



Board of Directors Meeting

AGENDA

August 20, 2026

2:00 p.m.

LTVCA Administration Office

1. First Nations Acknowledgement.....	2
2. Call to Order	2
3. Adoption of Agenda	2
4. Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest	2
5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes	3
5.1) Board of Directors Meeting Minutes June 18, 2026	3
6. Business Arising from the Minutes	7
7. Presentations	7
7.1) Preliminary 2027 Budget.....	7
7.2) Risk Management Plan.....	7
7.3) New MNR Technical Guidelines and Technical Bulletin.....	7
7.4) Update on Flood Plain Studies	7
7.5) Update on LTVCA Transition to WLERCA	7
7.6) August 2026 Southwold Flood Events	7
8. New Business	7
9. Business for Approval	8
9.1) Risk Management Plan.....	8
9.2) Income and Expenditure vs Budget to June 30, 2026.....	13
9.3) Preliminary 2027 Budget.....	17
9.4) Fundraising and Project Initiation for the CM Wilson Pavilion.....	19
9.5) Potential Building Construction – Two Pole Barns.....	21
10. Business for Information.....	23
10.1) CAO / Secretary Treasurer Report	23
10.2) Water Management.....	25
10.3) Planning and Regulations	33
10.4) Conservation Lands	38
10.5) Conservation Services	40
10.6) Communications, Education and Outreach	57

10.7) Wheatley Two Creeks Association June 4, 2026, Minutes	62
10.8) Wheatley Two Creeks Association July 2, 2026, Minutes	63
11. Correspondence	64
11.1) Minister’s Direction Under Section 1.14 of the Conservation Authorities Act with Respect to Budget and Apportionment Matters	64
11.2) Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency	71
11.3) WLERCA Transition – Project Executive Appointed	73
11.4) WLERCA – Guiding Principles for Transition	75
11.5) CO’s Consolidated Response to Bill 98 Legislative and Regulatory Proposals	76
12. Other Business	87
13. Adjournment	87

1. First Nations Acknowledgement

We will begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of First Nations people who have longstanding relationships to the land, water and region of southwestern Ontario. We also acknowledge the local lower Thames River watershed communities of this area which include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, Munsee Delaware Nation, Delaware Nation, Caldwell Nation and Walpole Island First Nation. We acknowledge the first nations people within the villages, towns and cities of our communities. We value the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America). We are thankful for the opportunity to live, learn and share with mutual respect and appreciation.

2. Call to Order

3. Adoption of Agenda

4. Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

5.1) Board of Directors Meeting Minutes June 18, 2026



Board of Directors Meeting

DRAFT MINUTES

The meeting of the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority's Board of Directors was held in person and remotely via the LTVCA's Administration Office at 100 Thames Street in Chatham, ON at 2:00 P.M. on Thursday, June 18, 2026. The following directors were in attendance: P. Tiessen, H. Aerts, S. Hipple, M. Vink, L. Vogler, S. Bod, P. Van Meerenberg and R. Leatham. K. Loveland, J. Wright, A. Finn and M. Bondy sent their regrets.

1. First Nations Acknowledgement

Mark Peacock read the First Nations Acknowledgement.

2. Call to Order

3. Adoption of Agenda

BD-2026-53 S. Hipple – S. Bod

Moved that the agenda be adopted as amended.

CARRIED

4. Disclosures of Conflicts of Interest

None Declared.

5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

BD-2026-54 H. Aerts – R. Leatham

Moved that the Board of Directors minutes of the April 16, 2026, May 29, 2026 and June 9, 2026 meetings be approved as amended.

CARRIED

6. Business Arising from the Minutes

None Declared.

7. Presentations

DRAFT

1 | Page

- 7.1) LTVCA Key Performance Indicators Plan
- 7.2) Update on LTVCA Transition to WLERCA
- 7.3) LTVCA Section 28 Hearing Guidelines
- 7.4) 2027 Budget Assumptions

BD-2026-55 M. Vink – S. Bod

Moved that Presentations 7.1 through 7.4 be received for information.

CARRIED

8. New Business

- 8.1) LTVCA Mileage Rates

Internal mileage charged to programs right now by the LTVCA is \$0.40/km, and mileage for Board of Directors and staff is currently \$0.54/km, with ALUS staff at \$0.64/km. The current CRA rate for 2026 is at \$0.73/km, with grant funders (Fed/Prov) for specific programs being dictated by the grant.

BD-2026-56 S. Bod – R. Leatham

Moved that the LTVCA mileage rate be set to the CRA approved rate;

And that the mileage rate for granted projects be set at the rate provided for in the grant.

CARRIED

9. Business for Approval

- 9.1) LTVCA Key Performance Indicators Plan

BD-2026-57 P. Van Meerenberg – L. Vogler

Moved that the Board of Directors approves the Key Performance Indicators as outlined in this report.

And Further that these indicators be reported to the Board of Directors and community within the Annual Report of the LTVCA.

CARRIED

- 9.2) LTVCA Section 28 Hearing Guidelines

BD-2026-58 S. Bod – M. Vink

Moved that the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority ("LTVCA") Board of Directors approve the attached Hearing Board Practices and Procedures document and that the document be posted on the LTVCA's website.

CARRIED

- 9.3) WLERCA Guiding Principles

BD-2026-59 P. Van Meerenberg – S. Hipple

DRAFT

2 | Page

Moved that the Board of Directors approves the guiding principles as presented in this report.

And Further That the representatives on the transition committee use these principles in their deliberations with the province.

CARRIED

9.4) Appointment of LTVCA Member to the Transition Committee

BD-2026-60 L. Vogler – R. Leatham

Moved that the Board of Directors appoints First Vice Chair Sarah Bod as the LTVCA Board representative on the Western Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority Transition Committee.

CARRIED

9.5) Income and Expenditure vs Budget to April 30, 2026

BD-2026-61 M. Vink – H. Aerts

Moved that the Board of Directors receives the Budget vs Revenue and Expenditures report for the period ended April 30, 2026.

CARRIED

9.6) 2027 Budget Guidelines

BD-2026-62 S. Bod – R. Leatham

Moved that the Board approve the budget assumption of a 4% general apportionment increase,

And That staff bring the preliminary 2027 budget to the regular August Board meeting for review and approval.

CARRIED

9.7) Royal Bank Account – Mount Brydges Branch, Signing Authority

BD-2026-63 P. Van Meerenberg – S. Bod

Moved that the LTVCA Board designate Todd Casier, Manager, Corporate Services and Mark Peacock, CAO/Secretary-Treasurer as signing officers for the RBC Mount Brydges bank account in connection with Longwoods Road Conservation Area operations.

CARRIED

10. Business for Information

10.1) CAO / Secretary Treasurer Report

BD-2026-64 R. Leatham – M. Vink

Moved that the CAO Secretary-Treasurer Report be received for information.

CARRIED

- 10.2) Water Management
- 10.3) Planning and Regulations
- 10.4) Conservation Lands
- 10.5) Conservation Services
- 10.6) Communications, Education and Outreach
- 10.7) Wheatley Two Creeks Association April 2, 2026 Minutes

BD-2026-65 P. Van Meerenberg – S. Bod

Moved that the Board of Directors receive the above reports, 10.2 through to 10.7 for information.

CARRIED

11. Correspondence

- 11.1) Minister's Direction Issued Pursuant to Section 1.14 of the Conservation Authorities Act
- 11.2) Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency
- 11.3) Lake Erie's Eroding Shoreline Raises a Bigger Question: Who Pays for Climate Risk?

BD-2026-66 H. Aerts – M. Vink

Moved that the Board of Directors receive 11.1 through to 11.3 for information.

CARRIED

12. Other Business

None noted.

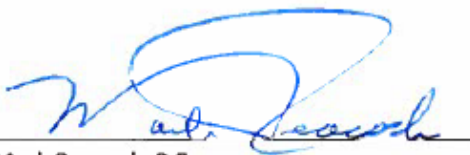
13. Adjournment

BD-2026-67 P. Van Meerenberg – S. Bod

Moved that the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

Paul Tiessen
Chair



Mark Peacock, P.Eng.
CAO/Secretary-Treasurer

DRAFT

4 | Page

6. Business Arising from the Minutes

7. Presentations

7.1) Preliminary 2027 Budget.

Todd Casier will provide a presentation of the LTVCA's preliminary 2027 Budget.

7.2) Risk Management Plan

Mark Peacock will provide a presentation on the LTVCA's Risk Management Plan.

7.3) New MNR Technical Guidelines and Technical Bulletin

Jason Wintermute and Mark Peacock will provide a presentation on the new MNR Technical Guidelines and Technical Bulletin.

7.4) Update on Flood Plain Studies

Mark Peacock will provide an update on the three on-going Flood Plain Studies.

7.5) Update on LTVCA Transition to WLERCA

Mark Peacock will provide an update on the progress of the transition to the WLERCA.

7.6) August 2026 Southwold Flood Events

Jason Wintermute will provide a presentation on the flood events that occurred in Southwold in August.

8. New Business

9. Business for Approval

9.1) Risk Management Plan

Date: August 20, 2026
Memo to: LTVCA Board of Directors
Subject: Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority Risk Management Plan

Background

In 2018, the LTVCA proactively began a Risk Management Planning process to help reduce impacts from unforeseen future risk events. This process resulted in the LTVCA Risk Management Plan being approved in October 2018 by the Board of Directors. The process now continues with the updating of the plan. We need to achieve our strategic objectives in a way that creates benefits and limits problems – we are not going to quit doing important things just because of risk, but we may do them differently.

What is Risk: LTVCA definition

- Consider a situation involving exposure to danger – danger to people or things or to your reputation. Risk is the understanding of the likelihood of the situation and the consequence the situation creates.

To effectively address risk, an organization has to manage it. This does not mean that we will not accept some risks. For a Conservation Authority, accepting risk occurs when we acknowledge that the potential loss from that risk is not great enough to warrant not providing the service that is for the watershed's good. In accepting risk, we do not ignore it, we control the risk and we understand its financial impacts.

Risk management is the identification, evaluation, and prioritization of risks followed by planned economical application of resources to minimize, monitor, and control the probability or impact of unfortunate events.

Risk Management Framework

The Risk Management Framework is as follows:



Preliminary Areas of Risk

After a number of meetings in 2018 the following LTVCA areas of risk evaluation were defined:

- 1) Administration - Governance
- 2) Administration - Financial
- 3) Administration - Human Resources
- 4) Administration - Information Technology
- 5) Water Management – including Hazard Management, Planning and Regulations
- 6) Conservation Education
- 7) Conservation Services
- 8) Conservation Lands, and Programs – Camping and Group Use
- 9) Conservation Lands and Programs– Individual Use
- 10) Infrastructure -Tenant buildings
- 11) Infrastructure - LTVCA owned buildings (public and staff used)
- 12) Infrastructure - Flood and Erosion Control Structures

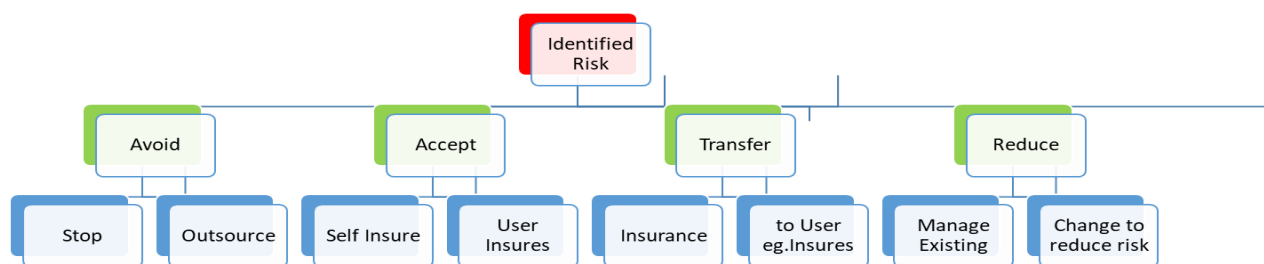
LTVCA Risk Assessment Matrix and Heat Map

Activities within each area of risk were defined and a qualitative evaluation was carried out for each activity. The following matrix was used to define an activity as a low medium or high-risk activity.

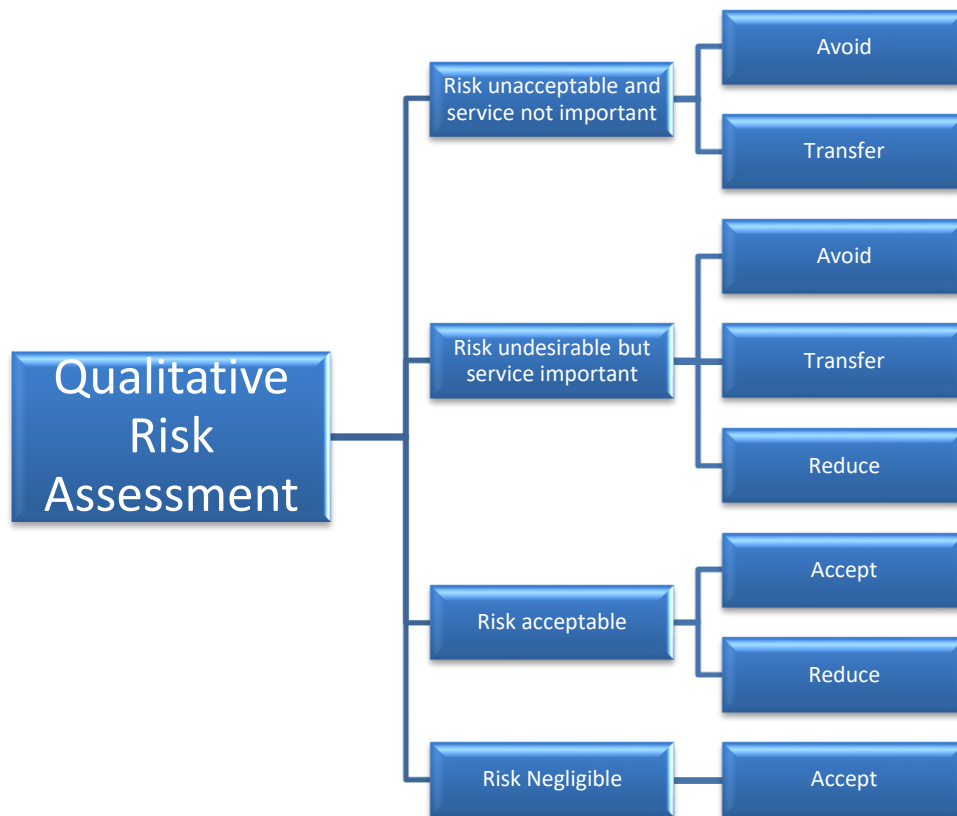
LTVCA Risk Assessment Matrix				Increasing Probability →				
Increasing Consequence ↑				A	B	C	D	E
Hazard Rating	People	Assets/ Finance	Reputation	Very Rare	Has Occurred in Ontario	Occurs in Conservation Authorities	Occurs in the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority	Annual Occurrence
1	Slight Health Effect	Slight Damage/Cost	Slight Impact					
2	Minor Health Effect	Minor Damage/Cost	Limited Impact					
3	Major Health Effect	Local Damage/Cost	Considerable Impact					
4	Permanent Disability	Major Damage/Cost	Major Impact					
5	Fatalities	Extensive Damage/Cost	Catastrophic Impact					
Legend:				LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	Intolerable – Investigate Alternatives	
				Manage for Continued Improvement	Incorporate Risk Reduction Measures			

Strategies For Controlling Risk

The following chart shows the standard strategies used in controlling risks identified in the assessment phase:



The following chart shows how the strategies were used:



Example Risk Register and Analysis for one Risk Area

A form was created that shows the risk identification, qualitative assessment, strategy selection and actions to manage risk. An example is shown below:

Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority

Risk Register – Risk Management

Risk Area: Administration – Information Technology

Date of Last Update: July 3, 2018

By: MVP



Area of Risk	Name / Description	Probability	Consequence	Risk Score	Risk Strategy	Action	Risk Score after Mitigation	Action By	Action When
Admin IT	Inadequate IT system to meet user's needs	D	3	Med	Reduce	Develop multiyear budget through the Asset Management Plan	Low	Admin	2019
Admin IT	Cyber-attack on network	C	5	High	Reduce	Ensure secure backup of all systems	Med	Admin	ongoing
Admin IT	Power outage for extended time	E	2	Med	Reduce	Ensure power backup systems in place	Low	Admin	2019
Admin IT	Business interruption due to failed IT	D	3	Med	Accept		Med	Admin	ongoing

Engaging staff in the develop of the Risk Management Plan

A work plan was developed that engaged staff in the updating of the Risk Management Plan. It was felt that unless staff were fulling engaged in the process, the plan would not be effectively implemented. The risk management update plan included:

1. Risk Management Process confirmed by management
2. Management Team develop first updated version of register assessment and proposed response
3. Managers review with staff, revise and improve
4. Managers review revised plan to ensure enterprise approach
5. Report to Board with details of Updated Plan – August 2026
6. Staff use Risk Management Plan for development of future Action Plans (Work Plans) and budgeting purposes

Final Results

Risk Management Area			Number of			Mitigated		
		Risks ID'd	High	Risks Medium	Low	High	Risks Medium	Low
1	Administration – Governance	41	4	12	25	0	1	40
2	Administration – Financial	20	2	12	6	0	4	16
3	Administration – Human Resources	23	11	9	3	0	11	12
4	Administratoion – Information Technology	12	9	3	0	0	10	2
5	Water Management	49	21	22	6	0	29	20
6	Conservation Education	23	3	18	2	0	8	15
7	Conservation Services	27	15	12	0	0	17	10
8	Conservation Lands & Programs – Camping and Group Use	30	10	17	3	0	14	16
9	Conservation Lands & Programs – Individual Use	24	8	15	1	0	13	11
10	Infrastructure – Tenant buildings	15	0	9	6	0	0	15
11	Infrastructure – LTVCA owned buildings (public and staff use)	21	0	16	5	0	1	20
12	Infrastructure – Flood and Erosion Control Structures	17	12	4	1	2	9	6
			95	149	58	2	117	183
Total Identified Risks		302						

The updated 2026 study results of the risk identification and qualitative risk analysis were as follows:

The first step identified 302 risks in the twelve risk management areas. Of these, 95 were of high risk, 149 medium risk and 58 low risk. The analysis of actions designed to limit risk has been developed and with those actions in place only 2 risks remain in the high category, 117 in the medium category and 183 have been placed in the low-risk category.

These results show that significant reduction in risk can be obtained by a methodological approach to risk management in the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority. Many of the recommended actions are simple best practices and many are already being implemented.

