

Full Authority
16 June 2022
Agenda Item: 13

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

- The period immediately after the peak of the spring freshet was following the typical mid- spring pattern. Water levels and flows were consistently heading lower and stop logs were being replaced in the dams to ensure enough water was captured to attain the summer recreational levels.
- Recently, water levels and flows have been impacted by storm and rainfall events in mid-May and early June and a slight upward trend has been observed by staff, resulting in the removal of stop logs throughout the watershed.

Anticipated Conditions

- The next two to four weeks of June weather conditions will be critical to set the stage for the summer recreational season. Should the current weather pattern of rain remain, it will require a higher than normal number of stop log adjustments for this time of year. In addition, all of the dams had been jacked, but that work will need to be redone.
- Higher flows could possibly delay the opening of Crowe Bridge Conservation Area. The CVCA threshold is 10 cubic metres per second. If flows are higher, then the CVCA considered the weir to be unsafe as people could easily be swept over the weir, thrown against rocks and be taken further downstream. Currently, the flow is 36 cms and rising.

Water Erosion Control Infrastructure Status Update

- The CVCA's Marmora Dam Repairs Project submission has been approved by the Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure committee.
- Staff have contacted Watech Inc. for an inspection to be conducted on the repairs prior to beginning the work in the event that the original estimate for the work has changed significantly. Inspection is scheduled for the week of the 13th of June.
- Should the inspection discover the issue has changed and funding allocated for the project is not sufficient, CVCA will request additional 50% funding from the Ministry and will require Board approval to release matching funds.

Flood Forecasting and Warning System Upgrade

- Four gauges have now been installed with the new equipment. The remaining equipment will be ordered and installed when there is less demand on regulations and water operations staff.

Dam Operations – General

- Staff have met at the Marmora and Belmont Dams with two employees from Littles Welding and Machine Shop to describe the projects and obtain quotes for the proposed works as described in Motion G 43/22 at the 21st of April 2022 meeting.
- A request for quotes has been made and staff have yet to receive them at this time.

Conservation Areas Update

General

- On May 21st 2022, a derecho storm event traversed across Ontario. The storm developed over Sarnia and eventually dispersed over Quebec City. The heart of this windstorm, associated with a line of thunderstorms cut through the Crowe Valley watershed with devastating effects. Many of our municipal partners are reeling from the impact of the storm and declared emergencies.

- The widespread damage to the electrical system, homes, cottages, vehicles and other personal property in the area has been extensive. Lives were lost and many residents were left without power for many days and limited access for essential services.
- The CVCA was extremely fortunate that our buildings escaped damage. However, the Authority was not totally unscathed as the McGeachie Conservation trails have been closed to the public due to the number of trees down across the trail and trees hung up precariously alongside the trails.
- Staff have made attempts to determine the extent of the damage, however, progress has been slow and staff's normal duties have to take precedence. This is especially true for water operations staff since we are dealing with increased stop log operations at the same time.
- The CVCA has posted on our website that both McGeachie and The Gut Conservation Areas are currently closed to the public due to the storm and/or at the request of our municipalities to limit road usage while the cleanup efforts continue.
- Without additional support, CVCA staff will not be able to clean up the 10 kms of trails in a timely manner. Obtaining that support when the demand will be high throughout our watershed and the rest of eastern Ontario for assistance, it may take more than a year or two to get the trails back into a safe condition for the public.
- Staff will review options and provide additional information to the Board when available.

Callaghan's Rapids Conservation Area

- Volunteers will start a plant identification inventory at Callaghan's on the 9th of June. The volunteers have extensive professional experience and educational backgrounds (PhDs) to undertake this inventory study. The inventory will provide a solid baseline/reference point moving forward for additional studies, possibly outdoor educational tours for schools and/or groups and potential funding opportunities
- Only a few trees came down in the May storm, but have been since cleaned up and trails are fully functional.

McGeachie Conservation Area

- Despite the storm that felled trees on the McGeachie Conservation Area, the cottage escaped damage and should be ready for the summer recreational season.
- Repairs to the carport have been completed and a number of other minor issues at the cottage will be completed before rentals begin in the summer.
- At this time, the cottage is fully booked for this upcoming recreational season.

Crowe Bridge Conservation Area

- The CVCA/Trent Hills Lease for the Crowe Bridge Conservation Area has been signed for one year.
- The CVCA's engineer to conduct the weir assessment has recently contacted the Authority to determine when divers may be able to conduct a dive at Crowe Bridge.
- Due to higher than average flows on the Crowe River at this time of year and the recent rainfall that will add to the situation, the dive will likely not be conducted until late July or August.
- The Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry has been notified of the circumstances.

Administration Update

Inventory of Programs and Services

- Since the April meeting, there have been a session with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) and an additional session hosted by Conservation Ontario regarding the Inventory of Programs and Services.
- Based on the feedback from MECP, there were some items the Ministry would like to see changed. As a result, there is a minor change the CVCA will have to make and recirculate to our member municipalities. The change is to simply move our benthic monitoring from Category 1 – Mandatory to Category 3 Non-Mandatory – Other.
- The first report on progress will be submitted to MECP by the end of July.

Flood Plain Mapping Funding Opportunity

Conservation Ontario (CO) has recently informed Conservation Authorities there is potentially flood plain mapping funding through a recently announced Federal program.

The program will not be rolled out until a survey has been completed to identify possible projects. Therefore, CO has requested the survey be submitted by the 17th of June for review and to demonstrate interest in the program.

Should Ontario secure funding from the program, this will be an opportunity for the CVCA to possibly partner with other stakeholders to secure funding for Chandos Lake flood plain mapping.

At this time, the funding would be a 50/50 arrangement similar to WECI funding. If North Kawartha and the Chandos Lake Property Owners Association would partner with the CVCA, then a 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 share of the 50% would reduce the cost significantly for the three organizations.

Conservation Ontario

- The Conservation Ontario Manager, Kim Gavine has announced her retirement and the CO Board of Directors has hired a firm to look for a successful candidate to fill the position.

Miscellaneous

- CVCA has received an invitation along with the Lower Trent Conservation Authority and Quinte Conservation to attend a Hastings County Planning and Development Committee Meeting on the 21st of June 2022.
- The invitation is in response to a resolution from the Township of Madoc commenting on wait times for responses from Quinte during the consent process.
- Justin Harrow, the Director of Planning & Development was directed to invite the three conservation authorities to a meeting to review the roles and responsibilities with regard to development focusing on planning and highlighting the differences between planning comments and the regulations permitting process.
- Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry staff contacted the CVCA to obtain permission to acquire the head of a deer from Callaghan's Rapids to test for Chronic Wasting Disease. The death of the deer was considered unusual, hence the need for the test. Permission was granted and results if positive, would require further investigation and public notification.