

**UPPER THAMES RIVER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS'**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AGENDA**  
**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2021 at 9:30 A.M**  
**Virtual Meeting Due to COVID-19 Pandemic**

**1. Approval of Agenda**

Mover: S.Levin

Seconder: N.Manning

THAT the Board of Directors approve the Agenda as posted.

**2. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**

**3. Minutes of the Previous Meetings: Friday January 15th, 2021 and Tuesday January 26, 2021**

Mover: H.McDermid

Seconder: P.Mitchell

THAT that the UTRCA Board of Directors approve the Special Meeting of the Board of Directors' minutes dated January 15, 2021, as posted on the Members' web-site.

Mover: A.Murray

Seconder: B.Petrie

THAT that the UTRCA Board of Directors approve the Board of Directors' minutes dated January 26, 2021, including any closed session minutes, as posted on the Members' web-site.

**4. Business Arising from the Minutes**

**5. Delegations**

**6. Business for Approval**

**6.1 Review and Approval of the Factual Certificate – S.Levin/I.Wilcox Fin #1153**

Mover: J.Reffle

Seconder: J.Salter

THAT the Board of Directors approve the Factual Certificate as presented.

**6.2 2021 Draft Budget - I.Wilcox/C.Saracino #124224**

Mover: M.Schadenberg

Seconder: A.Westman

That the UTRCA Board of Directors approve the 2021 Draft Operating Budget under Section 27 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* in the amount of \$16,054,952 and that staff be directed to circulate the Approved Budget to member municipalities as part of the required

30 day review period. Please note the 2021 new levy component of the operating budget of \$5,779,537 will be apportioned to member municipalities based on a general levy formula as developed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry using Current Value Assessment data from the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation and by Special Benefitting Percentages for structure operations.

Mover: M.Blosh

Seconder: D.Edmiston

That the UTRCA Board of Directors approve the 2021 Capital Budget under Section 26 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* in two parts:

a) The amount of \$736,851 to support the Authority's 20 year Flood Control Capital Plan. Apportionment of the flood control portion of the 2021 capital levy of \$537,879 is based on Special Benefitting Percentages, by structure, as presented in the 2021 Draft Budget. It is noted this levy amount has been set based on cooperative discussions with participating municipalities and assumes that the majority of the works will receive a matching funding contribution through the provincial Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure Program (WECI) or federal Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund program (DMAF).

Mover: A.Hopkins

Seconder: T.Jackson

That the UTRCA Board of Directors approve the 2021 Capital Budget under Section 26 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* in two parts:

b) The amount of \$391,000 to support the Authority's other (non-flood control) capital spending needs. The municipal levy share of this capital amount is \$178,626 and will be apportioned to member municipalities based on a general levy formula as developed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry using Current Value Assessment data from the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation.

### 6.3 2021 Capital Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) Projects

C.Tasker FC#1781

Mover: S.Levin

Seconder: N.Manning

THAT the Board of Directors approve the recommendation as presented in the report.

## 7. Business for Information

### 7.1 Section 28 Annual Report – T.Annett ENVP #9983

Mover: H.McDermid

Seconder: P.Mitchell

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report as presented.

- 7.2 Conservation Authorities Act Proclamations – I.Wilcox #124214  
Mover: A.Murray  
Seconder: B.Petrie  
THAT the Board of Directors receives the report as presented.
- 7.3 2021 Service Award Recognition – I.Wilcox/S.Viglianti HR #8947  
Mover: J.Reffle  
Seconder: J.Salter  
THAT the Board of Directors receives the report as presented.
- 7.4 UTRCA Administrative By-Law Review Deferral – I.Wilcox  
Mover: M.Schadenberg  
Seconder: A.Westman  
THAT the Board of Directors receives the report as presented.
- 8. February 2021 For Your Information Report**
- 9. Presentation – Five Years of Source Protection Plan Implementation - What We've Accomplished and Where We're Going– J.Allain**
- 10. Presentation – Recognition of Dr. Doug Bocking – I.Wilcox**
- 11. Other Business (Including Chair and General Manager's Concluding Remarks)**
- 12. Closed Session – In Camera**
- 13. Adjournment**  
Mover: M.Blosh



Ian Wilcox, General Manager

c.c. Members of the Board of Directors and Staff

## Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

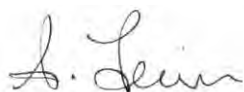
### FACTUAL CERTIFICATE

**To: Board of Directors**

The undersigned hereby certify that, to the best of their knowledge, information and belief after due inquiry, as at 9 February, 2021:

1. The UTRCA is in compliance, as required by law, with all statutes and regulations relating to the withholding and/or payment of governmental remittances, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the following:
  - All payroll deductions at source, including Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan and Income Tax;
  - Ontario Employer Health Tax;
  - WSIB premiums
 And, they believe that all necessary policies and procedures are in place to ensure that all future payments of such amounts will be made in a timely manner.
2. The UTRCA has remitted when due to the Group RRSP carrier, Group Insurance carrier and to OMERS Pension Plan all funds deducted from employees along with all employer contributions for these purposes.
3. The UTRCA is in compliance with all applicable Health and Safety legislation and all applicable Pay Equity legislation.
4. The UTRCA is in compliance, as required by law with remittances and claims for:
  - Federal Harmonized Sales Tax (HST).
5. The UTRCA is in compliance with the requirements of the Charities Act. Corporate information updates are provided through this means. The 2019 T3010 was filed before due. The CEWS audit has not yet returned an assessment; however, we are prepared to repay the grants if required.
6. In addition to statutory obligations, the UTRCA, through its internal processes, confirms the payment of supplier transactions so as to support the credit-worthiness of the organization.
7. The UTRCA is providing the prescribed standard of service in the performance of its functions and following the prescribed procedures and practices in accordance with our funding agreements and as reported to the Board of Directors of the UTRCA through the following reports:
  - Quarterly Financial Report to the Board
  - Regular Program Updates from the General Manager and unit Managers
8. The operating line of credit was not used during 2020, and there is no current outstanding balance.

Dated at London, Ontario on 9 February, 2021



Chair, Finance and Audit Committee



General Manager

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**To:** UTRCA Board of Directors  
**From:** Ian Wilcox, General Manager  
**Date:** February 9, 2021 **Agenda #:** 6.2  
**Subject:** 2021 Draft Budget: Municipal Input Summary **Filename:** ::ODMA\GRPWISE\UT\_MAIN.UTRCA\_PO.File\_Centre\_Library:124224.1

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**Recommendations:**

1. That the UTRCA Board of Directors approve the 2021 Draft Operating Budget under Section 27 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* in the amount of \$16,054,952 and that staff be directed to circulate the Approved Budget to member municipalities as part of the required 30 day review period. Please note the 2021 new levy component of the operating budget of \$5,779,537\* will be apportioned to member municipalities based on a general levy formula as developed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry using Current Value Assessment data from the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation and by Special Benefiting Percentages for structure operations.
2. That the UTRCA Board of Directors approve the 2021 Capital Budget under Section 26 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* in two parts:
  - a) The amount of \$736,851 to support the Authority's 20 year Flood Control Capital Plan. Apportionment of the flood control portion of the 2021 capital levy of \$537,879\* is based on Special Benefiting Percentages, by structure, as presented in the 2021 Draft Budget. It is noted this levy amount has been set based on cooperative discussions with participating municipalities and assumes that the majority of the works will receive a matching funding contribution through the provincial Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure Program (WECI) or federal Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund program (DMAF).
  - b) The amount of \$391,000 to support the Authority's other (non-flood control) capital spending needs. The municipal levy share of this capital amount is \$178,626 and will be apportioned to member municipalities based on a general levy formula as developed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry using Current Value Assessment data from the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation.

\*\$2 differences between budget document and municipal levy table due to rounding of percentages

**Discussion**

The UTRCA's 2021 Draft Budget was approved by the Board of Directors at the November meeting and circulated to member municipalities for comment on November 26, 2020. Attached to this report are

two previous Board reports that are included here as context: 1) the 2021 Draft Budget Board Report from November 10, 2020 and 2) the 2021 Draft Budget: Municipal Feedback to Date Board Report from January 19, 2021. No further municipal input has been received since the January Board meeting.

