

Full Authority
21 September 2023
Agenda Item: 12

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

- Recreational water levels have been consistent this summer as enough precipitation has been received in the watershed. With this sufficient rainfall, the Orillia Power Hydro Plant at the Marmora dam has been operational most of the time, with only brief periods being offline. Currently the plant is offline, but expected to start up once either more inputs from rainfall or the CVCA drawdown period begins in the fall.
- With consistent water levels this summer, the number of concerns or inquiries by the public has been lower than anticipated for this time of year.
- The past couple of weeks has seen a decrease in rainfall and the normal water level pattern has taken hold of the watershed. Water levels have been trending downward due to the reduced rainfall and evaporation rates on the lake.
- As an example, during a hot dry summer, many lakes could easily experience a 2 to 2.5 cm daily decrease in its water level. This year, at this moment, the daily average drop is in the .5 to 1.0 cm range, which is anticipated without additional rainfall.

Anticipated Conditions

- After the early September heat wave, predicted precipitation may increase for a number of days with cooler temperatures. Depending on the amount of precipitation, this may result in one of three possible outcomes. The rain could 1) slow the current downward trend, 2) stabilize lake levels and flows or 3) possibly result in higher lake levels and start an upward trend.

Water Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) Status

- CVCA staff have contacted Littles Welding and Machine Shop for a revised quote. The original quote was submitted to the CVCA in 2022.
- Staff also contacted the property owner adjacent to the Belmont Dam to discuss the proposed new walkway/set of stairs.
- Representatives from Littles, the property owner and myself met to discuss the project.
- CVCA is waiting on the quote and the start date to get the work completed this fall at Belmont, Marmora and Wollaston dam.

Dam Operations – General

- The fall drawdown will commence soon with Paudash Lake being the first lake to drawdown to winter seasonal lake levels. Staff target the 30th of September at Paudash in order to comply with Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's requirements to be ready for the lake trout spawn.

Conservation Areas Update

Callaghan's Rapids Conservation Area

- Progress on securing the perimeter of Callaghan's has continued with the efforts of one volunteer in particular and two CVCA students who were able to devote some of their allotted time.
- Unfortunately, the success of the barriers has resulted in an incident at Callaghan's. The volunteer was confronted by 3 ATV riders and the one rider took it to the next level and assaulted him. Fortunately, there were no serious injuries and the volunteer was able to recover and returned to working at Callaghan's within a couple of weeks.
- After the final barriers are erected, the volunteers will turn their attention to the installation of a gate to allow access for emergency vehicles.

McGeachie Conservation Area

- Trail cleanup continued into the summer as dam operations and vacations permitted. Progress was steady until the CVCA's gator was reported stolen on the 22nd of August.

- The OPP and the CVCA's insurance company were contacted immediately. A claim has been made by the CVCA and is waiting for an adjuster's review.

Crowe Bridge Conservation Area

- No further update at this time.

The Gut Conservation Area

- No further update at this time.

Administration

Personnel Policy Update

- A CVCA staff committee was struck to update the Personnel Policy.
- Progress has been made, however the task has proven to be larger than anticipated as the policy updates has turned more into a policy review with many changes in conjunction with the updates CVCA staff wanted to add.
- Staff are still targeting this fall to complete the review, however depending on other duties and responsibilities, a draft copy may not be available until early in 2024.

Regulation 686/21

- In addition to the categorization of the services and programs of the CVCA and the resulting MOU agreements, there are a number of other deliverables all conservation authorities must meet by the end of 2024. These items include:
 1. A Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy
 2. A Conservation Area Strategy (for all CVCA owned properties)
 3. A Land Inventory
 4. An Operational Plan
 5. An Ice Management Plan
 6. An Asset Management Plan
- Fortunately, Conservation Ontario is providing some assistance with templates. Meetings with General Managers have also proved beneficial as there is an opportunity to share ideas, concerns and interpretations of requirements. Regardless of how the plans look and the content, it will be additional work on top of regular day to day business for staff to be able to put together these documents to meet what is stipulated in Ont. Regulation 686/21.

- Thankfully, there seems to be quite a bit of flexibility as the Province recognizes there is quite a range of resources/capabilities across the conservation authority spectrum to complete these tasks. Hence, our plans, etc., will be kept simple and straightforward compared to most if not all larger conservation authorities.
- Further updates to follow at the next scheduled Board meeting.

Board Discussion

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