Recommendations of Plan

The following is recommended:

1. That the updated Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority Risk Management Plan be used as a tool for planning and budgeting purposes.
2. That the risk controls as outlined in the updated Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority Risk Management Plan be implemented as budgets permit.
3. That the updated Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority Risk Management Plan be reviewed annually to ensure risks and control actions are relevant and up to date. A full update of the plan should be undertaken every 5 years.

Recommended Resolution:

That the LTVCA Risk Management Plan Update dated August 2026 be approved and implemented.

This report aligns with the following objectives of the LTVCA's Watershed-Based Resource Management Strategy:

10. Improving Management and Operations of Conservation Areas
11. Strengthening and Increasing Collaboration with Community Stakeholders
14. Improving Transparency and Understanding of LTVCA Operations
15. Improving Capital Asset Management
16. Strengthening Staff Stability (financial stability, attraction & retention)
17. Improving Staff Communications and Team Building

Respectfully Submitted

Mark Peacock, P. Eng.

C.A.O. / Secretary Treasurer

9.2) Income and Expenditure vs Budget to June 30, 2026

Date: Aug 20, 2026
Memo to: LTVCA Board of Directors
Subject: **Income and Expenditure vs Budget to June 30, 2026**
From: Todd Casier, CPA, CA, Manager, Corporate Services

Background:

Review of the 2026 Budget to the Revenue and Expenditures for the 6 months ended June 30, 2026.

REVENUE	2026	2026 BUDGET		2026 ACTUAL	\$ VARIANCE
	BUDGET	JUN PROJECTED		TO JUN 30	TO PROJECTED
GRANTS	5,593,237	2,796,619	*	2,666,096	(130,523)
GENERAL LEVY	1,982,567	1,982,567	^	1,906,063	(76,504)
DIRECT SPECIAL BENEFIT	217,464	217,464	^	217,464	0
GENERAL REVENUES	879,790	439,895	*	3,605,988	3,166,093
FOUNDATION GRANTS & REVENUES	0	0	*	4,329	4,329
RESERVES	0	0	*	0	0
CASH FUNDING	8,673,058	5,436,545		8,399,940	2,963,395
OTHER	0	0		0	0
TOTAL FUNDING	8,673,058	5,436,545		8,399,940	2,963,395

*-based on a 6 of 12-month proration of the budget

^-based on balance invoiced

Grant income is comparable.

Note: Grant income is based on funds received/invoiced and not matched to expenses, meaning there may be expenses outstanding and not recognized in the attached expense statement. At year-end each grant is reviewed individually; spent funds for grant programs not invoiced are set-up as receivables and added to grant income, unspent funds are reduced from grant income and deferred for future expenditures.

Apportionment revenue is shown on a cash basis. The following municipalities are paid in full as of August 13th, 2026: Chatham-Kent, Dutton/Dunwich, Lakeshore, Leamington, Middlesex Centre, Southwold, Strathroy-Caradoc, Southwest Middlesex, and West Elgin.

General Revenue is above budget due to a three-million-dollar cash donation to purchase conservation lands. When this donation is removed General Revenue is slightly above budget due to the following factors:

- Conservation Areas is above budget due to receiving seasonal camping revenue, Conservation Services and Chatham Kent Greening are above budget as tree planting is done and landowners have been

billed and interest income is above budget due to increased interest rates. This is slightly offset by Planning Fees and Conservation Education being lower than budget.

Foundation Grants and Revenues are above budget due to the payment of memorial trees for 2026 versus the uncertainty of funds available when budgeting.

Reserves are zero as this account is used to balance the accounts at year-end if expenses are greater than revenues.

EXPENSES	2026	2026 BUDGET	2026 ACTUAL	\$ VARIANCE
	BUDGET	JUN PROJECTED	TO JUN 30	TO PROJECTED
WATER MANAGEMENT				
FLOOD CONTROL STRUCTURES	239,991	119,996	109,183	(10,813)
EROSION CONTROL STRUCTURES	10	5	5	0
FLOOD FORECASTING AND WARNING	123,991	61,996	50,284	(11,712)
TECHNICAL STUDIES	523,153	261,576	163,268	(98,308)
PLANNING & REGULATIONS	504,012	252,006	233,783	(18,223)
WATERSHED MONITORING (PGMN)	194,572	97,286	106,291	9,005
SOURCE PROTECTION	44,745	22,372	19,715	(2,657)
THAMES MOUTH DEBRIS REMOVAL	0	0	0	0
Water Management Subtotal	1,630,474	815,237	682,529	(132,708)
CONSERVATION & RECREATION PROPERTIES				
CONSERVATION AREAS	962,082	481,041	423,620	(57,421)
COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND EDUCATION				
COMMUNITY RELATIONS	158,142	79,071	98,960	19,889
CONSERVATION EDUCATION	159,961	79,981	40,731	(39,250)
SKA-NAH-DOHT VILLAGE	133,115	66,558	49,416	(17,142)
Community Relations & Education Subtotal	451,218	225,610	189,107	(36,503)
CONSERVATION SERVICES/STEWARDSHIP				
CONSERVATION SERVICES (FORESTRY)	233,860	116,930	125,881	8,951
CHATHAM-KENT GREENING PROJECT	655,064	327,532	261,348	(66,184)
PHOSPHORUS REDUCTION	4,702,978	2,351,489	2,470,951	119,462
SPECIES AT RISK	37,382	18,691	50,324	31,633
Conservation Services/Stewardship Subtotal	5,629,284	2,814,642	2,908,504	93,862

CAPITAL/MISCELLANEOUS

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING REPAIRS/UPGRADES	0	0	0	0
UNION GAS CENTENNIAL PROJECT	0	0	0	0
EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS (FED/PROV)	0	0	0	0
Capital/Miscellaneous Subtotal	0	0	0	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	8,673,058	4,336,530	4,203,760	(132,770)

Water Management

Flood Control Structures expenses are slightly below budget due to some larger annual expenses incurred later in the year.

Erosion Control Structures are comparable to budget.

Flood Forecasting and Warning expenses are below budget due to some larger expenses incurred later in the year and staff time spent on Technical Studies.

Technical Studies are below budget due to just starting to incur the expenses for the FHIMP and GLFEI projects and is slightly offset by wages being over budget.

Planning and Regulations expenses are below budget due to staff time being spent in other areas like Technical Studies, above.

Watershed Monitoring is slightly above budget due to March 31 year-end spending for the PWQMN GAP analysis grant.

Source Protection expenses are comparable to budget.

Conservation Areas

Conservation area expenses are below budget as most large projects, operation of the campgrounds, and other large operational costs are incurred during the summer months.

Community Relations and Education

Community Relations is above budget due to time and costs of the AGM. Conservation Education and SKA-NAH-DOHT Museum and Village are below budget due to the seasonal nature of large activities in these programs and one vacant part time position.

Conservation Services/Stewardship

Conservation Services (Forestry) is comparable to budget.

Chatham-Kent Greening expenses are below budget as more activities and related expenses are completed during the summer months.

Phosphorous Reduction is comparable to budget.

Species at Risk is above budget due to March 31 year-end budget expenditures and continuing the Species at Risk program.

Capital/Miscellaneous

No Capital/Miscellaneous expenses to date.

Summary:

	2026	2026 BUDGET	2026 ACTUAL	\$ VARIANCE
	BUDGET	JUN PROJECTED	TO JUN 30	TO PROJECTED
TOTAL CASH FUNDING	8,673,058	5,436,545	8,399,940	2,963,395
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	8,673,058	4,336,530	4,203,760	(132,770)
OPERATING SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	0	1,100,015	4,196,180	3,096,165

At June 30, 2026, LTVCA's operating surplus is favourable mostly due to the large donation of cash to purchase conservation land and less expenditures compared to budget due to the seasonal nature of a large amount of the Conservation Authorities' expenses.

Recommendation:

That the Board of Directors receives the Budget vs Revenue and Expenditures report for the period ended June 30, 2026.

The report aligns with the following objectives of the LTVCA's Watershed-Based Resource Management Strategy:

- 14. Improving Transparency and Understanding of LTVCA Operations
- 15. Improving Capital Asset Management

Respectfully Submitted

Todd Casier, CPA, CA
Manager, Corporate Services

Mark Peacock, P. Eng.
C.A.O. / Secretary Treasurer

9.3) Preliminary 2027 Budget

Date: August 20, 2026
Memo to: LTVCA Board of Directors
Subject: **2027 Preliminary Budget Report**
From: Todd Casier, CPA, CA, Manager, Corporate Services
Mark Peacock, P. Eng., C.A.O. / Secretary Treasurer

Background:

In its meeting of June 2026, the Board of Directors of the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority was presented with the 2027 preliminary budget assumptions. The Board approved the assumptions and directed staff to prepare the 2027 preliminary budget based on these assumptions and bring it to the August meeting.

As a mandatory requirement and part of the Strategic Plan, staff developed an Asset Management Plan. The costing of this plan is included in this budget.

Budget Changes:

Every year, costs change based on the funding available and programs offered. More significant negative and positive impacts to the budget in 2027 are as follows: (numbers rounded to the nearest \$100)

	Negative impacts on Budget	Difference to Prior Year Budget
1	Increased ECCCCPPRP costs	-\$87,300.00
2	Decreased Revenue in Technical Studies	-\$82,500.00
3	Increased RALP Stewardship Costs	-\$81,800.00
4	Increased SAR Wages	-\$78,400.00
5	Merit Increase (To maintain current programs)	-\$75,300.00
6	2.05% COLA (2025 CPI) (To maintain current programs)	-\$75,100.00
7	Decreased Urban Stewardship funding	-\$40,500.00
8	Asset Management Funding (Annual increase as part of 10-year plan)	-\$19,800.00
9	Increased Insurance costs (To maintain current programs)	-\$12,000.00
10	Increased Urban Stewardship wages	-\$9,700.00
11	Benefits Increase (To maintain current programs)	-\$9,400.00
12	Increased Property Taxes	-\$9,000.00
	Total Negative Impact on Budget	-\$580,800.00
	Positive Impacts on Budget	
1	Decreased Services in Technical Studies	\$135,000.00
2	Increased RALP Stewardship funding	\$81,800.00
3	Decrease Program Development and Support Funding	\$64,600.00
4	Increased COLA & Merit from External Funding	\$57,900.00
5	Increased Land Rent	\$52,300.00
6	Increase CKGR Drain Work Funding	\$45,000.00
7	Decreased Part-time Conservation educator wages	\$35,200.00
8	Increased SAR funding	\$23,200.00
	Total Positive Impacts on Budget	\$495,000.00
	Net Change	-\$85,800.00

	Apportionment Increase	\$85,800.00
	Total Change	\$0.00

2026 Budget

The LTVCA Board approved a 2026 budget of \$8,673,058, resulting in a general apportionment of \$1,982,567 plus a special apportionment of \$226,114 for Chatham-Kent for Flood Control Structures and the Greening Partnership/Natural Heritage Programs.

Proposed 2027 Budget

For 2027, the preliminary balanced budget of \$8,927,018 requires a general apportionment of \$2,061,871, an increase of \$79,304 over the 2026 general apportionment, or 4.00% (Chatham-Kent's special benefiting apportionment increasing \$6,524 to \$223,988). The total municipal apportionment for 2026 is \$2,285,859. As in previous years, the annual adjustment to each municipality's assessment within the watershed varies, the resulting change in the apportionment ranging from 2.65% to 6.97%. The current value property assessment values are provided annually by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and are beyond the ability of the Conservation Authority to modify.

Non-municipal revenues include grants and general revenues (user fees) and account for \$6,641,159 or 74.4% of total program revenues. Non-municipal funds are required for a number of programs, the most variable of which are the Conservation Services/Stewardship programs, which are heavily dependent on the success of numerous funding applications. Staff are constantly engaged in developing new funding sources and extending current contracts to meet the demand for services and to take advantage of emerging priorities such as phosphorus reduction.

Recommendation:

That the 2027 preliminary budget totalling \$8,927,018 be approved and that the member municipalities be advised of the budget and their share of the proposed apportionment as calculated; it being noted that the Authority is required to provide 30 days' notice of its intention to adopt a final budget and apportionment. And that the final 2027 Budget be brought to the October 2026 Board Meeting for approval.

The report aligns with the following objectives of the LTVCA's Watershed-Based Resource Management Strategy:

- 14. Improving Transparency and Understanding of LTVCA Operations
- 15. Improving Capital Asset Management

Respectfully Submitted

Todd Casier, CPA, CA
Manager, Corporate Services

Mark Peacock, P. Eng.
C.A.O. / Secretary Treasurer

9.4) Fundraising and Project Initiation for the CM Wilson Pavilion

Date: August 20, 2026
Memo to: LTVCA Board of Directors
Subject: Approval Request to fundraise and construct the CM Wilson Pavilion.
From: Genevieve Champagne, Manager Conservation Lands and Services

Project Information

CM Wilson Conservation Area is a very public conservation area, featuring trails, ponds, a campground, playground items, learning centre, community barn, the old safety village, tall grass prairie, forested areas, open spaces and more. The community has requested over the last couple years to have a larger event/educational pavilion that can be utilized for outdoor events, educational programming and community get togethers at CM Wilson. Staff agreed with the public as this would be a lovely addition to the property however the cost was prohibitive.

Fundraising Initiative and Overall Costing

Administration has set aside funding for the CM Wilson Pavilion over the last couple years with the current funding amount of approximately \$30,000 available. The engineering has been completed for the building and drawings for the building permit have been completed. The current estimated costing for the pavilion construction is approximately \$90,000-\$100,000 for the slab and built structure as designed. The remaining amount of funding required for the pavilion is approximately \$60,000-\$70,000 before construction can take place.

Staff will create a fundraising letter with design drawings that will be send out to partners that have supported the LTVCA in the past and have a long-standing relationship with their communities.

Should our goal be met, the tender and design requirements would be issued immediately for quoting with construction to commence as soon as possible.

Design

The design of the pavilion is a floating slab design with a trussed roof; the project will be tendered as one project with items that can be added or removed depending on the pricing received during the quoting process and the budget received through fundraising.

Quoting Process

Staff will tender out the project and drawings for the C.M Wilson Pavillion to receive competitive quoting once funding has been secured. When the quotes have been received, they will be evaluated and a poll will be sent out to the board to review the details and approve the project award moving forward for the funded budget.

Recommended Resolution

Be it Resolved That:

That the board approve the LTVCA Staff to proceed with the fundraising campaign for the CM Wilson Pavilion and the process to proceed with the tendering and construction of the project; pending approval by the board of the tender award.

This report aligns with the following objectives of the LTVCA's Strategic Plan:

1. Strengthen and Increase Collaboration with Community Stakeholders

Respectfully Submitted:
Genevieve Champagne,
Manager Conservation Lands and Services

Approved By:
Mark Peacock, P. Eng.
C.A.O. / Secretary Treasurer

Pavilion Design:



Pavilion Location:



9.5) Potential Building Construction – Two Pole Barns

Date: August 20, 2026
Memo to: LTVCA Board of Directors
Subject: **Building Construction**
From: Todd Casier, CPA, CA, Manager, Corporate Services
Mark Peacock, P. Eng., C.A.O. / Secretary Treasurer

Background:

As the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA) budget grows and projects become more frequent, more diverse and larger so does the need for more and bigger equipment. The LTVCA can no longer house all its equipment in the current buildings. This leads to pieces of equipment sitting outside and deteriorating in the elements which increases asset management cost or tightly packing them in the current buildings and continually spending time moving equipment to get at other pieces of equipment.

The Lower Thames is proposing the construction of two new implement sheds, one a Wilson CA and one at Longwoods CA to house all this equipment to help increase the life and potential resale value of these assets and increase efficiency and decrease time spent moving equipment around.

The funding for these buildings will come from a short-term grant through the Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program (RALP). In fiscal 2026 RALP will provide approximately \$200k in staffing costs for staff already included in the budget. This funding will free up the off set of up to \$200k of Apportionment dollars to fund the construction of these buildings. This grant also includes the purchase of some equipment, and the purpose of these buildings is to house this equipment, as well.

Current Position:

Based on a rough idea of building requirements. We have received one quote for the engineering and materials for a 40' X 80' X 14' high pole barn of \$52,905 and an approximate cost of materials of \$37,750 for a 40' X 64' X 14' high pole barn.

A rough estimate for construction is \$8-10 per sq/ft. Using \$9 for the 40' X 80' building construction cost would be around \$28,800 and construction cost using \$10 for the 40' X 64' would be around \$25,600. Construction costs do not include site preparation including removing topsoil, gravel and leveling. A rough estimate of this would be approximately \$10,000 per building not dependant on size.

Adding each of the above costs estimated total cost per building would be \$91,706 for the 40' X 80' and \$73,350 for the 40' X 64'.

These costs do not include any services like hydro services.

Recommendation:

Be it resolved that the Board of Directors direct LTVCA staff to explore the construction of two new pole barns, one at CM Wilson CA and one at Longwoods CA, contingent on it staying within the \$200k apportionment available from the RALP grant funding.

And that: All decisions regarding the award will be brought back to the Board for approval.

The reports align with the following objectives of the LTVCA's Watershed-Based Resource Management Strategy:

- 10. Improving Management and Operations of Conservation Areas
- 15. Improving Capital Asset Management

Respectfully Submitted

Recommended by:
Todd Casier, CPA, CA,
Manager, Corporate Services

Reviewed by:
Mark Peacock, P. Eng.
CAO / Secretary-Treasurer

10. Business for Information

10.1) CAO / Secretary Treasurer Report

Date: August 20, 2026
Memo to: LTVCA Board of Directors
Subject: CAO /Secretary-Treasurer Report
From: Mark Peacock, P. Eng., C.A.O. / Secretary Treasurer

Flood Line Mapping Projects

Three major flood line mapping projects are being completed in 2026/2027. These projects are being funded through the Flood Hazard Identification and Mapping – federal program. Fifty percent of the funding is coming from local municipalities, fifty percent from the federal government, and significant in-kind support to modelling and field work is being contributed by the LTVCA.

The following work has been completed to date:

Talbot Creek Flood Plain Study

The contract for the Talbot Creek Flood Plain Study has been awarded to Greck and Associates. The consultant has completed field survey of structures (bridges and culverts) and representative bathymetry of all watercourses. Landowner contact was completed through the Township of Southwold with the Drainage Superintendent providing critical support. LTVCA staff have provided all background data to the consultant to allow the project to move forward. The consultant has completed the Data Collection Report for the project and has moved forward with the hydrology component. LTVCA Communications staff have prepared a draft communications plan for the project, and this will be shortly approved by the project steering committee for implementation. The Peer Reviewer has been contracted and has begun supporting the development and review of the project.