**Please note that the draft budget has been revised with new and more accurate information.** These new values are reflected in the resolutions included above. While expenses and revenues have changed, **the municipal levy request has not been altered** from the original draft. In addition, these changes have seen the year-end projected deficit reduced from \$636,311 to \$352,514.

In the interest of efficiency, **the full formatted Draft Budget document has not been revised**; instead proposed changes are summarized in three key tables below. If approved by the Board, the budget document will be revised and circulated to members and member municipalities as the UTRCA's 2021 Approved Budget.

Specific changes to this final version of the draft budget include:

1. New contract revenue.
2. Application of fee increases previously approved (November 2020).
3. Inclusion of deferred revenue amounts which can be conservatively planned for use in 2021.
4. An increase to wages was incorporated from the previously recommended 0.6% to 1.0%. This better reflects industry standards among conservation authorities and municipalities, actual inflation, and is affordable without affecting municipal levy.
5. Redistribution of overhead costs among units.
6. Note that the projected operating deficit would be eliminated without the desire to add to specific reserves. In other words, we are very closely matching expenses to anticipated available operating funding in 2021.

These changes are summarized in the following tables:

Table 1: Combined Operating and Capital Costs

Table 2: Operating Budget

Table 3: Capital Budget

Prepared by:

Ian Wilcox,  
General Manager

Christine Saracino  
Supervisor, Finance & Accounting

**To:** UTRCA Board of Directors

**From:** Ian Wilcox, General Manager

**Date:** November 10, 2020

**Agenda #:** 6.3

**Subject:** 2021 Draft Budget

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### Recommendations:

**That the Board of Directors approve the attached UTRCA 2021 Draft Budget for circulation to member municipalities. Final Budget approval will be considered at the Board's Annual General Meeting IN February 2021.**

### Introduction

The UTRCA's 2021 Draft Budget has been significantly influenced by the on-going COVID-19 Pandemic. Impacts on demand for services and revenues during 2020 have been unprecedented and are expected to continue into 2021. The Draft Budget as presented foregoes strategic initiatives (Environmental Targets), some capital investment and service growth needs, and instead presents a maintenance budget that respects economic constraints imposed on municipalities, contract funders and individuals due to the pandemic. This budget recommendation focuses on immediate financial challenges at the expense of the organization's long term strategic goals.

### Discussion

1. **Environmental Targets Strategic Plan:** The UTRCA's Strategic Plan (2016) recommends significant and planned service growth to support the achievement of specific environmental targets by 2037. Investment in the plan and service growth proceeded until 2020 when the final year of new municipal levy funding was reduced by 75% in response to municipal financial concerns. This final installment of new levy funding, totaling \$230,000, was deferred to the 2021 budget however that deferral is now recommended to be pushed until 2022. While staff are recommending this deferral in light of municipal and other financial challenges, the consequences and risk of this deferral must be noted and include:
  - a. Added pressure for the organization to achieve its stated Environmental Targets despite delays in funding and program growth.
  - b. Added risk that Environmental Targets will not be achieved by 2037.
  - c. The need to either reset with less ambitious Environmental Targets, or extend the plan's timeline, or both.
  - d. The risk of changes to the Conservation Authorities Act (Bill 108 and Bill 229) removing levying powers for components of the Strategic Plan. There is risk certain Targets will

not be eligible for municipal funding as of 2022 and future program delivery will be decided by each individual municipality. Significant administrative effort is also expected during 2021 to prepare for updates to the Conservation Authorities Act and subsequent changes to regulations and procedures.

2. **Salary Review/Reorganization:** Staff retention is a key management priority at the UTRCA. Reduced staff turn-over benefits the organization through employment of experienced staff, return on investment in staff training, and fewer disruptions to work flow. The last formal salary review was completed in 2006 and while the organizational structure has been tweaked over time, there are also structural barriers to staff growth and advancement. Both issues have been recognized during the past few years but have recently become a priority as staff retention is being affected. A total of \$20,000 has been added to the 2021 budget to fund a formal salary review. Recommendations are expected for increased wages across the salary grid however funding these increases will pose a significant challenge for the Authority in 2022 and beyond. A full review of the UTRCA's organizational structure will be deferred until provincial changes to the Conservation Authorities Act are fully understood.
3. **Inflation:** An inflationary increase to wages of 0.6% has been included in the draft budget based on Ontario's April-April CPI. Our policy is to consider this measure as a guide for annual inflationary increases but it should be noted that actual increases are typically much higher e.g., property insurance premiums are expected to increase 25%, property tax increases are between 3-5%.
4. **Capital Spending:** Capital spending has largely been deferred for 2021 except in support of public safety such as rectifying electrical orders and/or maintenance of existing service levels such as replacement of two trucks and computer servers. In general, plans for equipment replacement continue to be deferred due to lack of capital funding.
5. **Reserve Forecast:** A projection of reserve balances is provided and includes the most recently approved 2020 budget and this draft 2021 budget. Year-end actuals are not yet available for 2020 so this table identifies what the budget impact will be if all transactions transpire as planned.
6. Note that the provincial funding formula that apportions levy across member municipalities will change again in 2021. The formula uses MPAC's Current Value Assessment of municipal properties within each CAs jurisdiction to calculate proportional costs. 2021 again sees the funding burden shift to rural municipalities as the value of farmland has increased faster than other land use types. This shift in funding is beyond the UTRCA's ability to control but does create frustration among our rural municipalities as their levy increases are inflated relative to other municipalities.

In summary, the UTRCA is presenting a combined deficit budget with a projected shortfall of \$636,000. This projection includes a conservative estimate of "soft revenue," typically contract revenue that is expected during the year from programs that have not yet been announced. The municipal levy increase is 3.0% for operating purposes of which 2.3% is driven by flood control needs with the remainder supporting the general levy.



Significant cuts were made during 2020 with no additional provincial or municipal funding support, including widely available wage subsidies. Cuts were applied to staff wages, capital and expenses across the board. No special funding for Conservation Authorities is expected in 2021 either. Provincial funding remains inadequate for the delegated responsibilities imposed on us. Despite this lack of financial support, the UTRCA continued to find ways to deliver programs and services that improves watershed health. While the administration is proud of the effort and commitment of staff to achieve these ends, this is not sustainable. The recommendation to defer much needed funding for 2021 is only being considered under these exceptional public health and economic circumstances and with an expectation that budgets for 2022 and beyond will more accurately reflect actual costs to support local environmental needs and public demands for service.

### **2021 Budget Development Schedule**

**September 2020:** Board Direction regarding Budget Concepts

**November 2020:** Draft Budget Board Approval

**November- February 2020:** Draft Budget circulation to member municipalities for comment

**January 2021:** Board review of municipal comments and budget reconsideration

**February 2021:** Budget review and approval

Prepared and Recommended by:

Ian Wilcox,  
General Manager

Christine Saracino,  
Supervisor, Finance and Accounting

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**To:** UTRCA Board of Directors  
**From:** Ian Wilcox, General Manager  
**Date:** January 19, 2021  
**Subject:** 2021 Draft Budget: Municipal Feedback to Date

**Agenda #:** 7.7  
**Filename:** C:\Users\wilcoxi\Documents\GroupWise\124138-1.doc

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The UTRCA 2021 Draft Budget was circulated to member municipalities for comment on November 26, 2020. No written feedback has yet been received. Staff have provided two council presentations (Thames Centre and St. Marys). A summary of feedback is below:

**Thames Centre:**

Questions and comments largely surrounded impacts from Bill 229 rather than the draft budget however there was strong support expressed for the programs and services offered by Conservation Authorities, as well as recognition of the value of the CA's cost-share model among member municipalities. In particular it was noted that paying as an individual municipality for access to equivalent staff expertise offered through CAs would be prohibitive.

