

Full Authority
20 June 2024
Agenda Item: 10

WECI Projects

Background

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) has again invited Conservation Authorities to submit Water, Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) project applications for repairs, safety issues and studies this year.

The Crowe Valley Conservation Authority has taken advantage of this program a number of times to complete projects at CVCA owned dams and weirs, including Belmont Marmora and Wollaston dams as well as the Crowe Bridge weir. Projects vary from rock anchor installations, major concrete repairs, studies and safety equipment (mobile overhead gantries), public signage and recently a walkway for staff safety.

The WECI program will split project costs 50/50 with conservation authorities which have been approved by the WECI Committee. The Committee is comprised of conservation authority staff selected from across the province and MNRF staff.

The amount of provincial funding available for the 2024/25 fiscal year is \$5 million dollars. An additional \$5 million is allocated for 2025/26.

This year a new agreement format is being introduced as a result of feedback from conservation authorities. The format is to create a two year window to complete projects rather than basing it on one year. This will allow complicated projects additional time to get the work done over a two year span. Quite often it has been difficult to hire a consultant, obtain a contractor and have the physical work completed all within one fiscal year that would span most of the winter as well.

This year, the call for submissions from MNRF was late and our 2024 Budget was passed before the CVCA knew about WECI funding, therefore no projects were submitted.

However, due to the change in the agreement format and in order to participate in the program for Year 2 projects, a submission was required now to meet the 3rd of June deadline.

Year 2 projects must be completed by 31 March 2026.

Should the CVCA be successful with our submissions, we will need to provide confirmation of our support for our 50% of the cost sharing. This will dovetail with our budget process for the 2025 Budget.

CVCA WECI Project Submissions for Year 2 (2025/26)

Projects have been submitted for:

1. S.25.013 – Wollaston Dam Safety Assessment Update
2. R.25.030 – Wollaston Dam Rock Anchors
3. R.25.031 – Marmora Dam Fencing

Project S.25.013 Description – Wollaston Dam Safety Assessment Update

The proposed project is located in Wollaston Township, approximately 6 km south of Coe Hill. The dam was originally assessed in 2005 and according to the Ontario Dam Safety Guidelines, an update is required every 10 years. A submission was made to the WECI Committee in 2016, however the project did not meet the scoring threshold to qualify at that time.

Estimated cost of the project is \$35,000 (CVCA share would be \$17,500).

Project R.25.030 Description – Wollaston Dam Rock Anchors

The project will be to add rock anchors to the existing structure. This project will be independent of any future projects. The original dam safety assessment indicated Wollaston Dam does not meet sliding resistance requirements under winter loading conditions as per the Ontario Dam Safety Guidelines. The addition of rock anchors will correct the deficiency. This project has been submitted previously and did not meet the scoring threshold to qualify.

Estimated cost of the project is \$175,000 (CVCA share \$87,500). Estimate will likely be lower when the engineering costs are finalized and the tender has been awarded. The estimate may also be influenced by inflationary pressures in 2025.

Project R.25.031 Description – Marmora Dam Fencing

This project, located in Marmora will be to install fencing at both access points (with one vehicle gate) of the Marmora Dam. This is critical for public safety and to limit CVCA liability.

While the public has had access to the dam since it was rebuilt in the late 1070's, there has been increased safety concerns for three reason:

1. The west end of the dam is built into a limestone rock embankment which is approximately 3 to 5 meters above the deck of the dam. The slope is virtually 90 degrees, however a “path” has been created by the public and is commonly used in conjunction with the dam to cross from one side of the river to the other. The limestone bedrock is unstable with evidence of large and small pieces of rock falling immediately downstream of the dam;

2. Since 2016, there have been two accidents on the deck of the dam resulting in debilitating injuries (one accident resulting in a lawsuit). Signage has been posted, however the public continues to use the dam to cross the Crowe River or for a picturesque view upstream and downstream of the river.
3. There is a hydro facility in the middle section of the dam with its own inherent dangers, especially the forebay of the generating plant. Another level of safety may help to prevent an accident at that site.

Estimated cost of the project is \$19,000 (CVCA share \$9,500).

These three projects were submitted to MNR and will be reviewed by the WECA Committee with a decision expected by the end of June or early July 2024. The CVCA is expecting approval of the fencing since safety projects are always approved. The other two projects are subjected to the scoring system and will also be affected by the number of other projects submitted from across the Province.

Board Discussion

TP