During the last few weeks, two significant rainfall events (1:100 and over 1:250 yr events) have occurred in the Township of Southwold. This has created significant hardship for area residents and also provided staff with a significant amount of flood data. LTVCA staff are working with municipal staff to support residents in recovery from the events. A public meeting will be held at the Southwold Keystone Complex on August 26, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.- 9:00 p.m. to discuss the flood plain project and recent flooding with area residents.

South Chatham Flood Plain Mapping Study

The contract for the South Chatham Flood Plain Mapping Study has been awarded to Kerr Wood Leidal Associates Ltd. The consultant has completed field survey of structures (bridges and culverts) and representative bathymetry of all watercourses. Limited landowner contact was required for the survey. What was required was facilitated by Municipality of Chatham-Kent Drainage staff. LTVCA staff have provided all background data to the consultant to allow the project to move forward. LTVCA staff have developed and run a series of models to determine the best modelling approach for the project. Additionally, LTVCA staff have prepared a HEC-RAS model of the diversion channel and provided this to the consultant. The consultant has completed the Data Collection Report for the project and will shortly move forward with the hydrology

component. LTVCA communications staff have prepared a draft communications plan for the project, and this will be shortly approved by the project steering committee for implementation. The Peer Reviewer has been contracted and has begun supporting the development and review of the project.

Thames River Phase 1 Flood Plain Mapping Study

The contract for the South Chatham Flood Plain Mapping Study has been awarded to Greenland International Ltd. The consultant has completed field review of the project area. This review was facilitated by Municipality of Chatham-Kent Drainage, and LTVCA technical staff. LTVCA staff have provided all background data to the consultant to allow the project to move forward. LTVCA staff have prepared a 1-dimensional HEC-RAS model of the subject Thames River channel and provided this to the consultant. The consultant is working to complete the Background Data Report for the project. LTVCA communications staff have prepared a draft communications plan for the project, and this will be shortly approved by the project steering committee for implementation. The Peer Reviewer has been contracted and has begun supporting the development and review of the project.

Changes to the Conservation Authorities Act

Staff continue to undertake significant work to meet the requirements of the province with regard to the amalgamation of Conservation Authorities. Work has included:

1. Development of final version of 2027 LTVCA budget to meet new budget timelines from province
2. Meeting with GM/CAOs and municipal representatives of the Western Lake Erie Region Conservation Authority area to align actions as we move forward.
3. Continued meetings with GM/CAOs of the Western Lake Erie Region Conservation Authority
4. Telephone meetings with Davin Heinbuck, Project Executive, for the Western Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority.

It is expected that the Transition Committee will soon begin meetings to begin the development of the Transition Plan.

Further reports and presentations will be provided to the board on what is being required, timelines and issues to be addressed.

Recommended Resolution:

That the CAO Secretary-Treasurer Report be received for information.

The report aligns with the following objectives of the LTVCA's Strategic Plan:

1. Strengthen and Increase Collaboration with Community Stakeholders

Respectfully Submitted

Mark Peacock, P. Eng.
C.A.O. / Secretary Treasurer

10.2) Water Management

10.2.1) Flood Forecasting and Operations

Flood Messaging and Flood Events

There have been three flood messages issued since the last written report to the Board of Directors in June. All three messages were Watershed Condition Statement – Flood Outlook messages focused on the region’s smaller watercourses and tributaries rather than the Thames River. The three messages were issued June 17th, June 26th, and August 2nd. On June 17th a Special Weather Statement had been issued by ECCC due to rain and thunderstorms in the forecast. The watershed was vulnerable to the additional rain, having just received around 50 mm of rain on June 14th, which had brought McGregor Creek within 30 cm of requiring the operation of the Diversion Channel. Fortunately, only around 15 mm of additional rain appeared and there were no issues. The June 26th message was issued because the central region of the Lower Thames watershed saw around 50 mm of rain the prior evening. Due to the relatively wet conditions, McGregor Creek rose almost to the point of requiring operation of the Diversion Channel. The message for the August 2nd event was issued after a series of thunderstorms passed through the region. A Rainfall Warning had been issued by ECCC calling for 50 mm across the region. However, at this time of the year, 50 mm would not have led to watercourse flooding. When the rainfall totals came in, specific regions had received significantly more. Cedar Springs recorded 87 mm, St. Thomas saw 75, and there were reports of over 100 mm in the Fingal area. However, for McGregor Creek, that subwatershed saw only 45 to 65 mm, which only brought flows up to around 25% of that which would be needed to operate the Diversion.

There were no issues with high flows on the Thames River, and no issues were reported on the shoreline of Lake Erie or Lake St. Clair. This report was drafted before the large event of August 7th which impacted the Township of Southwold.

Report on Lake Conditions

Average daily lake levels on Lake Erie at the beginning of August were around 174.40 m (I.G.L.D.). The all-time record high monthly average for August was 175.02 m, set in 2019. Water levels at the beginning of August were 10 cm above what would be considered normal for the month of August. Water levels now appear to just be beginning their seasonal decline. Water levels are predicted to drop around 8 cm by the beginning of September.

Average daily water levels on Lake St. Clair at the beginning of August were around 175.34 m (I.G.L.D.). The all-time record high monthly average for August was 175.97, set in 2020. Water levels at the beginning of August were 11 cm above what would be considered normal for the month of August. Water levels now appear to just be beginning their seasonal decline. Water levels are predicted to drop around 8 cm by the beginning of September.

Water levels on Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie had been slightly below their long-term averages for the first few months of 2026. However, April saw very rapid rises in water levels on all the Great Lakes. Water levels on both lakes are now back to slightly above their long-term average. The long-range forecasts of lake levels suggested that Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair will see slightly above normal water levels over the next 6 months.

The figures below are published by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and graph the monthly average water levels and water level forecast over the next 6 months. These versions were published at the beginning of August.

Legend

Lake Levels

Recorded

Projected

Average**

Maximum**

Minimum**

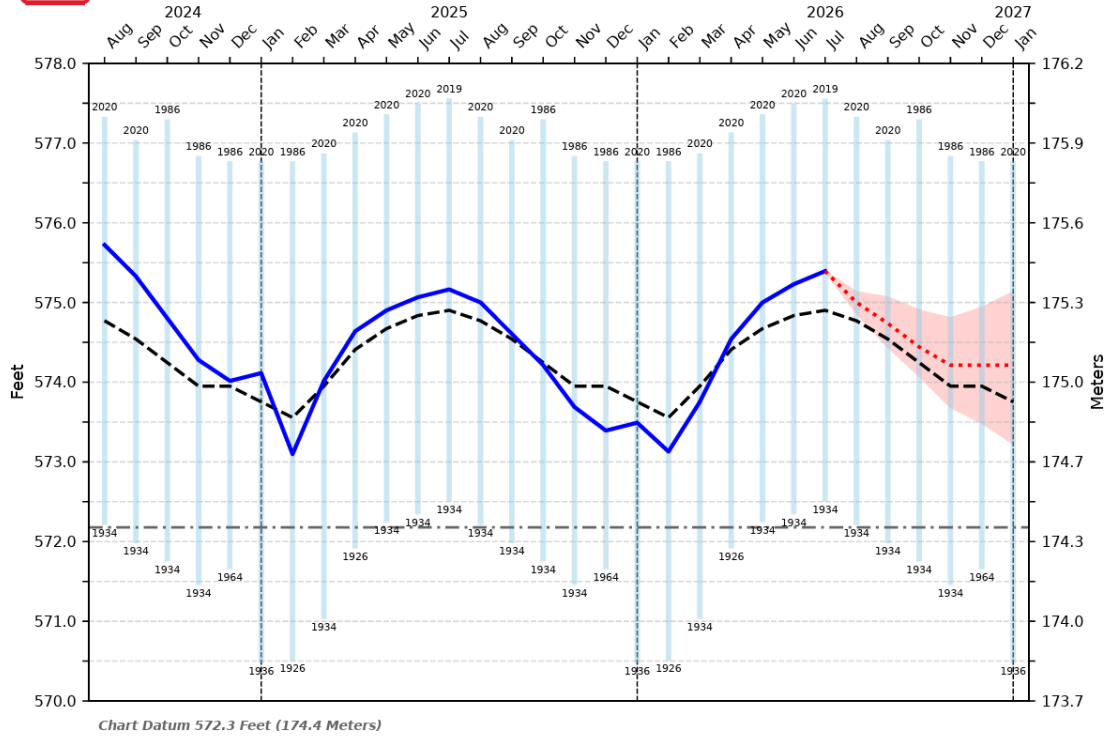
Chart Datum

** Average, Maximum, and Minimum for period 1918-2025

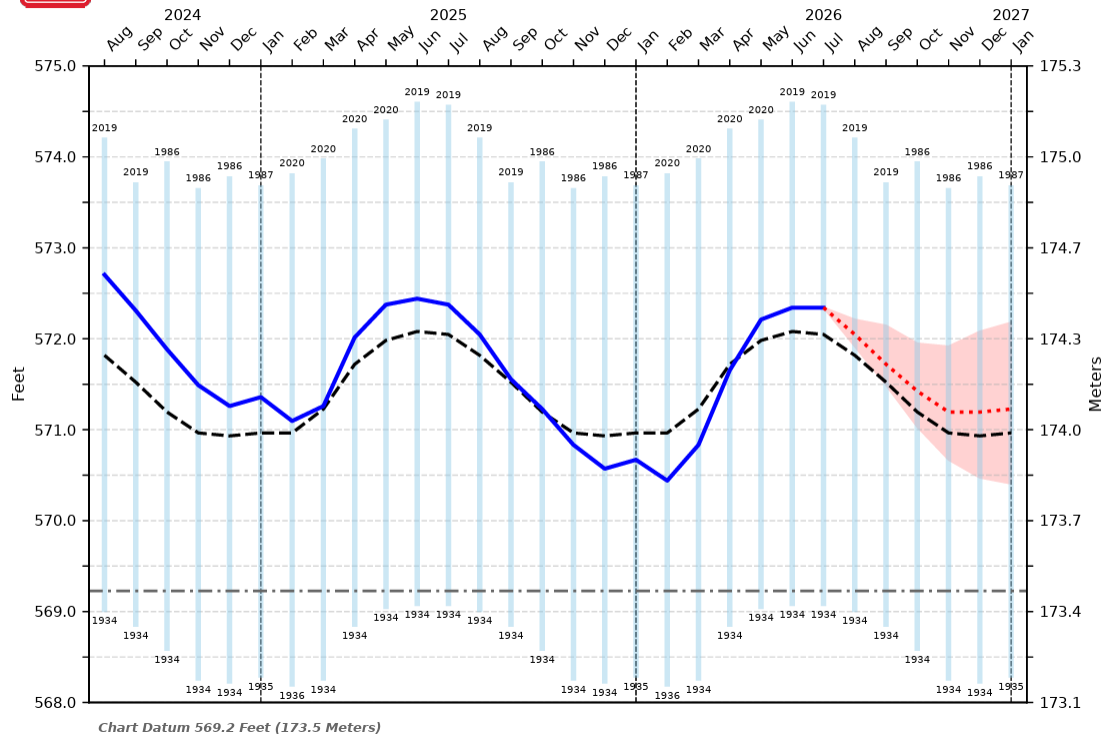
1985 1973 1986 2019
1936 1934 1926 1934



Lake St. Clair Water Levels - August 2026



Lake Erie Water Levels - August 2026



10.2.2) Flood Control Structures

The McGregor Creek Diversion Channel has not been operated since the last Board of Directors report, despite coming close to requiring operation twice in June.

In the last report, it was noted that there had been an issue closing one of the gates of the Diversion Dam. Upon inspection, after the high flow events had passed, nothing unusual was observed and the gate operated smoothly and was able to be closed completely. It is suspected that the issue was debris stuck under the gate. A contractor was retained to remove debris from the trash rack at the upstream inlet of the dam, which is common practice after major events.

There continues to be issues with debris management at the 6th Street Dam. LTVCA staff had to once again clear a significant amount of debris from the gates of the dam and additional debris that had backed up behind the dam. This work was undertaken on July 14th, the day before Crowfest.

The annual mowing and tree/brush maintenance program for the Diversion Channel is underway. Regular maintenance also continues for Sharon Dam.

10.2.3) Low Water Response Program

The Low Water Response Program looks at both precipitation and flow in local watercourses in determining whether there is a low water condition. For precipitation, both 18-month and 3-month rainfall totals are examined, and the program thresholds are: Level 1, 80% of average; Level 2, 60% of average; and Level 3, 40% of average. For flows, the average flow over the last month is examined and the summer thresholds are: Level 1, 70% lowest average summer flow (LASF); Level 2, 50% LASF; and Level 3, 30% LASF. During the growing season, LTVCA staff create a brief report summarizing conditions around the watershed, which is available by request.

The 3-month rainfall totals are quite varied around the region. Four of the 11 gauges suggest low water conditions. Of these four, two are showing 77% of normal which is only slightly below the 80% indicator value. The locations of these gauges with lower rainfall totals are also spread around the watershed. This is likely indicative of summer thunderstorms dropping variable amounts across the watershed. It does not appear to be systematic low water conditions in any particular region. Looking at the rainfall breakdown by months, May appeared to have near normal rainfall, June had above normal rainfall, and July had been quite dry. Should August have near normal rainfall, one would expect similar results next month. The 18-month rainfall indicator continues to show slightly drier conditions over the longer time period. Of the 7 stations examined, 3 of these stations showed rainfall totals in the Level 1 Low Water Condition range. These 3 gauges all show between 72 and 77% of normal rainfall over the 18-month period.

Flows on the Thames River show that flows over the month of July were low, and below the LASF. However, the criteria for a Level 1 Low Water Condition is 70% of the LASF, and the flows on the river at Dutton and Thamesville were above this threshold.

At the time this report was written, the LTVCA was still waiting to see if there were any comments from the Low Water Response Team. The recommendation was not to declare a Low Water Condition, as river flows were still above the threshold, and while some gauges showed rainfall below the threshold there didn't seem to be a systematic or regional pattern to those low rain area.

Further information on the Provincial Low Water Response Program can be found at:

<https://www.lioapplications.lrc.gov.on.ca/webapps/swmc/low-water-response/>

10.2.4) Watershed Monitoring

Watershed-wide surface water quality monitoring continues at 22 sites throughout the watershed. In addition to regularly scheduled sampling, staff are attempting to capture event-based runoff when it occurs. Event sampling is unpredictable, but the automation of samplers has made it possible to capture summer thunderstorms.

The sampling is funded by the MECP through the PWQMN program as well as a grant through the Canada-Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health (COA).

The MECP COA grant is coming up for renewal this year. LTVCA staff have been in contact with MECP and are currently working on drafting the next 2-year agreement. The LTVCA looks forward to working with MECP on the renewal of this agreement. While less MECP lab capacity has been allocated to this project, resulting in higher private lab costs, there is proposed to be increased funding to help urban and rural stewardship projects.

Sampling has also continued under the Health Canada contract to collect pesticides at 6 locations in the western portion of the watershed. Samples are being collected on Jeannette's Creek, Big Creek, and McGregor Creek as well as at the Rivard, Deary and Dauphin municipal pump stations. Sampling frequency varies by site.

Several additional sampling runs have also been undertaken with an algae sensor to see whether there were any concerns yet regarding blue-green algae blooms. Additional information about algae blooms can be found in the next section.

The Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN) program also continues. LTVCA staff maintain the sites and download the information from data loggers. Sites are typically visited once every 3 months. The most recent downloads were completed on May 13. Two loggers have been sent to the manufacturer for data recovery and repair.

10.2.5) Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB)

Lake Erie Blooms

The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) issues a seasonal forecast, typically in early July, for potential HABs on Lake Erie. The Seasonal Lake Erie HAB Forecast gives coastal managers and drinking water facility operators a general sense of how "bad" the upcoming bloom season has the potential to be. The seasonal forecast is an ensemble of models based largely upon phosphorus discharge from the Maumee River. This year's seasonal forecast was updated on July 30th. (see forecast below).

During the bloom season, the operation at NOAA Lake Erie HAB Forecast provides the current extent and 5-day outlooks of where the bloom will travel and what concentrations are likely to be seen, allowing managers to determine whether to take preventative actions. At the time this agenda was drafted, the most recent Forecast was from August 5th (see forecast below).

The cyanobacteria bloom present in western Lake Erie appears to be largely restricted to the U.S. side of the lake. There are relatively large areas of bloom around Maumee Bay, Sandusky Bay, and the area between.

Satellite imagery does not detect any bloom along the Canadian shoreline of Lake Erie. However, imagery does suggest there could be a bloom in Rondeau Bay which does align with local reports. (See Other Reported Blooms below) The bloom began in Maumee Bay around June 12th and has been slow to expand, similar to last year. The bloom is expected to peak in mid to late August and last into September. The bloom is expected to remain mostly within the western basin.

Thames River Blooms

The LTVCA now has an active program for monitoring algae blooms on the Thames River. Monitoring for potential algae blooms is conducted by LTVCA staff with an algae sensor, when the potential for a bloom seems to exist. Algae testing is scheduled once per month during the 4th week of the month. If any algae is noticed at other times while staff is conducting sampling for its other water quality monitoring programs, additional algae sampling days will be added. Scheduled runs have taken place on July 9th. The next day is scheduled for August 10th. No blooms large enough to be detected and followed up on have been reported for the Thames River yet this year.

Other Reported Blooms

Rondeau Bay: A cyanobacteria bloom was reported at Rondeau Bay Estates on July 13. Staff visited the area and tested the water with the YSI algae sensor on July 15th and took samples for analysis by the MECP on July 17th. The results for the samples came back on July 27th. No anatoxin was found but total microcystins concentration was 28.93 µg/L. The safe level for recreational swimming is 10 µg/L. MECP notified CK Public Health on July 28th. Satellite imagery still shows a bloom covering Rondeau Bay itself. (Lake Erie HAB Forecast sheets attached at end of the report)

10.2.6) Geographic Information Systems

Work continues on updating the LTVCA's Regulated Area Screening layer for O. Reg. 41/24: Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits, which can be accessed by the public on an ArcGIS Online web portal linked to the LTVCA's website. In addition to regular updates, the MNR has recently released new aerial photography taken in 2025. They have also released new Fall 2025 LiDAR data for a large portion of the watershed. The remaining portion of the watershed had LiDAR flown in Spring of 2026, which is currently under internal review by MNR. With this new data, additional revisions will need to be undertaken to update the Regulated Areas Screening map. Recent efforts have been placed on better delineating wetlands.