**St. Marys:**

- Mayor Strathdee expressed disappointment that the Chair was not on the call.
- The Mayor challenged the general manager regarding the UTRCA's accountability to its member municipalities and rate payers based on past concerns he has expressed and the UTRCA's response.
- The general manager responded that the mechanism for accountability is through the Board of Directors and each member municipality's representative.
- The Mayor noted he had requested and is still requesting a singular representative to the Board of Directors (rather than shared).
- The Mayor referenced a Sept. 19, 2019 letter and his extreme disappointment that no response had been received and was clear he still expects a response.
- The Mayor noted he recently raised this matter of transparency and accountability with the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.
- The Mayor asked if the UTRCA is considering his recommendation to engage a third party review regarding the necessity and funding fairness of the Environmental Targets Strategic Plan. The general manager replied that no third party review is planned but that, in all likelihood, the UTRCA's strategic plan will have to be reviewed in light of recent changes to the Conservation Authorities Act.
- A councillor mentioned the recently convened St. Marys Developers Roundtable including developer comments that the UTRCA was viewed as a barrier to development. The general manager noted UTRCA staff attended and appreciated hearing concerns directly, and that recent efforts to improve timelines have been implemented as part of a Conservation Authority wide initiative. Bills 108 and 229 also include regulatory changes,

some of which are supported by CAs (e.g., eliminating permits for minor works like decks). CA's are open to improvements that will enable staff to focus on high risk development proposals as a priority.

- A councillor asked about the future of Glengowan lands and whether or not the UTRCA was considering selling land as a means of generating needed revenue. The general manager noted the Authority is in the midst of an Official Plan Amendment with Perth County to allow severances for Glengowan lands.
- A comment was made that Springbank Dam is being decommissioned.
- A councilor asked about the recently announced Bill 229 Provincial Working Group, noting surprise that the membership was mostly CA staff. She questioned whether or not that group would be pushing for increased regulatory standards, the status quo, or some other outcome. The general Manager replied that all CAs are supportive of the standards that exist (e.g., 1:250 year flood standard) but that how regulations are implemented could be improved. CAs are not looking for an increase to those standards (i.e., tighter controls) but are not looking to weaken public safety protections either.
- A councillor commented that flows through the St. Marys Golf and Country Club seemed well managed in 2020 and offered his compliments for what appeared to be a change in practice.
- A councillor challenged the implementation time lines posed by Bill 229, that being the development of regulations and negotiation of municipal agreements, all in time for the 2022 budget year. The general manager agreed those timelines seem aggressive and perhaps unrealistic.

Prepared by:

Ian Wilcox,  
General Manager

UTRCA  
2021 - Combined Operating and Capital Budgets

	Pre-Covid Approved 2020 Budgets	Final 2020 Budgets	Draft 2021 Circulated November	Revised 2021 Budget	% Change from Draft Circulated	Notes
<b>Funding</b>						
New Municipal Levys	8,794,787	8,181,940	6,496,042	6,496,042	0.0%	
Government Transfer Payments	181,217	181,217	181,213	181,213	0.0%	
Contracts	7,034,863	8,969,647	4,446,333	4,697,573	5.7%	Some new contract amounts are now known
User Fees	4,315,556	3,118,752	4,132,002	4,207,241	1.8%	Fee increases implemented
All other incl. Deferred Revenues	1,238,572	1,113,490	924,380	1,248,221	35.0%	Revenues available for use in 2021 from 2020
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>21,564,994</b>	<b>21,565,046</b>	<b>16,179,969</b>	<b>16,830,289</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	
<b>Expenditures</b>						
Wages, Benefits, Per Diems	10,200,803	9,402,112	10,107,014	10,334,796	2.3%	Wage grid increase is 1%
Training, PPE, Travel Reimbursements	218,905	158,974	185,410	197,910	6.7%	Reestablishing some further training online
Legal, Audit, Insurance, Banking	402,285	417,765	457,558	457,558	0.0%	
Advertising and Promotion	62,400	28,997	37,200	32,950	-11.4%	
Consulting and Services	800,586	1,110,460	1,063,185	1,090,185	2.5%	
Computers and Communications	337,225	309,054	339,330	346,280	2.0%	
Property, Utilities, Security	1,390,407	1,097,247	1,264,459	1,245,721	-1.5%	
Contracted Services, incl. Flood Control	5,884,000	6,470,183	568,880	583,837	2.6%	
Supplies	1,218,259	1,265,576	1,198,352	1,229,482	2.6%	
Flow through expenses	165,715	100,697	110,750	111,650	0.8%	
Depreciation Expense	1,221,973	1,153,341	1,161,434	1,161,434	0.0%	
Unallocated Costs	264	2	6,710	1	-100.0%	
Mission centre capital costs	361,500	151,500	316,000	391,000	23.7%	Additional \$75K for FCA hydro infrastructure
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>22,264,322</b>	<b>21,665,908</b>	<b>16,816,281</b>	<b>17,182,803</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	
<b>Surplus (Deficit) from these budgets</b>	<b>(699,327)</b>	<b>(100,863)</b>	<b>(636,311)</b>	<b>(352,514)</b>		
<b>Net Transfers (from) or to reserves</b>	<b>103,830</b>	<b>117,098</b>	<b>(116,756)</b>	<b>(43,228)</b>	<b>-63.0%</b>	<b>Reducing reliance on existing reserves</b>
Total affecting reserve balances	(595,497)	16,235	(753,067)	(395,742)	-47.4%	

UTRCA  
2021 - Operating Budget

	Pre-Covid Approved 2020 Budget	Final 2020 Budget	Draft 2021 Circulated November	Revised 2021 Budget	% Change from Final Nov Draft	Notes
<b>REVENUES:</b>						
<b>New Levy Funding</b>						
Municipal General Levy	4,113,390	4,113,335	4,154,463	4,154,463	0.00%	
Assessment Growth Levy	310,037	-	-	-	0.00%	
Dam and Flood Control Levies	1,461,675	1,461,675	1,636,062	1,591,062	-2.75%	Correction made between type of levy funding
Operating Reserve Levy	33,678	33,678	34,014	34,014	0.00%	
	5,918,780	5,608,688	5,824,539	5,779,539	-0.77%	
<b>Amortized Levy from previous years</b>						
Municipal General Levy	239,794	239,794	611,942	337,486	-44.85%	
Flood Control Levies	78,062	78,062	120,142	95,142	-20.81%	
Capital Maintenance Levy	42,745	47,297	51,926	51,926	0.00%	
	360,601	365,153	784,010	484,554	-38.20%	
<b>MNRF Transfer Payment</b>						
	181,217	181,217	181,213	181,213	0.00%	
<b>Contracts and Grants</b>						
Municipal within Watershed	894,351	1,059,945	858,773	967,700	12.68%	
Municipal outside Watershed	73,340	129,660	130,676	132,176	1.15%	
Provincial	635,591	770,804	1,183,403	1,167,751	-1.32%	
Federal	464,599	541,534	273,528	281,528	2.92%	
All Other	1,853,982	1,946,932	1,724,803	1,862,268	7.97%	
	3,921,863	4,448,875	4,171,183	4,411,423	5.76%	
<b>User Fees and Other Revenues</b>						
Conservation Areas	3,709,056	2,527,862	3,539,502	3,554,298	0.42%	Fee adjustments implemented as approved
Planning and Permit Fees	315,000	390,000	335,000	365,000	8.96%	Estimated workload adjustments to fees
Education Fees	125,000	65,800	63,500	66,500	4.72%	
Landowner, tree sales, cost recoveries	166,500	135,090	194,000	221,443	14.15%	Some 2020 planting to take place in 2021
	4,315,556	3,118,752	4,132,002	4,207,241	1.82%	
<b>Other Revenues</b>						
From deferred revenues	582,621	535,434	25,000	623,297	2393.19%	Additional deferred revenues available for 2021
Donations, interest and gains	295,350	212,903	140,370	140,370	0.00%	
	877,971	748,337	165,370	763,667	361.79%	
<b>Funding required from Flood Reserves</b>	-	-	201,975	201,975	0.00%	
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	15,575,988	14,471,022	15,460,291	16,029,611	3.68%	
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>						
<b>Mission Cost Centres</b>						
Community Partnerships	1,301,859	1,308,089	1,521,274	1,573,450	3.43%	Undertaking more targets projects in 2021
Water and Information Management	2,726,437	2,595,648	2,780,199	2,778,149	-0.07%	
Environmental Planning & Regs	2,253,972	2,108,896	2,363,163	2,370,697	0.32%	
Conservation Services	1,995,488	1,971,072	1,777,989	1,817,297	2.21%	
Watershed Planning & Research	1,120,434	1,109,841	1,111,818	1,149,750	3.41%	
Conservation Areas	4,496,269	3,749,340	4,364,360	4,550,739	4.27%	
Lands and Facilities Management	1,746,540	1,524,391	1,691,455	1,716,146	1.46%	
<b>Service Cost Centres</b>	257,310	163,296	153,077	98,725	-35.51%	
<b>Program Operating Expenditures</b>	15,898,309	14,530,573	15,763,335	16,054,952	1.85%	
<b>Desired Transfers to Reserves</b>	53,678	-	285,000	326,614	14.60%	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	15,951,987	14,530,573	16,048,335	16,381,566	2.08%	
<b>NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)</b>	(375,999)	(59,551)	(588,043)	(351,955)		Deficit reflects desire to add to reserves in 2021
Depreciation Expense	1,221,973	1,153,341	1,161,434	1,161,434	0.00%	
<b>CASH SURPLUS (DEFICIT)</b>	845,974	1,093,790	573,391	809,480	41.17%	

