

**Full Authority**  
**19 September 2024**  
**Agenda Item: 15**

**General Manager's Report**

**Background**

The General Manager's report provides a brief update for the Board Members prior to the Board meeting bringing forward additional information and/or progress on initiatives or current issues for the Board members' consideration.

**Watershed Management**

*Current Watershed Conditions*

- Precipitation levels have been higher than normal for the majority of lakes in the watershed this summer.
- As a result, water levels have been subjected to a cyclical pattern this summer. Rainfall has been received typically in one or two day storm events on almost weekly basis. This results in additional stop log adjustments to attempt to keep water levels in the summer elevation range.

*Anticipated Conditions*

- Staff expect water levels to drop to summer elevations during the next two weeks, as predicted precipitation amounts are negligible for this time period.

*Dam Operations – General*

- Staff will commence the seasonal drawdown this month, starting at St. Ola lake and then Paudash Lake as per usual with no anticipated issues or concerns. The remaining lakes will be drawndown in October.

## **Conservation Areas Update**

### *McGeachie Conservation Area*

- The Hastings Destination Trails Committee is requesting to hold another “foraging” workshop event at the McGeachie Conservation Area.
- The event will be similar to the one held in the spring.
- In addition, HDTI has requested approval to groom the trails in the winter for cross country skiing. They also would like to place a lock box on the gate which would enable the groomer to enter as required to maintain the trail in the winter.
- Cross country skiing is another seasonal use which helps to promote the use of the trails and assist with generating tourism for the area.

### *Callaghan’s Rapids Conservation Area*

- There have been recent ATV incursions into Callaghan’s Rapids Conservation Area. This was a direct result of a new point of access and a concrete block as part of the barrier has been moved enough to allow ATV’s to get onto our property.
- Volunteers have replaced the concrete block to the original position and blocked the new access point with downed trees found in the area.
- This will be an ongoing issue since at least a few of the ATVers seem to have the appropriate means (equipment and determination) to gain access even after all of the efforts to create physical barriers.
- Staff will be contacting the Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance to request additional support to help tackle the ongoing incursions since the activity emanates from the trail.

## **Regulations and Planning**

### *Flood Hazard Identification Mapping Project (FHIMP)*

- The FHIMP projects have been successfully completed and a staff report will be included in the Agenda package for the Board’s review.
- Although the projects have taken longer to complete than anticipated, the information and deliverables included in the reports will provide the CVCA with updated floodplain mapping and current data based on recent models, rather than an outdated report from the 1980’s. This should position the CVCA to make good water management decisions for the foreseeable future.
- Staff would like the Board to receive the project reports submitted to the CVCA and endorse it for use effective immediately. Recommendations will be included in the staff report.

## *Highway #7 Violation*

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of August 2024, CVCA staff and counsel were present at the Belleville Ontario Provincial Offenses Court to hear the judge's decision regarding the Highway #7 violation charges.

The judge ruled in favour of three of the four charges laid by the CVCA.

As a result of these convictions, the CVCA will be proceeding with a press release before the end of September. This press release will go to local media and be posted on the CVCA website.

The decision by the judge to convict the landowner will send a message to the public that Provincial Regulation 41/24 PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES, EXEMPTIONS AND PERMITS must be taken seriously.

Recent changes to the Conservation Authorities Act will allow fines up to \$50,000 per conviction.

## **Administration**

### *General*

- At the 20 June 2024 Board Meeting, it was reported the CVCA would be receiving GIS and technical assistance from the Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority (LTRCA) to enable the CVCA to place mapping on our website to aid the public in the regulation application process and/or determine if development proposals were in the regulated area.
- All went according to plan from our perspective and the mapping tool which is a requirement of changes to the CA Act and its subsequent regulations was ready to be put on the website for early July.
- However, at a General Manager's Workshop in late June, an issue regarding mapping on three conservation authorities in Eastern Ontario had caught the attention of the Minister of Natural Resources.
- This issue was a direct result of these conservation authorities expanding their mapping on the website to include all wetlands. Previously, the mapping was selective and only included Provincially significant wetlands. By increasing the number of wetlands captured on the website, it appeared to the public there was a significant increase to the regulated areas in their watershed and the public reaction resulted in garnering the attention of MNR and ultimately the Minister. The conservation authorities were only adding the wetlands to the website to comply with O. Reg 41/24: Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits Section 2, part 3) *For the purposes of subparagraph 2 v of subsection 28 (1) of the Act, other areas in which development activities are prohibited are the areas within an authority's area of jurisdiction that are within 30 metres of a wetland.*

- However, the Minister issued an order to remove the mapping and not add it to the website.
- This directive raised concerns with the CVCA's efforts. This Authority has never had interactive mapping (designed to assist with the regulation application process) on the website due to primarily a lack of resources and capacity to maintain it. With the new regulation stipulated it must be completed, staff proceeded to put in motion a plan to ensure compliance with the regulation. This was only possible with the support from the LTRCA and will also have budgetary implications moving forward.
- The CVCA was ready to launch in early July to be compliant. However, with the Ministerial directive for the other conservation authorities to remove the mapping there seemed to be a direct correlation with our situation and the one which caused a furor.
- Staff were directed to put plans on hold while advice was sought from Conservation Ontario staff. Putting an interactive map on our website could easily have appeared the CVCA would also overregulating even though our regulated area around wetlands was actually reduced from 120 metres to 30m.
- The response from Conservation Ontario was to hold off on placing the mapping on the website until further notice.
- Further updates will be provided as information becomes available.

#### *Transition Plans*

- Time is quickly approaching to comply with the Transition Plans as identified in O.Reg. 686/21.
- The following six plans are required to be completed by the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2024 and must be a priority moving forward.
  1. Watershed Based Resource Management Strategy
  2. Conservation Area Strategy
  3. Land Inventory
  4. Ice Management Plan
  5. Flood and Erosion Asset Management Plan
  6. Flood and Erosion Infrastructure Operational Plan
- Some progress has been made to date on three of the plans, however staff will be required to devote the necessary time to complete the plans. A staff committee will undertake the remaining work, however it may divert staff time and effort from other ongoing deliverables and day to day workload items. For example, the creation of policies to assist with the administration of the CVCA (Finance and Personnel, Land Development on CVCA Property, Violation Policy), staff workplace training and water management operational review will likely have to be placed on hold until the plans are completed.

#### *CVCA Land Development Policy*

- Regrettably, the request for a report as per Motion 72/24 has not been completed for this Board meeting. Staff will endeavour to bring it forward at a subsequent Board meeting.

*Source Water Protection Update*

- The Trent Conservation Coalition funding has been approved by the Province without any impact on the 2025 budget due to effective solutions found by the Project Manager.
- This three year Agreement was recently signed by all of the TCC partners.

*Staff Recommendation*

*That the CVCA Board receive the General Manager's report as presented.*

**Board Discussion**

**TP**