

04-24-BOD

Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority

Friday, May 24, 2024 at 9:00 AM EDT to Friday, May 24, 2024 at 12:00 PM EDT

Agenda

1. Events

Let the River Flow: Mad River benefit concert

A benefit concert in support of "The Friends of the Mad River", a local, community-based group of volunteers who are committed to restoring and sustaining the Mad River as a healthy habitat for all who rely on it. [Free registration encouraged on Eventbrite](#). This is a "Pay What You Can" event, cash only at the door or donate online at the [Canada Helps](#) link.

Date: May 26, 2024

Location: St. John's United Church, 192 Mill Street Creemore, ON L0M 1G0

Tiffin Nature Program (for preschoolers)

Tiffin Nature Program will help preschoolers gain knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the natural world and our amazing planet. Children learn about risky play, and develop a better understanding of their relationship with the land.

Half Day Dates: Tuesdays March 19, 2023 – June 4, 2024

Full Day Dates: Thursdays March 21, 2023 – June 6, 2024

Location: Tiffin Centre for Conservation

PA/PD Day

Camp Tiffin encourages outdoor exploration, guided excursions in the forest fueled by student interest. Every day will be guided by student inquiry, seasonal changes, and weather and program availability.

Date: June 7 and June 28, 2024 from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Location: Tiffin Centre for Conservation

2. Call to Order

3. Land Acknowledgement

Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority Board acknowledges that we are situated on the traditional land of the Anishnaabeg people. The Anishnaabeg include the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Pottawatomi nations, collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy. We are dedicated to honouring Indigenous history and culture and committed to moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation and respect with all First Nation, Métis and Inuit people.

4. Declaration of Pecuniary and Conflict of Interest

5. Motion to Adopt the Agenda

Recommendation:

RESOLVED THAT: the agenda for the Board of Directors meeting #04-24-BOD dated on May 24, 2024 be approved.

6. Announcements

7. Presentations

8. Deputations

Deputation regarding Watercourse Deluge and Runoff Negatively Affecting Nottawasaga Bay from Pamela Spence.

Recommendation:

RESOLVED THAT: the Board of Directors receive the deputation as presented.

9. Hearings

10. Determination of Items Requiring Separate Discussion

Board members are requested to identify items from the Consent List that they wish to have considered for separate discussion.

11. Adoption of Consent List and Identification of Items Requiring Separate Discussion

Recommendation:

RESOLVED THAT: agenda item number(s), _____ was identified as requiring separate discussion, be referred for discussion under Agenda Item #12; and

FURTHER THAT: all Consent List Agenda Items not referred for separate discussion be adopted as submitted to the board and staff be authorized to take all necessary action required to give effect to same; and

FURTHER THAT: any items in the Consent List not referred for separate discussion, and for which conflict has been declared, are deemed not to have been voted on or discussed by the individual making the declaration.

12. Consent List

12.1. Adoption of Minutes

Recommendation:

RESOLVED THAT: the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting 03-24-BOD dated on April 26, 2024 be approved.

12.2. Staff Reports

12.2.1. Staff Report No. 14-04-24-BOD from Greg Marek, Senior Planner Regarding PPS

Recommendation:

RESOLVED THAT: The Board of Directors receive and approve Staff Report No. 14-04-24-BOD regarding NVCA planning staff's review of the new proposed provincial planning policy instrument titled the "Provincial Planning Statement".

12.2.2. Staff Report No. 15-04-24-BOD from Greg Marek, Senior Planner Regarding the Minister and CA Act

Recommendation:

RESOLVED THAT: The Board of Directors receive and approve Staff Report No. 15-04-24-BOD regarding NVCA planning staff's review of the proposed

regulation detailing new Minister's permit and review powers under the Conservation Authorities Act.

12.2.3. Staff Report No. 16-04-24-BOD from Greg Marek, Senior Planner Regarding Bill 185

Recommendation:

RESOLVED THAT: The Board of Directors receive and approve Staff Report No. 16-04-24-BOD regarding NVCA planning staff's review of Bill 185 and potential implications for the NVCA in its delegated responsibility from the Province to represent provincial interests regarding natural hazards.

12.2.4. Staff Report No. 17-04-24-BOD from Kyra Howes, Director, Conservation Services

Recommendation:

RESOLVED THAT: the Board of Directors receive Staff Report No. 17-04-24-BOD as information.

12.2.5. Staff Report No. 18-04-24-BOD from Maria Leung, Senior Communications Specialist

Recommendation:

RESOLVED THAT: Staff Report No. 18-04-24-BOD regarding NVCA Communications – *April 12, 2024 – May 10, 2024*, be received.

13. Other Business

14. In Camera

Recommendation:

RESOLVED THAT: this meeting of the Board of Directors No. 04-24-BOD move into closed session at _____ to address matters pertaining to:

- a) Litigation, or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals, affecting the authority; and,
- b) Personal information regarding an identifiable individual, including authority staff, and

FURTHER THAT: the Chief Administrative Officer, Director, Corporate Services, Director, Watershed Science, Director, Conservation Services, Manager, Development Planning & Permits, Manager, Engineering Services and Administrative Assistant be in attendance for recording and speaking purposes for item a and;

FURTHER THAT: the Director, Corporate Services be in attendance for recording and speaking purposes for item b.

15. Out of In-Camera

Recommendation:

RESOLVED THAT: the Board of Directors rise from in-camera at _____ and report progress.

15.1. Doug Hevenor, Chief Administrative Officer 2023 Annual Performance Review

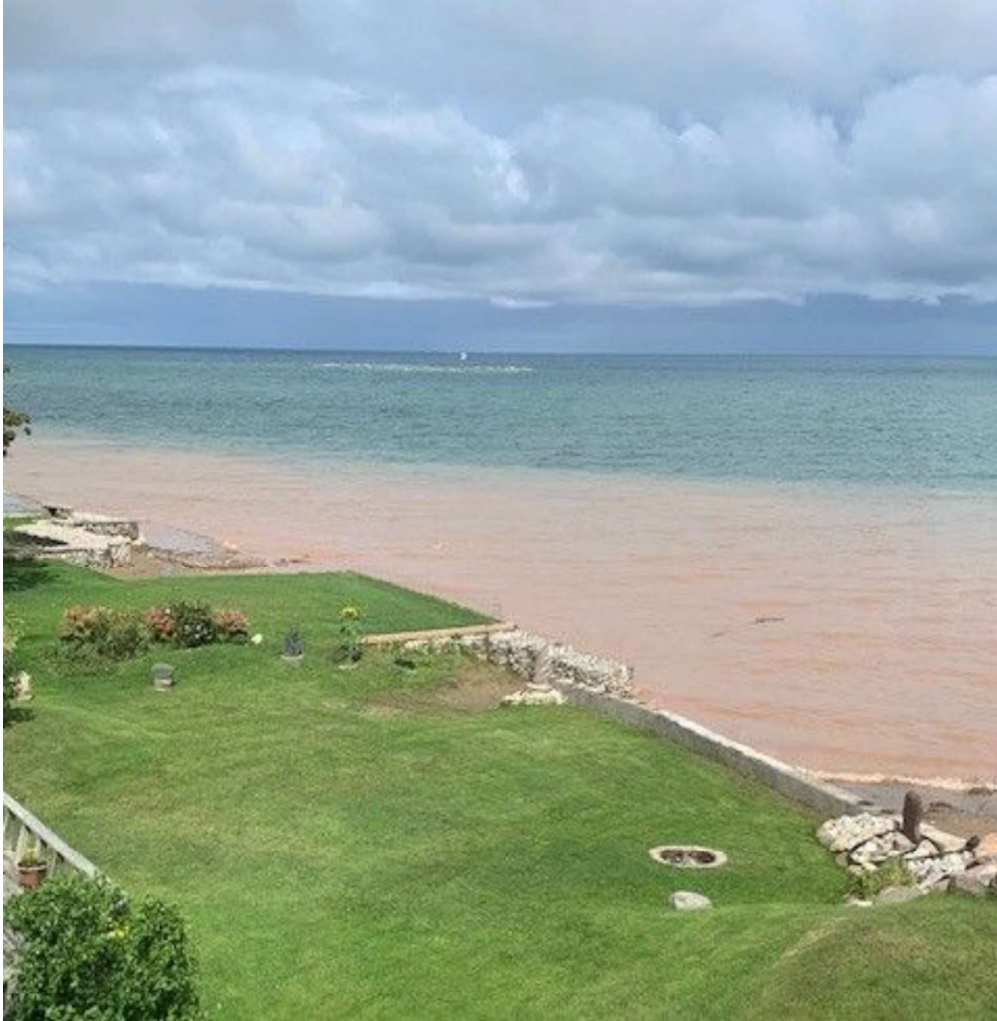
Recommendation:

RESOLVED THAT: the Board of Directors receive the Chief Administrative Officer's 2023 annual performance review and 2024 review for implementation.

16. Adjourn

Recommendation:

RESOLVED THAT: this meeting adjourn at _____ to meet again on June 28, 2024 or at the call of the Chair.

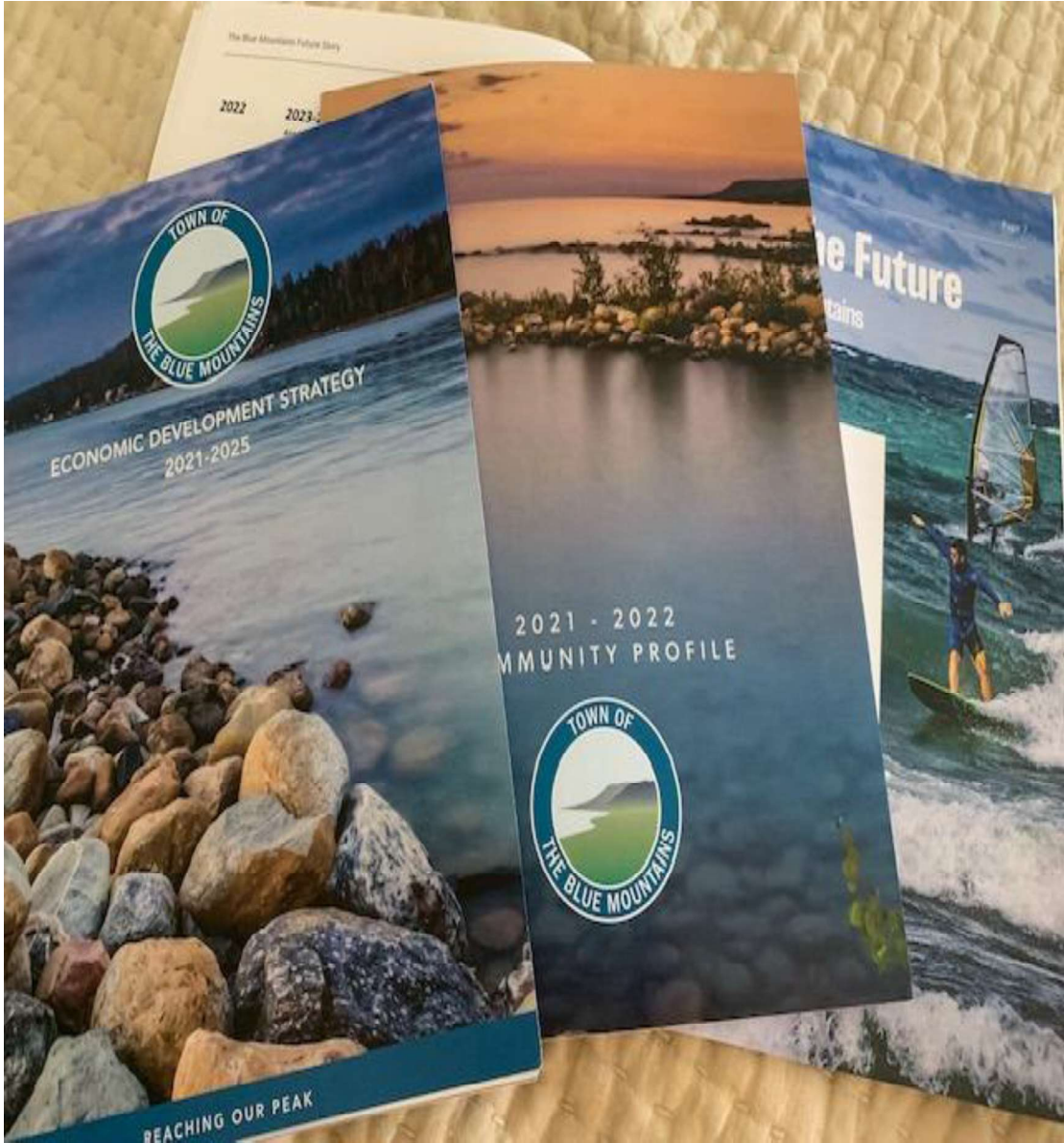


Nottawasaga Bay Needs Your Attention

Presented to Grey Sauble & Nottawasaga
Valley
Conservation Authorities
Spring 2024

By Pamela Spence
209691 Highway 26, Craigeleith, TBM





The Town of The Blue Mountains takes pride in & promotes the natural beauty of the Escarpment and Georgian Bay. Wonderful visuals demonstrate the beauty of the Bay.

