

Board Meeting Highlights

73rd Annual General Meeting

January 26, 2024

Welcome and Greetings:

Chair Emmerson welcomed everyone to the 73rd Annual General meeting of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and acknowledged the Lake Simcoe watershed as traditional Indigenous territory.

Presentations:

a) Lake Management

Limnologist, Dr. Brian Ginn, provided an update on how phosphorus loads and phosphorus use within the lake have changed, along with lake management implications, noting that since 2010 the environmental state of Lake Simcoe has not responded to fluctuations in phosphorus loads in the manner expected. Despite increases and decreases in annual nutrient inputs, key in-lake health indicators have not fluctuated in turn and are within the range of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan (the Plan) targets. He explained that over the past 3 years, the Conservation Authority has investigated why the lake has not responded to changing phosphorus loads and is apparently “decoupled” from well-established ecological relationships that are the foundation of lake management strategies.

Dr. Ginn noted that climate change has altered precipitation patterns and tributary flows that are the main drivers of phosphorus loads, and the variation in loads between years is dependent on how and when precipitation falls, as well as delivery of nutrients to the lake by tributaries. Invasive quagga mussels are another factor and are the dominant species in Lake Simcoe, redefining the nutrient pathways to patterns that could not have been predicted when the Plan was written before 2009. He explained these new patterns of phosphorus delivery and use in Lake Simcoe are occurring on other lakes across the Great Lakes region. Through collaborations, the team is now understanding where changes may be required in lake management plans, and how to develop new models to better predict ecological changes in the lake and across the Great Lakes system. One example is as long as quagga mussel populations grow, in-lake phosphorus concentrations are expected to further decline. If quagga mussel populations decline, in-lake phosphorus concentrations and amounts of algae would be expected to increase. As a result, phosphorus load targets would need to be flexible to protect the sustainability of the lake ecosystem.

Dr. Ginn advised that the phosphorus decoupling scenario being investigated on Lake Simcoe should serve as a cautionary tale for lake management. A single metric, such as phosphorus loads, does not always accurately reflect lake health, ecological trends, or the effectiveness of a management strategy. For example, climate change is extending the length of water column stratification, which impacts late year deepwater oxygen; a lack of winter ice cover and warmer water temperatures can change amounts of algae and larval fish development; chloride run-off is an emerging concern for freshwater ecosystems including Lake Simcoe. Lakes have many complex relationships that must be monitored, assessed, and tracked over time to provide a more complete picture of lake health. He noted the importance Conservation Authority staff's continuing to evaluate and re-visit metrics to ensure a sustainable future for the lake's ecosystem.

To view this presentation, please click this link: [Lake Management Update Presentation](#)

b) 2023 Year in Review

Chief Administrative Officer, Rob Baldwin, congratulated staff on their many accomplishments of 2023, noting that staff are the reason for our success and what a privilege and honour it is to lead such a talented team. CAO Baldwin shared a video that captures the many highlights and accomplishments from 2023.

To view the video, please click this link: [2023 Year in Review Video](#).

These highlights and accomplishments are also captured in the [2023 Year in Review Infographics](#)

Conclusion of 2023 Business:

Chair Emmerson concluded the Year 2023 business and deemed the Chair vacant.

2024 Business:

The 2024 Business portion of the meeting was called to order by the CAO Rob Baldwin, who served as Chair Pro Temp during the election of the Chair and Vice Chair for 2024.

Election of Officers for 2024:

City of Barrie Councillor Clare Riepma was appointed to the position of Chair for 2024, and Township of Oro-Medonte Mayor Randy Greenlaw was appointed to the position of Vice Chair for 2024.

2024 Board of Directors' Meeting Schedule:

The Board approved the following meeting schedule for the remainder of 2024. Meetings will begin at 9:00 a.m. and will be held in person at the Conservation Authority's Newmarket offices.

Friday, February 23rd

Friday, March 22nd

Friday, April 26th

Friday, May 24th

Friday, June 21st

Friday, July 26th

No meeting in August

Friday, September 27th

Friday, October 25th

Friday, November 22nd

Friday, December 20th

To view the meeting's media release, please click the following link: [2024 Annual General Meeting](#)