UTRCA  
2021 - Capital Budget

	Pre-Covid 2020 Budget	Draft 2021 Circulated	Revised 2021 Budget	Notes
<b>FLOOD CONTROL</b>				
<b>Capital Funding</b>				
Flood Control Capital levy	2,700,881	467,877	537,877	Correction made between operating and capital funding
Federal Funding	2,988,000	160,000	160,000	
Provincial - WECI	125,000	115,150	126,150	
Net Funding from (to) reserves	157,508	(33,731)	81,411	
<b>Total current year funding</b>	<b>5,971,389</b>	<b>709,296</b>	<b>905,438</b>	
<b>Capital Projects</b>				
Dam Safety Reviews	23,808	-	-	
Fanshawe Dam	50,000	40,168	40,230	
Wildwood Dam	301,591	102,941	103,154	
Pittock Dam	81,232	47,037	80,091	
London Dykes	5,483,508	417,575	418,099	
Mitchell Dam	-	71,101	36,760	
Small Dams	64,374	58,124	58,517	
<b>Total Spending</b>	<b>6,004,513</b>	<b>736,946</b>	<b>736,851</b>	Spending corresponds to WECI report for approval
<b>Surplus (Deficit) from Flood Control Capital</b>	<b>(33,124)</b>	<b>(27,650)</b>	<b>168,587</b>	Any surplus funding is available to flood control reserves
<b>OTHER CAPITAL NEEDS</b>				
<b>Capital Funding</b>				
Capital Maintenance Levy	175,126	178,626	178,626	
<b>Capital Expenditures</b>				
Land Improvements	115,000	-	-	
Infrastructure	40,000	115,000	190,000	ESA order to be addressed, and some park road works
Furniture and Fixtures	30,000	-	-	
Vehicles and Equipment	109,000	151,000	151,000	Includes 1-ton cab and dump
Technology Equipment	67,500	50,000	50,000	Server and network storage replacements
<b>Total Spending</b>	<b>361,500</b>	<b>316,000</b>	<b>391,000</b>	
<b>Surplus (Deficit) from other Organizational Capital</b>	<b>(186,374)</b>	<b>(137,374)</b>	<b>(212,374)</b>	
<b>Total Capital Budgets Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>(219,498)</b>	<b>(165,024)</b>	<b>(43,787)</b>	

# Memo

**Date:** February 10, 2021  
**To:** UTRCA Board of Directors  
**From:** Chris Tasker, Manager, Water & Information Management  
**RE:** 2021 Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) Projects  
**Agenda #: 6.3**  
**Filename: FC #1781**

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**Recommendation:**

**The UTRCA Board of Directors approve the 2021 WECI Projects, with 5 repair projects & 5 studies and their project budgets, as part of the WECI funding application to be submitted by February 19, 2021.**

**Background:**

The Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) program provides provincial funding for capital repairs of CA infrastructure. This program provides 50% funding for eligible repairs and studies. Each year project submissions are made in February for review by the WECI committee made up of representatives from MNRF, Conservation Ontario and Conservation Authorities. Projects are ranked to determine which projects are approved for the 5 million dollars of provincial funding available each year. Provincial funding must be matched with local funding which generally come from flood control levy or program reserves.

The proposed projects for the 2021 WECI fiscal year ending March 31, 2021 with cost estimates are summarized in the attached table as part of the application to be submitted prior to the February 19, 2021 deadline. The list of projects is based on the 20 Year Flood Control Capital Repair Plan with some projects that have become a higher priority or were immediate needs. The total estimated cost of the proposed 2021 WECI projects is \$352,000.

The total project costs to be submitted for WECI funding include UTRCA project management and labour costs where applicable as these costs are eligible for WECI funding. Please contact David Charles ([charlesd@thamesriver.on.ca](mailto:charlesd@thamesriver.on.ca)), or Chris Tasker ([taskerc@thamesriver.on.ca](mailto:taskerc@thamesriver.on.ca)) if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Recommended by:

Prepared by:

Prepared by:

Chris Tasker,  
Manager Water and  
Information Management

David Charles,  
Supervisor, Water  
Control Structures

Fraser Brandon-Sutherland,  
Project Engineer

<b>Project Description UTRCA – 2021 WECl Project Proposal (Funding Application Feb 19, 2021)</b> <b>5 Repair Projects and 5 Studies</b> <b>Project ID, Name, &amp; Description</b>	<b>Total Project Cost Estimate</b>
<b>R.21.002 Wildwood Dam Electrical Wiring Replacement</b> - The electrical wiring needs replacing from the new Master Control Centre (MCC) to the gate motors and gate heaters. The scope of the project includes new cable tray and wiring from the MCC to the electrical panels in front of each of the 4 gate motors and then to the gate motors and gate heaters. This project was identified through inspections and testing associated with the MCC replacement project.	\$80,000
<b>R.21.015 Pittock Dam Embankment Repairs</b> - The erosion on the downstream side of the north and south embankments needs to be repaired. The embankment repairs have been designed by the KGS Group as part of the Pedestrian Access Project in partnership with the City of Woodstock and are being tendered by the City of Woodstock for Phase 2 works commencing in September 2021.	\$60,000
<b>R.21.016 Mitchell Dam Hand Railing Replacement Phase 2</b> - Hand Railings with lockable swinging gates will be installed in front of the gate motors on the upstream side of the dam to ensure public safety. The project includes the supply and installation of these hand railings which will still permit access to the gate motors for maintenance personnel through the lockable swinging gates. The existing hand railings on the downstream side of the dam were replaced in 2018 as part of a previously funded WECl project.	\$34,000
<b>R.21.017 Fanshawe Dam Monitoring Upgrades</b> - Update telemetry system which remotely monitors dam performance (such as reservoir water level, flow and gate/valve position). The upgrades will consider alternative/redundant communication methods and sensors, as well as connection of monitoring added through ongoing Dam Safety Review (including embankment borehole water levels) and other parameters not previously monitored.	\$20,000
<b>R.21.018 Pittock Dam Monitoring Upgrades</b> - Update telemetry system which remotely monitors dam performance (such as reservoir water level, flow and gate/valve position). The upgrades will consider alternative/redundant communication methods and sensors, as well as connection of monitoring added through ongoing Dam Safety Review (including embankment borehole water levels) and other parameters not previously monitored.	\$20,000
<b>S.21.006 Embro Dam Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report</b> - Class EA was initiated in May 2015 with the issuance of the notice of intent. Unsuccessful WECl application, but the project proceeded with solely municipal funding. This project was run in parallel with the Harrington Dam EA. When the final draft EA project files were discussed with municipal council it was determined that a Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report should be completed prior to posting the notice of completion of the EA.	\$13,500
<b>S.21.007 Harrington Dam Cultural Heritage Evaluation &amp; Impact Assessment</b> - Class EA was initiated in May 2015 with the issuance of the notice of intent (previous WECl project). This project was run in parallel with the Embro Dam EA. When the final draft EA project files were discussed with municipal council it was determined that a Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report and Impact Assessment should be completed prior to posting the notice of completion of the EA.	\$14,500
<b>S.21.008 Fanshawe Dam Safety Review Continuation</b> - The Consultant indicated that the monitoring data on the phreatic levels in the dam would be of higher value if analyzed after the typical seasons of high water level. The deferred geotechnical portion of the DSR as well as other components recommended by the consultant will be completed.	\$40,000
<b>S.21.009 Pittock Dam Safety Review Continuation</b> - The Consultant indicated that the monitoring data on the phreatic levels in the dam would be of higher value if analyzed after the typical seasons of high water level. The deferred geotechnical portion of the DSR as well as other components recommended by the consultant will be completed.	\$50,000
<b>S.21.010 Fanshawe Dam Subsurface Inspection</b> – Inspection and cleanout of stilling basin was undertaken in the 1990's. Concrete scouring and exposure of reinforcing were identified in some locations. Additional information is required to assess the current state in order to determine the scope and urgency of expected future repairs. Underwater inspection and concrete condition assessment is planned to be undertaken so the information may be assessed as part of the ongoing Dam Safety Review.	\$20,000
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Grand Total</b></p>	\$352,000