Eloquent words in TBM documents speak to –

- Sparkling Georgian Bay
- Clear Waters
- Crystal Clear waters

TBM's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan Natural Environment Goal is to have:

“Pristine waters in Georgian Bay and throughout the connected watersheds”

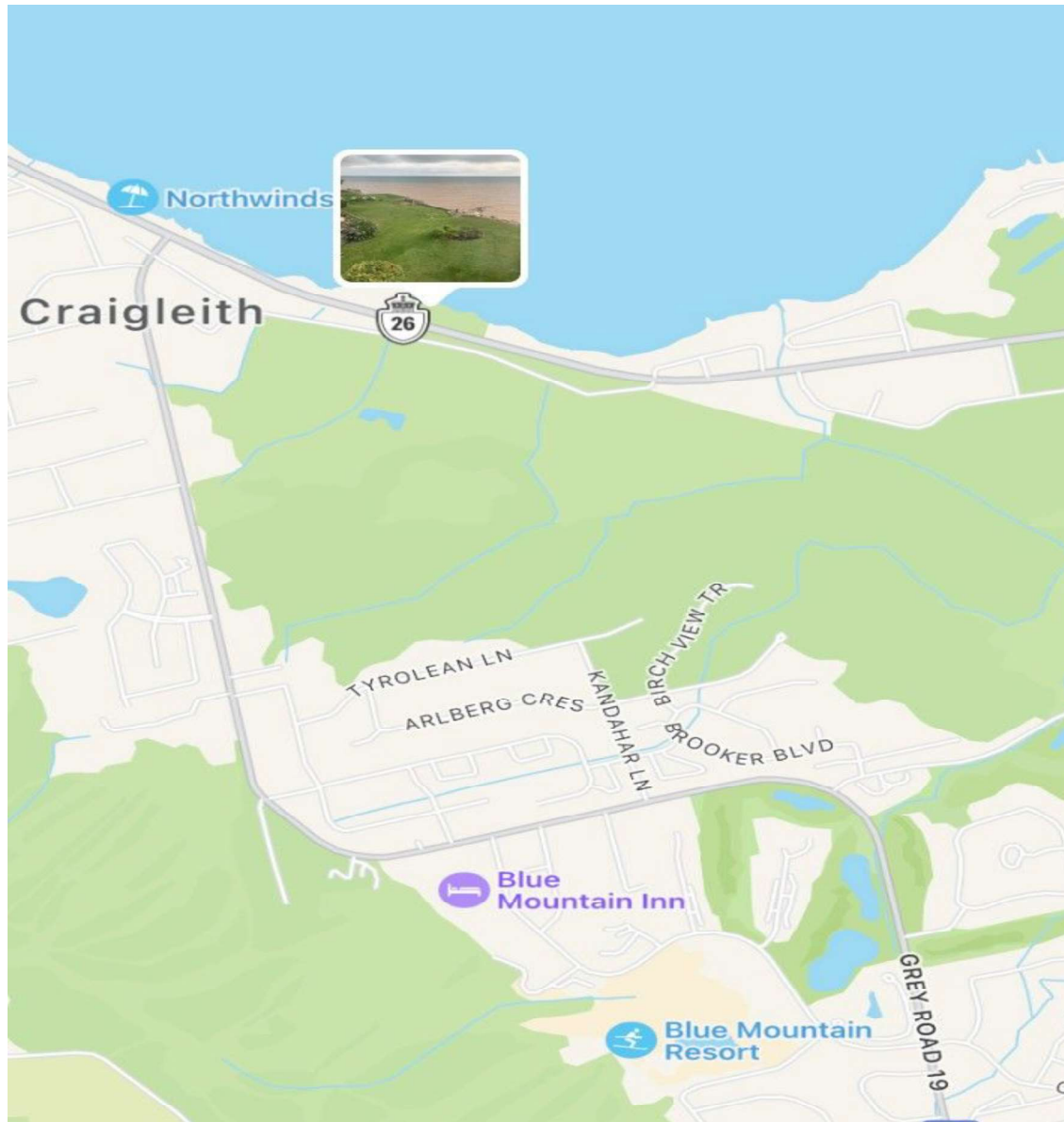


Northwinds Beach

June 26, 2023

**This community
needs to address
some issues to
achieve
sparkling waters
in Nottawasaga
Bay**





Nottawasaga Bay
At
Craigeleith

Between
Northwinds Beach
At Grey Rd 19
&
Fraser Cres West

Watercourses 6-11/14



Bay neighbours have noticed the degradation in the water and have written the Town

From: Cheryl and Tom Meneely, 209539 Highway 26, Craigeleith

To: Council, The Town of the Blue Mountains

To: Committee of the Whole, February 21, 2023 and by web submission June

We have been in our family home on the Bay for 30+ years and are situated between two creeks. We are concerned about the changes happening that seem not to be for the better.

I would like to know what is being done to control erosion and control the water runoff from the new subdivision between Lakeshore Rd and Grey Rd. We have witnessed many, many times lots of red mud flowing into the bay from the creeks to the west/north. What is being done to stop the erosion and stop the mud that has been showing up in the Bay and ruining the fish and wildlife habitat? We have contacted Grey Sauble on a number of occasions about the red clay running into the Bay from the creeks but our calls have not been returned. We had to get a permit from them to put a simple deck on our house more than 30 feet from the shoreline. What is Grey Sauble doing about this?

The changes proposed seem extreme and increase runoff rather than contain it. Water should not enter the bay until it is mud-free and clear.

Robert Woodcock <boulderbob_ah@yahoo.ca>

To: developmentengineering@thebluemountains.ca

Cc: Tom Meneely, Corrina Giles

Tue, Sep 5 at 4:00 p.m.

I am aware of the efforts of my TBM neighbour, Mr. Tom Meneely, to seek a solution to the clay-laden water which contaminates the shoreline-area for at least three days following heavy rainstorms. I agree with Mr. Meneely that a solution to this ongoing problem should be sought as it makes the water unuseable (until the clay content settles and leaves a mucky base) for humans and is surely not friendly to fish and waterfowl. Do you know if there has been any effort (on foot or using drones) to determine where the clay-laden water originates from and if there is some feasible way to redirect or corral it until the clay content settles?

Your opinion would be appreciated,

Robert (Bob) Woodcock,
209539 Hwy. 26, TBM

From Town of the Blue Mountains' Development Engineering Dept. (Aug 29 2023)

"The Town is aware of sedimentation issues and regularly works with the Conservation Authority(s) and the Ministry of the Environment to ensure that Developers have the appropriate sedimentation & erosion controls installed and functioning on Development sites. However as I'm sure you are aware, the clay soils prevalent in the area are easily eroded even in natural systems to form a colloidal suspension that causes the discolouration in Georgian Bay adjacent to the shoreline. If you are aware of a specific site creating a sedimentation issue, please contact us directly and we will follow up." **Not Citizen's Job!**



April 5,
April 12,
April 13,
2023





June
26

2023



June
30



July 1



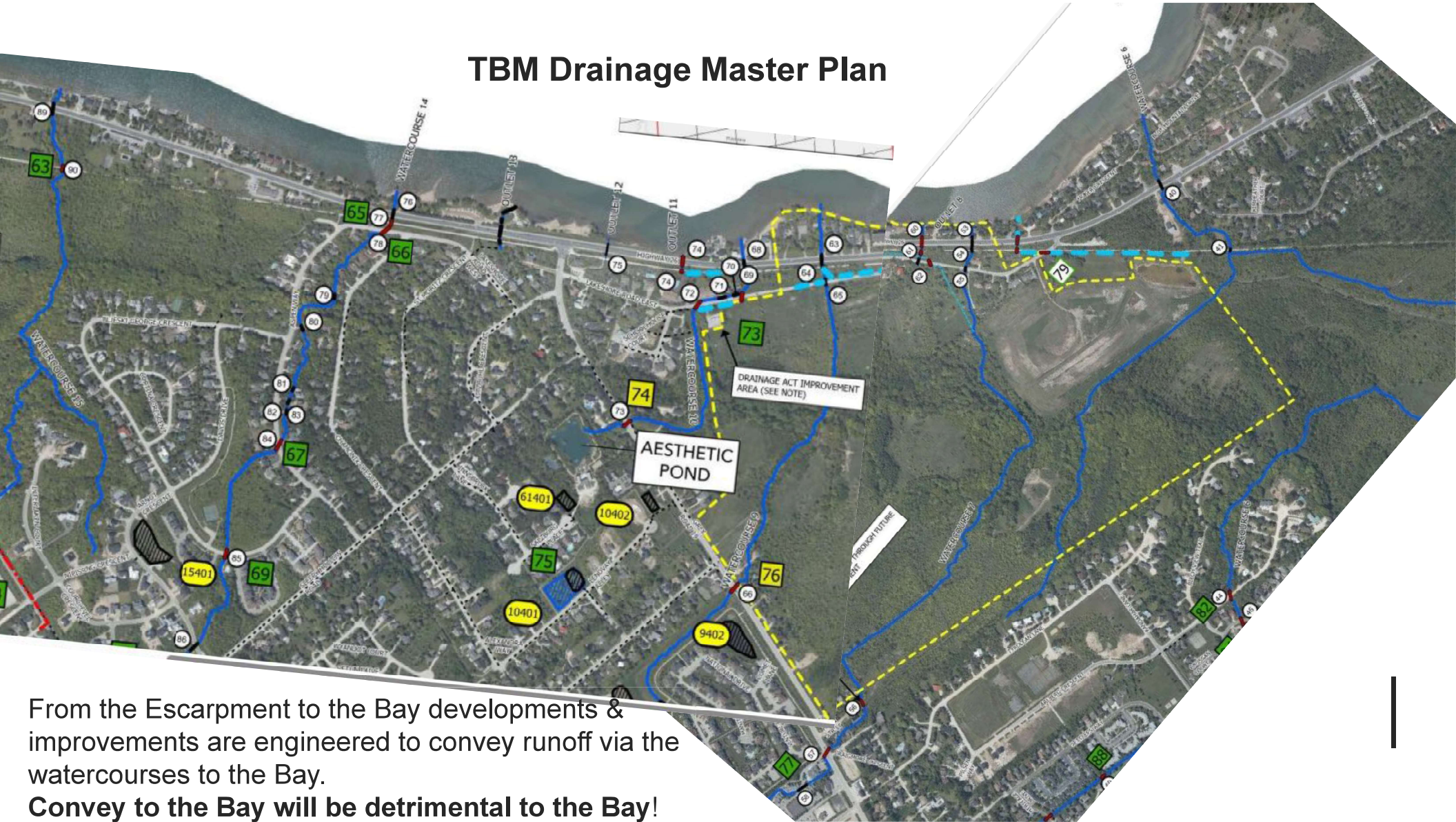
July 7
&
July 13,
2023





Waves of silt and sandbars visible from the sky - July
2022

TBM Drainage Master Plan







Watercourse 11/14

June 23/23

Watershed est.75 ha.

