



## St. Clair Region Conservation Authority Meeting Highlights – April 18, 2019

Below is a list of highlights from the SCRCA board meeting held in April. 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).

**Environmental Registry Postings:** On April 5, 2019, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks along with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry posted proposed amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* on the Environmental Registry. The proposed changes recommend increased transparency and clarification on core programs of the Authority along with updates to policies related to development permits on the protection of people and property. Staff are reviewing the postings and preparing draft responses that will require Board approval prior to submission.

**Conservation Lands:** The Authority's three regional campgrounds open on April 26<sup>th</sup>. Over the winter, 800 overnight campsite reservations were made producing \$108,502 in revenue. A number of improvements are planned for the three campgrounds including upgrades to hydro, roads, and facilities (pool buildings, washrooms). In addition, septic studies will be conducted at each campground to review the existing system, monitor usage, determine lifespans and identify upgrades.

**Spring Flooding Conditions:** Unseasonal temperatures and rainfall at the start of February greatly reduced ice and snow cover throughout the region and resulted in an early freshet. During this time, four watershed condition bulletins were issued – at its peak, the event reached "Flood Watch" status. At present, the flood threat on the Sydenham River is low. Staff will be monitoring water levels and the weather forecast on an ongoing basis to ensure proper communication with municipalities regarding flood risks.

**Lake Levels:** The monthly comparison for February 2019 indicates that Lake Huron levels remain high and exceed levels observed in February 2018 by 9 cm, suggesting a continued higher trend in local lake levels. Numbers also continue to increase above the 10-year average for Lake Huron by 66 cm. Lake St. Clair levels are higher than last year (9 cm) and are 56 cm above the 10-year average.

**Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure Funding:** The SCRCA will submit a request for \$927,000 in grant dollars for 6 projects. Staff expect to receive a list of approved projects in June.

**National Disaster Mitigation Program (NDMP):** The SCRCA received notification from NDMP that funding will be provided to support the second phase of the floodplain mapping study. Currently, phase one of this work is focused on the City of Sarnia and St. Clair Township. The rest of the watershed will be completed in phase two resulting in updated floodplain mapping for the entire SCRCA watershed.

**Engineering and Design Plan for Management of Contaminated Sediment in the St. Clair River:** SCRCA staff are currently reviewing a draft Request for Proposals (RFP) that once finalized will be provided to pre-qualified consultants. The outcome of the RFP process will determine what consulting firm will be selected to prepare the engineering and design plan for management of three pockets of contaminated sediment in the St. Clair River. Staff are also organizing several open houses and meetings with Aamjiwnaang and Walpole Island First Nations to update local communities on the tasks and timelines associated with this phase of the project.

**Healthy Watershed Program:** Staff have applied for grants to support landowner stewardship projects and education and outreach initiatives for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. In 2018-2019, staff were successful in securing \$336,300 in funding to support a number of stewardship projects including: 3 Erosion Control Projects, 10 Wetland Projects and 63 Riparian Buffer and Marginal Land Tree Planting Projects that resulted in over 73,000 trees planted.

**Tree Planting:** This spring, the Authority will be planting approximately 68,000 trees on 36 properties. Another 5,000 trees will be distributed to landowners. In addition, approximately 600 large stock trees have been ordered. Two tractor mounted machine tree planting crews and one hand planting crew are planned for operations to take place starting the last week of April.

**Lambton Larvicide Program:** SCRCA staff will once again be treating catch basins with methoprene this summer as part of the Lambton Larvicide Program. The purpose of this program is to control mosquito populations in the region to prevent the spread of the West Nile virus.

**Conservation Education:** Education staff had a busy winter season thanks to a donation by the Sarnia Lambton Environmental Association that supported two in-class programs – Go with the Flow and River Bottom Critters. The Spring Water Awareness Program will continue into its 8<sup>th</sup> year thanks to funding provided by Plains Midstream. The River RAP in-class program that is supported by Friends of the St. Clair River, has undergone an expansion to meet the needs of multiple curriculums and allow for more classes to participate. Pilot programs are being run between April 1<sup>st</sup> and April 16<sup>th</sup> for this new program expansion. In addition, staff revived the Maple Syrup school program and a full week of classes enjoyed their time learning about the tradition of maple syrup production at the A.W. Campbell Conservation Area.

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