**To:** UTRCA Board of Directors  
**From:** Tracy Annett, Manager – Environmental Planning and Regulations  
**Date:** February 11, 2021 **Agenda #:** 7.1  
**Subject:** Annual Report of Administration and Enforcement - Section 28, *Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation (O.Reg157/06)* **Filename:** ::ODMA\GRPWISE\UT\_MAIN.UTRCA\_PO.EN\_VP:9983.1

**Section 28 Annual Report:**

As part of the Conservation Ontario Client Service and Streamlining Initiative, Conservation Ontario (CO) developed the *Annual Reporting on Timelines Template for Permissions under Section 28 (S.28) of the Conservation Authorities Act*. The template outlines best practice level of service timelines and reporting requirements for CA review of S.28 permit applications. Best practice timelines were developed for major, minor, and routine permit applications in the *CA Roles and Responsibilities in Plan Review and Permitting*. In addition to the timelines as outlined in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry *Policies and Procedures for Conservation Authority Plan Review and Permitting, 2010* (known as CALC) were also provided.

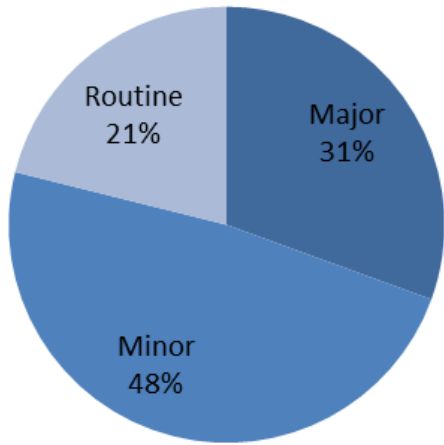
Previous interim reports were provided to the Board in April and November, 2020. All future reporting will be completed on an annual basis. In addition, this report will be provided to Conservation Ontario for consideration by CO Council at their AGM.

The following summary is provided:

<b>UTRCA Annual Section 28 Report Summary</b>						
<b>Permits Issued Within CALC Timeline</b>		<b>Permits Issued Outside CALC Timeline</b>			<b>TOTAL 181</b>	
<b>MAJOR</b>	<b>MINOR</b>	<b>MAJOR</b>	<b>MINOR</b>		<b>Percentage</b>	
54	116	1	9		<b>Within CALC</b>	
Total 170		Total 10			<b>94%</b>	
<b>Permits Issued Within CO Timeline</b>			<b>Permits Issued Outside CO Timeline</b>			<b>TOTAL 181</b>
<b>MAJOR</b>	<b>MINOR</b>	<b>ROUTINE</b>	<b>MAJOR</b>	<b>MINOR</b>	<b>ROUTINE</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
49	81	26	6	6	12	<b>Within CO Timeline</b>
Total 156			Total 24			<b>87%</b>

Categories of permits are based on the guideline document *CA Roles and Responsibilities in Plan Review and Permitting* developed by Conservation Ontario and the previous categories in the CALC policies and procedures.

# Permits by Application Types



**Routine** - are activities that are documented through another approval process or are determined to have limited impacts on the control of flooding, erosion, pollution, or the conservation of land.

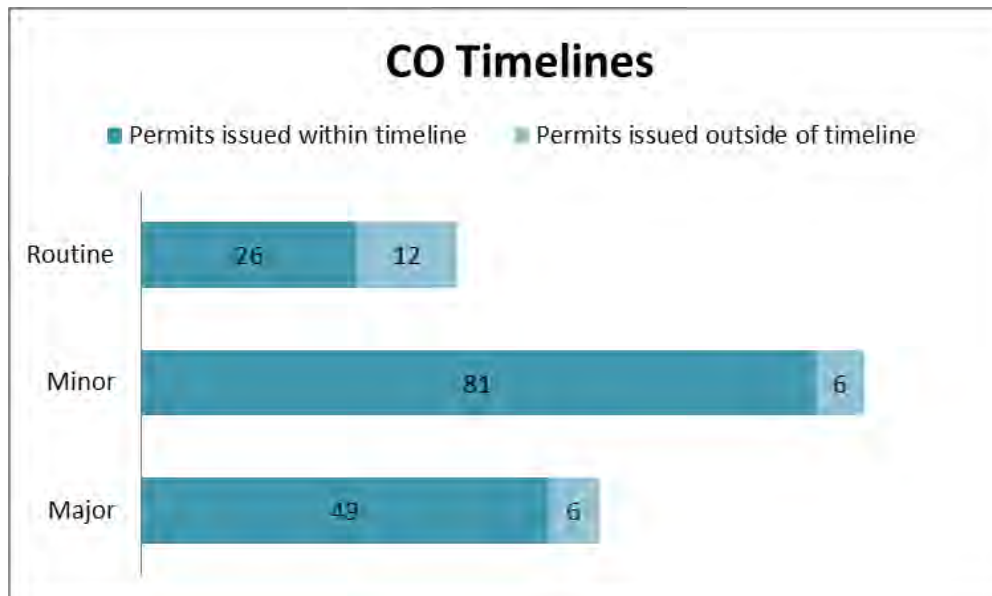
**Minor** - development projects could be considered minor in nature due to the project size, level of risk, location, and/or other factors. These projects have minor impacts on the control of flooding, erosion, pollution, or the conservation of land. Based on the proximity of the project to the hazard, these applications are reviewed by UTRCA staff and generally require standard conditions.

**Major** - require significant UTRCA staff involvement. The proposals may involve developments with significant natural hazards, environmental impacts, or multiple approval processes requirements. Generally, these would include Plans of Subdivision / Condominium, large Site Plan Control applications, and major infrastructure development.

In 2020, the majority of the permits issued were considered minor in nature. A third of the applications reviewed and approved were major, involving a significant amount of staff involvement. Routine applications were smallest percentage of applications processed.

The Level of Service for CA Review of section 28 Permit Applications has reduced the time to review and approve Section 28 applications from the 2010 MNRF procedures by more than half. The diagrams below show the permits issued within the timeline guidance for both the CO and CALC best practices.

*The timeline guideline is recommended as a client service target for CAs and represent a significant improvement to the timelines provided in the MNRF 2010 Guideline entitled “CA Roles and Responsibilities in Plan Review and Permitting”; the timeline guideline for major permits change from a total of 132 to 63 calendar days and for minor permits change from a total of 72 to 42 calendar days.*



Previously, the categories of Routine and Minor were combined within the MNRF policies and procedures document. Adding the routine application category with very short timelines can be challenging to achieve.