Outflow at

Northwinds Beach



Watercourse 10 - 20 HA
April 2023 Craigleith Ski Club –
Source at North Parking Lot



Watercourse 10 – June 26 2023
North Lot at Craigleith Ski Club -
Not just a spring occurrence



Watercourse 9 - 75.6 HA from Craigeith Ski Club to Ford Drain



June
Hwy 26

April
Ford Drain Outlet



Watercourse 7 – 74 HA

Blue Mountain Resort/Toronto Ski Club
Earth works on the slopes went on for weeks in June 2023 and more is expected in 2024.



Silt fence does little good

Watercourse 7 -at Lakeshore Rd and Georgian Trail and then out to the Bay



What will the consequences be on the Bay from erosion, turbidity and bedload?



August 4, 2023

The runoff into Nottawasaga Bay starts at the Escarpment, rushes down the slopes into channels, ditches, culverts and the watercourses. New developments have not created the erosion but may contribute to an increase!

No one knows what is in that water and what it is doing to the Bay!

Concerns -

- Quantity and velocity of runoff
- Erosion and sedimentation
- Turbidity (can't see your feet in water below your knees)
- Snowmaking & chemicals in runoff
- Increased algae & aquatic weeds
- Potential beach and shoreline degradation & closures
- Bedload in runoff creating plumes way out into the bay and affect on aquatic wildlife
- TBM OPR; anticipate more runoff and erosion due to Climate Change



The Ask:

Allocate \$\$ and resources to study erosion and strengthen policies to improve watercourses, such as:

- Change the mantra from conveyance to the Bay to **clean** conveyance to the Bay
- Study and monitor runoff from watercourses 14-5
- Measure sources, causes, volume, speed and bedload of runoff from the top of the escarpment to the bay
- Implement measures/methods to slow runoff throughout the watersheds
- Do not compromise 30m from top of bank setback policy
- Require better erosion filtering with more hay bales, silt socks, erosion control blankets, coco rolls, etc.



Monitor runoff content for fertilizers, chemicals and other contaminants



Improve policies on watershed planning, natural wetland preservation & artificial wetland creation



Create and implement greener engineering standards & low impact drainage (LID) in developments



Clean up water in watercourses flowing into the Bay



Approve policies for better erosion control i.e., more tree planting and tree preservation



Maintain culverts and drain outlets on a regular basis to prevent debris dams.



This is a call to ACTION

Let's clean up our
watercourses to keep
Nottawasaga Bay pristine!

Thank you





03-24-BOD (April's Board of Directors Meeting) Minutes (**Draft**)
Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority
Apr 26, 2024 at 9:00 AM EDT
@ 8195 8th Line, Utopia ON, L0M 1T0

Attendance

Present:

Mayor Scott W. Anderson, Adjala-Tosorontio (Township); Cllr. Christopher Baines, Collingwood (Town); Cllr. Joe Belanger, Wasaga Beach (Town); Cllr. Nicole Cox, New Tecumseth (Town); Cllr. Kyle Fegan, Shelburne (Town); Cllr. Pieter Kiezebrink, Essa (Township); Chair Gail Little, Amaranth (Township); Deputy Mayor Paul Van Staveren Clearview (Township); Mayor Janet Horner, Mulmur (Township); Cllr. June Porter, The Blue Mountains (Town); Vice-Chair Jonathan Scott, Bradford West Gwillimbury (Town); Cllr. Gary Harvey, Barrie (City); Cllr. Ralph Manktelow, Mono (Town); Cllr. Richard Schell, Oro-Medonte (Township)

NVCA Staff:

Sheryl Flannagan, Director, Corporate Services; Doug Hevenor, Chief Administrative Officer; Chris Hibberd, Director, Watershed Management Services; Kyra Howes, Director, Conservation Services; Christine Knapp, General Account (*departed at 9:30am*); Sarah Thompson, Source Water Coordinator; Jennifer France, Watershed Monitoring Technician; Maria Leung, Senior Communications Specialist; Kerry Jenkins, Administrative Assistant/Recorder

Absent:

Cllr Phil Fisher, Springwater (Township); Cllr. Kevin Eisses, Innisfil (Town); Mayor Darren White, Melancthon (Township); Cllr. Joel Loughead, Grey Highlands (Municipality)

Guests:

Tiffany Cecchetto, KPMG, (*departed at 9:30am*); Andrew Pascuzzo (*arrived at 9:13am; departed at 10:30am*)

1. Events

Arbor Day

NVCA will hold its 34th annual Arbor Day Tree Sale. A variety of bareroot tree and shrub seedlings will be for sale. Trees and shrubs are sold in bundles of 10 for \$35 each. Tree availability is first come first serve and cannot be reserved.

Date: May 11, 2024

Location: Tiffin Centre for Conservation

Tree Planting Event on the Mad River

Volunteer to plant trees along the creek with Friends of the Mad River and Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority from 9 a.m. to noon. This is a great way for students to get their volunteer hours. Pre-registration required. [Register here.](#)

Date: May 5, 2024

Location: 2295 Nottawasaga Concession 6 Creemore, ON L0M 1G0

Let the River Flow: Mad River benefit concert

A benefit concert in support of "The Friends of the Mad River", a local, community-based group of volunteers who are committed to restoring and sustaining the Mad River as a healthy habitat for all who rely on it. [Free registration encouraged on Eventbrite.](#) This is a "Pay What You Can" event, cash only at the door or donate online at the [Canada Helps link.](#)

Date: May 26, 2024

Location: St. John's United Church, 192 Mill Street Creemore, ON L0M 1G0

Tiffin Nature Program (for preschoolers)

Tiffin Nature Program will help preschoolers gain knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the natural world and our amazing planet. Children learn about risky play, and develop a better understanding of their relationship with the land.

Half Day Dates: Tuesdays March 19, 2023 – June 4, 2024

Full Day Dates: Thursdays March 21, 2023 – June 6, 2024

Location: Tiffin Centre for Conservation

2. Call to Order

Chair Little called the meeting to order at 9:04am.

3. Land Acknowledgement

Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority Board acknowledges that we are situated on the traditional land of the Anishnaabeg people. The Anishnaabeg include the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Pottawatomi nations, collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy. We are dedicated to honouring Indigenous history and culture and committed to moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation and respect with all First Nation, Métis and Inuit people.

4. Declaration of Pecuniary and Conflict of Interest

5. Motion to Adopt the Agenda

Recommendation

RES: 20-24

Moved by: Mayor Scott W. Anderson

Seconded by: Cllr. Pieter Kiezebrink

RESOLVED THAT: the agenda for the Board of Directors meeting #03-24-BOD dated on April 26, 2024 be approved.

Carried;

6. Announcements

Chair Little informed the Board of Directors that at the April 19th meeting for Conservation Ontario, Vice-Chair Scott was named Vice-Chair for Conservation Ontario.

7. Presentations

7.1. 2023 Audit from Tiffany Cecchetto, CPA, CA, KPMG LLP

Tiffany Cecchetto, CPA, CA, KPMG LLP conducted a presentation regarding NVCA's 2023 Audit.

Recommendation

RES: 21-24

Moved by: Cllr. Christopher Baines

Seconded by: Cllr. Gary Harvey

RESOLVED THAT: the Board receives the presentation regarding NVCA's 2023 Audit; and

FURTHER THAT: the Board approves the 2023 Draft Financial Statements.

Carried;

7.2. Enforcement and Compliance from Meagan Kieferle, Senior Regulations Officer

Meagan Kieferle, Senior Regulations Officer conducted a presentation regarding NVCA's Enforcement and Compliance.

Recommendation

RES: 22-24

Moved by: Cllr. Nicole Cox

Seconded by: Cllr. Gary Harvey

RESOLVED THAT: the Board receives this presentation as presented.

Carried;

8. Deputations

Deputation regarding NVCA Permits for Wood Avenue Semis.

A presentation was conducted by Andrew Pascuzzo from Pascuzzo Planning Inc.

Recommendation

RES: 23-24

Moved by: Cllr. Joe Belanger

Seconded by: Cllr. Rick Schell

RESOLVED THAT: the deputation be allowed to provide additional details beyond the scope of the original deputation.

Carried; 2/3 votes in favor.

Recommendation

RES: 24-24

Moved by: Vice-Chair Jonathan Scott

Seconded by: Cllr. Ralph Manktelow

RESOLVED THAT: the Board of Directors receive the deputation as presented.

Carried;

9. Hearings

There were no hearings at this time.

10. Determination of Items Requiring Separate Discussion

Board members are requested to identify items from the Consent List that they wish to have considered for separate discussion.

11. Adoption of Consent List and Identification of Items Requiring Separate Discussion

Recommendation

RES: 25-24

Moved by: Mayor Janet Horner

Seconded by: Cllr. Kyle Fegan

RESOLVED THAT: agenda item number(s), 12.2 was identified as requiring separate discussion, be referred for discussion under Agenda Item #12; and

FURTHER THAT: all Consent List Agenda Items not referred for separate discussion be adopted as submitted to the board and staff be authorized to take all necessary action required to give effect to same; and

FURTHER THAT: any items in the Consent List not referred for separate discussion, and for which conflict has been declared, are deemed not to have been voted on or discussed by the individual making the declaration.

Carried;

12. Consent List

12.1. Adoption of Minutes

Recommendation

Approved by Consent

RESOLVED THAT: the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting 02-24-BOD dated on March 22, 2024 be approved.

12.1.1. Adoption of Agricultural Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Recommendation

Approved by Consent

RESOLVED THAT: the minutes of the Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting 01-24-AAC dated on March 28, 2024 be approved.

12.2. Staff Report No. 09-03-24-BOD 1st Quarter Budget from Sheryl Flanagan, Director, Corporate Services

Recommendation

RES: 26-24

Moved by: Cllr. Gary Harvey

Seconded by: Mayor Scott W. Anderson

RESOLVED THAT: the Board of Directors receive Staff Report No. 09-03-24-BOD regarding the 2024 first quarter financials; and

FURTHER THAT: staff continue to monitor budget activities.

Carried;

12.2.1. Staff Report No. 10-03-24-BOD from Sheryl Flannagan, Director, Corporate Services

Recommendation

Approved by Consent

RESOLVED THAT: the Board of Directors approve Staff Report No. 10-03-24-BOD regarding the Administrative Bylaws Update.

12.2.2. Staff Report No. 11-03-24-BOD from Sheryl Flannagan, Director, Corporate Services

Recommendation

Approved by Consent

RESOLVED THAT: the Board of Directors approve Staff Report No. 11-03-24-BOD regarding the Employee Handbook Update.

12.2.3. Staff Report No. 12-03-24-BOD from Maria Leung, Senior Communications Specialist

Recommendation

Approved by Consent

RESOLVED THAT: Staff Report No. 12-03-24-BOD regarding NVCA's Customer Satisfaction Report 2023 be received by Board of Directors.

12.2.4. Staff Report No. 13-03-24-BOD from Maria Leung, Senior Communications Specialist

Recommendation

Approved by Consent

RESOLVED THAT: Staff Report No. 13-03-24-BOD regarding NVCA Communications – *March 9, 2024 – April 11, 2024*, be received.

13. Other Business

Recommendation

RES: 27-24

Moved by: Cllr. Pieter Kiezebrink

Seconded by: Cllr. Nicole Cox

RESOLVED THAT: the Board of Directors approve the inclusion of Vice-Chair Scott's resolution not withstanding procedural by-laws.

