

**Full Authority
21 January 2016
Agenda Item: 10**

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. Current Water Level and Flow Conditions

- December 2015 was the warmest December on record and the warm temperatures continued into the first few days of January 2016. With these warm temperatures and associated rainfall, the watershed is experiencing higher than normal levels and flows.
- Flows at Marmora Dam have exceeded autumn highs for 2015 and is currently at 53 cubic metres per second
- Increased dam operations (removal of stop logs) have resulted from the excess water in the system and will require the replacement of stop logs once water has receded
- A Watershed Conditions Statement has been issued on January 13, 2016 and will be updated as required. The statement informs residents of higher than normal flows and lake levels for the winter season and warning everyone (especially children) to stay away from locations where high flows are particularly dangerous such as dams
- Should temperatures remain at or below seasonal norms (and therefore no additional rain), staff anticipate water levels and flows will return to winter settings in approximately one to two weeks.

2. McGeachie Conservation Area

- Staff have submitted a TD Friends of the Environment grant proposal for trail work at McGeachie Conservation Authority
- Staff met with Mike Sherwin (environmental teacher at Norwood District High School) and Terry Bradt (MCA volunteer and former MNR biologist) to lay out new trails on 40 acres of property purchased from Mrs. Lee in 1996
- Staff will be meeting with Mr. John Harnett to discuss "Friends of McGeachie" possibilities

3. Pay by Phone – MCA, Callaghan's, The Gut and Crowe Bridge

- Staff have participated in discussions with a number of conservation authorities regarding a pay by phone option for parking/donations presently offered by three companies
- CVCA would use it for the four conservation areas which provide a parking area for conservation authority patrons.
- Pay by phone is essentially an app which can be downloaded for free and then payment can be made on site to a company on behalf of the CVCA
- Four options – MacKay Pay, HonkMobile, PaybyPhone and CVCA “hybrid”
- MacKay Pay will set up the app to receive donations, no monthly minimum, transaction fees low (60 cents per transaction - .25 Mackay Pay + .35 for credit card processing), 1-800# option to pay is available)
- CVCA “hybrid” not as flexible for conservation area users – reliant on website (Canada Helps Donation) to receive payment – no app option, no 1-800# option, phoning CVCA with donation still means a visa authorization fee of .15 + 2.12% visa credit assessment.
- HonkMobile and PaybyPhone transaction fees, signage, minimum monthly fees and startup are more expensive than MacKay Pay or the CVCA in house option

Recommendation:

The CVCA investigate whether a contract MacKay Pay to establish a pay by phone system for the collection of donations from conservation area users is feasible based on startup expenses, options for payment, number of patrons attending the areas, user group makeup (local vs visitors) and success of other conservation authorities utilizing payment by phone.

Should the MacKay Pay model not be feasible for the CVCA circumstances, then, the CVCA extend the option for donations by phone or other electronic devices to MCA, Callaghan's and The Gut, and possibly Crowe Bridge, (contingent upon discussions with our lease holder - Trent Hills) using the CVCA “hybrid” model.

4. Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) Funding

- No further progress to report regarding the 2015 WECI projects at this time
- WECI applications for 2016 will likely be required to be submitted in February – no deadline has been established

5. Insurance Quote

- As of the time this report has been distributed to the Board, the Conservation Ontario Insurance Committee has not yet met and committed to the rate for 2016