



St. Clair Region Conservation Authority Meeting Highlights – November 14, 2019

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.

Meeting with the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP):

On, Tuesday, November 5th, 2019, SCRCA representatives met with staff members of the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, Jeff Yurek, to discuss Conservation Authority programs, funding mechanisms and organizational structure. Additional meetings with MECP are expected to occur in the winter to further consult on Conservation Authority roles and mandates.

Watershed Conditions: Above average rainfall in October triggered widespread flooding throughout the region, resulting in the operation of the W. Darcy McKeough Floodway on October 31st. The flood threat remains moderate to high as a result of continued high water levels. Staff suspect that due to current watershed conditions, the flood risk associated with the spring freshet will be high.

Lake Levels: Lake levels remain high. Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie continue to exceed 1986 all-time monthly record highs for September by 2 cm and 4 cm, respectively. Lake Huron water levels were 1 cm shy of its record September high. Water levels are forecasted to fall from September levels.

Shoreline Protection – Brights Grove: A tender for Phase 2 of the shoreline protection work occurring between Kenwick Street and Helen Avenue in Brights Grove was advertised in September 2019. Cope Construction was awarded the contract with construction expected to commence in December after all required permits are acquired.

Healthy Watersheds: A number of events have occurred or are being planned in support of the Healthy Watersheds Program that aims to minimize sediment and nutrient loading to local waterways through the promotion of stewardship.

- TD Tree Days – Through funding provided by TD Friends of the Environment Fund, two community tree planting events were held in Strathroy and Sarnia this fall. Between the two events, over 400 native trees were planted by more than 100 volunteers.
- Forest Fall Fair – Over 250 people visited the SCRCA booth over the three-day fair where staff shared information on agricultural best management practices, conservation areas, and invasive Phragmites.
- Upcoming Events
 - November 20, 2019 – WORKSHOP – The Value of Wetlands on Marginal Farmland
 - February 12, 2020 – Soil Health Conference – Location (TBD)

- December 11, 2020 – WORKSHOP – Fertilizer Management and Understanding Your Soil Tests
- March 11, 2020 – WORKSHOP – Topic (TBD)

Reptiles at Risk: Through funding provided by the provincial Species at Risk Stewardship Fund, the SCRCA has implemented recovery programs for two local endangered species – the Eastern Spiny Softshell turtle and the Eastern Foxsnake. 2019 Highlights include the following:

- 785 turtle eggs were successfully collected, incubated, hatched and released back into their natural habitat. This included 257 Eastern Spiny Softshell turtles, 268 Northern Map turtles (special concern), 247 Snapping turtles (special concern) and 13 Midland Painted turtles.
- Artificial nesting boxes aimed to attract female Eastern Foxsnakes to nest are installed at nine SCRCA properties and five private landowner properties. Remnants of successful nesting were observed this fall.
- Eight weeks of coverboard monitoring for local snake species resulted in the recording of numerous species including the Eastern Foxsnake, Eastern Gartersnake and Butler’s Gartersnake (endangered).
- The 3rd annual Turtle Birthday Party was held at the A.W. Campbell Conservation Area on August 16th, 2019, attracting over 50 guests.
- Approximately 65,000 copies of the 2019 Species at Risk newsletter were distributed throughout the St. Clair Region watershed.

Conservation Services Update: The SCRCA had another successful tree-seed collection season in 2019. In total, 2,800 litres (70 bushels) of seed were collected and sent to a nursery where they will grow. Trees grown from this year’s seed will be planted in 2021 and 2022. Planning for the 2020 tree-planting program is well underway with approximately 60,000 trees on order to be planted, beginning next spring.

Memorial Forest Dedications: The 3rd annual Denning’s Chatham-Kent and West Elgin Memorial Forest dedication was held on Sunday, September 15th, 2019. Over 90 people attended the event held at the Keith McLean Conservation Lands. Tree planting and conservation education are supported through donations made to the St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation (SCRCF) in recognition of families served by the Chatham-Kent and West Elgin Denning Funeral Home branches. Seventy people attended the SCRCF Memorial Forest Dedication held on Sunday, September 22nd, 2019 at the Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area. Forty-seven trees were dedicated through individual donations to the program.

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