Carried; by 2/3 votes in favour

Recommendation

RES: 28-24

Moved by: Vice-Chair Jonathan Scott

Seconded by: Cllr. June Porter

WHEREAS: private water systems (e.g., wells) are not protected through legislated requirements under The Safe Drinking Water Act 2002 and The Clean Water Act 2006, but are more likely to contribute to cases of gastrointestinal illness than municipal systems; and

WHEREAS: the 2023 Ontario Auditor General's value-for-money audit of Public Health Ontario (PHO) recommended that PHO, in conjunction with the Ontario Ministry of Health, begin the gradual discontinuance of free private drinking water testing; and

WHEREAS: in the jurisdiction of NVCA, many households do not receive water from municipal systems, with many relying on a private drinking water system, including wells; and

WHEREAS: the Walkerton Inquiry Report Part II, concluded the privatization of laboratory testing of drinking water samples contributed directly to the E. coli outbreak in Walkerton, Ontario in May 2000; and

WHEREAS: all Ontarians deserve safe, clean water, and free well-water testing is a way to help ensure that residents on private wells continue to have barrier-free access to well water testing.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Board recommend the Board of Directors call on the Province to not phase out free well-water testing as part of the proposed streamlining efforts of public health laboratory operations in the province; and

FURTHER THAT: this resolution be circulated to the Hon. Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health; Hon. Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; Hon. Andrea Khanjin, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks; local MPPs; and Conservations Ontario and Ontario's conservation authorities.

Carried;

14. Adjourn

Recommendation

RES: 27-24

Moved by: Vice-Chair Jonathan Scott

Seconded by: Cllr. Gary Harvey

RESOLVED THAT: this meeting adjourn at 11:20am to meet again on May 24, 2024 or at the call of the Chair.

Carried;



Staff Report: 14-04-24-BOD
Date: 24/05/2024
TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors
From: Greg Marek, RPP, MCIP
Senior Planner

SUBJECT: NVCA planning staff's review of the new proposed provincial planning policy instrument titled the "Provincial Planning Statement"

Recommendation

RESOLVED THAT: The Board of Directors receive and approve Staff Report No. 14-04-24-BOD regarding NVCA planning staff's review of the new proposed provincial planning policy instrument titled the "Provincial Planning Statement".

Purpose of the Staff Report:

The purpose of this report is to update the Board of Directors on the Province's recent release of a new proposed provincial planning policy instrument titled the "Provincial Planning Statement" for comment on the Environmental Registry of Ontario under ERO Number [019-8462](#).

Background:

On April 10, 2024, the Province released a new proposed provincial planning policy instrument titled the "Provincial Planning Statement" for comment on the Environmental Registry of Ontario under ERO Number [019-8462](#). The comment period was open for 30 days and closed on May 12, 2024.

The Province has been investigating a streamlined province-wide land use planning policy framework that incorporates the housing-focused policies of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS, 2020) and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater

Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan, 2020).

The new Provincial Planning Statement is effectively a blending of the current PPS, 2020 and the Growth Plan, 2020 into a new provincial planning policy instrument. Should the Province adopt the new Provincial Planning Statement, the Province would consequentially revoke the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and the Growth Plan, 2020.

Issues/Analysis:

Conservation Authorities play a key role within Ontario's land use planning and development framework. As prescribed through the Mandatory Programs and Services Regulation (O. Reg. 686/21), CAs review and comment on applications and other matters submitted pursuant to the *Planning Act* to help ensure consistency with the natural hazard policies found within policy statements issued under section 3 of the *Planning Act*, as well as the protection of drinking water sources.

The following report highlights some of the key policy changes within the proposed Provincial Planning Statement that would impact the Conservation Authority in its delegated responsibilities, and provides recommendations for modifications to the policy statement that would provide for the continued protection of people, property and infrastructure from the impacts of natural hazards, drinking water sources, and natural spaces that support safe and healthy communities.

PPS, 2024 Vision

Within the Vision section of the document, staff are pleased to see the reference to the Province, planning authorities and CAs working together to mitigate potential impacts on development or risks to public health and safety associated with natural hazards, including the risks associated with the impacts of a changing climate.

PPS, 2024 New Settlement Areas and Settlement Area Boundary Expansions

Staff are supportive of the new proposed policy 2.3.2.2 that requires planning authorities to "identify a new settlement area only where it has been demonstrated that the infrastructure and public service facilities to support development are planned or available".

To ensure that the proposed expansion would be planned and demonstrated to avoid, or if not possible, minimize and mitigate any potential negative impacts on watershed conditions and the water resource system, including the quality and quantity of water, staff are recommending that the existing Growth Plan policy 2.2.8.3 that requires planning authorities to determine the feasibility of proposed boundary expansions based on the application of all policies within the Growth Plan, be brought forward into section 2.3.2 of the proposed Provincial Planning Statement. This inclusion would provide consistency with the policies of Section 4.2 related to using the watershed as the meaningful scale for integrated and long-term planning.

PPS, 2024 Stormwater Management

- The stormwater management policies of the PPS, 2020 have been revised to

provide direction related to minimizing, preventing or reducing increases in stormwater volumes. This direction is a positive addition, and will ensure planning authorities have regard to increased volumes which may contribute to pluvial and fluvial flooding in developed areas from stormwater flows. Stormwater management plans must also align with any comprehensive municipal plans for stormwater management that consider cumulative impacts of stormwater from development on a watershed scale.

- Existing policy 3.2.7 of the Growth Plan has not been carried forward into the proposed PPS, 2024, which requires municipalities to develop stormwater master plans that are informed by watershed planning or equivalent, and examine / assess cumulative impacts to stormwater from development, including how impacts are exacerbated during extreme weather events. This policy is significant for mitigating impacts associated with a changing climate within Ontario's communities. It is recommended this policy be retained for large and fast-growing municipalities.

PPS, 2024 Natural Heritage

- All the natural heritage policies from the PPS, 2020 have been carried forward into the new section 4.1 (Natural Heritage).
- Policies in section 4.2 (Water) encourage all municipalities, and require large and fast-growing municipalities to undertake watershed planning to inform planning for several purposes, including planning for sewage and water services. Furthermore, section 4.2.5 now encourages all municipalities to collaborate with applicable CAs when undertaking watershed planning. The proposed changes to the definition of watershed planning are further supported which relate watershed planning to the evaluation and consideration of impacts of a changing climate on water resources systems, and clarify that the process can be undertaken at many scales.

PPS, 2024 Natural Hazards and Human-made Hazards

- Staff are pleased with the proposed new reference to CAs in section 5.2 (Natural Hazards) with respect to identification of hazardous lands and sites, and management of development in those areas, and that all the natural hazard policies of the PPS, 2020 have been carried forward.
- Section 5.1 (General Policies for Natural and Human-Made Hazards) states that development shall generally be directed to areas away from hazardous lands and hazardous sites. The proposed PPS must ensure that, in accordance with the natural hazard policies (section 5.2) and water policies (section 4.2), intensification does not occur in hazardous lands or on hazardous sites, where safe access through the hazard cannot be achieved, or where development should be restricted to protect the quality and quantity of drinking water supplies.
- Current PPS, 2020 policies 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 related to man-made hazards such as mineral aggregate operations and contaminated sites have been carried over however, policy 3.2.3 related to excess soils has not. The use of excess soils is

now regulated under Ontario Regulation 406/19 On-site and Excess Soil Management.

Other General Recommendations

- In addition to the proposed references for collaboration and coordination with CAs that have previously been mentioned in this report, staff are recommending CAs be explicitly referenced in the proposed PPS, 2024 Coordination policy 6.2(1) as a part of the “coordinated, integrated and comprehensive approach...when dealing with planning matters”. The integration of CAs throughout the proposed Provincial Planning Statement is a positive step forward to continue protecting people, property and infrastructure from potential impacts of natural hazards as well as protecting sources of drinking water.
- That the Province provide comprehensive, up-to-date implementation guidance concurrently with the issuance of the updated Provincial Planning Statement. It is noted that the proposed policies are quite flexible and may result in additional Ontario Land Tribunal hearings without adequate interpretation support. Comprehensive and up-to-date guidance with ongoing implementation support from the Province would help to increase consistency and certainty regarding planning outcomes, resulting in more timely approvals. Specifically, the Province should consider updating and/or finalizing the following: The Natural Hazard Technical Guides, the 1993 Watershed Planning Guidelines, the 2022 subwatershed Planning Guide, and the Natural Heritage Reference Manual (and related guidance). Updated implementation guidance should include direction on planning for a changing climate, particularly with regard to natural hazard management, watershed/subwatershed planning, and stormwater management.

Comprehensive provincial policy must strike the appropriate balance on all matters of provincial interest. This balance will not only support the government’s initiative to increase the supply and diversity of housing in Ontario, while providing for the continued protection of people, property and infrastructure from the impacts of natural hazards, drinking water sources, and natural spaces that support safe and healthy communities.

At the time of the writing of this report, it was understood that Conservation Ontario would be submitting a detailed comment letter to the Province through Environmental Registry of Ontario on this new proposed planning instrument, generally addressing the comments and recommendations included in this report.

Next Steps:

Should this new Provincial Planning Statement be approved, the follow are key next steps:

- Update Members on finalized policies and definitions to identify any potential implications to the NVCA in fulfilling its delegated responsibility from the Province to represent provincial interests regarding natural hazards, as a regulatory authority under O. Reg. 41/24, as a public body under the *Planning*

Act as per our CA Board approved policies, and as per our Municipal Partnership and Service Agreements with the watershed municipalities.

- Update references to Provincial Planning Statement, new policies and definitions within CA policy documents, procedural manuals and guidelines, applications, maps, website, etc., as required.

Relevance to Authority Policy/Mandate

NVCA staff will continue to review *Planning Act* development applications and permits in accordance with any new provincial natural hazards policies, the *Conservation Authorities Act* and O. Reg. 41/24.

Impact on Authority Finances:

Should this new Provincial Planning Statement be approved, it is expected that there will be no impact on the Board approved budget.

Climate Change Implications

This staff report does not result in an increase in greenhouse gases, temperature or precipitation exposure.

Approved for submission by:
Original Signed by
Chris Hibberd
Director Watershed Management Services

Approved for submission by:
Original Signed by
Doug Hevenor
Chief Administrative Officer



Staff Report: 15-04-24-BOD
Date: 24/05/2024
TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors
From: Greg Marek, RPP, MCIP
Senior Planner

SUBJECT: NVCA planning staff's review of the proposed regulation detailing new Minister's permit and review powers under the Conservation Authorities Act

Recommendation

RESOLVED THAT: The Board of Directors receive and approve Staff Report No. 15-04-24-BOD regarding NVCA planning staff's review of the proposed regulation detailing new Minister's permit and review powers under the Conservation Authorities Act

Purpose of the Staff Report:

The purpose of this report is to update the Board of Directors on the Province's proposed regulation detailing new Minister's permit and review powers under the Conservation Authorities Act as posted to the Environmental Registry of Ontario under ERO Number [019-8320](#).

Background:

On April 1, 2024, proclaimed provisions in the *Conservation Authorities Act* (CA Act) and associated regulations came into effect. These provisions include new powers for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry to:

1. Issue an order to prevent a Conservation Authority (CA) from issuing a permit and to take over the permitting process in the place of a CA; and
2. Review (and potentially alter) a CA permit decision at the request of the applicant, where the CA has refused a permit or assigned conditions to the permit that the applicant objects to.

On April 5, 2024, the Province posted a proposal for a regulation on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO Number [019-8320](#)) to specify the circumstances under which these Ministerial powers can be used.

The following report summarizes the specifics of the proposed Regulation as identified in ERO Number [019-8320](#) and the potential implications for Conservation Authorities, municipalities and property owners. The comment period for this posting was for 31 days, closing on May 6, 2024.

Issues/Analysis:

Summary of Proposal (ERO Number: [019-8320](#))

Permits issued by the Minister

- Under section 28.1.1 of the CA Act, the Minister has powers to:
 - direct a CA not to issue a permit to a specific individual for a specified activity;
 - direct a CA not to issue a permit for a certain type or class of activity;
 - make an order before or after a CA permit application has been submitted (even if CA decision is pending);
 - issue a permit in place of a CA for any activity if the same s.28.1 criteria or 'tests' concerning natural hazards and public safety considered by CAs are satisfied; and
 - refuse a permit or issue a permit subject to such conditions as the Minister determines are appropriate.
- Notice of any Ministerial order must be provided to affected CAs and any person who applied for the permit in question prior to the order, and must be posted on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) within thirty (30) days.
- The Regulation would specify the circumstances under which the Minister may issue an order to prevent a CA from making a permitting decision and make a permitting decision in place of a CA. Proposed additional requirements that would be set out in regulation include:
 - The Minister may make an order to prevent a CA from making a permitting decision and take over the permitting process only if the development activity or type or class of permits pertains to or supports a specified provincial interest, including:
 - Housing (community, affordable and market-based);
 - Community services (health, long-term care, education, recreation socio-cultural, security and safety, environment);
 - Transportation infrastructure;
 - Buildings that facilitate economic development or employment; and
 - Mixed use developments.