A few reasons for issuances outside of the timeline for

routine applications variances are provided. Many of the routine applications were related to *Drainage Act* maintenance activities received in the spring, while work was not possible to be initiated until the Fisheries Act timing windows would permit in-water work. (Our Drainage Superintendents tend to apply early during their 'slow times', knowing they can't undertake the in water work until the fisheries timing windows open). Given the circumstances, these applications were not prioritized as everyone was adjusting to new work from home arrangements during the initial stages of the pandemic. Considering all application categories 6 were issued within 3 days of the timelines outlined in the CO guideline document.

An overall achievement of 87% is excellent, especially given the challenges during the past year. However, it should be emphasized that while staff were able to achieve the timelines for permits, it is only one measure. We recognize that other important activities have been delayed and our priority needs to be the protection of life and property through routine compliance inspections, following up on violations, consultations with building officials, drainage superintendents and municipal by-law officers and data/file management. In addition, it is anticipated the amendments proposed to Section 28 Regulations will require policies and procedures to be updated while in the short term additional appeal mechanisms will impact service delivery over the long term. Our ability to continue to meet these new time lines, plus deal with increases in development generally while providing quality review and comments on applications, will require additional capacity as presented in the 2021 draft budget.

**Recommended by:**  
 Tracy Annett, MCIP, RPP, Manager  
 Environmental Planning and Regulations

**Prepared by:**  
 Cari Ramsey  
 Environmental Regulations Technician

Jessica Schnaithmann  
 Land Use Regulations Officer

Brent Verscheure  
 Land Use Regulations Officer

Karen Winfield  
 Land Use Regulations Officer

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**To:** UTRCA Board of Directors  
**From:** Ian Wilcox, General Manager  
**Date:** February 8, 2021 **Agenda #:** 7.2  
**Subject:** Conservation Authority Act Changes-  
Proclamations **Filename:** #124214

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As the Board is aware, recent changes to the Conservation Authorities Act have been approved by the provincial government through Bill 108 and Bill 229. While these legislative changes have been passed, Conservation Authorities have been waiting for these changes to be proclaimed and an implementation schedule to be developed. In response, please find attached correspondence received February 5, 2021 from Keley Katona, Director, of the newly created Conservation and Source Protection Branch of the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP). Staff will be seeking further clarity regarding implementation responsibilities and timing however having some certainty regarding change is welcome in terms of our ability to plan and communicate with member municipalities.

Prepared by:

Ian Wilcox,  
General Manager

## Administrative Assistant - EXTERNAL Proclamation of Provisions of the Conservation Authorities Act

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**From:** "ca.office (MECP)" <ca.office@ontario.ca>  
**Date:** 05/02/2021 10:45 AM  
**Subject:** EXTERNAL Proclamation of Provisions of the Conservation Authorities Act  
**Attachments:** FAQ - Conservation Authorities Act.pdf

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Good morning,

With the amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* ("CAA") in Bill 229, the *Protect, Support and Recover from COVID-19 Act (Budget Measures), 2020*, now passed by the Legislature, the government has made a series of substantive amendments to the CAA in 2017, 2019 and in 2020, resulting in a number of un-proclaimed provisions in the CAA.

On February 2, 2021, some specific provisions in the CAA were proclaimed to initiate changes to conservation authority governance, for consistency in administration, transparency and financial accountability, as well as increased municipal and provincial oversight of conservation authority operations. These provisions are not tied to any specific regulations, and relate only to provisions from the 2019 and 2020 CAA amendments. Specifically, these include:

- Government requirements (e.g. Non-derogation provision clarifying that nothing in the CAA is intended to affect constitutionally protected Aboriginal and treaty rights);
- Provisions related to conservation authority governance (e.g. changes to the conservation authority municipal membership);
- Minister's powers (e.g., enabling the Minister to issue a binding directive to a conservation authority following an investigation); and
- Housekeeping amendments.

Please refer to the [CAA](#) on e-Laws for a complete list of the provisions that are now in force.

We are proposing that the remaining un-proclaimed provisions be proclaimed in two further stages over the coming months to align with the roll out of proposed regulations and policy. These include:

- i) Provisions related to natural hazard management, mandatory programs and services, community advisory boards, the agreements and transition period, and fees.
- ii) Provisions related to municipal levies, and standards and requirements for non-mandatory programs and services.

We have received a number of questions about the implications of certain provisions coming into force, and particularly those related to the composition of conservation authority membership. I can assure you that we are moving forward with a smooth transition to the new framework. Please refer to the attached FAQ for critical information on the implementation of these new measures.

My team in the Conservation Authority Office are available to answer any questions that you may have about the provisions that are now in effect as a result of the stage 1 proclamation. Please do not hesitate to contact us at [ca.office@ontario.ca](mailto:ca.office@ontario.ca).

The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks will be in touch at a future date to notify you of the proclamation of the remaining provisions.

I look forward to continuing to work with you through our upcoming consultations on the new regulatory proposals under the CAA to ensure we put conservation authorities in the best position possible to be able to deliver on their core mandate.

Sincerely,

Keley Katona  
Director, Conservation and Source Protection Branch  
Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

# Implications of Proclamation of Various Provisions: Frequently Asked Questions

## Implications of Proclamation of Various Provisions: Frequently Asked Questions

### **1. Do participating municipalities have to appoint new members to conservation authorities now in order to meet the 70% requirement?**

Immediate action is not required on the part of conservation authorities or by municipalities related to the provision requiring 70% of municipally appointed members be elected officials.

Current members should complete the remaining duration of their appointments. As new members are appointed, participating municipalities should be appointing members in a way that complies with this new requirement.

A participating municipality may also apply to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks requesting an exception to this 70% requirement. The request should include the rationale for the request, and what proportion of members the municipality is proposing to be elected officials. Requests should be sent to [minister.mecp@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.mecp@ontario.ca).

### **2. Does a conservation authority need to immediately initiate the term limits of chair/vice-chairs and rotate amongst participating municipalities?**

Immediate action is not necessarily required. Implementation of this provision could begin at the first meeting held this year (following the proclamation date of February 2, 2021), or at such other meeting as may be specified by the authority's by-laws.

A participating municipality or conservation authority may also apply to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks requesting an exception to the term limit or rotation. The request should include the alternative approach being proposed, and the rationale for the request. Requests should be sent to [minister.mecp@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.mecp@ontario.ca).

### **3. When should conservation authorities transition to the use of generally accepted accounting principles?**

If not already the practice, conservation authorities will transition to the use of generally accepted accounting principles for local government and ensure that key conservation authority documents are made available to the public (i.e., minutes of authority or executive committee meetings, auditor reports) following proclamation of these provisions on February 2, 2021.

# Implications of Proclamation of Various Provisions: Frequently Asked Questions

## 4. When do copies of municipal member agreements need to be sent to the Minister and made public?

Please submit any existing agreements (on the number of total conservation authority members and number of members per participating municipality in a conservation authority) to the Minister within 60 days of February 2, 2021 (i.e., by April 3, 2021).

If no such agreement is in place as of February 2, 2021, but such an agreement is entered into at a future date, please provide it to the Minister within 60 days of executing the agreement. These agreements should also be made available to the public through the conservation authority's website or other appropriate means within these same timelines.

## 5. Which provisions of the *Conservation Authorities Act (CAA)* are you proclaiming in this first phase?

Provisions in the CAA that come into effect February 2, 2021, as part of this first phase include:

### Housekeeping Amendments

- Clarifying "Minister" means the Minister of the of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (rather than the Minister of the Natural Resources and Forestry) (Bill 108, 2019).
- Administrative change by striking out "of the Environment" from "Minister of the Environment" (in the section on CA dissolutions – clause 13.1(6)(c)) (Bill 108, 2019).
- Remove a legislative date (now stale) for a past transition period for conservation authorities (CAs) to up-date administrative by-laws (Bill 229, 2020).

### Government Requirements

- Non-derogation provision to recognize existing Aboriginal or treaty rights (Bill 229, 2020).
- Enable the Minister to delegate his or her powers to an employee of the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (Bill 229, 2020).