Regular activities that support LTVCA staff with their GIS needs also continue, such as fulfilling data requests, the creation of additional data layers, custom mapping products, and other GIS products.

This report aligns with these Strategic Objectives in the LTVCA's Watershed Based Resource Management Strategy:

2. Monitoring the Health of the Watershed
5. Protecting the Community from Natural Hazards
6. Educating the Community about Natural Hazards
7. Supporting Community Understanding of the Watershed

Western Lake Erie HAB Early Season Projection

Bulletin 7 2026-07-30

Summary: This Bulletin provides an updated estimate of potential *Microcystis* harmful algal bloom (HAB) severity in western Lake Erie. With Maumee River discharge observations through July 28 we continue to predict a potential bloom severity of 3.5 with a range of 3-4.5. Rainfall and associated runoff in July was within the forecasted uncertainty and resulted in an expected, additional ~10 metric tons of TBP. With this modest increase, we continue to expect a moderate bloom. The severity is based on the quantity (biomass) of the bloom over a sustained 30 day period. The phosphorous loads were estimated by the Heidelberg University National Center for Water Quality Research. The bloom began in Maumee Bay around July 12th and has been slow to expand, similar to 2025. The bloom progression has been about three weeks behind the progression in 2024. Cool air in June kept lake temperatures low. During the high temperatures in July the surface water heated rapidly, causing stratification, which keeps the surface and bottom waters separated. This meant that the bottom water took longer than usual to warm.

We expect the bloom to peak in mid to late August, continuing into September, with variation in size and location due to wind. At this severity we expect the bloom to remain mostly in the western basin. While toxicity varies throughout the duration of the bloom, toxins will concentrate in any surface scums that form during calm weather. People and pets should not swim in areas with scum. Information on the location and intensity of the bloom can be found at [NOAA's Lake Erie Harmful Algal Bloom Forecast webpage](#), in collaboration with NOAA's Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory (GLERL). For additional information on safe recreation, please visit [Ohio EPA's webpage on HABs](#).

Predicted Bloom Severity

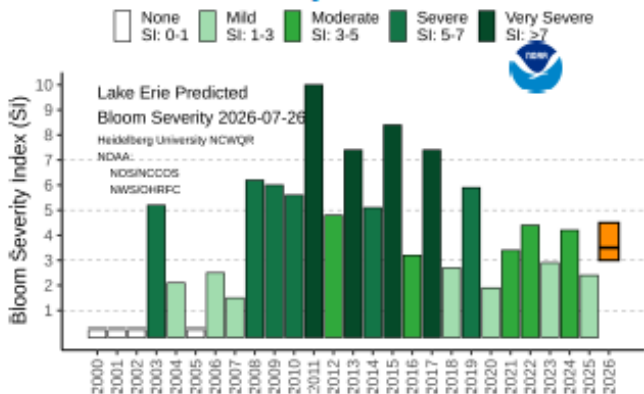


Fig. 1. Predicted bloom severity as compared to previous years. The wide orange bar is the likely range of severity based on current forecast uncertainty (3-4.5; Moderate bloom). The uncertainty in the bloom severity forecast is due to uncertainty in the bloom severity models.

Total Bioavailable Phosphorus

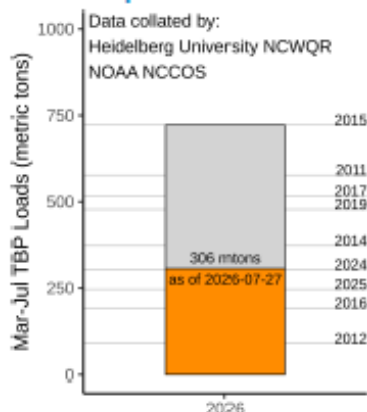


Fig. 3. Estimated total bioavailable phosphorus (TBP) load accumulated from the Maumee River near Waterville, OH to date. The right axis denotes the TBP load from selected previous years.

For more information visit: coastalscience.noaa.gov/science-areas/habs/hab-forecasts/lake-erie or ncwqr.org

Cumulative Total Bioavailable Phosphorus

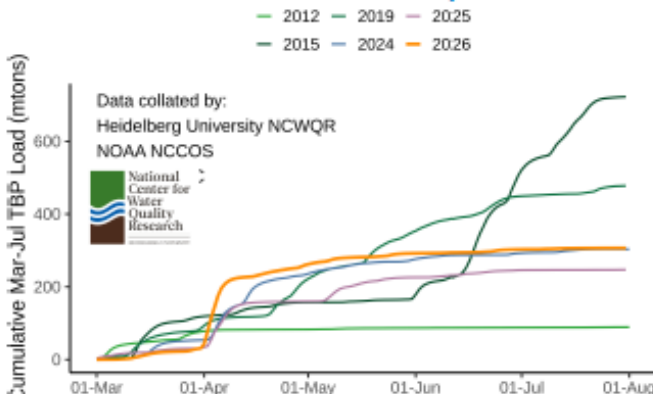


Fig. 2. Cumulative TBP loads for the Maumee River (Waterville, OH). Each line denotes cumulative load for different years. 2026 is in orange.

Satellite Image - True Color



Fig. 4. True color image for 23 July 2026 derived from the Copernicus Sentinel-3a/b satellite.

Questions? Contact: hab@noaa.gov

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Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
coastalscience.noaa.gov

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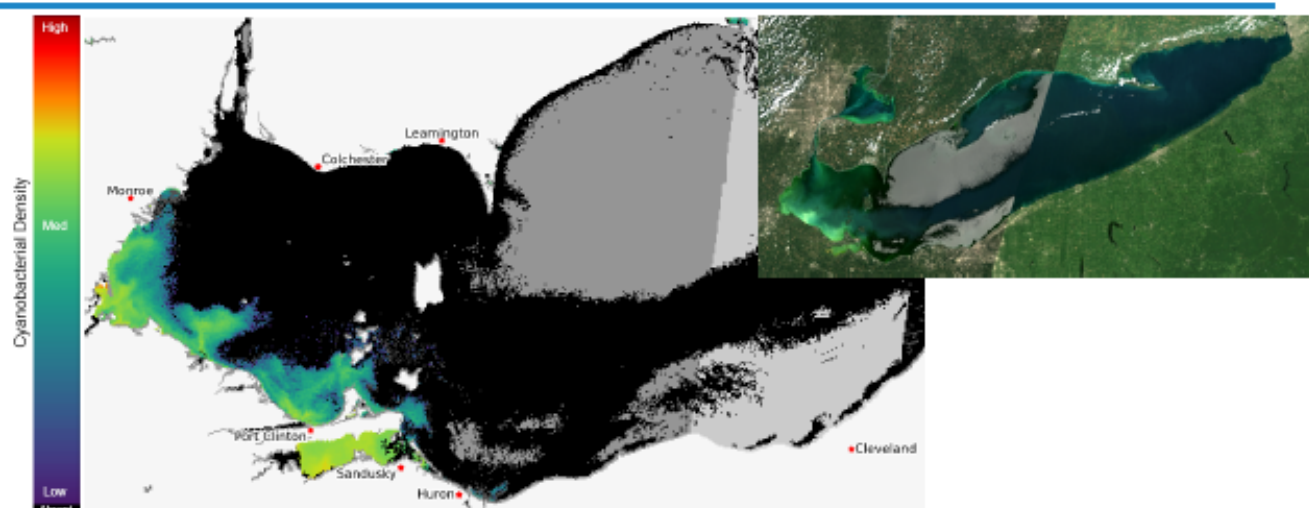
Lake Erie Harmful Algal Bloom Forecast

2026-08-05

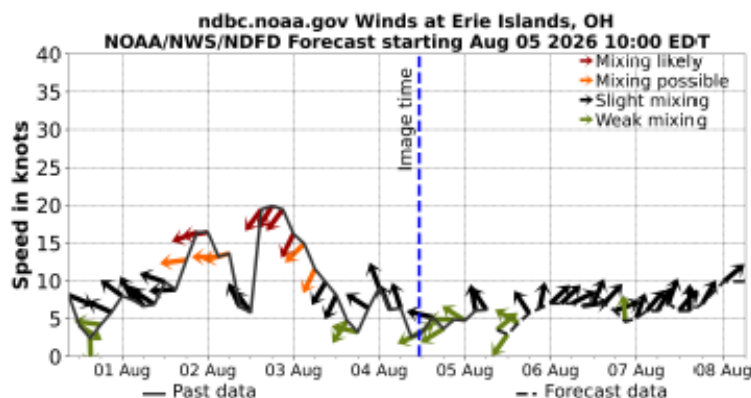
Summary

The cyanobacteria bloom in western Lake Erie has an approximate area of 260 square miles, which is an increase in area since Aug 03. A cyanobacteria bloom is present from north of Monroe, MI to Port Clinton with higher concentrations in Maumee Bay. Cyanobacteria may also be present near Huron, OH. Weekly high resolution imagery of Maumee Bay can also be found at [the Demonstration Great Lakes \(20m\) HAB Monitoring Page](#). Toxins have been detected below the recreational limit in western Lake Erie. They can be highly concentrated in scums! If you see scum, keep your pets and yourself out of the water. In the satellite imagery or bloom forecast position products, any areas that are orange or red are likely to have scum, especially during calm winds, see Mixing Forecast product. — Stumpf, Meredith, and Owens, 4 August 2026

The past few days of imagery can be seen at [the HAB monitoring site](#). The Lake Erie Forecast is operated by the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science. Contact hab@noaa.gov for technical Questions. Model Last Updated: 2026-08-05 10 AM EST

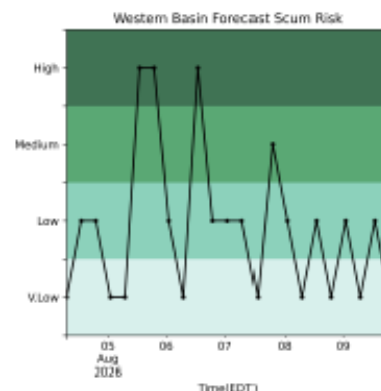


Current Lake Erie Sentinel-3 satellite imagery from the Ocean and Land Color Imager (OLCI) on Aug 04, 2026, showing bloom location and extent in the western basin. Grey indicates clouds or missing data. The estimated threshold of cyanobacteria detection is 20,000 cells/mL. Inset shows an enhanced truecolor image of the entire lake. Data derived from Copernicus Sentinel-3.



Wind speed and direction from Erielslands, OH. Blooms mix through water column at wind speeds > 15 knots.

For more information visit: coastalscience.noaa.gov/science-areas/habs/hab-forecasts/lake-erie/



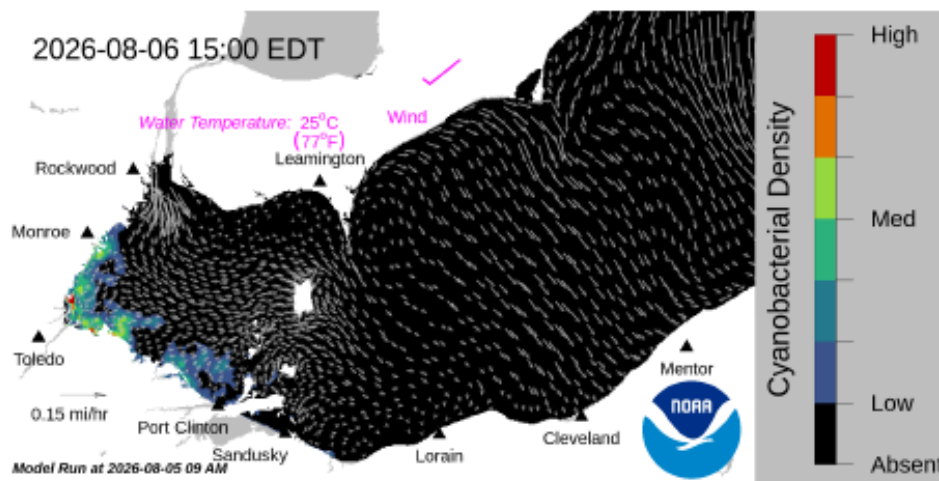
Where the bloom is present in western Lake Erie, the potential risk of scum.

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coastalscience.noaa.gov

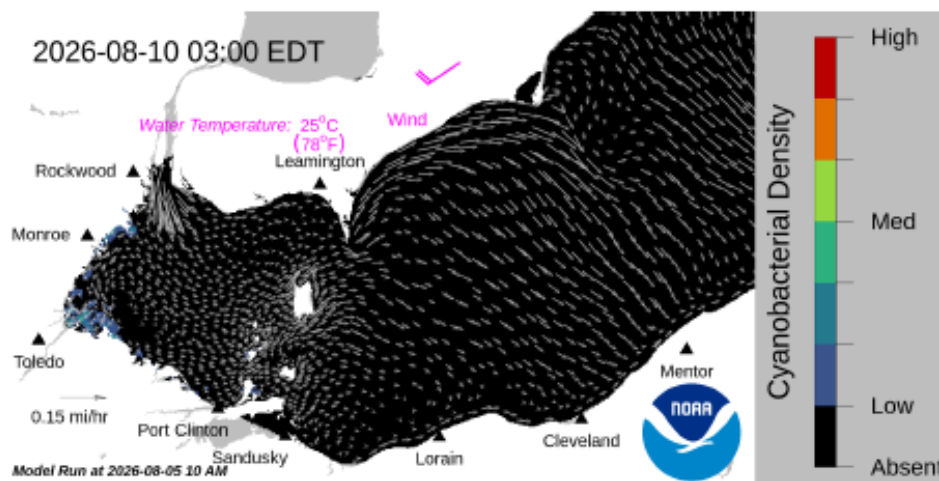
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Lake Erie Harmful Algal Bloom Forecast

2026-08-05



Forecast surface bloom position for Aug 06, modeled from the last satellite image with water currents estimated from the Lake Erie Operational Forecast System (LEOFS). Potential for bloom movement is forecast in 3-dimensions with a hydrodynamic model using satellite imagery and currents. The modeled output does not contain clouds. Black indicates the absence of chlorophyll and gray indicates area with no data. The arrows show forecasted currents. Water temperature and winds (in magenta) are the averages for the western basin from the model.



Forecast surface bloom position for Aug 09. Black indicates the absence of chlorophyll and gray indicates area with no data. The arrows show forecasted currents. Water temperature and winds (in magenta) are the averages for the western basin from the model.

Additional resources:

- [Archived Lake Erie Forecasts](#)
- [More information](#)
- [FAQs](#)
- [Contributors and Data Providers](#)
- [Lake Erie HAB Forecast Guide](#)

For more information visit: coastalscience.noaa.gov/science-areas/habs/hab-forecasts/lake-erie/

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10.3) Planning and Regulations

10.3.1) Planning

From the end of May 2026 through to the end of July 2026, there were 33 planning submissions reviewed by staff for this reporting season with respect to the Provincial Planning Statement, Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act and Ontario Regulation 41/24. On average it takes roughly 5 days to respond to submissions, ranging from same day response to 15 days for more involved planning submissions. There have also been 62 phone calls and over 146 email responses to inquiries that staff have responded to.

Planning Numbers	2025 Totals	Jan 2026 Totals	Feb 2026 Totals	Mar 2026 Totals	April 2026 Totals	May 2026 Totals	June 2026 Totals	July 2026 Totals
Chatham-Kent	178	13	7	31	11	18	10	9
Elgin	42	6	3	1	3	3	3	3
Essex	15	0	1	1	0	5	0	2
Middlesex	39	5	10	3	2	10	2	4
Total Numbers	274	24	21	36	16	36	15	18

Planning Fees

There were no planning submission fees received from member municipalities for the time period between June 1, 2026, through to July 31, 2026. There have been 11 legal inquiries received in June and July 2026 totaling \$1,375.00.

MUNICIPALITY	JUN 1, 2026 TO JULY 31, 2026	2026 TOTAL	2025 TOTAL
Chatham-Kent			\$450.00
Elgin County			
Southwold		\$13,645.00	\$23,645.00
Dutton Dunwich		\$1,090.00	
West Elgin		\$4,060.00	
Essex County			
Lakeshore			
Middlesex County			
Middlesex Centre			
YTD Total		\$18,795.00	\$24,095.00

10.3.2) Section 28 Regulations / Permitting

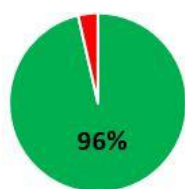
With respect to Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act and its associated regulation, Ontario Regulation 41/24, the LTVCA received a total of 50 new permit applications in the months of June and July. The total number of permit applications received thus far in 2026 is 210.

Of the new applications and, combined with previously submitted “incomplete” applications, a total of 49 applications were deemed to be “complete” in June and July and could be reviewed for permitting. Those 49 applications were in addition to the previous queue of three “complete” applications leading into this reporting period. 40 of the 52 “complete” applications were processed and all but one were approved by staff with or without conditions. One was approved by the Executive Committee in a Hearing. As of the end of July, 12 “complete” applications were in the queue for processing. Two of which had Hearings with the Executive Committee held on July 29th, but formal decisions haven’t been made or provided yet.

\$46,950 in permit application & hearing fees had been, or were to be, collected as of the end of July.

10.3.3) Application Timelines:

Review for Completeness:



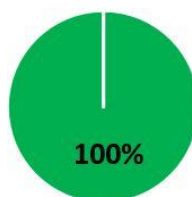
Ontario Regulation 41/24 requires that conservation authorities are to make a determination on whether an application is considered to be “complete” or “incomplete” and provide a response of such to the applicant within 21 calendar days. For the months of June and July, the average response time with respect to this was three days (ranging between 0 and 22 days). 96% of all applications met the provincially required timeline for a “completeness” response.

The applications, which didn’t meet the provincially required timeline, were all related to municipal infrastructure projects.

Permit Processing:

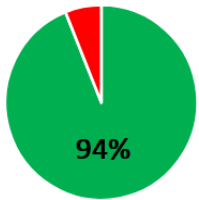
For applications issued in June and July, the table and charts below indicate that 100% of “routine” applications and 94% of “minor” applications met their applicable LTVCA customer service standard for turnaround time. The single “major” permit application did not meet its LTVCA customer service standard for turnaround time.

Routine Applications:



For the months of June and July, the average turnaround time for a routine permit application was within a day (ranged between 0 and 1 days). The LTVCA’s customer service standard for routine permits is a turnaround within 14 days. The processing time for routine permit applications met the LTVCA’s customer service target.

Minor Applications:



For the months of June and July, the average turnaround time was 10 days (ranged between 1 and 24 days) for minor permit applications. The LTVCA's customer service standard for minor complexity permits is a turnaround within 21 days. The processing time for minor permit applications is generally meeting the LTVCA's customer service target.