- If a proponent wishes to petition the Minister to issue an order, the proponent must submit a request to the Minister that would include information on:
 - Overview of proposed development;
 - Why the Minister's involvement is requested (e.g., development of provincial interest; timing/urgency; permitting process to date, if applicable; other barriers) and why it is preferable to the standard process in the CA Act;
 - Indication of whether the local municipality has endorsed the project and the request for Minister's involvement (e.g., by municipal letter or resolution); and
 - Status of other required project approvals, including the extent of any engagement with the CA in the permitting process that the applicant has had to date.

Permits Reviewed by the Minister

- Under section 28.1.2 of the CA Act, applicants may request reviews of CA permits, including:
 - request the Minister's review of the CA's decision where a permit was refused or of the permit conditions imposed within fifteen (15) days;
 - appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) a CA's decision to refuse a permit or issue a permit subject to conditions (appeal provisions limited where a request for the Minister's review has been made) within ninety (90) days;
 - After receiving a request, the Minister has thirty (30) days to decide whether or not they intend to conduct a review. If the Minister decides to conduct the review, a notice shall be posted on the ERO within thirty (30) days of a reply indicating the Minister intends to review the decision by the authority. If the Minister does not reply within thirty (30) days of the request, this is deemed to indicate that the Minister does not intend to conduct a review;
 - After conducting a review, the Minister may confirm or vary the CA's decision or make any decision the Minister considers appropriate, including issuing the permit subject to conditions;
 - The Minister is required to base the decision on the same criteria concerning natural hazards and public safety that are considered by the CA.
- The regulation would specify the circumstances under which the Minister may undertake a review of a CA permitting decision. Proposed additional requirements that would be set out in regulation include:
 - The Minister may conduct a review of a CA permit decision only if the development activity pertains to or supports a development of specified Provincial interest, including:
 - Housing (community, affordable and market-based);
 - Community services (health, long-term care, education, recreation socio-cultural, security and safety, environment);
 - Transportation infrastructure;
 - Buildings that facilitate economic development or employment;
 - and

- mixed-use developments.

Note: These criterias would not apply to permit reviews under section 28.1.2 regarding permits where there is an order made by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing under section 34.1 or 47 of the Planning Act.

- The request submitted to the Minister for a review would include information on:
 - Overview of proposed development.
 - If the request relates to conditions imposed by the CA to which the applicant objects, identification of the specific conditions that are subject to the request for review, the changes requested to the conditions, and the rationale in support of the requested changes.
 - If the request relates to a CA's decision to refuse a permit, the rationale in support of requesting that the Minister varies the decision and issues the permit.
 - Why the Minister's involvement is requested (e.g., development of Provincial interest, timing/urgency; permitting process to date; other barriers) and preferable to alternative mechanisms in the CA Act.
 - Indication of whether the local municipality has endorsed the project and/or the request for the Minister's involvement (e.g., by municipal letter or resolution).
 - Status of other required project approvals.
- The ERO posting states that, by clearly communicating the circumstances under which the Minister would consider whether to issue an order or to review a CA permitting decision, the regulation would ensure that development proponents pursue the appropriate permitting channel and that 'efficiently navigating the permitting process is expected to help save proponents time and resources.'

Implications

If the regulation is approved as proposed, some of the potential implications include:

1. Decision-making could become political rather than technical and could result in an increased risk to life and property.
2. Local decision-making could be circumvented.
3. More confusion and time delays could be introduced into the development approval process.

Suggested Recommendations for the Province

To avoid the potential implications identified above, further details and clarification regarding the Minister's scope and process for considering development proposals is recommended in consultation with CAs.

The details regarding these new Minister's powers must be carefully developed to ensure Minister's decision making on permits remains technical, apolitical and integrates a watershed perspective to natural hazard management to continue protecting the public, properties and infrastructure.

Where the Minister's decisions are inconsistent with CA Board-approved policies or CA natural hazard mapping and modelling, the liability for such decisions remains with the issuing body (the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry). CAs are not liable for decisions made under the *CA Act* by another body that may result in losses or damages, and must not be expected to undertake compliance and enforcement activities with permits issued by the Minister in these situations.

Furthermore, alternative solutions that would support provincial goals and solve the challenges that CAs and municipalities face that can lead to delays in the development approval process and meeting housing goals should also be discussed and explored between the CAs and the Province.

The implications and recommendations for the Province as described in this report, and as outlined in greater detail by Conservation Ontario, were submitted to the Province through the ERO in separate submissions on May 6, 2024.

Next Steps:

Should a new regulation detailing new Minister's permit and review powers under the *Conservation Authorities Act* be approved, the follow are key next steps:

- Update Members on the specifics and implications of the new regulation; and
- Update references to the new regulation within CA policy documents, procedural manuals and guidelines, applications, website, etc., as required.

Relevance to Authority Policy/Mandate

NVCA staff will continue to review *Planning Act* development applications and issue permits in accordance with the *Conservation Authorities Act*, O. Reg. 41/24 and any other applicable legislation and regulations.

Impact on Authority Finances:

Should this new regulation be approved, there are potential implications associated with enforcement and compliance activities related to Minister issued permits where decisions are inconsistent with CA Board-approved policies and CA natural hazards mapping and modelling, requiring additional time and staff resources at the NVCA which may impact on the Board approved budget.

Climate Change Implications

This staff report does not result in an increase in greenhouse gases, temperature or precipitation exposure.

Approved for submission by:
Original Signed by
Chris Hibberd
Director Watershed Management Services

Approved for submission by:
Original Signed by
Doug Hevenor
Chief Administrative Officer



Staff Report: 16-04-24-BOD
Date: 24/05/2024
TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors
From: Greg Marek, RPP, MCIP
Senior Planner

SUBJECT: NVCA planning staff's review of Bill 185 and potential implications for the NVCA

Recommendation

RESOLVED THAT: The Board of Directors receive and approve Staff Report No. 16-04-24-BOD regarding NVCA planning staff's review of Bill 185 and potential implications for the NVCA in its delegated responsibility from the Province to represent provincial interests regarding natural hazards.

Purpose of the Staff Report:

The purpose of this report is to update the Board of Directors on the Province's *Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024* (Bill 185) that was presented to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for first reading on April 10, 2024, which proposed legislative changes were posted to the Environmental Registry of Ontario under ERO Numbers [019-8365](#), [019-8366](#), [019-8369](#) and [019-8370](#).

Background:

The *Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024* (Bill 185) was presented to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for first reading on April 10, 2024. It is another example of a Bill brought forward by the Province of Ontario (the "**Province**") addressing matters of land use planning, development and municipal regulatory powers. It is important to note that at the time of the writing of this report, Bill 185 had not yet been passed and may be revised by the Province before it is final.

Bill 185 proposes changes to the *Planning Act, City of Toronto Act, 2006, Municipal*

Act, 2001 and the *Development Charges Act*. The proposed changes are currently posted to the Environmental Registry of Ontario under ERO Numbers [019-8365](#), [019-8366](#), [019-8369](#) and [019-8370](#). With the exception of ERO posting [019-8365](#), which is an information bulletin only, the comment period for all Bill 185 related postings was open for 30 days, closed on May 10, 2024.

This report summarizes the legislative changes proposed through Bill 185 as identified in ERO Number [019-8369](#) and the implications for municipalities and land use planning in Ontario. It also highlights any changes that may impact the Conservation Authority in its delegated responsibility from the Province to represent provincial interests regarding natural hazards, as a regulatory authority under Ontario Regulation 41/24 Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits (O. Reg.41/24); as a public body under the *Planning Act* as per our CA Board approved policies; and as per our Municipal Partnership and Service Agreements with the watershed municipalities.

Issues/Analysis:

Proposed Planning Act, City of Toronto Act, 2006, and Municipal Act, 2001 Changes (Schedules 4, 9, and 12 of Bill 185 - the proposed Bill 185, Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024) (ERO Number [019-8369](#))

Changes to Appeal Rights

- It is understood that Conservation Authorities as public bodies will retain their ability to appeal where there are concerns regarding development in an area subject to natural hazards, and where before the approval authority made its decision, the Conservation Authority made oral submissions at a public meeting or written submissions to the approval authority.

Settlement Area Boundary Expansions

- The Province proposes to allow applicants to appeal a municipality's refusal or failure to make a decision on privately requested official plan or zoning by-law amendments that would change the settlement area boundaries, outside of the Greenbelt Area. There is concern that proposals for settlement area boundary expansions would disregard or underestimate natural hazards, safe access, and source water protection constraints to developable lands; resulting in a lengthy appeal process initiated by municipalities or CAs.
- **Recommendation to Province** - That the proposal be amended to require expansion of settlement area boundaries to exclude hazardous lands and hazardous sites, lands where safe access through the hazard cannot be achieved, and where development should be restricted to protect the quality and quantity of drinking water supplies.

"Use It or Lose It"

- Bill 185 proposes to expand on the existing municipal authority to attach lapsing provisions to draft plans of subdivision, to site plan approvals as well.

- This proposal would help address outdated approvals that do not meet modern planning standards and would allow for the impacts of natural hazards to be reassessed upon lapsing. Natural hazards are dynamic and variable [especially in a changing climate] and the proposed tool would ensure that approvals reflect the current state of natural hazard features and associated risks; to reduce potential risks to public health and safety, and to property damage.

Pre-Consultation

- Bill 185 proposes to remove the municipal authority's ability to require pre-consultation for applications for official plan amendments, zoning by-law amendments, site plan approval and draft plans of subdivision. Instead, the *Planning Act* and the *City of Toronto Act, 2006* would be amended to simply permit applicants to seek pre-consultation.
- Should this proposal be enacted and where CAs are not included in pre-application consultation, the opportunity to address natural hazard impacts or potential impacts on drinking water sources protected by a Source Protection Plan could be missed. This may result in further delays as these impacts will need to be addressed in a less comprehensive manner later in the process.
- **Recommendation to Province** - Retain the ability for councils and planning authorities to pass by-laws requiring pre-application consultation; and allow time to complete the consultation process to enable planning authorities to make a complete application decision, prior to allowing an applicant to appeal to the OLT.

Additional Residential Units (ARUs)

- This proposal would enhance the Minister's authority to make regulations that would remove elements of municipal zoning by-laws for ARUs, such as basement suites. This enhanced authority would allow the Minister to eliminate zoning such as maximum lot coverage and limits on bedrooms allowed per lot.
- NVCA permits will still be required for ARUs in regulated areas in accordance with O. Reg. 41/24
 - One potential challenge will be that if the provisions of a municipal zoning by-law that restricts dwelling units, including ARUs from being located in hazardous lands is not applied, and the ARU is in an area where the Conservation Authority would be unable to support or permit the creation of the dwelling unit in its regulated area, there is now a conflict between land uses permitting through the *Planning Act* and the *Conservation Authorities Act*. The Conservation Authority would also then need to refuse the permit application and potentially have to work through an appeal process.
- **Recommendation to Province** - Clarify the proposed Minister's regulation-making authority that would not allow the Minister to remove elements of municipal zoning by-laws which would direct ARUs outside of hazardous lands and hazardous sites and where safe access through the hazard is not achieved. Furthermore, the Province should continue to empower municipalities to

regulate lot coverage where there is a higher possibility that stormwater infrastructure could be overwhelmed.