### Governance

- Changes to the CA municipal membership provisions including requiring 70 per cent of municipally appointed members to be elected officials with provision for the Minister to permit less than 70 per cent on application by a participating municipality (Bill 229, 2020).
- Requiring copies of municipal member agreements on number of total CA members agreed upon and numbers per participating municipality in a CA agreed upon, to be made public and provided to the Minister (Bill 229, 2020).
- Removal of the regulation making authority regarding the composition of the CA (Bill 229, 2020).



## **Implications of Proclamation of Various Provisions: Frequently Asked Questions**

- Minister's power to appoint a member from the agricultural sector with limitations added to the member's voting rights (Bill 229, 2020).
- Limiting the term of the chair/vice-chair and rotating of the chair/vice-chair among a CA's participating municipalities with provision for the Minister to permit an exception to these requirements upon application of the CA or participating municipality. If an exception is granted, this would allow a chair/vice-chair to hold office for more than one year or two terms, or a member to succeed an outgoing chair, vice-chair, appointed from the same participating municipality (Bill 229, 2020).
- Minor amendments to the 'powers of authorities': integrating the CA power to "cause research to be done" with the CA power to "study and investigate the watershed" in order to support the programs and services the CA delivers; to require consent of the occupant or owner of the land before a CA staff can enter the land for the purpose of a CA project (such as land surveying); and to remove the power of a CA to expropriate land (Bill 229, 2020).
- Require CAs to follow generally accepted accounting principles for local governments, make key documents (annual audit, meeting agendas and minutes and member agreements) available to the public (Bill 229, 2020).

### **Minister's Power**

- Enable the Minister to issue a binding directive to a CA following an investigation (Bill 229, 2020).
- Enable the province, upon recommendation by the Minister, to appoint a temporary administrator to assume control of a CA's operations following an investigation or the issuance of a binding directive, if the directive is not followed. Immunity is provided for the administrator (Bill 229, 2020).

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**To: UTRCA Board of Directors**  
**From: Ian Wilcox, General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer**  
**Date: February 8, 2021** **Agenda #: 7.3**  
**Subject: Service Awards** **Filename: #HR8947**

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The UTRCA typically presents staff service awards as part of its Annual General Meeting (AGM). This award is an opportunity for the Board to publicly recognize staff commitment and dedication. This would normally include a public presentation of the award during the AGM however, due to our current practice of hosting meetings virtually, that will not be possible this year. Instead, staff will be recognized during a virtual full staff meeting in March 2021 where we plan to include a message of congratulations from the Chair.

Please find below a listing of this year's recipients of the 2020 Service Awards.

**10 Years of Service:** Maranda MacKean, Community Education Specialist  
Karen Sockett, Conservation Area Clerk

**15 Years of Service:** Stewart Cahill, Fleet Management Technician  
Christine Creighton, Land Use Planner  
Debra Kirk, Source Protection Administrative Assistant  
Ian Rowbotham, Dam Maintenance Mechanic

**20 Years of Service:** Scott Gillingwater, Species at Risk Biologist  
Mike Knox, Land Management Technician  
Steven Musclow, Superintendent, Fanshawe C.A.

**25 Years of Service:** Terry Chapman, Geographic Information Systems Specialist  
Karen Maaskant, Water Quality Specialist  
Karen Wilkie, Land Management Technician

Prepared by:

Ian Wilcox,  
General Manager

Sharon Viglianti,  
Human Resources/Payroll Administrator

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**To:** UTRCA Board of Directors  
**From:** Ian Wilcox, General Manager  
**Date:** January 10, 2021  
**Subject:** 2021 Administrative By-Law Review Deferral

**Agenda #:** 7.4  
**Filename:** D:\Users\vigliantim\Documents\GroupWise\3978-1.doc

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## For Information

The Annual General Meeting is typically when the annual review of the administrative by-laws is completed and proposed changes are presented for discussion and approval. This year, staff are deferring the presentation of the annual review in light of the pending changes from Bill 229 and the upcoming Board workshop with Mr. Nigel Bellchamber, a governance consultant retained by the Authority. In this workshop, to be tentatively scheduled in April, Mr. Bellchamber will review and discuss recommended procedural changes. The proposed administrative by-law updates will be presented to the Board for discussion at the closest Board meeting following the training session.

Please note that any further by-laws changes required as a result of Bill 229 acclamations after April 27<sup>th</sup> will be dealt with and presented to the Board at the 2022 Annual General Meeting, unless directed by otherwise by the Province.

Recommended by:

Ian Wilcox,  
General Manager

Prepared by:

Michelle Viglianti,  
Administrative Assistant

*fyi*

February 2021



Virginia Opossum

[www.thamesriver.on.ca](http://www.thamesriver.on.ca)

Twitter [@UTRCMarketing](https://twitter.com/UTRCMarketing)

Facebook [@UpperThamesRiverConservationAuthority](https://www.facebook.com/UpperThamesRiverConservationAuthority)

### New Weekly Blog!

The UTRCA has started a new weekly blog on its website to share projects, announcements, and other watershed news. The first article is about the [cover crop research being carried out in the upper Medway watershed](#) and includes an interview with Mike Yeo, a local farmer.

We welcome suggestions! If you have a story idea, please get in touch!

Contact: [Emily Chandler](#), Communications & Research Assistant

### Gizzard Shad in the Thames

The stay at home orders and physical distancing that are now part of daily life mean more and more people have been enjoying the City of London's trail network along the Thames River. With so many eyes on the river, it's not surprising that calls and emails started coming in to UTRCA staff this winter when larger than usual numbers of Gizzard Shad were sighted in the city.

- [See Gizzard Shad video](#) and [photos](#)

In mid-November, people started seeing huge schools of fish moving about in the Thames, from Springbank Park all the way upstream to Fanshawe Dam. As the river got colder in



December, the schools stopped roaming the river and settled around a handful of sites, where they became even more obvious to trail users. Calls, emails, and social media posts increased as people wondered what these fish were and why they were there.

The fish are [Gizzard Shad](#), a member of the herring family. Their name comes from a strongly muscled part of their digestive system, the gizzard, which allows them to effectively crush and digest plant matter. The species is native to Ontario and can be found in the Thames River throughout the year. Here in the Great Lakes basin, juvenile Gizzard Shad are an important food source for many game fish species including Muskie, Northern Pike, Walleye, and Bass.

Every fall, schools of Gizzard Shad move north up the Thames River, some coming as far as London. The fish are not very cold hardy and are at the northern edge of their population range here in Ontario. They seek out warm spots, which are often found in urban centres, to improve their odds of surviving the winter.

Once temperatures in the Thames River began to drop, the shad searched out warmer water, such as the outlets of wastewater treatment plants and sites where the underground storm sewer network outlets above ground. As thousands of fish have remained at these sites, many Londoners have made a habit of taking a weekly walk to go see if the fish are still there.



*Thousands of Gizzard Shad have gathered at outlets where warmer water is entering the Thames River.*

As we moved into February, the cold winter temperatures finally set in with an extended cold snap. Temperatures in the Thames River have dropped below 1°C and ice is starting to form in the river. The cold temperatures, in combination with **[Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia \(VHS\)](#)**, which is an endemic disease in the shad population of this area, have resulted in the winter's first reported Gizzard Shad die-off.

A die-off occurs most years near the end of the winter and is a natural part of the shad life cycle in this part of their range. The largest and healthiest fish will survive the winter and make their way back towards Lake St. Clair once the Thames River warms back up. There they will spawn in the late spring and into the summer, producing a new generation of Gizzard Shad that may one day overwinter in the City of London.

To see more photos and videos of the Gizzard Shad and other aquatic species in the UTRCA watershed, check out [@UTRCAaquaticbio](#) on Twitter and [Instagram](#).

Contact: [Michelle Fletcher](#), Aquatic Biologist

### **Stratford Energy and Environment Committee working with UTRCA to address invasive species**

The UTRCA and the City of Stratford's Energy and Environment Committee have been working to protect the TJ Dolan area from invasive species that are threatening its unique ecology. Most recently, UTRCA staff carried out a first round of targeted herbicide treatment on the east side of TJ Dolan to control European Buckthorn. Last year, staff treated buckthorn on the west side. It is hoped that the mature buckthorn will be largely under control by the end of 2021. In the past, UTRCA staff have also treated Japanese Knotweed, Phragmites, Periwinkle, and Poison Ivy in the TJ Dolan.