Major Applications:



For the months of June and July, the single "major" permit application turnaround time was 37 days. The LTVCA's customer service standard for major complexity permits is a turnaround within 28 days. The processing time for the major permit application did not meet the LTVCA's customer service target.

10.3.4) Property Inquiries:

Up to the end of July, 1,316 property inquiries (including permit pre-consultation inquiries) were received and responded to by the Regulations Officer, which is 480 more since the last board report. The June and July inquiries were responded to with 667 e-mails, 40 phone calls, and 20 in-person meetings.

At the time of writing this staff report, the current response time to property and pre-consultation inquiries is up to 5-10 business days for e-mails and 10-15 business days for phone calls. The length of time to respond to e-mails and return phone calls has increased since the last board report.

10.3.5) Policies & Procedures Update:

Given the current workload, there has been no work completed on the Policy & Procedures Manual and, therefore, no additional municipal or public consultations on the Manual have been undertaken. The Manual hasn't been updated since the original draft from the March 2024 board meeting. The Manual still requires multiple new sections and revisions to meet the requirements of Section 12 of Ontario Regulation 41/24.

Additionally, with respect to the Additional Residential Unit ("ARU") discussion from the June 2025 Board of Directors' meeting, staff had drafted and circulated proposed ARU policies to planning staff at our member municipalities and the local counties, as well as to building department staff at our member municipalities. Comments have been received but no further work has progressed.

10.3.6) Section 28 Enforcement:

In the first seven months of 2026, 15 complaints / tips were received from the public about possible enforcement issues. This is four more than the previous board report.

These reports align with these Strategic Objectives in the LTVCA's Watershed Based Resource Management Strategy:

3. Supporting Sustainable Growth
4. Improving Transparency and Customer Service in Planning and Regulations
5. Protecting the Community from Natural Hazards

10.3.7) Permit Decisions in February and March 2026

Permit Decisions in June and July 2026

B.D. 08/20/2026

App No.	Location	Community / Township	Municipality	Decision	Processing Time (days)
152-2026	12436 Talbot Trail	Morpeth	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 03, 2026	13
158-2026	7748 Grande River Line	Dover	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 03, 2026	6
160-2026	13339 Jane Road	Thamesville	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 03, 2026	2
161-2026	131 Rosewood Crescent	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 03, 2026	2
162-2026	9 Alice Street	Thamesville	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 02, 2026	0
163-2026	10629 Lakeview Drive	Lake Morningstar	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 02, 2026	1
164-2026	79 Lemuel Street	Thamesville	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 04, 2026	2
165-2026	9790 Maynard Line	Harwich	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 02, 2026	1
166-2026	Clearville Road Boat Launch	Orford	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 04, 2026	1
167-2026	303 Ironwood Trail	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 09, 2026	5
168-2026	279 Ironwood Trail	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 10, 2026	6
169-2026	67 Rosewood Crescent	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 10, 2026	2
171-2026	4191 Carriage Road	Delaware	Middlesex Centre	Granted: June 29, 2026	13
172-2026	55 Hillcrest Avenue	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 11, 2026	0
173-2026	28 Cornerstone Place	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 29, 2026	14
174-2026	32 Cornerstone Place	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 29, 2026	14
175-2026	36 Cornerstone Place	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 29, 2026	14
176-2026	40 Cornerstone Place	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 29, 2026	14
177-2026	35 Cornerstone Place	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 29, 2026	14
178-2026	39 Cornerstone Place	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 29, 2026	14
179-2026	Arkwood Drain No. 2	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 23, 2026	22
180-2026	Arkwood Drain No. 1	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 23, 2026	21
181-2026	Culvert over Stevenson Drain	Mersea	Leamington	Granted: June 24, 2026	19
182-2026	Knott Creek Drain - Branch No. 1	Harwich	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 24, 2026	7
183-2026	160 Rosewood Crescent	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 03, 2026	14
184-2026	11530 Rondeau Drive	Rondeau Bay Estates	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 03, 2026	14
185-2026	4727 Mint Line	Tilbury East	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 16, 2026	24
187-2026	20874 Cemetery Road	Wheatley	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 27, 2026	37
188-2026	13545 Jane Street	Thamesville	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 03, 2026	9
189-2026	99 Rosewood Crescent	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 03, 2026	10
190-2026	2214 Mersea Road 7	Mersea	Leamington	Granted: June 30, 2026	0
191-2026	12647 Longwoods Road	Camden	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 30, 2026	0
192-2026	810 Rivait Drive	Lighthouse Cove	Lakeshore	Granted: July 03, 2026	3
193-2026	4550 Talbot Trail	Port Alma	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 28, 2026	13
195-2026	6842 Riverview Line	Raleigh	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 16, 2026	9
196-2026	20924 Pickeral Road	Wheatley	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 13, 2026	0
197-2026	156 Rosewood Crescent	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 24, 2026	9

Permit Decisions in June and July 2026

B.D. 08/20/2026

App No.	Location	Community / Township	Municipality	Decision	Processing Time (days)
199-2026	601 Tweedsmuir Avenue West	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 24, 2026	6
205-2026	183 Rosewood Crescent	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 24, 2026	0
207-2026	455 Mariners Road	Erieau	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 28, 2026	0

10.4) Conservation Lands

10.4.1) Conservation Areas

Longwoods Road Conservation Area

Longwoods Road Conservation Area is always a busy location with our education programming completing at the end of June and then full summer programming kicking in. The Museum staff have been working hard to use our new to us display cabinets to set up beautiful displays throughout the museums and the land staff assisting to make the building and experience in the land a beautiful place.

The land staff restored the cable bridge and is a stunning piece to our conservation area. The storms are frequent this summer with heavy torrential downpours that have been traveling over land, has resulted in additional unexpected work loads on our land staff. The pathways around the building are being established and the driveway has been added for the lower entrance of the building.

Staff are constantly making new improvements to the Longwoods Road CA.

C.M. Wilson Conservation Area

C.M. Wilson Conservation Area has been a busy place this summer. The staff have been working hard on land preparation working with our education team to help build fencing around our Indigenous Gardens. The Ranger staff have been working on engaging the campers this summer with crafty events in the afternoons with the families.

The season has been a dry season with flash storms popping up. It has kept the staff busy with storm debris clean ups and high limbing activities. The gas line for the furnace is finally installed now that the land has dried out and the furnace for the shop will be installed within the next couple weeks. Accessory building roofs and washroom facilities have been upgraded over the last couple years and now are fully functional for the community and campers.

Rivard Dam

Staff entered the Rivard Dam to review the status of the gates and the debris located on the grates. The grates have been cleaned off this summer, and interior of the dam structure is in good working condition. The gates have been inspected by the staff and cleared of any vegetative debris that was located within the gates as several large branches has been jammed in a couple of the gates since the last operation.

6th Street Dam

Staff have cleaned out the 6th street dam several times this Spring and Summer as several large trees have come down McGregor Creek and have caused extensive backlogs of debris. LTVCA Staff and Municipality of Chatham-Kent Park Staff have created a very good working relationship to help manage the large obstructions for removal as some of the debris does exceed the capabilities of our own equipment and staffing abilities. This relationship we have cultivated is an amazing resource and has strengthened our bond with the Municipalities Parks Department.

Camping

Camping season is in full swing; the seasonal camping is a hustle and bustle of activities. The transient camping overall has been dropping in usership since Covid however on weekends is it still very active overall.

Watershed Events

September 23	Resource Centre and Hall Grand Opening	Longwoods Road CA
September 27- October 3 rd (Tentatively)	Conservation Area Grand Opening	Five Maples CA
October 6 th -8 th	Chatham-Kent & Lambton Children's Water festival	CM Wilson CA
October 13 th (14 th Rain date)	Annual Track and Field Event	Longwoods Road CA
October 17-25 th (Tentatively)	New Playground Grand Opening	CM Wilson CA
Spring 2027	Conservation Area Grand Opening	Campbell CA

The reports align with the following objectives of the LTVCA's Watershed Based Resource Management Strategy.

9. Providing Opportunities for Outdoor Experiences
10. Improving Management and Operations of Conservation Areas

10.5) Conservation Services

10.5.1) General Update

Western District

Western District – Stewardship Biologist - Erica Ion

Since joining the Conservation Services team on June 1st, I have been working on grant reporting and coordination for this year's stewardship grants, as well as supporting the communications and solicitation of projects through social media and the website. I have also been helping to coordinate *Phragmites* control efforts in Chatham-Kent through our working group.

Last year we received funding from the Invasive Species Centre and Nature Conservancy of Canada to create the Chatham-Kent *Phragmites* Management Areas Working Group. The goal of this working group is to bring together stakeholders, including local NGO's, private landowners, Indigenous groups, the Municipality, and other interested groups to share knowledge and resources to coordinate control efforts of *Phragmites* in the area. This year's focus for the group has been to begin the permitting process and extermination of invasive *Phragmites* at targeted sites.

We met with contacts from Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) on June 23rd at a targeted site that we have plans to treat out near Rondeau Bay. This meeting allowed us to ask questions regarding the permitting required for herbicide treatment in an aquatic area designated as Critical Habitat for Species at Risk. Using this knowledge, we submitted a Request for Review to DFO and are now awaiting a response. In addition to this site permitting, we are also in the process of applying for permits for our second targeted site in the St. Luke's area.



"Wall of Phragmites" at a site visit near Rondeau Bay.

We presented the knowledge we gained from DFO to our *Phragmites* working group at our second working group meeting in Blenheim on July 15th. We met at Willow Ridge Golf Course to discuss project updates at each targeted site, the permitting process, and using other methods such as biological control to manage *Phragmites*. We are looking forward to getting our permits approved and starting the extermination this Fall.

On Thursday, July 23rd, I attended a Drainage Workshop hosted by St. Clair Region Conservation Authority in Warwick, ON. I met with representatives from other nearby Conservation Authorities, the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), and drainage superintendents from surrounding municipalities. Experts spoke about managing *Phragmites* in agricultural drains, as well as the Drainage Act of Ontario, and controlled drainage systems. It was

a great opportunity for me to connect with other local groups dealing with *Phragmites* in drains, as well as funders from NCC who are supporting our working group.



Photo from the Drainage workshop hosted by SCRCA in Warwick, ON, on July 23rd, 2026.

Lastly, on July 30th, we were invited out by Janice Gilbert and her team from the Invasive *Phragmites* Control Centre (IPCC) and Adrian Rivard from Drone Spray Canada, who are contractors for this work, to see how *Phragmites* control is done using both the spray drone and the Truxor methods. Since our goal is to have a similar site near Rondeau treated with the spray drone, this was an opportunity for us to learn more and to ask questions. We are excited to begin treating some sites this Fall.



Spray drone from site visit near Rondeau on July 30th, 2026.

Western District – Wetlands & Stewardship Technician - Michael Young

The summer months have been off to a great start following up with landowners and gathering leads for potential projects. The dry periods have been a great time to implement some of these projects, with multiple wetland and erosion control projects being completed.

What has been surprising is the amount of tree projects we are gathering for next year's tree season. Lots of folks are interested, and we are able to get a head start getting those projects together.

Several staff attended the St. Clair Region CA Drainage workshop, where we were able to learn more about agricultural drainage, and network with Municipal Drainage.

We also attended the Elgin Stewardship Council tour, supporting our ongoing partnership and looking at completed and proposed projects. It was a great opportunity to see some new projects and to continue to network and expand our reach within the watershed, showcasing the importance of partnership and how we all work together to implement stewardship projects.

Lots of wetland and erosion control work have been going on, with projects in various stages of completion, design and initial discussion. I hosted a tour with Ducks Unlimited to look at funding various potential projects, in addition to some completed ones. Working with DUC and other funding partners has enabled us to continue to complete wetland projects in our watershed.



Turtle laying on side of laneway in Rondeau Bay area.



Wetland under construction in Wheatley area.



Wetland under construction in Buxton area.

Eastern District

Eastern District – *Eastern District Stewardship Technician - Tyler Thornton*

During the summer months of the year our Conservation Services Team are continuing to conduct site visits and engage landowners within the rural community, as we look to propose and implement future stewardship projects throughout our watershed. As part of the LTVCA's contractual obligations in liaison with Tree Canada and Forest Canada, first, second, and 5-year tree survival assessments for our 2021, 2024 & 2025 tree planting projects were completed, as well as the reporting and documentation required for submission. Six spring tree planting sites within the eastern district of our watershed required survival audits to be completed as part of our obligations with Tree Canada, which have all been performed and submitted well ahead of the submission deadline. During the months of June and July I have simultaneously collaborated with contractors, funders, colleagues, and landowners to establish three wetland projects within the eastern district of the watershed, which was a combined total of 1.75 acres of new wetland habitat. One of the completed wetland projects had erosion control components and was designed to address major soil erosion concerns on its respective property. The implemented erosion control design and control structures will play an important role in mitigating excess nutrients & sediment from entering the Thames River, which is adjacent to the aforementioned project. By mitigating these materials from entering the Thames River it will benefit the overall water quality of the Thames River and aid in protecting species at risk that are identified in the nearby area. Several other wetland projects, which would combine for a total of approximately 1.9 acres of additional wetland habitat are currently ongoing and are anticipated to be completed this fall, weather permitting.

Our Urban Stewardship team is currently working in liaison with myself and the landowner of Pearce Williams Summer Camp to organize a large-stock tree planting event, which is set to take place this fall. This event is anticipated to see heavy local community engagement where we will be planting approximately 100, 5-7-gallon native oak trees to create an Oak Savanna within a recently seeded meadow within a 9-acre field. The to be planted trees will provide further wildlife diversity of the area and is anticipated to be used in part as an educational trail system for all the campers who attend the Pearce William Summer Camp.

Site visits for future 2026 and 2027 stewardship projects are steadily ongoing as I continue to prepare and plan to establish these future projects.

Please see below for pictures encapsulating some of the work conducted in the eastern district this summer.



Wetland site (two weeks after construction) for project ID - LTVCA-01050H-C0343



Looking at 1 WASCOB area for project ID - LTVCA-01050H-C0343



Wetland Site (Day after construction) for Project ID: LTVCA-00434H-C0707



Wetland site (One week after construction) for Project ID: LTVCA-00625M-C0544



WASCOB Area for (Day after construction) for Project ID: LTVCA-00625M-C0544

Trees Canada Survival Assessments Photos 2026



*2024 Tree Planting- Project ID: LTVCA-01197B-C0067
(Second Year Tree Survival Photo)*



*2024 Tree Planting- Project ID: LTVCA-01249H-C0095
(Second Year Tree Survival Photo)*



*2025 Tree Planting- Project ID LTVCA-01421V-C0189
(First Year Tree Survival Photo)*



*2025 Tree Planting- Project ID LTVCA-01305K-C0119
(First Year Tree Survival Photo)*

ALUS Elgin

ALUS Elgin – ALUS Elgin Program Lead - Russel Vey

Tree planting was completed successfully this spring in partnership with the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority and Catfish Creek Conservation Authority, resulting in approximately 14 acres of new forest habitat established throughout the county. Several warm-season tallgrass prairie projects were also successfully seeded, with additional cool-season grassland projects planned for establishment later this fall as conditions become more favorable. Wetland establishment has now become the primary focus of the field season. Approximately 8 acres of wetlands are currently planned for establishment this year, with several projects already completed and additional opportunities continuing to emerge.



Completed Wetland at Geraldine Hind's Farm.

ALUS Elgin has partnered with ALUS Chatham-Kent and ALUS Middlesex to organize the Practical Stewardship for Water Quality Tour, taking place on August 13 at Chris Crump's farm. The guided tour will feature presentations from professionals specializing in phosphorus management and water quality, with discussions taking place directly at established stewardship projects. By showcasing these projects in the field, participants will have the opportunity to see firsthand how stewardship practices contribute to improved water quality, phosphorus reduction, farm resiliency, and long-term environmental sustainability.



ALUS

Practical Stewardship for Water Quality

Join the **ALUS Elgin, Chatham-Kent, and Middlesex** teams for a **guided farm tour** focused on practical approaches to phosphorus reduction, water quality improvement, and farm resiliency.

Visit established stewardship projects including wetlands, grasslands, grassed waterways, and forested areas. Learn how these practices function on the landscape and support both environmental and agricultural outcomes.

Speakers:
ALUS Staff - About the project and how you can become part of the ALUS program
Rick Gray - Best selling author of "The Gardener's Guide to Native Plants of the Southern Great Lake Region"
Sarah Larsen, PHD - Research & Small Grains Program Director at EFAO, Co-Owner of Three Ridges Ecological Farm

Come Join Us
Date: August 13, 2026
Time: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Location: Ilderton, ON
Cost: Free
Contact: Amanda Blain
 (519)354-7310 ext. 234
 amanda.blain@ltvca.ca

Lunch Provided
Registration Details Below



ALUS.ca

Practical Stewardship for Water Quality Tour Event Page.

Since joining ALUS Elgin in May, Nikolas Rohde has been assisting with participant follow-ups, site visits, and project verification, helping ensure project boundaries, eligible acreage, and database records remain accurate. Nikolas has also been monitoring the Gutoskie Reforestation Monitoring Project alongside ALUS Chatham-Kent and LTVCA, collecting data on tree survival and growth under different maintenance treatments to help inform future tree planting and restoration efforts.



Nikolas Rohde Measuring a Tree at the Gutoskie Site.

ALUS Middlesex – ALUS Middlesex Program Director - Elise Gabrielli-Schroder

ALUS Middlesex welcomes the long summer days and the opportunities that the season brings. Our team has been keeping busy with a variety of projects and events.

In mid-July, the ALUS Middlesex team travelled to Steinbach, Manitoba, to attend the 2026 ALUS National Field Conference, hosted by the Seine Rat Roseau community. The conference brought together an incredible group of farmers, partners, and colleagues from across Canada who are working every day to address some of our most pressing environmental challenges.

Throughout the conference, our team participated in peer-to-peer workshops and field tours, exploring practical approaches to erosion control, improving soil health, protecting biodiversity and species at risk. Visiting these projects and hearing firsthand from the landowners and community members who manage them was a powerful reminder that working lands can deliver meaningful environmental benefits that extend well beyond the farm gate. Their dedication and innovation continue to inspire and reinforce the collective impact we can achieve by working together to support farmers and healthy ecosystems.



Harold Janzen takes guests from across Canada on a tour of the conservation work by ALUS done to his Marsh River Farms. (Christopher Gareau/CBC)

Building on this momentum, the ALUS Middlesex team is thrilled to share that we are a recent recipient of a \$345,000 Community Vitality Grant from the London Community Foundation, to be distributed over three years. These grants are made possible through the generosity of Community Fund holders, as well as donations from local families, individuals, and businesses.