Facilitating Standardized Housing Designs

- Bill 185 would create regulation-making authority that would enable:
 - The establishment of criteria to facilitate planning approvals for standardized housing.
 - The proposed changes would only apply on certain specified lands, of a minimum lot size, such as urban residential lands with full municipal servicing outside of the Greenbelt Area.
 - The identification of elements of the *Planning Act* and/or *City of Toronto Act, 2006* that could be overridden and/or certain planning barriers that could be removed if the criteria are met.
- **Recommendation to Province** - Amend the proposal so any new regulation include criteria that standardized housing shall not be permitted in lands affected by hazardous lands and hazardous sites, and where safe access through the hazard cannot be achieved.

Minister Zoning Orders

- New framework in place for requesting a Ministers Zoning Order (MZO) including criteria that will consider provincial priorities.
 - Reportedly the new framework will result in a revised and transparent process for requesting and issuing minister's zoning orders. This new framework should provide an opportunity for Conservation Authorities to provide input on development activity proposed by way of an MZO. Of note, if a Conservation Authority permit is required for development activity permitted by an MZO and the conditions attached to a Conservation Authority permit conflict with the terms of a Minister's order made under 47 of the *Planning Act*, the terms of the order shall prevail.

Expediting Approval process for Community Service Facilities and Exempting Universities from Planning Act Requirements

- A new section of the *Planning Act* is proposed that authorizes regulations to provide for the non-application of any provision of the Act, or a regulation made under the Act, or for setting out restrictions or limitations to prescribed classes of community service facilities that meet prescribed requirements. The proposal would apply to community service facilities, including an undertaking of a board defined under the *Education Act*, a long-term care home, and a hospital. Similarly, publicly assisted colleges and universities are proposed to be exempt from the *Planning Act* and planning provisions of the *City of Toronto Act, 2006* for university-led student housing projects on- and off-campus.
- The Provincial Policy Statement strictly prohibits institutional uses, including long-term care homes, hospitals, and schools from being located in lands affected by natural hazards and where safe access through the hazard cannot be achieved. Any proposed exemption must consider the Province's direction regarding natural hazards to ensure vulnerable populations or sensitive uses

are not located in areas that pose an increased risk to life and property.

- **Recommendation to Province** - Amend the proposal to ensure any new regulation excludes institutional uses and student housing from hazardous lands and hazardous sites and where safe access through the hazard cannot be achieved, in accordance with provincial standards.

Upper-Tier Planning Responsibilities

- Under Bill 185, the upper-tier municipalities of Peel, Halton and York will no longer have planning responsibilities as of July 1, 2024. The Regions of Durham, Niagara and Waterloo and the County of Simcoe continue to be identified as “upper-tier municipalities without planning responsibilities,” however the in-force date for their loss of planning responsibilities would come into effect upon proclamation by the Lieutenant Governor, at some point in the future.

In conclusion, with the exception of the proposed changes to the *Planning Act* to give the Minister new regulation-making power to remove zoning barriers by establishing requirements and standards with respect to ARUs for various dwelling types, most of the changes will have limited impacts to the Conservation Authority in its delegated responsibility from the Province to represent provincial interests regarding natural hazards.

The above-noted comments were shared with Conservation Ontario in the form of a memo to assist in their review of the Bill 185.

Next Steps:

Should the *Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024* (Bill 185) be approved and should there be any potential implications to the Authority’s mandate, a follow-up report identifying those implications will be brought to the Board of Directors.

Relevance to Authority Policy/Mandate

NVCA staff will continue to review and comment on municipal *Planning Act* applications, and review and approve NVCA permits applications in accordance with all applicable legislation and regulations.

Impact on Authority Finances:

Should Bill 185 be approved, there is a potential impact on the Board approved budget should there be appeals to the Conservation Authority’s decision to refuse a permit application for an ARU in hazardous lands in a regulated area, where the ARU is permitted on the basis that the land use controls in Part V of the *Planning Act* are not applied.

Climate Change Implications

This staff report does not result in an increase in greenhouse gases, temperature or precipitation exposure.

Approved for submission by:
Original Signed by
Chris Hibberd
Director Watershed Management Services

Approved for submission by:
Original Signed by
Doug Hevenor
Chief Administrative Officer



Staff Report: 17-04-24-BOD

Date: 25/05/2025

To: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors

From: Kyra Howes
Director, Conservation Services

SUBJECT: Spring Tonic Maple Syrup Festival Update

Recommendation

RESOLVED THAT: the Board of Directors receive Staff Report No. 17-04-24-BOD as information.

Purpose of the Staff Report

The purpose of this staff report is to provide an update to the Board of Directors on a brief history of the Spring Tonic Maple Syrup Festival and an update on this year's event.

Background

The Spring Tonic Maple Syrup Festival has been operating at the Tiffin Centre for over 3 decades. Previously, the event was run by NVCA's Board of Directors and staff. As the event expanded, the event needs exceeded the capacity of this small group, resulting in the development of the partnership with the Rotary Club of Barrie.

Many of the offerings at the event have remained consistent over the decades with a focus on maple syrup production and family friendly events such as horse or tractor drawn wagon rides, live local musicians, and petting zoo. Over the years, partnerships have been established with local service providers, including the Simcoe County Paramedics, the Essa Fire Department and the Cadets (navy, air

and army). The event planning team continue to annually review and expand offerings and have recently introduced dog agility demonstrations provided by Red Barn Events.

The event also encourages 'hands on' participation with the construction of bird boxes, crafts and tree tapping demonstrations. Visitors are encouraged to purchase 'made at Tiffin' syrup and locally produced maple syrup products.

This event provides the opportunity for the public to engage with NVCA and fosters a sense of community.

The event is typically hosted the first weekend of April. The success of this event is highly weather dependant and in 2024, event organizers were pleasantly surprised to have exceptional weather for both days of the event. An information both with NVCA provided staff the opportunity to engage with members of the public and provide information on NVCA operations and activities.

Issues/Analysis

NVCA staff and volunteers appreciate NVCA's Board of Director support which allows us to continue to offer this flagship community event. Every year, over 3,000 community members and visitors come out to enjoy this festival. Support from local municipal partners, including the Township of Essa, ensure this event continues to be a success.

Support provided by the Rotary Club of Barrie results in over 300 volunteer hours required to successfully run the event every year. These volunteers limit the staffing costs associated to maintain such a high quality, community-based experience.

Relevance to Authority Policy/Mandate

Under the *Conservation Authorities Act*, Conservation Authorities may provide services programs and services an authority determines are advisable, provided the support of their municipal partners. NVCA is fortunate that all watershed municipal partners continue to be supportive of this event and view this event as an opportunity to engage and educate the community on the Authority and an important part of Canadian History.

Impact on Authority Finances

The revenues generated by the Spring Tonic Maple Syrup festival are split between the Rotary Club of Barrie and NVCA. Proceeds from the event support community

projects, such as the Royal Victoria Hospital, the Salvation Army, affordable housing and many other community enhancement projects throughout Simcoe County as well as towards maintaining the Tiffin Conservation Area.

Climate Change Implications

This report has no climate change implications.

Reviewed by:
Original Signed by
Kyra Howes
Director, Conservation Services

Approved for submission by:
Original Signed by
Doug Hevenor
Chief Administrative Officer



Staff Report: 18-04-24-BOD

Date: 24/05/2024

To: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors

From: Maria Leung
Senior Communications Specialist

SUBJECT: Communications Report – April 12, 2024 – May 10, 2024

Recommendation

RESOLVED THAT: Staff Report No. 18-04-24-BOD regarding NVCA Communications – April 12, 2024 – May 10, 2024, be received.

Purpose of the Staff Report

This staff report presents a summary of NVCA media coverage and public outreach during the period of April 12, 2024 – May 10, 2024.

The following outlines the communications and media coverage during the period.

1. Flood Messages

Watershed Condition Statement: Water Safety, issued on April 12, 2024

There was no media coverage for this flood message.

2. Media coverage of NVCA news releases

Column: Good river habitat restoration benefits everyone, not just fish, issued on April 23, 2024

Communications Report – April 12, 2024 – May 10, 2024
 Staff Report No. 18-04-24-BOD

Title	Media Outlet	Date	Reference
COLUMN: River habitat restoration benefits more than just fish	Collingwood Today	April 24, 2024	Fred Dobbs, Manager, Stewardship Services
COLUMN: River habitat restoration benefits more than just fish	Barrie Today	April 26, 2024	Fred Dobbs, Manager, Stewardship Services
COLUMN: River habitat restoration benefits more than just fish	Bradford Today	April 27, 2024	Fred Dobbs, Manager, Stewardship Services
COLUMN: River habitat restoration benefits more than just fish	Orillia Matters	April 25, 2024	Fred Dobbs, Manager, Stewardship Services

NVCA Board of Directors advocates to province to maintain free testing for private wells, issued on April 30, 2024

Title	Media Outlet	Date	Reference
NVCA urges government to maintain free testing of private wells	Barrie Today	April 30, 2024	Vice Chair Scott
NVCA urges government to maintain free testing of private wells	Bradford Today	April 30, 2024	Vice Chair Scott
Local agency urges province to maintain free testing of private wells	Orillia Matters	May 3, 2024	Vice Chair Scott
'It is such an essential service': Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority, Clearview Township ask province to keep well water testing free	Wasaga Sun	May 8, 2024	Vice Chair Scott
NVCA asks province to maintain free well testing	New Tecumseth Times	May 9, 2024	Vice Chair Scott

Apply for NVCA permits early to avoid delays, issued on May 7, 2024

Title	Media Outlet	Date	Reference
Conservation authority urges residents to apply early for permits	Barrie Today	May 7, 2024	Ben Krul, Manager, Development Planning and Permits
Conservation authority urges residents to apply early for permits	Bradford Today	May 7, 2024	Ben Krul, Manager, Development Planning and Permits
Conservation authority urges residents to apply early for permits	Collingwood Today	May 7, 2024	Ben Krul, Manager, Development Planning and Permits
Conservation authority urges residents to apply early for permits	Innisfil Today	May 7, 2024	Ben Krul, Manager, Development Planning and Permits
Conservation authority urges residents to apply early for permits	Orillia Matters	May 9, 2024	Ben Krul, Manager, Development Planning and Permits

All other media releases can be found on [NVCA website under "News."](#)

3. Other Media Coverage

Title	Media Outlet	Date	Reference
NVCA accepting applications for 2025 tree-planting program	Collingwood Today	April 14, 2024	Rick Grillmayer, Manager, Forestry
NVCA, Friends of the Mad River call for tree planters	Creemore Echo	April 19, 2024	
'Excited' councillor named Conservation Ontario vice-chair	Bradford Today	April 21, 2024	Vice Chair Scott
Residents Invited to Take Advantage of Tree Planting Grants	FM 101 Milton	April 26, 2024	
Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club takes part in habitat restoration event	Caledon Citizen	May 9, 2024	Shannon Stephens, Healthy Waters Coordinator

Title	Media Outlet	Date	Reference
NVCA rallies people to plant trees along Mono Centre Creek	Orangeville Citizen	May 9, 2024	Shannon Stephens, Healthy Waters Coordinator

DISCLAIMER: NVCA does not allege that the information provided in the media articles depicts accurate statements or testimonies on behalf of any individual named, and is not responsible for any misinterpretation of information or misquoted statement(s).

2. Other Communication/Media Outreach

- Ongoing – social media outreach (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn)

3. Presentations/Displays/Key Events by NVCA staff

- April 27, 2024 – NVCA attended Earth Fest in the Town of New Tecumseth as a vendor
- April 27, 2024 – Laura Wensink, River Restoration Technician, presented at Earth Fest in the Town of New Tecumseth
- April 28, 2024 – Volunteer tree planting event in Adjala-Tosorontio
- May 2, 2024 – Volunteer tree planting event in the Municipality of Grey Highlands
- May 3, 2024 – Volunteer tree planting event in the Town of Collingwood
- May 5, 2024 – Volunteer tree planting event in the Township of Clearview
- May 7, 2024 – Volunteer tree planting event in the Township of Mulmur
- May 8, 2024 - Volunteer tree planting event in the City of Barrie
- May 9, 2024 - Volunteer tree planting event in the City of Barrie

Issues/Analysis

The media coverage and public outreach/communications in this reporting period was positive with regard to NVCA work and programs. There are no issues of concern at this time.