*European Buckthorn thrives in a variety of habitats, forming dense thickets that crowd and shade out native plants.*

Many approaches to controlling invasive plant species have been tried over the past decade. The most effective techniques are herbicide injection and targeted, specific herbicide application. The herbicides are approved for use by Health Canada and carefully applied by licensed applicators on staff at the UTRCA, following best management practices approved by the Ontario Invasive Plant Council and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

The increasing prevalence of invasive species is another impact of climate change and it's important we try to tackle them before they take over natural areas such as the TJ Dolan.

Contact: [Craig Merkley](#), Conservation Services Specialist

### Virtual Hike

Community Living London approached UTRCA Community Education staff in the fall of 2020, hoping to arrange several hikes that our staff would lead in local nature areas for their participants. With the ever-changing COVID restrictions, it was decided that a virtual hike would be the best way for participants to safely enjoy a nature experience and learn some more about their surroundings.

With the expertise of our Marketing Specialist, Steve Sauder, two education staff went to the Medway Valley Heritage Forest Environmentally Significant Area and filmed a 15 minute hike. Stops were made along the way to describe and inform about some of the flora and fauna.

- [See the Virtual Hike](#)

A few weeks later, education staff met the participants on a Zoom call to introduce themselves and explain how the virtual hike would proceed. After the hike was completed, we met back on the Zoom call to show a short slide presentation to add to the experience and motivate some curiosity and questions. One person wanted to know more about the trees we saw during the hike; someone else was quite excited about the woodpecker we encountered; and another participant was curious about coyotes in the Medway Valley.

Eighteen happy hikers participated in the virtual activity. We had an excellent time with everyone and it was great to be able to be with them, even if it was virtually! We plan on connecting with this group several more times in the next few months to bring them a nature experience, either virtually or in-person.

Contact: [Kim Gilbert](#), Community Education Technician (Fanshawe)

### Virtual River Safety Program

This month, UTRCA Community Education staff launched a virtual version of our River Safety program! For the past 23 years, UTRCA staff have visited grade two classrooms throughout the Upper Thames River watershed to lead this important program, which teaches students how to stay safe near rivers and streams.

Staff developed the River Safety program after a potentially fatal accident occurred at Springbank Dam in London. In 1996, three grade eight students on a school field trip were swept over the dam when they made some poor safety decisions. A subsequent study to determine how to minimize public hazards around water identified the need for river safety education. In response, UTRCA Community Education staff developed the River Safety education program.

The program is traditionally one hour of engaging and interactive in-class activities, specifically designed for grade two students. Staff focus on this age group because research indicates that they are especially vulnerable. Students are taught the dangers of high water



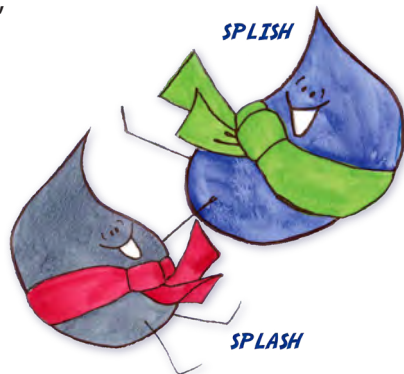
levels, slippery banks, and fast-flowing water, as well as other water hazards throughout the UTRCA watershed. Community Education staff also build the students' awareness around the hazards of reservoirs, irrigation ponds, swimming pools, and natural bodies of water including rivers and streams. Students learn about the dangers associated with ice-covered water surfaces. The River Safety program meets the grade two curriculum expectations in science (Water) and health (Safety).

This year, with restrictions on classroom visits due to COVID-19, staff have launched a new virtual version of the River Safety program. The Fanshawe Community Education staff's virtual program consists of a curriculum-based Teacher's Guide and an engaging "Staying Safe" slideshow for students, that teaches them how to be safe near rivers and streams. An online version of the story, "The Journey of Splish and Splash," can be read aloud by teachers, and an interactive "Matching Game"

tests students' knowledge and their retention of the program information.

Other program components are a virtual Activity Booklet that teachers can print out for their students to complete or students can complete on devices; a "Flooding on the Thames River" slideshow that demonstrates the intensity of the flood that occurred on the Thames in February 2018; and a list of additional resources for teachers.

The Wildwood Community Education staff's virtual River Safety program consists of an interactive Google presentation designed to be used by teachers, with teachers, or independently by students. Education staff can be heard narrating "The Journey of Splish and Splash" along with the pictures from the book. Students learn "What is a Watershed?" through a voice recorded presentation then play a game



of memory to help identify and remember the parts of a watershed. Students can look at a series of pictures accompanied by voice recorded sentences to make important decisions about situations around water in an activity called "Safe or Unsafe." To conclude, a virtual version of pages of the Activity Booklet is included.

This year, Community Education staff will also be sending out a newly created interactive story map once students have completed the program. The story map will help students make direct connections to various features of our watershed and build on what they learned while completing the River Safety program.

The UTRCA has received a very enthusiastic response from schools for this year's virtual River Safety program and some new schools have signed up. The 2021 program has been booked for more than 2500 grade two students throughout our watershed. Although we are happy we can still reach students this year, staff are very much looking forward to a time when they can return to schools to teach this important and engaging program directly to students.

Many thanks go to our generous community funders for their continued sponsorship and support of the River Safety program: Arva and District Optimist Club, Bryanston-Birr Optimist Club, Byron Optimist Club, Highbury Pet Hospital, and London Oakridge Acres Optimist Club! Contact: [Julie Read](#), Community Education Supervisor (Fanshawe), and [Maranda MacKean](#), Community Education Specialist (Wildwood)

### **Another Accessibility and Restoration Project completed along Lake Victoria**

UTRCA staff have completed another section of shoreline improvement on the north shore of Lake Victoria, in Stratford. This year's project includes an accessible canoe/kayak launch for paddlers, and extends an accessible trail along the water's edge with areas for trail users to appreciate the vista. Improved erosion protection is another important component of the project.

[See project photos](#)



*The accessible canoe/kayak launch and erosion control are constructed of a timber cribwall with underwater rock shoals.*

The project builds on previous work around Lake Victoria, including south shore protection projects in 2018 and 2020, and cribwalls installed along the north shore in 2017 and 2019.



Staff and contractors with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority worked to complete construction on a number of shoreline improvements along Lake Victoria's north shore in Stratford Friday morning. Improvements include making a 60-metre stretch of the city's north-shore pathway more accessible, constructing wooden cribbing and reinforcing the shoreline with rocks to prevent further erosion, and building a kayak and canoe launch closer to the water to make it easier to get in and out from shore. Galen Simmons/The Beacon Herald/Postmedia Network

The following project partners contributed funding and/or in-kind donations:

- Avon River Environmental Association
- City of Stratford
- City of Stratford Energy and Environment Committee
- The Green Hair Spa
- Rotary Club of Stratford
- UTRCA

Contact: [Craig Merkley](#), Conservation Services Specialist

### On the Agenda

The next UTRCA Board of Directors meeting will be the Annual General Meeting, held virtually on February 18, 2021.

- Review and Approval of the Factual Certificate
  - 2021 Draft Budget & Municipal Feedback
  - 2021 Capital Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure Projects
  - Section 28 Status Report
  - Conservation Authorities Act Proclamations
  - 2021 Service Award Recognition
  - UTRCA Administrative By-Law Review Deferral
  - Presentation: 5 Years of Source Protection Plan Implementation - What We've Accomplished and Where We're Going
  - Presentation: Recognition of Dr. Doug Bocking
- Please visit the "Board Agendas & Minutes" page at [www.thamesriver.on.ca](http://www.thamesriver.on.ca) for draft agendas, audio/video recordings, and approved minutes.
- Contact: [Michelle Viglianti](#), Administrative Assistant