

Board Meeting Highlights

September 29, 2023

Announcements:

- a) Chair Emmerson and Board members welcomed City of Barrie Councillor Amy Courser, who was appointed in place of Councillor Bryn Hamilton, who stepped down.
- b) CAO Rob Baldwin noted that the recent Provincial cabinet shuffle included the move of the Minister David Piccini from Environment, Conservation and Parks to Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, as well as Barrie-Innisfil MPP Andrea Khanjin becoming Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks.
- c) Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation Executive Director, Cheryl Taylor, was pleased to report amounts raised through recent events include approximately \$200K at the Annual Conservation Dinner and \$53K at the Annual Golf Tournament.
- d) Director, Conservation Lands, Philip Davies, shared photos of new conservation area entrance signs; namely, Whitchurch Conservation Area, Thornton Bales Conservation Area, and Scanlon Creek Conservation Area, and noted that updating of maps and wayfinding signage will take place in the near future.

Presentations:

Education Program Overview

Manager, Education, Nicole Hamley, provided an overview of the Education Program, noting that with a goal to engage learners of all ages, interests and abilities through programmed learning experiences that raise awareness, impart knowledge, create understanding and inspire action that leads to real and lasting change, the Conservation Authority's Education team delivers programming at Scanlon Creek Conservation Area, in schoolyards and greenspaces, as well as through live and interactive virtual sessions and online activities and resources. She reviewed the many achievements for 2022, including reopening the Nature Centre to field trips after a two-year hiatus due to Covid, engaging over 14,000 students through school programming, engaging over 2,600 children, youth and adults through various community programs, as well as an online platform with over 1,200 members.

Faced with significant challenges including the cancellation of all programming during Covid, impacts to school bookings resulting from unionized job action, and delays in advancing the final design and construction of the new Nature Centre, staff have continued to deliver programs in a building that is no longer adequate for its needs.

Robust safety plans and innovative and adaptive programming have the Education team well positioned to respond to any program impacts that may arise in the 2023/24 school year. The Education team is excited to see the development of the new Nature Centre moving closer to becoming a reality.

To view this presentation, please click this link: [Education Program Overview](#)

Lake Simcoe Water Levels

Manager, Environmental Science and Monitoring, David Lembcke, provided an overview of the Lake Simcoe water levels, noting the Lake Simcoe watershed is within the greater watershed of Lake Huron, which drains to Lake Erie and then Lake Ontario, and ultimately through the St. Lawrence seaway. With the completion of the Trent Severn Waterway many years ago, Lake Simcoe is hydraulically connected to Lake Huron and Lake Ontario. He explained that connection to the Trent Severn Waterway means that the water level of Lake Simcoe is managed by Parks Canada. Their two key operational priorities for Lake Simcoe are spring water level management and summer drawdown. During the spring, the goal is to reduce flooding while storing as much water as possible for summer use, making this a delicate balance of retaining water in Lake Simcoe and Couchiching without overfilling, the difficulty of which is compounded by inputs from the uncontrolled north Black River. Through summer, water levels are slowly drawn down utilizing as little water as possible from storage lakes striving to maintain navigable depths in the Trent Severn Waterway while maintaining sufficient flows to ensure water quality.

High lake water levels can increase the risk of damage due to shoreline flooding and flooding of low-lying agricultural lands such as the Holland Marsh. Therefore, as part of the flood warning program the Conservation Authority communicates regularly with Trent Severn Waterway staff during periods of high lake levels to ensure appropriate messaging is conveyed to watershed residents. Climate change is affecting the amounts and timing of inputs and outputs of water to the lake. This increasing variability may necessitate updating the established rule curve by Parks Canada.

The Conservation Authority receives many public inquiries and complaints regarding the management of water levels in Lake Simcoe; however, as described management of lake level resides with the Parks Canada through the Trent Severn Waterway and their operational objectives. In response to frequently asked questions the Conservation Authority receives, staff developed a fact sheet that can be found through the following link:

<https://www.lsrca.on.ca/Pages/Lake-Simcoe-Water-Levels.aspx>

To learn more, please click this link to view the presentation: [Lake Simcoe Water Levels](#)

Correspondence and Staff Reports:

Correspondence

The Board received Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition and Forbid Roads Over Green Spaces' July 27th letter to Spills, Ontario, which the Board of Directors was copied on.

Conservation Authorities Act Transition – Quarterly Report No. 6 for September 2023

The Board received Staff Report No. 52-23-BOD regarding the Conservation Authority Transition Quarterly Progress Report No. 6 and approved the quarterly report, with one change, for submission to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve – Update on 2022 Tax Relief Request

The Board received Staff Report No. 53-23-BOD regarding the status of the Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve 2022 property tax appeal and directed staff to submit a formal request to the Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Hon. Caroline Mulroney, MPP York-Simcoe, and MPP Andrea Khanjin seeking a letter of support to the Conservation Authority's 2022 property tax appeal, and to engage with the Town of Georgina to seek appropriate tax refunds for the Preserve Lands under the Municipal Act.

2024 Operating and Capital Expenses Apportionment Procedures

The Board received Staff Report No. 54-23-BOD regarding Operating and Capital Expenses Apportionment Procedures and approved the apportionment methodology for Category 1 operating and capital expenses apportionment outlined within the report.

For more information or to see the full agenda package, visit [LSRCA's Board of Directors' webpage](#).