Impact on Authority Finances

Staff time to prepare this report is addressed in the 2024 budget.

Climate Change Implications

This staff report does not result in an increase in green house gases, temperature or precipitation exposure.

Reviewed by:
Original Signed by
Sheryl Flannagan
Director, Corporate Services

Approved for submission by:
Original Signed by
Doug Hevenor
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment 1 – Media Clippings for the period

NVCA accepting applications for 2025 tree-planting program

Conservation authority could cover up to 95% of tree-planting projects

April 14, 2024

Collingwood Today



The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority is accepting applications for its 2025 tree-planting program. Photo supplied by the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority

NEWS RELEASE

NOTTAWASAGA VALLEY

CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Landowners are invited to apply for the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority's (NVCA) 2025 tree-planting grants before next winter.

"As spring is approaching, many landowners are looking to plant their forests this year," said Rick Grillmayer, manager of forestry at NVCA. "However, planting forests takes a lot of planning. We look at soil conditions, the tree species that are suitable for the property, and most importantly, we need to let the nurseries know what species of trees we need so they can start growing the trees."

There are two requirements to qualify for tree planting grants from NVCA: The property must be in the Nottawasaga watershed, and there is a minimum of one hectare of planting space. Depending on the location of the site, NVCA may be able to cover 25 to 95 per cent of tree-planting projects. Properties over 4.45 hectares in size may be eligible for the [Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program](#).

"Interested landowners can contact me to schedule a free site visit," continued Grillmayer. "We will discuss the tree-planting process, funding structure and feasibility of planting on the site. If everything goes well, I will develop a tree-planting plan for the site and schedule the property into the 2025 spring tree plant."

Landowners who do not meet the minimum requirements for NVCA's tree-planting program can purchase seedlings at NVCA's Arbor Day Tree Sale. There will be a variety of bare-root tree and shrub seedlings for sale. Trees and shrubs are sold in bundles of 10 for \$35 each.

Planting trees helps to provide wildlife habitat, shade rivers and streams, produces oxygen, among many other benefits. Well-managed forests also contribute to the economy by providing wood for construction and wood fibre for products such as paper.

For more information about NVCA's tree-planting program or Arbor Day Tree Sale, visit nvca.on.ca.

To schedule your site assessment, contact Rick Grillmayer at 705-424-

1479, ext. 230, or
email rgrillmayer@nvca.on.ca.

NVCA, Friends of the Mad River call for tree planters

April 19, 2024 by Trina Berlo

Creemore Echo



Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) and the Friends of the Mad River are organizing a tree-planting near Creemore on Sunday, May 5.

Volunteers are needed to plant native trees and shrubs along the banks of Temperance Creek. Trees will help enhance fish and wildlife habitat, shade the stream, stabilize the banks and capture carbon.

Individuals, families and community groups are welcome. (Uneven surfaces and a steep slope make this event not recommended for small children.)

The morning will begin with an orientation and tree planting tutorial. Volunteers are advised to wear closed toed shoes or rubber boots, and bring a rain jacket, hat, work gloves, sunscreen, bug spray, snacks and extra water.

A portable toilet will be available on site.

The planting is on Concession 6 Nottawasaga, from 9 a.m. to noon.

Registration is required at nvca.on.ca/events-and-education/volunteer-events.

Students are encouraged to take the opportunity to accumulate some of their required volunteer hours.

This event will take place rain or shine but will be rescheduled if there is extreme weather.

The NVCA is also hosting its 34th annual Arbour Day tree sale on May 11, from 8 a.m. to noon at the Tiffin Conservation Area, 8195 8th Line of Essa, Utopia. Trees and shrubs will be sold in bundles of 10 for \$35 each. Selection is based on first come, first serve. Visit nvca.on.ca for more information.

'Excited' councillor named Conservation Ontario vice-chair

'It's a really important time to have conservation authorities getting that balance right between environmental protection and smart growth,' says Bradford's Jonathan Scott

April 21, 2024 by Michael Owen

Bradford Today



Ward 2 Coun. Jonathan Scott was acclaimed as vice-chair of Conservation Ontario during the association's annual general meeting in Richmond Hill on Monday, April 15. Supplied

This long-time Bradford local sees protecting the environment as part of the Canadian identity.

Ward 2 Coun. Jonathan Scott was acclaimed as one of two vice-chairs for Conservation Ontario, during their annual general meeting (AGM) in Richmond Hill on Monday, April 15.

"I'm excited," said Scott, who is also vice-chair of the Nottawasaga Valley

Conservation Authority (NVCA). "I like the work we do, both locally and province wide. I think it's a really important time to have conservation authorities getting that balance right between environmental protection and smart growth."

Monday's AGM offered Scott the chance to dive into his new role almost immediately, as the chair needed to leave the meeting early to attend a council meeting, leaving Scott to chair the remainder. Those meetings generally include, among other things, a review of any new findings from Environment and Climate Change Canada, information about available grants, updates on the association's advocacy efforts and a breakdown of any recent changes to federal or provincial regulations.

Luckily, this was far from Scott's first time chairing a meeting.

"I like to think I bring some energy and a fresh perspective, as I have on the NVCA and as our town council's green initiatives chair," he said.

In addition to having been involved in various environmental causes and having worked with various non-governmental organizations throughout his professional career, Scott became chair the town's [green initiatives committee](#) in April 2023 following the municipal election in November 2022, was [elected as vice-chair of the NVCA](#) in early 2023 and earlier this year was [acclaimed for a second term](#).

In the previous term of council, Scott also [began advocating](#) for a [phosphorus recycling](#)

[facility](#) among [other ongoing measures](#) in the Holland Marsh and worked with fellow Bradford Coun. Peter Ferragine as well as councillors from other municipalities [to push for](#) having Lake Simcoe included in the federal [Freshwater Action Plan](#) and the Canada Water Agency.

“What conservation authorities do at the local and regional level and what Conservation Ontario does on their behalf province wide is probably more important than ever right now,” he said. “I grew up in Bradford in the ’90s and early 2000s when we were starting to rapidly grow. We’re on the Holland River, the Holland Marsh, Lake Simcoe — these are such key parts of our area’s identity.

“On a personal level, I grew up skating on ponds, I grew up life guarding and swimming in lakes in Muskoka,” he said. “So much of the Canadian identity ... is based around water. We’re blessed to have fresh water, but we’re putting a lot of pressure on our lakes, our rivers and our wetlands.”

To address that, Scott says his focus remains on two key areas: encouraging smart growth and advocating for more funding to protect fresh water.

While he acknowledges that some planning processes can contain “red tape,” which should be improved to be faster and more fair to the development community, Scott also values the importance of performing “due diligence” to avoid unintended consequences such as flooding, lack of green space or neighbourhoods where

residents can’t safely or reasonably walk to amenities.

“We need to build housing to bring housing within reach for people who can’t afford it today, but we also need to do it in a sustainable way,” he said.

Conservation Ontario is non-profit association representing Ontario’s 36 different conservation authorities, with the goal of promoting and strengthening those conservation efforts by bringing together those authorities to create policies and advocate on issues common to all of them.

Conservation Ontario is governed by a six-member elected board of directors and directed by a council comprised of appointed and elected municipal officials from the 36 conservation authorities.

For more information about Conservation Ontario, visit conservationontario.ca.

COLUMN: River habitat restoration benefits more than just fish

Efforts also help reduce effects of flooding and erosion, says Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority official

April 24, 2024

Collingwood Today



3 / 6 Before and after restoration. Photo supplied by the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority



1 / 6 A mother and daughter volunteered to plant trees to cool the Pine River. Photo supplied by the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority



4 / 6 Two friends planted a young sapling and used a coconut fibre mat to discourage other plants from growing around it. Photo supplied by the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority



2 / 6 An excavator installs log jams into the river bank to stabilize the soil. Photo supplied by the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority



5 / 6 Two volunteers anchor Christmas trees to the river bank to reduce erosion and create fish habitat. Photo

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6 / 6 Volunteers install Christmas trees along the river bank to reduce erosion and create fish nurseries. Photo supplied by the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority

Throughout the year, anglers can be seen on the banks of the Nottawasaga River looking to catch Chinook salmon, rainbow trout, brown trout and the occasional walleye, as well as brook trout in the headwaters of the river.

Historically, the Nottawasaga River has supported native fish such as lake sturgeon, brook trout and brook lamprey. Between the early 1900s and the 1970s, rainbow trout, brown trout and Chinook salmon moved into this river system. The unique habitat the Nottawasaga River provides helped these fish thrive, creating the world-class fishing opportunities we experience today.

Some of the greatest fishing hotspots along the river are in the Township of Essa and the Town of Wasaga Beach. In September, Essa hosts a river bank fishing derby, attracting hundreds of people to the area each year. Anglers who prefer fishing on Georgian Bay

set sail from Wasaga Beach and Collingwood to catch rainbow trout and Chinook salmon.

Like other forms of tourism, this sport and hobby makes huge contributions to local economies. During their fishing excursions, many anglers purchase fishing gear, food, and gas. They may visit local businesses like coffee shops and restaurants, and stay at local accommodations. [According to the selected results from the 2020 recreational fishing survey in Ontario](#), an estimated 1.15 million anglers spent \$1.74 billion on fishing-related expenses across Ontario.

The Nottawasaga River is one of the largest rivers that flows into Georgian Bay. Small streams arise from the Niagara Escarpment near Orangeville, and come together as the upper Nottawasaga River. The river flows 150 kilometres north to Georgian Bay, collecting water from tributaries such as the Mad River, the Pine River and Willow Creek along the way.

Although the Nottawasaga River provides excellent fish habitat, water quality in some parts of the river is impacted by urbanization and agriculture. Through data collection and analysis, the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority's (NVCA) biologists have identified transition zones where water quality and aquatic habitat conditions decline.

The NVCA partnered with Nottawasaga Futures' South Simcoe Streams Network and established the Nottawasaga River restoration program in 2019 to restore these transition zones, which make up

roughly 10 km of highly impacted river habitat.

By engaging with a wide range of volunteers, funders, landowners, community groups, local municipalities, and other partners, the two groups have been working to stabilize eroding river banks, install fish habitat, plant trees to keep the river cool, and construct floodplains to reduce the effects of flooding and erosion.

Not only do these restoration projects improve local aquatic habitats; they help reduce the impacts of flooding and erosion, as vegetated stream banks are more likely to withstand heavy rain and remain stable.

To understand the significance of the Nottawasaga River restoration project, we encourage everyone [to watch this mini-documentary](#). If you're looking to volunteer to help plant trees and restore the river this spring and summer, [register on our website at nvca.on.ca](#).

Fred Dobbs is the manager of stewardship services at the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority.

COLUMN: River habitat restoration benefits more than just fish

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April 25, 2024

Orillia Matters



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Fred Dobbs is the manager of stewardship services at the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority.

COLUMN: River habitat restoration benefits more than just fish

Efforts also help reduce effects of flooding and erosion, says Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority official

April 26, 2024

Barrie Today



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Residents Invited to Take Advantage of Tree Planting Grants

April 26, 2024 by Adrienne Proceviat

FM 101 Milton

<https://www.nvca.on.ca/arbor-day-tree-sale/>



The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority is inviting residents to apply for next years tree planting grants.

Home owners require a minimum of 1 hectare of planting space for the trees and the property must be in the Nottawasaga Watershed.

Properties over 4.45 hectares in size may be eligible for the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program.

The NVCA will assist with the development of a tree planting plan for your property and schedule it into the 2025 spring tree plant!

They will also look at soil conditions and the tree species that are suitable for your property.

Landowners who do not meet the minimum requirements for NVCA's tree planting program can purchase seedlings during the **Arbor Day Tree Sale** on **May 11**.

