**Full Authority**

**18 June 2015**

**Agenda Item: 9**

**General Manager’s Report**

As per usual, the General Manager’s report provides a brief update for the Board Members prior to the Board meeting. The report brings forward additional information and/or progress on initiatives or current issues for the Board members consideration.

**Current Water Level and Flow Conditions**

* Conditions this spring have continued to be very dry until recent rainfall in a 10 day period from 31 May to 10 June, shifting concerns from low water levels, flows and possible drought conditions to spilling excess water in the system.
* Rainfall has been received throughout the watershed, however, the highest accumulation has been in the southern portion of the watershed, triggering a number of stop log adjustments at dams in the watershed. During the above noted period, the highest amount of rainfall recorded was 140.5mm at the Belmont Lake rain gauge.
* In the opinion of the CVCA, flows have exceeded public safety levels at two popular swimming areas on the Crowe River. The CVCA has provided this information to the appropriate member municipalities in order for them to post warning signage and close the Crowe Bridge Conservation Area.
* Future rainfall events will dictate how quickly there will be a return to normal summer recreational levels and flows, especially in the lower half of the watershed.
* In addition, regardless of which extreme the watershed is under stress from staff are fully aware of the associated issues such conditions may impose on the watershed and the management of dams.
* Therefore, earlier this spring, particular attention was directed to CVCA owned dams to mitigate potential areas of concern. All dams had been jacked by the end of May to prevent as much leakage as possible since the dry conditions were indicating the potential for a severe drought during this summer recreational season.
* However, as noted, recent precipitation has resulted in a complete reversal. Now, once the excess water has moved through the system, CVCA staff will for the second time this season, seal stop logs by jacking and use sandbags where and when required at our dams. This will enable staff to manage water in the most effective manner for the duration of the summer recreational period.
* As the experienced Board members know and understand, Belmont dam is one of the most challenging dams in dry/low water conditions due to a number of factors influencing the dam. Last year, the Board agreed to implement a temporary sealing measure completed by O.D.S. Marine. This approach would only be applied to the bottom sill logs and the two end bays. At that time, there was the understanding the measures may or may not last two or three years,
* With the installation of the sandbags along the sill and the tarping of the two end bays, the sealing did reduce the leakage/flow rate.
* Unfortunately, only one of the two tarps remained fully in place after the spring freshet and at various points, sandbags would also likely need to be reinstalled along the sill should dry conditions return and show signs of significantly impacting water levels at Belmont.
* Therefore staff request Board authorization to proceed with the hiring of O.D.S. Marine to replace the tarp and/or sandbags at the appropriate time if deemed necessary by the General Manager and Water Technician.
* The cost to temporarily seal the dam last year was $6,803.05. Diving costs are approximately 50% of the total.
* There is also the possibility CVCA staff may be able to reposition the tarp and place sufficient sandbags to seal the dam to the same level as last year without hiring O.D.S. Marine. At the very least, CVCA staff are confident placing sandbags can be successfully done to virtually the same level without the need to place a diver in the water.

**The Gut Conservation Area Restoration Project**

* As per usual, there was a deadline to expend funds donated from the TD Canada Foundation.
* As a result, CVCA staff, Lou Young in particular made every effort to ensure the restoration project met the deadline.
* Therefore, staff made inquiries at Norwood District High School to determine whether they would once again be interested in assisting the CVCA.
* 16 students from Mike Sherwin’s Forestry class at Norwood District High School and three staff members (Mike, Dale and Deb) volunteered to finish the stairs and rebuild the outhouse.
* The enthusiastic crew, with great skills to boot, completed the task in two days under the guidance of the Norwood staff.
* CVCA staff provided additional supporting roles to assist wherever possible (8”x8”x8’ cedar logs are heavy!) and providing a lunch and snacks for the crew.
* Due to their great work and dedication for work which would not have been completed without their help, a presentation was made to Mike’s class with certificates of appreciation and an overnight stay at the McGeachie cottage. Mike has already stated, this will be used to further educate the students with tree marking exercises and assistance with trail maintenance at MCA.
* I would like to acknowledge the tremendous effort and thank Lou Young at our office for coordinating and assisting everyone’s effort during the entire project.

**Benthic Monitoring Project**

* The CVCA applied for two students to conduct the Benthic Monitoring Project in the watershed this year. Although the Ministry of Natural Resources was late in giving approval to all CAs this year, the CVCA was awarded funding for two students.
* The work has progressed well and the students are in the final stages of a seven week program.

**Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) Funding**

* Approval for WECI funding has been confirmed by the Ministry of Natural Resources.
* Funding was granted for the dam safety assessments/reviews at Belmont Dam and Allan’s Mills.
* Regrettably, the Wollaston Dam Rock Anchor Bolt Project did not rank sufficiently high enough to be funded. This project, like others similar across the province, is challenging to get funding due to a number of factors working against them. Conservation Ontario and the WECI Committee recognize this issue and are working with a CO sub committee (which I am a participant) to arrive at a solution to address the issue.

**Oak Lake**

* Recently, Ches Semple, who has been authorized to monitor and make stop log adjustments at the Oak Lake dam, Neil McConkey and myself met to discuss the issue of the unauthorized removal of stop logs from the dam.
* Staff will attempt to design a device to lock down the stop logs, install signage and if the situation continues consider other monitoring possibilities.

**Updates**

* After sending out tenders for a new vehicle, the CVCA has purchased a 2015 Subaru Forester with four wheel drive to replace the 2002 Santa Fe.. The Subaru will give Sharlene the capabilities and the confidence to traverse the watershed to conduct inspections.
* In addition, the vehicle has sufficient cargo space for the CVCA’s water monitoring equipment and acting as a backup for dam operations. Improvements made by Subaru have also significantly improved gas mileage and added a rear view camera which wasn’t available on similar vehicles in this class. This camera will undoubtedly be a welcome feature for Sharlene if (when) she is turning around in any tight spots.
* The vehicle is also equipped with a Reese trailer hitch, which will allow staff the opportunity to tow a trailer for other equipment or transporting stop logs.
* Since the CVCA is refunded a large portion of taxes on the vehicle and with a sizeable discount from Subaru, the net cost to the CVCA is approximately$3,000 less than the amount allocated in the capital budget for purchase of a new vehicle.
* Staff are in the process of establishing a date which is best for the Belmont Lake Cottage Association membership to attend an open house at the CVCA office.
* Richard Clark from the Wollaston Lake Home and Cottage Association has been in contact with the CVCA regarding the Wollaston Lake Environment Camp. He has requested CVCA staff participate/aid in the delivery of a science project for two age groups this summer. Staff are excited at the prospect of assisting with the success of the environmental camp.