Community Vitality Grants are awarded to organizations addressing priorities identified in the Foundation's flagship *Vital Signs* report. This funding recognizes and supports local climate action initiatives that strengthen ecosystems, enhance environmental resilience, and help build a more sustainable future for communities across Middlesex County.



Alus Middlesex Team

The funding will support program delivery by expanding the implementation of nature-based solutions on farmland, strengthening project monitoring and reporting, and enhancing community outreach and engagement. It will also provide participating farmers with project design support and mentorship opportunities, recognizing and empowering them as leaders in addressing local environmental challenges.

While the Foundation's investment is expected to support approximately 90 acres of environmental projects, the need continues to grow. By the end of 2032, it is anticipated that nearly 500 acres of eligible land will be awaiting funding, highlighting the significant opportunity to expand the program's impact. As ALUS Canada CEO Jordan Sinclair explains, "This project is scalable, with each additional dollar invested directly expanding the number of acres placed under stewardship, unlocking proportional increases in environmental outcomes and community impact."

Throughout the remainder of July, the ALUS Middlesex team has remained focused on project implementation and monitoring. Each year, ALUS Canada works with each community to support the program's verification process, during which approximately 10% of projects are randomly selected for inspection by an independent third-party agency to meet funder requirements. This year, ALUS Middlesex is proud to be one of the first communities to pilot an in-house verification process. While annual monitoring evaluates the overall health and condition of a project, including ground cover, species composition, and evidence of disturbance, verification is primarily focused on confirming the accuracy of reported project acreage and location.

As the growing season continues, much of our work is centred on wetland construction and erosion control. To date, the team has established nine separate wetland projects.

ALUS Chatham-Kent

ALUS Chatham-Kent – ALUS CK Program Lead & Stewardship Technician - Rashel Tremblay

When Tree season ends in May, Interim Reporting season begins. Reports are almost finalized now and we're returning to site visits and field work. Interest is high and we've had 15 site visits since June. Wetlands are in high demand this year and we're excited to get as many established as we can!

We're done verifying delayed hay projects, they're required to delay cutting or grazing until after July 15th, to allow Bobolink, a species at risk, to fledge from their ground-nest. The Chatham-Kent PAC also approved a new delayed hay project for this Fall.



A horsefly photo-bombed a photo of a new Tree project, which was established directly next to a delayed hay project.



Alfalfa in bloom in a delayed hay project, near Pinehurst.



Delayed hay project near Merlin. Bobolinks were first identified here in 2023 and the farmer decided to protect them by enrolling the acres in ALUS.

We've been verifying new projects and project renewals, doing Tree assessments, and continuing our weekly data collection on a Tree demonstration farm near Merlin, where we're studying the effects of different kinds of maintenance on the health of new Trees.



The Swamp White Oak pictured here is thriving, despite being nibbled by Deer and Rabbits.

ALUS

Practical Stewardship for Water Quality

Join the **ALUS Elgin, Chatham-Kent, and Middlesex** teams for a **guided farm tour** focused on practical approaches to phosphorus reduction, water quality improvement, and farm resiliency.

Visit established stewardship projects including wetlands, grasslands, grassed waterways, and forested areas. Learn how these practices function on the landscape and support both environmental and agricultural outcomes.

Speakers:

Rick Gray- Best selling author of "The Gardener's Guide to Native Plants of the Southern Great Lake Region"

Sarah Larsen, PHD- Research & Small Grains Program Director at EFAO, Co-Owner of Three Ridges Ecological Farm.

Come Join Us!
Date: August 13, 2026
Time: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Location: 5372 Egremont Dr, Ilderton, ON
Contact: Russell Vey, ALUS Elgin Program Lead (519) 264-9684 ext. 344
Registration Details Below

ALUS.ca

Lastly, we're preparing for a joint ALUS Tour with ALUS Elgin and ALUS Middlesex on **August 13th** at the Crump Family Farm near Ilderton!

Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/alus-practical-stewardship-for-water-quality-tour-tickets-1992663430963?aff=oddtcreator>

10.5.2) Agricultural Initiatives

Agricultural Programs

Andrew Mickle, Agricultural Stewardship Specialist

Since the last update in June, the Ag. Stewardship Specialist has primarily been focused on reviewing applications for the Precision Phosphorus Reduction Program (PPRP) and granting pre-approval for in-field practices. The interest and uptake of the program far exceed that of 2025, with approximately \$1.7 million in pre-approvals granted to date. This represents over 14,000 acres of cover crops, 24,000 acres of intensive soil testing, 16,000 acres of precision applied phosphorus fertilizer, and 25,000 acres of no-till/strip-till practices. At this time, we have closed application intake for the majority of in-field activities as our targets have been met or exceeded. Producers have begun sending in required documentation and data which is being reviewed prior to granting full approval and funding.

Andrew has also been working closely with the Stewardship staff to liaise with landowners and contractors to assess and mitigate erosion issues on farms. These include projects such as buffer strips, windbreaks, water & sediment control basins, rock chutes and wetlands. The 2026 PPRP is contributing to over 50 projects of various scopes and sizes. Many of these projects have been completed to date and many more are in various stages of planning/permitting.

A highlight of the last few months has been the continued collaboration between the teams of regional conservation authorities. The members of the different agriculture programs have built and maintained a great relationship which has helped strengthen our individual programs targeting phosphorus reduction. Members of the LTVCA PPRP met in person with the teams from SCRCA, UTRCA, GRCA, LPRCA, ERCA to discuss our current programs, successes/challenges, and future plans.

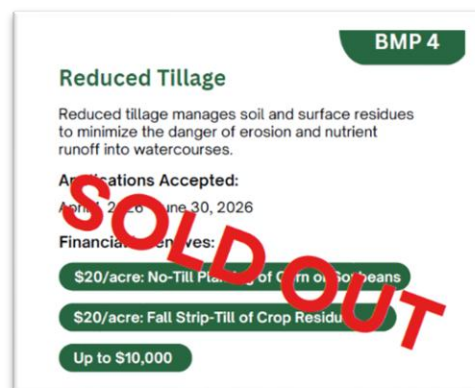
In the immediate future, Andrew will continue to review new applications and proposals for construction projects. August is filled with in-field events, highlighted by the LTVCA Cultivating Conservation Tour which will take attendees on a tour of local sites to showcase conservation projects working in harmony within agricultural landscapes.

Amber Frak, Water Quality Technician

The Precision Phosphorus Reduction Program's monthly water sampling continued as normal. There have been several summer pop up storms, which resulted in three rain events that created enough flow for Amber to collect samples. Between monthly sampling and event sampling, there have been 55 samples collected so far since the beginning of June. Maintenance at the ISCO sites to ensure the machines are in good working order has also been ongoing, along with weed whacking and trimming to ensure the sites are accessible and pest free. Amber also began Algae sampling for the summer season to monitor for Harmful Algae Blooms at sampling sites throughout the watershed. Many members of the PPRP team attended the Southwest Crop Diagnostic Days at Ridgetown College in July which was a great opportunity to learn about different research, technology and methods currently being used in the agricultural industry.

Leah Ripley, Agriculture Program Administration Assistant

Over the past few months, the Agriculture Program Admin Assistant has been processing applications for the 2026 Precision Phosphorus Reduction Program. The program has received over 200 applications in its first three months. Leah has been working with the PPRP team to create and distribute letters of approval to the applicants.



She has been in communication with farmers both in person and over the phone, providing information about the PPRP, assisting farmers with their applications, and acquiring applicants' audit documentation. Leah has begun preparing financial documents for the first round of payments for applicants that will be paid in August.

In addition, Leah has been attending weekly meetings to review the database that is used by the stewardship and agriculture programs. The review of the database will assist with ensuring accurate tracking of program information and reporting requirements.

Elizabeth Arango Ruda, Water Resource Analyst

From June to August, the Water Resource Analyst focused on the following activities related to data analysis, collaboration, workshops and outreach and education.

As part of ongoing data analysis, the Water Resource Analyst has been evaluating nutrient loads across the Thames River Watershed to better understand nutrient transport. Discharge data is required to calculate nutrient loads across the Thames River tributaries. However, the majority of the sites where water quality data is being collected do not have discharge measurements (non-gauge sites). In the past, yearly phosphorus loads were calculated for all the sites using the area approach method. There is an interest in an alternative method to analyze discharge and load patterns at a finer time scale resolution to look at the hydrograph and the existence of hysteresis patterns. For this reason, a synthetic daily Global Flood Awareness System (GloFAS) forecast dataset is being used to access discharge data at daily resolution within the watershed.

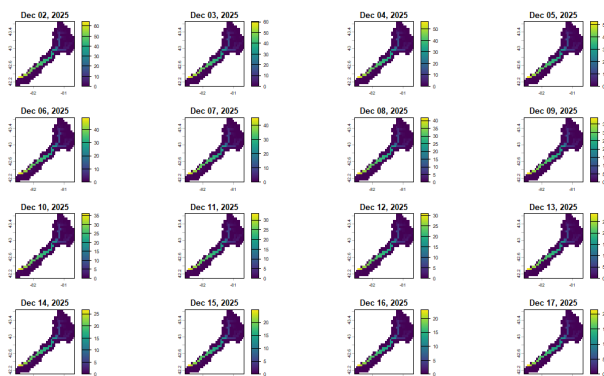


Figure 1. Daily progression of discharge ($m^3 s^{-1}$) measurements on the Thames River for December 2025.

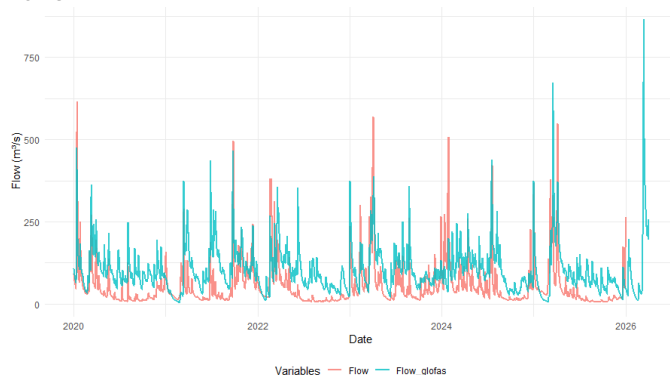


Figure 3. Daily observed and modelled discharge ($m^3 s^{-1}$) at a site on the Thames River.

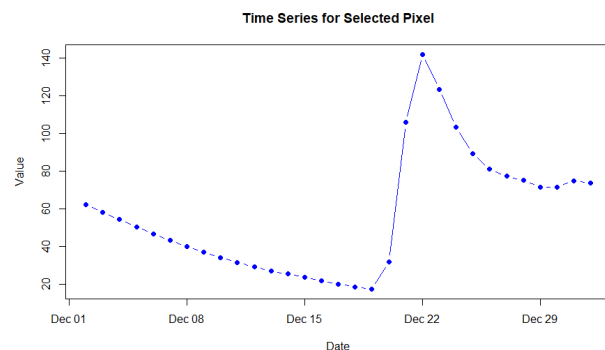


Figure 2. Hydrograph from December 1st to December 30th, 2025, at the outlet of the Thames River.

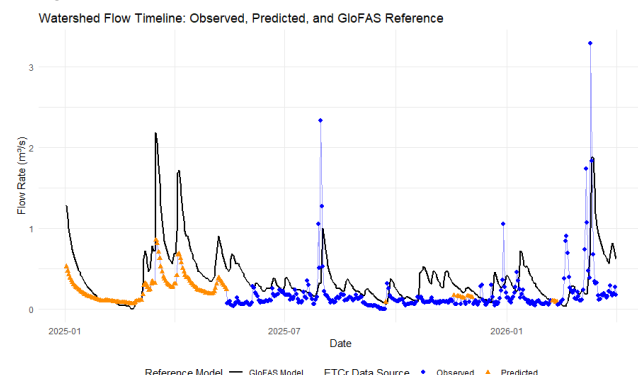


Figure 4. Daily observed and modelled discharge ($m^3 s^{-1}$) at East Two Creeks.

Elizabeth has been providing support for outreach and education initiatives that will promote watershed awareness and community engagement. In collaboration with the Agricultural Outreach and Communications Technician, the Water Resource Analyst assisted with outlining topics to include in the Agricultural Stewardship Story Map. This project is expected to be finished by the end of the year and will contain information such as land use, agricultural practices in the LTVCA watershed, and current and historical LTVCA phosphorus reduction programs and initiatives.

The plan includes the development of an ArcGIS Dashboard that will be used in the Agricultural Stewardship Story Map and added to the LTVCA website.

Elizabeth joined the “Strong Roots Community Planting” event being held in Ilderton on June 2nd, 2026.

During the month of July, Elizabeth advanced her professional development by attending the McCall MacBain Foundation Leadership certification at McMaster University. This opportunity was possible through a scholarship she had received.

Ani Pearn, Agriculture Technical Assistant

The Agriculture Technical Assistant has been working to enter PPRP applicant information into the LTVCA tracking system to support the processing of applications. To date roughly 1500 fields have been submitted for funding consideration of BMP practices. In addition to processing application records, Ani has been actively mapping all projects funded under the no-till category. This mapping process helps verify field eligibility and supports reporting requirements.

Additionally, Ani has participated in tracking tree health and growth measurements of a tree project funded through the ALUS program. The objective of this task is to determine which post-planting maintenance practices provide the greatest benefits to tree growth.

Justine Cooper, Soil and Water Quality Technician

The LTVCA recently hired Justine Cooper as the new Soil & Water Quality Technician. Justine is from London and just graduated from the University of Guelph with a Bachelors of Environmental Science, majoring in Environment Resource Management. Some of her previous work experiences include co-op terms working with AAFC on the Living Labs project, and working with Corteva Agriscience as a Research Assistant. Justine is excited to use these experiences to contribute to the ONFARM program and help conserve the Lake Erie watershed.



Justine attended the annual meeting of the Canadian Society of Soil Science and the Canadian Society of Agronomy (CSSS-CSA) at the University of Guelph on June 23rd, and Southwest Crop Diagnostic Day at Guelph Ridgetown Campus on July 8th. A variety of academics, industry professionals, and local farmers attended both events. Through these experiences the Soil and Water Quality Technician improved her understanding of soil health and agricultural practices.

On-Farm Applied Research & Monitoring (ONFARM) Program

The ONFARM program, developed by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness and delivered by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association.



LTVCA staff have been busy conducting work for the LTVCA's ONFARM project including site maintenance, edge-of-field sample collection, and attending knowledge transfer event. Staff conducted 2 sampling events in late June and mid July with 7 samples collected from the Fairview site. It has been a dry month with some moderate rain events mostly occurring east of the Merlin sites. As a result, between June 10 – July 28, 2026, the Fairview

site received a total of 130.4 mm of rain, while the Merlin site received only 98.6 mm of rain. With the limited amount of rain, dry soils, and crops covering the fields, there have been few tile runoff events overall. On July 14, 2026 LTVCA staff joined the Soil Resource group at the Merlin A and Merlin B edge-of-field sites to collect harvest data from the wheat crops at both fields. As both fields are in wheat crop during 2026, this data will be useful for analyzing differences between the two different management practices.

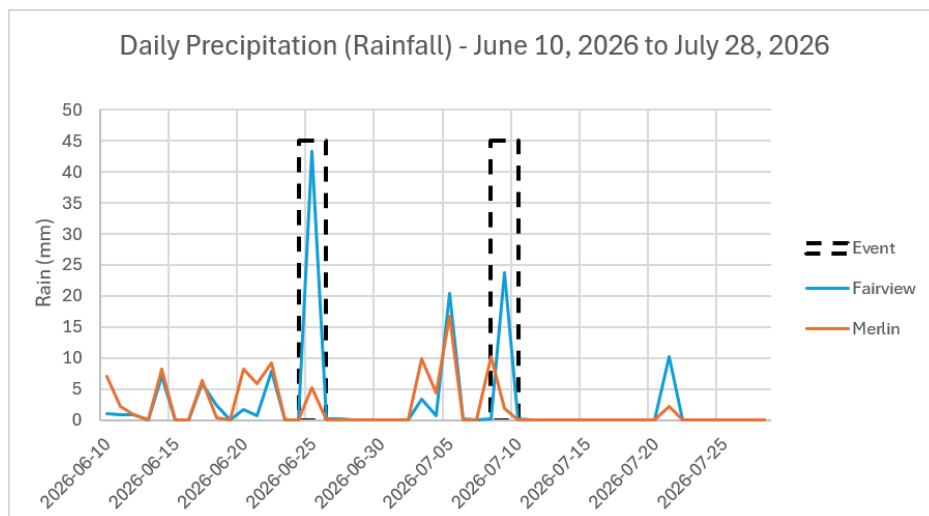


Figure 1. Daily precipitation at Merlin and Fairview edge-of-field sites from June 10, 2026 – July 25, 2026



Figure 2. Wheat harvest samples collected at the Merlin A site on July 14, 2026.



Figure 3. New cap covering HOBO sensor at Merlin B site.

Maintenance during the summer season becomes a priority due to improved weather and less frequent rain events. To ensure the sites are easily accessible, staff have weed whacked the research plots once a month. Monthly downloads from data loggers are also done to confirm the equipment is functioning properly. All enclosure locks were replaced to improve the security and accessibility of the sites. A sensor at the Merlin B site was reading unlikely values causing it to be removed, replaced, and tested, leading to a worm being found within. The sensor was reinstalled and is once again reading accurate values. In addition, a cap holding two HOBO sensors in place was replaced to ensure structural integrity and maintain accuracy of the sensor.

Donna Small, Agricultural Program Coordinator

The Agricultural Program Coordinator continued to oversee the delivery of the Precision Phosphorus Reduction Program (2024-2028), the LTVCA ONFARM Program (2023-2028), the LTVCA OMAFA-COA Agreement (2025-2027) and the Agricultural Phosphorus Filter Tank Project (OMAFA). The Agricultural Program Coordinator is working closely with staff to ensure that all project deliverables and reporting requirements are met. This

includes coordinating activities related Best Management Practice (BMP) incentive program delivery, water quality research and monitoring, and outreach and education initiatives.

