

Full Authority
20 June 2019
Agenda Item: 16

General Manager's Report

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.

1. Watershed Management

Summer Recreational Levels

In preparation for the summer recreational season in the Crowe Valley watershed, staff replace stop logs after the spring freshet as required and make any further adjustments based on anticipated precipitation, flows, current lake level, input from the remaining subwatershed and current stop log settings. As part of the operational process between the spring freshet (flood) and the summer recreational season, stop logs at each bay at every dam are then jacked (pressure exerted on the stop logs to ensure the best seal between stop logs possible) to further reduce leakage. Operationally, this is one of the most effective tools in the CVCA's arsenal to help maintain summer recreational levels. Other than the placement of physical barriers, which can be costly, difficult and can create other complications, the only option to seal the dams would be the placement of organic and/or inert material between the stop logs.

The management technique available to the Authority heading into the summer season is to retain a buffer of a few inches (or slightly more depending on individual lake characteristics, the location of the lake in the watershed and other contributing factors) higher than the regulated summer level. This buffer is essential to give the Authority staff flexibility to help keep lakes at the targeted level for the whole summer. This is generally acceptable to the majority of lake users in the watershed. However, the CVCA may have to revisit this tactic to determine if it is sufficient enough as extreme weather events and conditions continue to persist due to climate change.

From a natural watershed perspective, the best asset to assist with hot, dry summer conditions is healthy wetlands. An abundance of wetlands in the CVCA watershed act as sponges that absorb water in the spring freshet, then slowly release water during the summer months. This enables the watershed to better withstand some of the extreme weather conditions in comparison to surrounding watersheds dominated by urban landscapes.

Fortunately, this spring with the extremely high water levels, CVCA watershed is well positioned to brace for hot, dry summer conditions. This resiliency alone is good justification for the implementation of the CVCA's regulation program to maintain water levels very close to or above the summer recreational period.

Current Watershed Conditions

- Current levels and flows are reasonably close to summer recreational levels. However, until conditions affecting water levels abate, there will be fluctuations throughout the watershed, with some lakes slightly higher or lower.
- Rainfall amounts have been higher than average throughout the month of May and the rainfall pattern has not abated in June. Lower temperatures have also reduced evaporation rates and therefore have not had a significant impact on the watershed.
- Flow levels continue to remain too high for recreational swimming at Crowe Bridge.

Anticipated Conditions

- The CVCA anticipates summer recreational levels will be attained by the end of June depending on rainfall amounts received in the next two week period.
- Should drought conditions become an issue, CVCA staff will make every attempt to keep lake levels at the summer level for as long as possible by employing the above noted operational options.
- CVCA staff will continue to monitor weather conditions and operate dams as required to mitigate effects of rainfall as the draw down is conducted.

2. CVCA – Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) Project Update

- WECI funding was not granted for any of the projects submitted by the CVCA for the 2019/20 Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry fiscal period.
- The CVCA will continue to pursue a contractor for maintenance repairs at the Marmora Dam

3. Programs

- The CVCA Ontario Benthic Biomonitoring Network program has had challenges since provincial funding for students was eliminated for this sampling season.
- Fortunately, a Federal program enabled the CVCA to hire a student who worked on the program for the Authority last year.
- With the assistance of two volunteers and additional help from an international student, the CVCA was able to continue with the program, albeit not quite at the same number of sites sampled. However, the important fact was to maintain continuity of the program and eliminate gaps from year to year.
- Given the lack of support from the province for student funding, the CVCA will be seeking funding from other sources or expanding our request for federal support. Volunteers from Fleming or the public at large for this program may also become a mainstay to allow it to move forward.

4. Administration

On 6th of June, the Province passed the *More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019*.
https://www.ola.org/sites/default/files/node-files/bill/document/pdf/2019/2019-06/b108ra_e.pdf

Conservation Ontario is pleased to report that a **partial win** resulted as the Province included a new category of mandatory programs and services that the Lieutenant Governor in Council (LGIC) could prescribe within one year of the other mandatory programs and services being enacted. This new category within the legislation contains no limitation regarding what the programs and services could be. This provision allows the Government to add additional programs and services that CAs could levy municipalities to provide.

The revised section 21.1(1) of the *Conservation Authorities Act* is included below. The partial win is highlighted in yellow.

Mandatory programs and services

21.1 (1) An authority shall provide the following programs or services within its area of jurisdiction: 1. A program or service that meets any of the following descriptions and that has been prescribed by the regulations:

- i. Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards.
- ii. Programs and services related to the conservation and management of lands owned or controlled by the authority, including any interests in land registered on title.
- iii. Programs and services related to the authority's duties, functions and responsibilities as a source protection authority under the Clean Water Act, 2006.
- iv. Programs and services related to the authority's duties, functions and responsibilities under an Act prescribed by the regulations.

2. A program or service, other than a program or service described in paragraph 1, that has been prescribed by the regulations on or before the first anniversary of the day prescribed under clause 40 (3) (h)

At the last Board meeting in May, the CVCA supported the Conservation Ontario Service and Streamlining Initiative. All 36 Conservation Authorities have now supported this initiative and next steps will be discussed at the June Conservation Ontario Council Meeting.

As per the initiative, high growth CAs are to implement a consistent client centric CA review and approval process checklist by August.

In the interim, all CAs have been categorized in order to determine which CAs must meet this target and the CVCA is considered a low growth CA (as were 9 others). The criteria was based on a combination of i) population growth projections, ii) whether member municipalities were a part of a regional government review and iii) planning and development transactions.

Although the CVCA is categorized low growth, CO Ontario encourages all CAs to strive to meet the standards as outlined below.

Implement a consistent client-centric CA review and approval process checklist that provides transparency of process and rules. The checklist is proposed to include having publicly accessible agreements and policies that guide reviews and decision making, including:

- i. CA/Municipal MOUs or Technical Service Agreements
- ii. CA plan review and regulation approvals policies/guidelines
- iii. CA Complete application requirements
- iv. CA Fee policies and schedules
- v. CA Client Service Standards Commitment/Policy [including for example, timelines and identification of a senior CA staff contact serving as a 'client service facilitator' for plan review and/or permit applications issue management]
- vi. CA Online screening maps
- vii. CA Annual report on review timelines