For more information

COLUMN: River habitat restoration benefits more than just fish

Efforts also help reduce effects of flooding and erosion, says Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority official

April 27, 2024

Bradford Today



3 / 6 Before and after restoration. Photo supplied by the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority



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NVCA urges government to maintain free testing of private wells

'Free well-water testing is a critically important public service and a vital public-health measure for rural residents across our watershed,' says official

April 30, 2024

Barrie Today

NEWS RELEASE
NOTTAWASAGA VALLEY
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

The NVCA’s board of directors has sent a letter to the Province of Ontario to call on the province to not phase out free well-water testing for private wells. Ontarians who get their drinking water from municipal sources are protected by the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act.

Although residents on private wells have benefitted from free water testing provided by the Ontario government, they do not have the same legislated protections, putting the residents responsible for protecting and monitoring their own drinking water sources.

“Free well-water testing is a critically important public service and a vital public-health measure for rural residents across our watershed,” said Jonathan Scott, vice- chair of the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority. “The NVCA board urges the provincial government to maintain free well-water testing. It’s the right thing to do to ensure equitable access to safe drinking water.”

Well water safety largely depends on the activities conducted around the well. Even if a well is properly installed and maintained, bacteria can contaminate the drinking water if septic systems, manure or pet waste is located too close to the well. A large proportion of residents in the Nottawasaga Watershed rely on private wells for drinking water.

Through local health units, the Ontario government tests water from private wells for bacteria such as E. coli to prevent serious gastrointestinal illnesses. NVCA encourages watershed residents to contact their local health unit for more information about private well water testing, or download the Testing and Treating Private Water Wells fact sheet developed by the Government of Ontario.

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May 3, 2024

Orillia Matters

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Conservation authority urges residents to apply early for permits

Property owners can book pre-consultation with NVCA planning team

May 7, 2024

Barrie Today



File photo | Photo supplied by the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority

NEWS RELEASE
NOTTAWASAGA VALLEY
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Property owners in the Nottawasaga watershed are urged to apply early for permits from the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) to avoid unexpected delays.

Property owners may need to get a permit from NVCA to do projects on or near a watercourse, river, stream, pond, wetland, steep slope, floodplain or the Georgian Bay shoreline. These areas are considered natural and hazardous. Depending on the complexity of the project, getting a permit may take longer than anticipated.

“We require specific information from property owners to determine if the project will be safe from flooding, erosion and other natural hazards,” said Ben Krul, manager of development planning and permits. “In some cases, technical studies are required, and may take property owners some time to develop. We try our best to have a quick turnaround for projects that are considered low risk and do not require technical studies, but it may still take up to 30 days.”

NVCA is responsible for regulating activities in natural and hazardous areas to avoid damage to property and loss of life due to flooding and erosion. Through provincial regulations that came into effect on April 1, 2024, NVCA will issue permits within 90 days of receiving a complete application.

Property owners are encouraged to book a pre-consultation with NVCA’s planning team. At the pre-consultation, staff will review project plans and provide the steps required to complete the permit application.

To learn more about common natural hazards found in the Nottawasaga watershed and where development should be placed in order to be safe, [visit NVCA’s website](#).

For more information and to book a pre-consultation, call NVCA’s planning team at 705-424-1479 or email permits@nvca.on.ca.

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May 7, 2024

Bradford Today



File photo | Photo supplied by the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority

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Collingwood Today



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Conservation authority urges residents to apply early for permits

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May 7, 2024

Innisfil Today



File photo | Photo supplied by the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority

NEWS RELEASE
NOTTAWASAGA VALLEY
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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**'It is such an essential service':
Nottawasaga Valley Conservation
Authority, Clearview Township ask
province to keep well water
testing free**

Audit of Public Health Ontario
recommended free well water testing
come to an end

Minister of Health Sylvia Jones said
there are currently 'no changes' to
free well water testing program.

May 8, 2024 by Ian Adams

Wasaga Sun



*Public Health Ontario provides a free
service for residents on well water to
test for bacterial contamination.*

Bruce-Grey Health Unit photo

The deputy chairperson of the regional
conservation authority wants to see
action, not just words, from Ontario's
health minister on the subject of free
well water testing.

Jonathan Scott, who is also the Ward
2 councillor in Bradford West
Gwillimbury, said Sylvia Jones is
showing a "lack of precision" in how
she speaks about the free tests for
private wells offered through [Public
Health Ontario](#) (PHO).

At the end of April, the board of
the [Nottawasaga Valley Conservation
Authority](#) called on the provincial
government to not phase out free
well-water testing for private wells.

PHO tests for coliforms — bacteria
often found in animal waste and
sewage — as well as E. coli. Currently,
the PHO provides free test kits for
Ontarians to test their well water
themselves, by dropping off their
sample at their local public health
unit.

In 2017, Public Health Ontario
proposed a plan to update its public
health laboratory services that would
have resulted in the gradual closing of
six of its 11 lab sites — including the
one in Orillia — and changing the type
of tests offered at the Public Health
Ontario Laboratory, removing 20 tests
and restricting eligibility for 12
additional tests, as well as the gradual
discontinuation of private drinking
water testing.

In 2023, an audit of Public Health
Ontario by the auditor general made
the same recommendation to the
ministry to consolidate lab sites and
gradually discontinue private drinking
water testing.

Source protection committees from
across Ontario have since urged the
province to reject the
recommendation.



Jonathan Scott is the deputy chairperson of the board of the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority and the councillor for Ward 2 in Bradford West Gwillimbury.

NVCA photo

“When we look at protecting water, it’s flooding, it’s natural heritage, it’s risk management, but it’s also ensuring that water is well stewarded and people have access to safe drinking water,” Scott said.

[When asked about the possibility of discontinuing free testing](#), Jones stated in the legislature on April 22 there would be no changes.

“To be clear, there are no changes where the people of Ontario can get their well water tested for free in the province of Ontario,” Jones said in response to a question from St. Catharines MPP Jennifer Stevens. “As a government, we have been very

clear that there are no changes anticipated in well water testing.”

Scott said he found Jones’s answer noncommittal.

“I don’t like when politicians try to be clever with words — and in this case, what she hasn’t said is ‘free well water testing will continue, full stop,’” he said. “She said well water testing is currently free, she has said we will continue to test well water.”

The letter to the minister from the NVCA noted residents on private wells do not have the same legislated protections as those who get their water from municipal systems, which fall under the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act.

According to the NVCA, well water safety largely depends on the activities conducted around the well. Even if a well is properly installed and maintained, bacteria can contaminate the drinking water if septic systems, manure or pet waste is located too close to the well.

The NVCA’s letter has since been followed up by local municipalities, including Clearview Township, which passed a motion supporting the NVCA’s letter at council’s April 29 meeting. Deputy Mayor Paul Van Stavaren, who is also the township’s representative on the NVCA, noted the municipality’s residents are “predominantly” on private wells.

“This is critical for rural residents all over Ontario, especially in Clearview,” he said. “If we do not continue water well testing ... it’s going to cost our health system. It is such an essential

service to the people of rural Ontario. (Public Health Ontario) has lost sight of the potential costs and effects on (the rural) community.”

Scott said it is a matter of equitable access to testing for rural residents.

“Will it remain a public service so that rural residents, particularly the rural poor, have equitable access to safe drinking water? Or will it, at one point, stop being free?” Scott asked. “I would just say to the minister, ‘let’s just have a straight answer, will free well water testing be maintained’. That’s the question, and we need an exact answer.”

Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club takes part in habitat restoration event

May 9, 2024 by Zachary Roman

Caledon Citizen



Members of a Caledon club helped restore vital habitat last weekend.

On May 4, the Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club's biodiversity team partnered with Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) staff and Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) staff for a habitat restoration project at Whitetail Refuge Nature Reserve in Mono.

Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club president Sandra Green said a better weather day for the project couldn't have been asked for. There were around 40 volunteers out to restore habitat, and together they planted 450 shrubs and bare root trees.

The trees and shrubs planted last Saturday will create a forested corridor along Mono Centre Creek. Green explained the creek is part of the Nottawasaga River watershed, which flows downstream from the

Niagara Escarpment to discharge into Georgian Bay.

Mara McHaffie is a land stewardship coordinator and ecologist with the BTC. She said the BTC was thrilled to partner with the NVCA and Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club for the May 4 event.

"By planting trees and shrubs along Mono Centre Creek, we are enhancing wildlife habitat and mitigating the effects of climate change on this coldwater stream," said McHaffie. "Ecological stewardship projects such as this are critical to supporting our mission of preserving a ribbon of wilderness, for everyone, forever."

Shannon Stephens is a healthy waters program coordinator for the NVCA. She said spring is an exciting time of year when long-planned-for projects can finally begin.

"I always think of some of the NVCA's community habitat restoration days as an odd matchmaking service between the properties that need some help, and the volunteers that can help them," said Stephens. "Whether it's planting trees, rehabilitating rivers, creating wetlands or seeding grasslands, without the help of about 2,000 amazing volunteers a year, great landowners and partners like the Bruce Trail Conservancy, and charitable funders, this type of watershed restoration couldn't happen... together, we make the valley a wonderful place to live in, for more living things than just people."

NVCA asks province to maintain free well testing

New Tecumseth Times by Brian Lockhart

May 9, 2024

The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority is asking the province to not phase out free well-water testing for private wells.

The NVCA Board of Directors sent a letter to the province stating their position that well-water testing is an important public health measure.

Ontarians who get their drinking water from municipal sources are protected by the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act.

While residents with private wells have benefited from free water testing provided by the Ontario government, they do not have the same legislated protections – leaving residents responsible for protecting and monitoring their own drinking water sources.

“Free well-water testing is a critically important public service and a vital public-health measure for rural residents across our watershed,” said Jonathan Scott, Vice Chair of the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority. “The NVCA board urges the provincial government to maintain free well-water testing. It’s the right thing to do to ensure equitable access to safe drinking water.”

Well, water safety largely depends on the activities conducted around the well. Even if a well is properly installed and maintained, bacteria can

contaminate the drinking water if septic systems, manure, or pet waste is located too close to the well.

A large proportion of residents in the Nottawasaga watershed rely on private wells for drinking water. Through local health units, the Ontario government tests water from private wells for bacteria such as E. Coli to prevent serious gastrointestinal illnesses.

NVCA rallies people to plant trees along Mono Centre Creek

May 9, 2024 by James Matthews

Orangeville Citizen

The effort to repopulate Mono Centre Creek with native vegetation is taking root this weekend.

The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority is rallying people to help plant trees and shrubs along the creek on May 11, starting at 9 a.m. Planting trees will help enhance fish and wildlife habitat, shade the stream, reduce erosion, and capture carbon.

Shannon Stephens, the authority's Healthy Waters Program coordinator, said as many as 100,000 trees are planted through the watershed throughout the season.

Pre-registration is required. That can be done by way of the NVCA website, at its events page.

Mono Centre Creek is a trout and salmon waterway at the headwaters of four river systems. And repopulating vegetation there is all the more important as trout and salmon are sensitive to water temperature.

Trees shade waterways, keeping the temperature favourable for fish, Stephens said. And shading the waters helps aquatic insects thrive. Those insects are food for many fish species.

"We kind of help those fish survive, especially in light of climate change," Stephens said.

She said more than 1,000 people participate in the spring planting.

Participants for the Mono Centre Creek event can meet at 754387 Mono Centre Road where parking will be available at roadside.

"It's amazing," Stephens said. "It's always a fun event."

An orientation and tree-planting tutorial will be provided to participants. Washroom facilities will be on site.

The planting will take place rain or shine but will be rescheduled if there is extreme weather. As such, organizers are asked to dress for the weather. Wear closed-toed shoes or rubber boots, use sunscreen and bug spray, and pack extra water, snacks and a lunch.

Don't forget work gloves, said the event's organizers.

Spring is tick season and participants should be aware and take precautions. Being tick-aware means wearing light-coloured clothing to make ticks easier to spot, long-sleeve shirts, pants, and closed-toe footwear. Tuck your shirt into your pants and tuck your pants into your socks.

"This can help prevent ticks from crawling onto your skin where they can feed," said event organizers. "Permethrin-treated clothing may provide protection against ticks and mosquitoes."

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Orillia Matters



File photo | Photo supplied by the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority

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