



## St. Clair Region Conservation Authority Meeting Highlights – November 12, 2020

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

**Provincial Bill 229:** On November 5, 2020, the Ontario government released its 2020 Budget Bill through Bill 229. In addition to the budget, the Bill also included changes to the *Conservation Authorities (CA) Act* that have raised concerns from CAs across the province, Conservation Ontario, municipalities, and the environmental community – particularly in terms of CA oversight of municipal planning comments, regulation of development in sensitive areas and board of director membership and duties.

**Flood Threat:** The flood threat in the St. Clair Region watershed is low due to a drop in water levels on the Great Lakes, Lake St. Clair and in Wallaceburg. Regional precipitation amounts are near or above normal averages.

**Lake Levels:** Lake Huron and Lake Erie lake levels were below their September record average water levels (1986 and 2019, respectively) by 4 cm. Lake St. Clair exceeded the 2019 record average water level by 2 cm. Water level forecasts for Lake Huron and Lake St. Clair show levels may exceed record-highs in January through to March.

**Healthy Lake Huron Program:** The Healthy Lake Huron program is a campaign that works to maintain and improve the water quality of the Lake by taking local action from Sarnia to Tobermory. In addition to working with private landowners to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) on their property to reduce nutrient loss to Lake Huron tributaries, the program also provides outreach and educational opportunities for local communities. COVID-19 has shuttered many opportunities for coordinating outreach activities, however, SCRCA staff were able to safely host an annual Shoreline Cleanup event at Ipperwash Beach in Lambton Shores. Thirty-five people attended the event in late September that resulted in the removal of enough garbage to fill the back of a pick-up truck. Similar to previous years, cigarette butts were scattered along the shoreline and were again, the item collected in the largest quantity. Other items included diapers, blankets, wire, broken metal and glass.

**Foundation Memorial Forest Dedication:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the SCRCA and St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation made the difficult decision to cancel the in-person Foundation Memorial Forest Dedication service scheduled to take place on September 27, 2020 at the Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area. In the coming months, a recorded service will be released and made available to all the families and individuals who made donations this past year. In addition, 2020 families will be invited to the 2021 dedication next September. From September 2019 to August 2020, 79 trees were dedicated through individual donations to the program.

**Conservation Education:** In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, conservation education staff have altered conservation education programming opportunities to abide by health authority restrictions and guidelines. Programs offered by the SCRCA this fall include:

- **Family Field Trips** – Offered at the Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area for groups of individuals who share a common “social bubble”.
- **Live-Stream with a Naturalist** – Teachers and students can connect with SCRCA educators “live” from a Conservation Area.
- **Virtual Field Trips** – The catalogue of virtual field trips produced in the spring continues to be offered to local schools. Various grades are available with more options to meet science-based curriculum requirements.
- **Nature in Your Neighbourhood** – SCRCA educators will visit local school yards and school neighbourhoods to deliver curriculum connected, experiential outdoor education, while maintaining the safety of pre-existing cohorts. This program has become a popular choice for schools throughout the watershed.

**Shoreline Projects:** The SCRCA continues to work with contractors and local municipalities to complete shoreline protection projects along the Lake Huron shoreline.

- **Brights Grove, Kenwick Street to Helen Avenue – Phase 2** – Work continues to repair 17 deficiencies identified in May at the toe of the shoreline protection. The contractor is currently exploring methods to complete the repairs.
- **Brights Grove, Kenwick Street to Helen Avenue – Phase 3** – A Request for Pre-Qualification (RFPQ) is being developed that will allow for the selection of a qualified contractor to continue with Phase 3 of the shoreline project. The RFPQ process is expected to be completed in November with tender submission to follow.
- **Brights Grove, Old Lakeshore Road East** – Shoreline work at this location on Lake Huron is progressing well with all in-water work completed. The project is anticipated to be complete by mid-December.

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