair are above average. Lake levels are expected to remain above their seasonal average.

Planning and Regulations Activity: Between August 1st and September 30th, 2024, staff issued 58 permits and responded to 121 inquiries under O. Reg 41/24 – *Prohibited Activities, Exemptions, and Permits* under O. Reg 97/04. Additionally, 2 permits were issued during the same timeframe under the *Drainage Act* and Section 28 Regulations Team (DART) protocol. Planning activity between August 1st and September 30th, 2024, included the review and comment on 55 municipal plan input and review files, 1 environmental assessment, and 11 legal inquiries.

St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation Memorial Forest Dedication: The St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation Memorial Forest Dedication was held on Sunday, September 29th at the Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area in Petrolia. Duncan Skinner and Pat Brown provided remarks on behalf of the Foundation and Authority, respectively. Over 100 people attended the dedication where a Tulip Tree was planted as a symbol for all trees dedicated over the last year through donations from individuals not associated with a funeral home program. From September 2023 to August 2024, 91 trees were dedicated through individual donations to the program and planted throughout 17 Authority and Foundation properties. To date, a total of 2,593 trees have been dedicated through the Foundation's Memorial Forest program.

St. Clair River Area of Concern: The Canadian Remedial Action Plan Implementation Committee held the second annual Honouring the St. Clair River event on September 26, 2024, in Sarnia, to provide an update to the community on progress in restoring the St. Clair River. The evening included a presentation by Eden Hataley, from the University of Toronto on microplastics in the Great Lakes, a presentation by the Friends of the St. Clair River on their recent public outreach activities, and a presentation by BASES on water quality monitoring in the St. Clair River. Approximately 70 individuals attended the event.

Upcoming Events: Several events are planned over the coming months. For more information, visit www.scrca.on.ca/events.

Erosion Control Practices for Building Soil Resiliency Workshop

Date: Wednesday, December 4, 2024

Time: 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Location: Warwick Community Centre, Warwick

Other Details: Registration will be required; Light refreshments provided

Rural Landowner Workshop

Date: Tuesday, February 4, 2025

Time: 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Location: Strathroy Lion's Club, Strathroy

Other Details: Co-hosted with Thames Talbot Land Trust and Ontario Nature,

Light refreshments provided

For more information, contact:
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