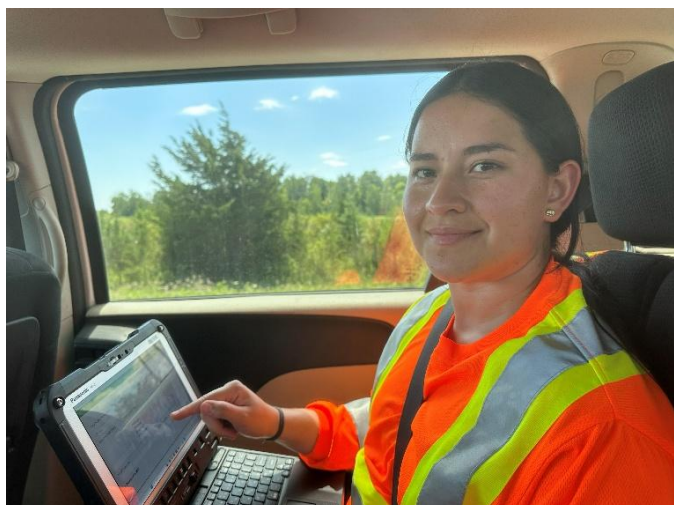
Summer continues to be a busy period for advancing BMP project implementation that support efforts to reduce phosphorus losses from agricultural sources. There is ongoing collaboration between LTVCA Technicians and the Agricultural Program Coordinator to review, evaluate and prioritize projects to align with funding priorities.

Notably, planning is underway for the LTVCA's 6th Annual Cultivating Conservation Tour that will take place on Wednesday August 19th in the Eastern region of the LTVCA watershed. The bus tour will feature stops at four project sites and complimentary lunch at Arrowwood Farms. On Tuesday July 28, 2026, Donna participated in a live on-air radio interview to promote the event and invite the public.

A flyer for the 'Cultivating Conservation Tour' by the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority. The flyer has a light green background with a dark green header and footer. The header features the title 'Cultivating Conservation Tour' in bold, followed by 'You're Invited! Join the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority for the 6th Annual Cultivating Conservation Tour.' Below this, it says 'Take a guided bus tour to discover how farmers and rural landowners are using conservation projects to resolve environmental concerns and enhance the natural landscape.' A blue banner in the center contains the date 'Date: August 19, 2026 9:30a.m. - 3:30 p.m.' Below the banner are three circular images: a field with trees, a pond with reeds, and a person working in a field. The footer contains contact information: 'www.ltvca.ca', 'agriculture@ltvca.ca', and '519-354-7310'.

12.5.3) Aquatic Species at Risk (SAR)

Aquatic Species at Risk (SAR)



Camila Barahona was hired as the new Aquatic Biology Technician on an 8-week (July - August) Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) funded position. She is assisting with data logger installation, surveying mussel middens in the lower Thames River west of Chatham and benthic and data logger data organization. Temperature and dissolved oxygen data loggers were installed at 18 locations throughout the watershed (13 in the lower Thames River, one in Big Creek, two in Rondeau Bay tributaries and two in the Deary Drain).

A funding proposal was submitted to Fisheries and Oceans Canada's (DFO's) Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk (CNAFSAR) for SAR activities.

These reports align with the following objectives of the LTVCA's Watershed Based Resource Management Strategy.

- 1. Improving Watershed Health
- 11. Strengthening and Increasing Collaboration with Community Stakeholders
- 12. Increase Awareness of the Value of Good Watershed Stewardship

10.6) Communications, Education and Outreach

Communications



Posters were made for campgrounds to help campers ensure their campsite is raccoon proof.



A good news story written for the Ridgetown Independent newspaper show Amanda Blain, Communications Specialist and Henk De Wilt a volunteer at Camp Vincent posing next to the seedlings planted this past spring.



New Signage for stewardship projects. The signs will be placed at landowners' properties who have completed a project with the LTVCA. Ideally placed at roadsides for visibility to the public. The signs feature a blank space for stickers of specific funders of the project.

LTVCA 65th Anniversary Mural

Mariah Alexander, the Indigenous Community Educator at C.M. Wilson, under the direction of management has been planning a collaborative mural project for staff of the LTVCA. The piece will highlight key species found in the Thames River Watershed and will serve as a commemorative project for our 65th anniversary and final moments of the Authority before amalgamation. The mural will provide staff with the opportunity to come together to create something beautiful as a larger team. The premise is that each staff member will paint a section of the mural on a small canvas, without knowing the whole image until all canvases come together. This reflects the idea that alone we may feel like we have little impact, but together, we do so much for the betterment of the authority. We are excited to see the results.

Education

Summer is flying by! The education team wrapped up June training the new Indigenous Community Educator out of Longwoods Road Conservation Area. We have since jumped right into summer public programming and the training of summer staff. Through the Canada Summer Jobs program, 3 youth were hired: 2 Community Museum Technicians at Longwoods Road and 1 Conservation Area Interpreter at C.M. Wilson. The education team is very grateful for the help these youth have provided throughout the summer!

The Indigenous Community Educator at C.M. Wilson has been leading guided hikes at Sharon Creek Conservation Area once a month with the support of Middlesex Centre. These walks were so well received that Middlesex Centre Municipality wishes to continue working together to plan fall and winter activities that can be offered to members of the municipality.

Interviews have been conducted for the role of Administrative Assistant, Education. This person will be joining the Corporate Services Department following the retirement of a long-time staff member.

Longwoods Road Conservation Area

On July 10th the Indigenous Community Educator at Longwoods Road and Community Museum Technicians visited the Cherryhill Branch Library where there were over 50 attendees for a pottery workshop. On July 22nd a second pottery workshop was held at the Lambeth branch. These were great opportunities for community engagement and brought awareness to the mission of the LTVCA.

Two summer camps have brought youth out to Longwoods for programming, while programs for a third were cancelled because of forest fire smoke.

Summer Events

For the summer, the Indigenous Community Educator organized weekly drop-in events focussed on the themes of Indigenous and environmental education. Bug Safari took place on July 7, 21, and 23, 2026. These opportunities allowed families to explore trails then catch and match a wide variety of bug species. Over 100 people attended cumulatively.

Beading workshops also hosted by the Indigenous Community Educator were held in the hall space on July 14th and July 28th. This program provided the public with the opportunity to learn about the general significance behind different bead colours and patterns in Indigenous culture, as well as how to create a variety of beaded work. New weekly events, including kids craft day and nature journaling, will be introduced in August.



C.M. Wilson Learning Centre

The Conservation Area Interpreter at C.M. Wilson has been helping maintain the Learning Centre, working on the new learning garden, delivering existing programming, and developing drop-in activities. So far, she has planned the following activities for drop-in days at the Learning Centre: free paint, cyanotype printing, bug safari, resourceful rafts, corn husk doll making, sensational seasons exploration, dip netting, and natural dye making. She has also been job shadowing the Indigenous Community Educator at C.M. Wilson, helping with group bookings and guided hikes.

Apart from drop-in activities, other summer programming has been going well. We kicked off the summer at Beachside Discovery Day in Erieau, where we had a touch table booth of fur, feathers, bones, and 3D models – educating the community about local wildlife and of the LTVCA. We have hosted a summer student group at Wilson, lead a webinar on Powwow history and etiquette to Chatham-Kent municipal staff, provided training to Kenesserie Camp Counsellors about tree ID, Indigenous history and Traditional Environmental Knowledge (TEK) in the area.

A Three Sisters garden has been started at the back of the Learning Centre. Corn was planted with the Montessori students prior to summer break, and the Indigenous Community Educator added the beans with the Conservation Area Interpreter. Squash will be planted by the end of July. We have also developed a plan for fencing the area, which will use up the rest of the funds provided by the CK School Garden Grant. Early in July, the Indigenous Community Educator sent an application to the TD Friends of the Environment Fund with the goal of securing funding to expand the garden in 2027 year.

Water Festival

Water Festival planning continues as usual, almost everything is ready to go other than doing inventory and finding volunteers for a few more spots. Water Festival inventory is scheduled to be completed on August 17 and 18, 2026.

Ska-Nah-Doht Village and Museum

As of August 3, 2026, the Ska-Nah-Doht Village's Facebook page has 4,411 Followers. The Instagram page for the Village has 1,574 Followers.

Filming at Rose's Classroom





On May 15-16, Rose's Classroom was used as a film location for the upcoming Hallmark film, *Nothing But Love*. The production shot overnight masquerade scenes in the classroom while their extras used the new Indigenous Community Learning Centre Hall for their staging area. Staff were available to them throughout the day and stayed at the conservation area overnight to ensure the safety of our facilities and natural environment. The film, under the updated title *Much About Love* will premiere on the Hallmark Channel on Saturday, August 29, 2026.

Artifact Day

On Sunday, July 5th, Artifact Day was hosted in the pavilion. Although it was a rainy day, many came to have their artifacts identified by Chris Ellis from the London Chapter of the Ontario Archaeological Society. Pottery and Arrowhead excavation stations were run by the education team.

Summer Repairs

The Curator has received follow-up questions from the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development regarding our application to the Ontario Job Creation Partnership. Responses are due to them on August 10, 2026. An additional call will take place between the Curator and ministry representative once answers are submitted.

Cabin roof replacements began the week of July 27, 2026. They are progressing well, with shingles having been removed and new materials installed at the Chippewas Cabin. As of July 31, 2026, progress is being made on the Oneida Cabin. Work at the Munsee Cabin will follow.

Exhibit Updates

With the support of the Community Museum Technicians, the Curator has installed 7 new exhibit cases at the Museum. These cases are a refreshing addition to the space and better allow for cultural belongings to be displayed. Natural items are also being collected to enhance displays related to environmental topics and plant life.

Throughout the summer, the Community Museum Technicians have also been starting to repaint old cases to better compliment those donated by the Guelph Civic museum. Wheels will also be installed to make these cases more mobile in the coming years.



Gift Shop

The education teams at Longwoods and C.M Wilson have been continually collaborating on new items to offer at the Ska-Nah-Doht Museum Gift Shop. This includes reaching out to local Indigenous-owned businesses about new products and the Indigenous Community Educator at Longwoods creating beaded jewelry and keychains to be sold.

Recognition Event

A recognition event for the construction of the Indigenous Community Learning Centre and Revitalization of Ska-Nah-Doht Museum is currently being planned. The Curator, Indigenous Community Educators, and Communications Specialist are collaborating on event action items with the support of the Eastern District Supervisor.

A donor recognition piece will be unveiled at the event; people will be invited to visit the museum and take part in hands-on activities. Other details continue to be confirmed.

These reports align with the following objectives of the LTVCA's Watershed Based Resource Management Strategy.

- 7. Supporting Community Understanding of the Watershed
- 8. Providing Educational and outreach opportunities
- 9. Providing Opportunities for Outdoor Experiences
- 11. Strengthening and Increasing Collaboration with Community Stakeholders

10.7) Wheatley Two Creeks Association June 4, 2026, Minutes

WHEATLEY TWO CREEKS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the regular meeting held on June 4, 2026 at Two Creeks.

Attendance: Gerry & Muggs Soulliere, Roger Dundas, Pauline Sample, Linda Pearce, Mike Diesbourg, Joe Pinsonneault, Rick Taves, Bruce & Marj Jackson, Lorna Bell, Joe Dama, Stephan Logan, Brian Warkentine.

Agenda: Moved by Joe Dama, sec. by Lorna agenda be accepted as outlined (Carried).

Minutes: Moved by Phil, sec. by Roger minutes be accepted as read. (Carried).

Mem. Groves: Mr. Kim would like to install 13 posts with spikes, he will put them in the ground. 8 trees need to be planted in the groves, 1 tree has been planted so far. The sign near the road has been repaired.

Prop. & Equip. : A short film will be shot in 1 day at Two Creeks sometime in July. The boards for the new picnic tables have been engraved . The trails are in need of cutting, Joe Dama has volunteered for the job.

Concerts: All concerts are set to go, there will be an opening act for the first week.

Financial Report: Submitted by Roger. Account balance as of April 30 2026 was \$50,397.71. Account balance as of May 31 2026 was \$ 58,338.85. Moved by Roger , sec. by Lorna report be accepted as given.

Correspondence: None.

Old Business: There is 1 more step to be taken to complete the revision of our by- laws. Elisabeth has mailed the flyers.

New Business: The North bike bridge has been cut up, also the bike group will try to clean up that end of the creek.

Adjournment: Roger moved for adjournment at 7: 25pm.

Phil Humphries, secretary.

10.8) Wheatley Two Creeks Association July 2, 2026, Minutes

Minutes of the regular meeting held on July 2, 2025 at Two Creeks

Attendance: Rick Taves, Lorna Bell, Gerry & Muggs Soulliere, Roger Dundas, Bruce & Marj Jackson, Linda & Lee Pearce.

Agenda: Moved by Roger, sec. by Rick agenda be accepted as outlined (Carried).

Minutes: Moved by Phil, sec. by Roger minutes be accepted as read (Carried).

Mem. Groves: The plaques for Mr. Kim have been completed, will now need to be installed. Kevin Getty has recently cut the Groves. He has agreed to cut the trails after we have cut them with our machine.

Prop. & Equip. : The rest of our property has been cut. The pavilion has been rented out periodically for July & August.

Concerts: We have agreed to start a music committee to assist Joe in this demanding role starting next year.

Financial Report: Submitted by Roger. Account balance as of May 31 2025 was \$58,338.85. Account balance as of June 30 2025 was \$61,764.52. Moved by Roger, sec. by Phil report be accepted as given.

Correspondence: We received a thank-you note from the CKEarlyON group thanking Kevin Getty for adjusting his grass cutting schedule to accomodate them. They also thanked Two Creeks for providing a beautiful area.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Adjournment: Roger moved for adjournment at 7:24 pm.

Phil Humphries, secretary.

11. Correspondence

11.1) Minister's Direction Under Section 1.14 of the Conservation Authorities Act with Respect to Budget and Apportionment Matters

Ministry of the Environment,
Conservation and Parks

Ministère de l'Environnement,
de la Protection de la nature et des
Parcs

Office of the Minister

Bureau du ministre

777 Bay Street, 5th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 2J3
Tel.: 416 314-6790

777, rue Bay, 5^e étage
Toronto ON M7A 2J3
Tél.: 416 314-6790



357-2026-1745

June 26, 2026

TO: Conservation Authorities Chairs, GMs/CAOs, and municipalities

SUBJECT: Minister's direction under section 1.14 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* with respect to budget and apportionment matters

I am writing with regards to the transition of Ontario's conservation authority system to a consolidated regional model. Pursuant to my authority under section 1.14 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* (CAA), I am issuing a direction ("Direction") to conservation authorities on budget and apportionment matters leading up to the transition date – please see attached Direction.

The purpose of this Direction, effective from June 26, 2026 to the transition date under the CAA (i.e., February 1, 2027, or such later date as may be prescribed by the regulations), is to require conservation authorities to complete the budgetary process for the 2027 calendar year budget before the transition date, and in accordance with the CAA and applicable budget and apportionment regulations.

This Direction establishes deadlines for key budget process milestones, including the holding of meetings to approve apportionment amounts and final budgets, and the sending of notices of apportionment to participating municipalities. Conservation authorities are also required to notify the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA) as certain steps of the budget process are completed. This Direction applies to all conservation authorities listed in Appendix A, with additional guidance set out in Appendix B of the attachment.

The Direction is intended to ensure that the transition to consolidation is successful with minimal disruptions to conservation authorities' governance, programs and services.

If you have any questions regarding this Direction, please contact the Conservation Authorities Section of the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks at ca.office@ontario.ca.

...2

Conservation Authorities Chairs, GMs/CAOs, and municipalities
Page 2.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Todd McCarthy", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

Todd McCarthy
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Enclosures

c: The Honorable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

ATTACHMENT A

Minister's Direction Issued Pursuant to Section 1.14 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* (this "Direction")

Section 1.14 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* (CAA) provides the Minister with the authority to issue a direction to a conservation authority in relation to various matters for the purpose of facilitating the transition to a regional watershed-based framework for conservation authorities. The types of directions that can be issued by the Minister are set out in clauses 1.14(1)(a) to (d):

- (a) prohibiting the authority from making a decision in relation to its exercise of any of its powers under this Act or any other Act in the circumstances specified in the direction and subject to any specified conditions;
- (b) requiring the authority to give notice, in accordance with the direction, of a decision that it has made;
- (c) requiring the authority to send notices under subsection 25 (2), 27 (3) or 27.2 (3) by the date specified in the direction;
- (d) governing budgetary and apportionment matters relating to the authority that are otherwise addressed in a regulation made under clause 40 (1) (c), (e) or (f) or clause 40 (3) (k).

Section 1.14 further provides that an authority that receives such a direction shall comply with the direction within the time specified in the direction.

Pursuant to the authority of the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks under clauses 1.14(1)(c) and (d), the conservation authorities set out under Appendix "A" of this Direction (the "**authorities**" or each, an "**authority**") are hereby directed as follows:

1. Each authority shall take all necessary steps to develop and approve its budget for the 2027 calendar year, in accordance with the CAA, to ensure that the authority complies with paragraphs 2 and 3 of this Direction.
2. No later than thirty (30) calendar days prior to the transition date, each authority shall:
 - i. Hold a meeting to approve apportionment amounts for its participating and specified municipalities as required by section 16 of O. Reg. 402/22.
 - ii. Hold a meeting to approve a final budget as required by section 22 of O. Reg. 402/22.
3. Prior to the transition date, each authority shall:
 - i. Provide a copy of its final budget to the Minister and each of its participating and specified municipalities in accordance with section 24 of O. Reg. 402/22, and in addition, provide a copy of the approved final budget to the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA).
 - ii. Send notices to the authority's participating and specified municipalities in accordance with subsections 25(2) (notices of apportionment of capital

costs), 27(3) (notices of apportionment of operating expenses) and 27.2(3) (notices of amounts owed by specified municipalities) of the CAA.

4. Upon completion of each of the following steps, each authority shall provide written notice of the completion of the step to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks and the OPCA:
 - i. Approval of a draft budget for consultation purposes in accordance with section 14 of O. Reg. 402/22.
 - ii. Approval of apportionment amounts for participating and specified municipalities in accordance with section 18 of O. Reg. 402/22.
 - iii. Approval of a final budget in accordance with section 23 of O. Reg. 402/22.
 - iv. Sending of notices to participating and specified municipalities in accordance with subsections 25 (2), 27(3) and 27.2(3) of the CAA.

General

5. This Direction applies to the authorities listed in Appendix "A" to this Direction.
6. This Direction is effective from the date of its issuance to the transition date, within the meaning of the CAA (i.e., February 1, 2027 or such later date as may be prescribed by the regulations).
7. This Direction may be amended in writing from time to time at the sole discretion of the Minister.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Todd McCarthy", with a long, sweeping underline.

