



General Manager's Report

June 20, 2019

Prepared for the Board of Directors
by Brian Horner

Introduction

I am pleased to provide the Board of Directors with a brief update on ABCA projects, programs, new partnerships, funding opportunities and activities over the past couple of months. This report also includes information about Conservation Ontario and some of its activities on behalf of Ontario's 36 conservation authorities. If you have any questions please call me. *Note:* This is not an inclusive list – only some highlights.

Conservation Ontario

Conservation Ontario is the network of 36 Conservation Authorities, local watershed management agencies that deliver services and programs that protect and manage water and other natural resources in partnership with the government, landowners and other organizations. Conservation Authorities promote an integrated watershed approach balancing human, environmental and economic need. Conservation Authorities are organized on a watershed basis.

1. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry told Forests Ontario the day after the provincial budget was released that the 50 Million Tree Program was being cancelled. The program's annual budget was about \$4.7 Million. This program provided funding for larger reforestation projects with a minimum of 1ha or 2.5 ac in size. (ABCA planted between 20,000 and 50,000 trees annually with the landowners subsidy between \$30,000 and \$75,000, \$1.5 per tree)
2. Conservation Ontario submitted Key Recommendations to the Province in response to (ERO 013-5018) Modernization of Conservation Operations and Schedule 2 of Bill 108; **Recommendation #1:** That the mandatory programs and services (proposed), prescribed in regulation, be supported and included the addition of: Conserving Natural resources.

Recommendation #2: That the scope of standards and requirements to be prescribed in regulation capture all key elements of the mandatory program and service area, as well as, watershed management and climate change adaptation activities required to support CA's ability to deliver on the mandatory programs and that these be developed in consultation with conservation authorities, municipalities, and other stakeholders.

Recommendation #3: That the government remove the requirements for individual Municipal Council Budget agreement for watershed-based programs called "other programs and services"/ non-mandatory and that municipal levy regulation and training be developed in collaboration with conservation authorities and municipalities.

Recommendation #4: That the province continue to invest in the core mandatory programs and services to be delivered by conservation authorities and support CA eligibility for other provincial funding programs. **Bill 108, More Home, More Choice Act, 2019**, reached Royal Assent on June 6, 2019 and a partial win was achieved in that the Province included a new category of mandatory programs and services that the Lieutenant Governor in Council could prescribe within one year of the mandatory programs and services being enacted.

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Projects, Programs and Studies

1. Hope Brock helped the Bayfield River Trail Association with a rain barrel sale on May 11 and over 80 barrels were sold.
2. Staff assisted with the rain garden planting at Jessica's House in Exeter on May 29 along with volunteers from SH Community Living and Precious Blood School.
3. Working closely with Huron County Soil and Crop Improvement Association, the ABCA staff along contractors and other partners participated in the on-site Demonstration Day for Huronview Innovative Drainage project on June 15.
4. Kari Jean and others prepared and submitted a funding application to the federal Canada Nature Fund. If successful this multi-year funding will help to complete projects that will benefit aquatic species at risk in the Ausable River.
5. Other than a couple of projects where conditions remain too wet, tree planting has been completed. Approximately 125 landowners purchased over 9,500 trees and ABCA staff planted over 35,000 at 40 sites throughout the watershed through the ABCA tree program.

Training

1. A number of staff attended the 13th Annual Conservation Authority Collaborative Information Sessions (CACIS) - a conference that brings together information management professionals from each of the 36 conservation authorities and government ministry representatives from across the province.
2. The Healthy Watersheds department is participating in an internship program with Niagara College. The student internship program prepares graduates for real-life situations that they may encounter in the environmental workforce, and provides employers such as ABCA with additional resources once a week over the summer.

Meetings and Special Events

1. Summer Nature Day Camps will be held July 8-12 Ages 6-9 (Explorers) and July 22-26 Ages 10-12 (Adventures). There are still openings for the Adventures camp. For those that are interested in registering or volunteering please contact Denise Iszczuk or Nina Sampson in our Education Department.
2. After 30 years as an advisor and/or Board member, Tom Prout has stepped down from the Conservation Dinner Committee and the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation Board of Directors. We thank Tom for all he has done and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.
3. Education staff attended an Envirothon Competition on May 2 where Central Huron Secondary School was the winner.
4. As part of the Lambton Heritage Museum Speaker Series, a number of staff members have made presentations. Hope Brock on May 23, Mari Veliz on June 5 and Kari Jean will present on July 9 at 2pm.
5. The Conservation Educators are fully booked for the month of June with almost 60 in-class or field trip programs. This is up from 40 programs in the same period last year.
6. Davin Heinbuck hosted and was Chair of the Southwestern Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (SWPGMN) semi-annual meeting on May 2. Representatives from the 10 Southwestern CAs as well as Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks were in attendance.