

Full Authority
22 September 2016
Agenda Item: 13

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.

Water Management Update

- Summer water management concerns were influenced by warmer than average temperatures for most of the summer and low precipitation received in parts of the watershed. In general, the CVCA watershed was not affected to the same degree as many of the watersheds in eastern Ontario. Many conservation authorities declared a Low Water Level Three status, confirming the worst drought like conditions since the program was introduced by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.
- Indicators used for declaring Low Water Levels are flow and precipitation data. CVCA has declared Low Water Level One status based on the combination of this information.
- The CVCA was able to maintain lake levels at or slightly above their summer recreational values for the majority of the summer.
- The North River subwatershed was impacted the most by the dry drought like conditions as verified by the lake levels on the largest lakes. Lake levels on Round and Katchewanog have only in the past two or three weeks slipped below summer water levels by approximately 8 to 10 cms (approximately 3 to 4 inches). All other lakes have maintained a "healthy" summer water level given the hot temperatures for such an extended period of time.
- Low Water Level One Status – still currently in effect, however, anticipate by the end of September, both flow and precipitation indicators will show above Level One minimums and therefore declare return to normal conditions.
- Staff had an opportunity to converse with Quinte staff at the end of August. Christine McClure, QCA Water Resources Manager confirmed lake levels were already at winter levels in August.

- Staff have also had discussions with Dave Burritt, Acting Supervisor, Surface Water Monitoring Centre, Integration Branch regarding the review of the Low Water Response Program.
- Many issues and concerns have surfaced regarding the program, the indicators, criteria, messaging and termination of the declared status levels (especially if the drought conditions persist into the fall and winter). Therefore, the Ministry has initiated a review of the program and will be seeking input from all conservation authorities to improve the program to meet the needs of the municipalities and the public.
- CVCA Water Resources Technician, Neil McConkey confirmed the draw down process will begin as regularly scheduled starting with Paudash and Wollaston on the 15th of September.
- The draw down is undertaken in the fall to intentionally lower the lakes to create reservoir capacity to help with the spring runoff period.
- For the Board's information, the CVCA has received numerous calls, emails and visits from the public inquiring about a planned draw down of 2 feet immediately after the Labour Day weekend in September on Round, Belmont and Crowe Lakes. This rumour originally started on Belmont Lake and spread to the neighbouring lakes. This was the first time a rumour of this nature had been brought to the attention of CVCA staff. Since the date of the rumour has passed, all calls, emails and personal visits to the CVCA have ended.

McGeachie Conservation Area

- Significant progress has been made on the new trail at MCA during the summer. Junior Rangers from the Bancroft District volunteered to begin the process of clearing the trail. In addition to the Rangers, Corinna Genet and Terry Bradt volunteered to assist during the day. CVCA staff, Lou Young coordinated the volunteers, provided support services and assisted with the trail work. Many thanks to all who participated.
- The CVCA received a grant of \$3200 from the Ontario Wildlife Foundation to complete the expanded trail system at MCA.
- The funds will be used to provide the Norwood District High School students with transportation, equipment rentals (if required), meals, beverages, directional signage, fuel for equipment, reprinted trail map booklets showing new trail and marketing.
- Work is scheduled to be completed at the end of October.

- Work on the establishment of the Friends of McGeachie has continued. A meeting was held in the summer, with another scheduled meeting this fall after the completion of the work on the new trail.
- The group is in the throes of seeking a few committed individuals to expand numbers to tackle the growing pains of the organization. The development is crucial to lay a solid foundation of members to ensure the newly formed “Friends” does not stall soon after its inception. Once the organizational concerns are dealt with, the group intends to work with the CVCA to alleviate maintenance and capital project pressures the CVCA is currently facing.
- CVCA staff are also hopeful the Friends of MCA will also be able to tap into funding sources the CVCA is prohibited to utilize.
- Summer rentals for the cottage were excellent with only two weeks not being filled due to a cancellation. Allergies were cited as the reason for the last minute cancellation.

Miscellaneous

- Comments were submitted to the Ministry of Natural Resources for the second round of the Conservation Authority Act review.
 - Comments echoed Conservation Ontario submission
 - Focused on need to address changes to the formula for distribution of MNRF funding for rural conservation authorities like the CVCA – should be based on population, size of watershed, infrastructure, total number of lakes, streams and rivers and their associated shorelines
 - In addition, suggested grant restrictions should be relaxed for conservation authorities to aid with grant applications – often authorities do not qualify since receive government funding sources
 - Also requested discussion sessions for the review process be increased in number throughout the province