Todd McCarthy
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
[June 26, 2026]

APPENDIX A

LIST OF CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES TO WHICH THE DIRECTION APPLIES

Ausable Bayfield CA	Lower Trent Region CA
Cataraqui Region CA	Maitland Valley CA
Catfish Creek CA	Mattagami Region CA
Central Lake Ontario CA	Mississippi Valley CA
Credit Valley CA	Niagara Peninsula CA
Crowe Valley CA	Nickel District CA
Essex Region CA	North Bay-Mattawa CA
Ganaraska Region CA	Nottawasaga Valley CA
Grand River CA	Otonabee Region CA
Grey Sauble CA	Quinte Region CA
Halton Region CA	Raisin Region CA
Hamilton Region CA	Rideau Valley CA
Kawartha Region CA	Saugeen Valley CA
Kettle Creek CA	Sault Ste. Marie Region CA
Lake Simcoe Region CA	South Nation River CA
Long Point Region CA	St. Clair Region CA
Lower Thames Valley CA	Toronto and Region CA
	Upper Thames River CA

APPENDIX B

Guidance document for the Minister's Direction issued under section 1.14 of the CAA with respect to budget and apportionment matters

The Minister's Direction issued June 26, 2026 under s.1.14 of the CAA aims to preserve operational and budget process continuity through the transition to a regional governance model for conservation authorities.

While Ontario Regulation 402/22 (Budget and Apportionment) does not set out specific dates or deadlines for the completion of the various phases of the budget and apportionment process, this Direction sets the following timing requirements and additional notification requirements:

Item/Task	Deadline
i. Holding of meeting to approve apportionment amounts for participating and specified municipalities (s. 16 of O. Reg. 402/22)	No later than 30 calendar days before the transition date
ii. Holding of meeting to approve final budget (s. 22 of O. Reg. 402/22)	
i. Providing copies of the approved final budget (s. 24 of O. Reg. 402/22)	Prior to the transition date
ii. Sending of notices to participating and specified municipalities (s. 25(2), 27(3), and 27.2(3) of the CAA)	
i. Providing a notice to the Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks (MECP) and Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA) when each of the following steps is completed: a. Approval of a draft budget for consultation purposes b. Approval of apportionment amounts c. Approval of the final budget d. Sending of notices to participating and specified municipalities	Upon completion of each step

With respect to any documents and notice required to be given to the MECP and OPCA (e.g., approved final budget and notice of completion of various steps), please send those documents and notices to MECP at ca.office@ontario.ca and OPCA at CCEO@ontario.ca.

2027 Annual Budget

Conservation authorities will carry out the 2027 calendar year budget process in accordance with Ministers Directions, the CAA and its regulations. The determination of revenue, expenses and costs under Section 5 of O. Reg. 402/22 and determination of reduced amounts to be apportioned under Section 6 of O. Reg. 402/22 should reflect continuity of normal operations of an authority according to current organization's

governance, financial structures, and programs and services. Any anticipated impacts from regional consolidation should not be considered or incorporated into the preparation of the budget for the 2027 calendar year under this direction.

Municipal Consultation

Current participating and specified municipalities are to be consulted on the draft budget for the 2027 calendar year, in accordance with existing legislative/regulatory requirements.

Voting

Budget-related votes are conducted using current authority membership and existing governance rules and in accordance with regulations, where that is set out.

Final Approval and Posting

Authorities approve, post, and provide copies of the final budget for the 2027 calendar year in accordance with existing requirements and the Minister's Direction.

Municipal Apportionment

The approach to municipal apportionment will not change for 2027 calendar year budgets and will follow the existing methods set out in O. Reg. 402/22 and O. Reg. 401/22 (Determination of Amounts Under Subsection 27.2 (2) of the Act) and apply to the current participating and specified municipalities of each authority per the apportionment percentages distributed by the Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks.

Once apportioned amounts are determined and approved by authorities, notices of apportionment are sent to each participating municipality and notices setting out amounts owing are sent to each specified municipality. Each municipality shall be required to pay the amount apportioned to it even after the transition date under the CAA, at which point the payment will be due to the regional conservation authority.

Future Annual Budget

Budget alignment across regional conservation authorities will occur following the transition date.

The ministry will assess whether any changes need to be made to the budgeting process as set out in the budget and apportionment regulations as a result of the regional consolidation of authorities and will consider amendments to those regulations in Fall 2026, where appropriate.

11.2) Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency



Ontario Provincial
Conservation Agency

l'Agence ontarienne de
protection de la nature

July 15, 2026

Dear GMs/CAOs:

I am writing to share an important update on transition planning for regional consolidation. In May, the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency launched an expedited external recruitment process to identify Project Executives who will chair Transition Committees and subsequently serve as inaugural Chief Administrative Officers of the new Regional Conservation Authorities (RCA) for terms of up to two years.

The opportunity was circulated broadly across the conservation and municipal sectors and the recruitment process generated over 50 applications, and more than 20 interviews were conducted with a diverse range of candidates, including current CAOs/GMs, senior municipal leaders, and experienced public-sector executives.

We have now completed the recruitment for the role and are pleased to announce the appointment of eight new Project Executives:

- Davin Heinbuck – Western Lake Erie RCA
- Samantha Lawson – Eastern Lake Erie RCA
- Sommer Casgrain-Robertson – St. Lawrence River RCA
- Alison McDonald – Eastern Lake Ontario RCA
- Don Goodyear – Lake Huron RCA
- Tim Commisso – Northeastern Ontario RCA
- Jacqueline Johnson – Western Lake Ontario RCA
- Robert Baldwin – Central Lake Ontario RCA

While a Project Executive will not be appointed for the Northwestern RCA, the region will continue to be fully engaged and closely integrated in transition planning. Tammy Cook will continue to lead this work in her current capacity as CAO, ensuring continuity and collaboration as transition activities progress.

The appointment of the Project Executives is a critical step in ensuring experienced, stable leadership to support a successful transition, with continuity and clear accountability both before and after consolidation.

I would also like to thank all those who indicated interest in the Project Executive role and participated in the recruitment process.

Please join me in welcoming the successful Project Executives to these transformative and challenging roles. I have no doubt that you will extend your full support and professional collaboration as leaders of your respective Conservation Authority to achieve successful consolidation.

Thank you as always for your continued commitment and dedication.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hassaan", enclosed within a light gray rectangular border.

Hassaan Basit
CEO
Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency

11.3) WLERCA Transition – Project Executive Appointed



July 24, 2026

Subject: WLERCA Transition – Project Executive Appointed

We are writing to provide an update on the amalgamation of Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA), Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA), St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (SCRCA), and Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) into the future Western Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority (WLERCA), including the appointment of the Project Executive who will lead the regional transition.

As you know, Ontario's 36 conservation authorities are preparing to amalgamate into nine regional conservation authorities on February 1, 2027. As part of this process, each conservation authority was required to appoint two representatives to a Transition Committee by June 30, 2026: its General Manager/CAO and one elected board member.

The Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA) is overseeing the transition, including the recruitment and appointment of a Project Executive for each new regional conservation authority. The Project Executive will chair the regional Transition Committee and serve as the inaugural CAO of the new organization. On July 15, 2026, OPCA announced that Davin Heinbuck, General Manager of Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA), has been appointed to this role for WLERCA. Davin has been with ABCA for more than 22 years, serving in a variety of positions before becoming General Manager two years ago. WLERCA General Managers have a strong working relationship with Davin and value the knowledge of conservation authorities and team-building skills he brings to the position, starting on July 27, 2026.

The Board of Directors of the four conservation authorities have approved the [Guiding Principles for Transition](#) as outlined in the attached letter. These principles will help guide the work ahead and reflect a shared commitment to building the Western Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority in a manner that is grounded in science, informed by local knowledge, and strengthened through collaboration and partnerships.

We recognize that organizational change may raise questions and concerns. Throughout this process, we are committed to open, transparent, and ongoing communication with our municipal partners and interest-holders. Our priority is to support a seamless transition while continuing to deliver the programs and services that municipalities, residents, and watershed communities rely on.

Following OPCA approval, the Transition Committee is expected to begin meeting later this summer. We remain committed to keeping municipalities informed and engaged as the

transition progresses and will continue to share updates as key milestones are reached. In the interim, questions about the transition may be directed to the General Managers as follows:

Essex Region Conservation Authority, Tim Byrne tbyrne@erca.org

Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority, Mark Peacock mark.peacock@ltvca.ca

St. Clair Region Conservation Authority, Ken Phillips kphillips@scrca.on.ca

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, Tracy Annett annett@thamesriver.ca

Attachments:

- Letter from Chairs within the Western Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority
- Guiding Principles for Transition

11.4) WLERCA – Guiding Principles for Transition

Western Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority

Guiding Principles for Transition

Over the past 80 years, Conservation Authorities have balanced fiscal responsibility with high-quality, locally responsive services. That success is rooted in a deep local knowledge and upheld by local connections with landowners, community groups and member municipalities. The consolidated authority should continue to be guided by science, local knowledge, and strong partnerships to protect people, property, and the natural environment.

Throughout this process, protecting staff and supporting a transition that respects municipal contributions and maintains public trust for all communities served should be a top priority. Successful consolidation will need to respect the past, while building upon shared achievements to create a unified region capable of delivering enhanced programs and services, advancing integrated watershed management and strengthening community partnerships across the region.

The principles are not listed in order of priority. Each principle is essential and collectively provide a framework for the future.

Accountable to Communities and Transparent Governance

Establish an effective, accountable, and transparent governance model that includes all participating municipalities and communities and complies with provincial legislation.

Fiscal Responsibility

Develop a fiscally responsible transition plan that protects short-term stability and long-term sustainability.

Commitment to Workforce Stability and Talent Retention

Prioritize the well-being, retention, and fair treatment of all staff while maintaining local service delivery throughout the consolidation process.

Service Excellence

Ensure that communities continue to receive high-quality, locally responsive programs and services.

Risk Management and Business Continuity

Ensure uninterrupted delivery of critical services while carefully managing risks associated with organizational change.

Watershed-Based Science Informed Management

Ensure consolidation does not dilute the watershed-based approach that defines Conservation Authorities.

Transparency, Trust and Clear Communication

Transparent communication is critical for maintaining confidence among staff, municipalities and the public.



11.5) CO's Consolidated Response to Bill 98 Legislative and Regulatory Proposals



May 11, 2026

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Provincial Planning Branch
13th Floor, 777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON
M7A 2J3
Canada

Re: Conservation Ontario's Consolidated Response to Bill 98 (*Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act, 2026*) Legislative and Regulatory Proposals (ERO# 026-0300, 026-0309, 026-0310, 026-0311, 026-0312, 026-0313, 026-0314, and 026-0315).

Conservation Ontario is the voice of Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities (CAs). We offer the following comments further to CA mandatory programs and services supporting natural hazard management and drinking water source protection, including natural hazard permitting, municipal plan review and commenting, and duties, functions and responsibilities as a source protection authority under the provisions of the *Clean Water Act, 2006*.

These comments are not intended to limit consideration of feedback provided by individual CAs.

Bill 98, *Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act, 2026* introduces proposed changes to the *Planning Act* and *City of Toronto Act* to "support housing, economic, and infrastructure development, and advance key transportation and transit priorities". Proposed changes affect Ontario's municipal planning framework, including proposed streamlining and standardization of official plans, municipal site plan control rules, and other matters.

In addition to the legislative changes proposed through Bill 98, the Province is seeking feedback on complementary regulatory and policy proposals. As outlined in various Environmental Registry postings, proposed changes intend to reduce duplication in planning approvals, standardize and streamline municipal planning documents, and increase consistency in the use of municipal planning tools such as Enhanced Development Standards and secondary plans.

Conservation Ontario and Ontario's CAs remain committed to supporting and collaborating with municipal partners, the Province, and the development industry to provide safe and resilient community and infrastructure development. We offer the following specific comments and recommendations on the individual Environmental Registry proposals associated with Bill 98.

1. Proposed Planning Act, City of Toronto Act, 2006, Building Code Act, 1992 and Municipal Act, 2001 Changes (Official Plan Standardization) (ERO#026-0300)

Schedule 7 of Bill 98 proposes to establish a standardized table of contents, schedules and land use designations for municipal official plans (OPs). The proposed standardized structure would apply to local (lower- and single-tier municipalities and planning boards).

If finalized, the proposed changes would come into force January 1, 2028, for the 29 large and fast-growing municipalities, and January 1, 2029, for all other municipalities.

ERO#025-1099 previously proposed to include "general policies applicable to all designations" in the standard framework for municipal OPs, including policies related to "natural and human made hazards". In its submission on that proposal, Conservation Ontario acknowledges the importance of secondary planning within Ontario's land use planning framework, recommends that water resource-related policies be included as general policies in official plans, and emphasizes the need to ensure that permissive land use designations do not inadvertently facilitate development in areas incompatible with the intended use, such as lands subject to natural hazards.

ERO#026-0300 proposes updates to the municipal OP framework subsequent to the earlier consolidation, including the following changes:

- The "general policies applicable to all designations" component is no longer proposed to be included in the standardized table of contents. **Conservation Ontario recommends the "general policies applicable to all designations" component be retained.** Including general policies that apply across all land-use designations, such as policies addressing natural and human-made hazards, is essential to ensure consistent protection of people, property, and infrastructure, and to enable planning authorities to address hazardous lands and sites comprehensively at a systems and watershed scale.
- Further to Conservation Ontario's submission to ERO#025-1099, **we continue to recommend that policies related to water resources be included in a consistent "general policies applicable to all designations" section.** This approach would reinforce requirements for the protection of municipal drinking

Conservation Ontario and Ontario's CAs remain committed to supporting and collaborating with municipal partners, the Province, and the development industry to provide safe and resilient community and infrastructure development. We offer the following specific comments and recommendations on the individual Environmental Registry proposals associated with Bill 98.

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- Further to Conservation Ontario's submission to ERO#025-1099, **we continue to recommend that policies related to water resources be included in a consistent "general policies applicable to all designations" section.** This approach would reinforce requirements for the protection of municipal drinking

water sources and support integrated, efficient, and sustainable use of water resources through watershed-based planning.

Additionally, ERO#025-1099 proposed to capture natural hazards under the “Natural Heritage” land use designation. Under the current proposal, the “Natural Heritage” land use designation is removed, and a new “natural environment and water resource areas” designation is added. **Conservation Ontario continues to recommend that “Natural Hazards” be included as a separate land-use designation.** Creating a distinct designation for these uses will help ensure municipalities, development proponents, and members of the public have a fulsome understanding of hazard features and associated policy requirements. Further to maintaining distinct “Natural Hazards” policies within the PPS, 2024, inclusion of a separate “Natural Hazards” designation will enhance consideration for matters of provincial interest, including the development of safe and healthy communities, protection of public health and safety, and adaptation to a changing climate.

2. Consultation on upper-tier official plans, secondary plans, and site and area-specific policies (Secondary Plans and Site- and Area-Specific Policies) (ERO#026-0315)

The Ministry is consulting on a proposal to create a distinct framework with clear parameters for secondary plans and site- and area-specific policies (SASPs).

Proposed changes for secondary plans include scoping the areas where such plans could be used, separating the secondary plan from the primary OP, and exempting secondary plans from Minister’s approval (lower tier municipalities within an upper-tier with planning responsibilities would still require approval from the upper-tier).

Conservation Ontario supports the findings from municipalities, school boards and industry partners summarized in ERO#026-0315 regarding the multiple benefits of secondary plans and their essential roles supporting growth management, infrastructure coordination, and consideration of community needs / characteristics. A flexible and adaptable secondary planning framework also allows municipalities to consider the broader water resource system (including natural hazards and sources of drinking water), helping to strategically plan for safe and sustainable communities.

Conservation Ontario recommends that any proposed framework for secondary plans and site- and area-specific policies provide sufficient flexibility for municipalities to support safe, coordinated growth within municipal jurisdictions. This includes enabling municipalities to develop secondary plans where necessary to manage growth and land use changes, examples include, but are not limited to:

water sources and support integrated, efficient, and sustainable use of water resources through watershed-based planning.

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Conservation Ontario recommends that any proposed framework for secondary plans and site- and area-specific policies provide sufficient flexibility for municipalities to support safe, coordinated growth within municipal jurisdictions. This includes enabling municipalities to develop secondary plans where necessary to manage growth and land use changes, examples include, but are not limited to:

- **New Communities and Neighbourhoods** (e.g., greenfield developments, settlement boundary expansions, etc.)
- **Significant Growth Areas** (e.g., urban cores, Major Transit Station Areas, etc.)
- **Environmentally Sensitive or Protected Areas** (e.g., hazardous lands and sites, natural heritage systems, etc.)
- **Areas with Complex Land Use Compatibilities** (e.g., waterfronts, brownfield redevelopments, institutional lands, heritage districts, etc.)
- **Employment Areas** (e.g., highway corridors, major employment hubs, etc.)

Conservation Ontario also notes that secondary planning is informed by subwatershed plans / studies, supporting municipal decisions on growth allocations, water/wastewater planning, and water resource identification. To ensure secondary plans are supported by the best available technical information, **Conservation Ontario recommends that the Province finalize the draft 2022 “Subwatershed Planning Guide” to help communities comprehensively plan for water / wastewater/ stormwater service, water resource allocations, drinking water source protection, and climate resiliency.**

3. **Proposed Planning Act, City of Toronto Act, 2006, Building Code Act, 1992 and Municipal Act, 2001 Changes and Proposed Regulation to Prohibit Mandatory Enhance Development Standards as a Condition of Land Division Approvals (Enhanced Development Standards) (ERO#026-0300 and ERO#026-0309)**

Bill 98 proposes changes to the *Planning Act* and *City of Toronto Act, 2006* to remove municipal authority to require certain mandatory Enhanced Development Standards (EDS) at the lot level, where they are not specifically required for health or safety. Amendments provide that green building/construction standards are voluntary and cannot be imposed by municipalities. A new regulation is proposed under the *Planning Act* to prohibit “sustainability” conditions as part of land division approvals.

Conservation Ontario continues to support flexibility for municipalities to consider both “green” and “grey” solutions for stormwater management that balance development needs with natural hazard mitigation (further to responses submitted to ERO#025-1100 and ERO#025-1101). This balanced approach may include the use of Enhanced Development Standards (EDSs) such as low impact development features to facilitate stormwater management (SWM) at the lot level.

Conservation Ontario supports the proposal to retain EDSs that are “specifically required for health, safety, accessibility or protection of adjoining lands (e.g., stormwater management)”.

- As noted in the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS), 2024, planning authorities are to prepare for the impacts of a changing climate through approaches that “promote green infrastructure, low impact development, and active transportation”.

Municipalities are required to plan for stormwater management (SWM) in such a way to “mitigate risks to human health, safety, property and the environment” and “promote best practices, including... low impact development”.

- To support a flexible and adaptive approach to SWM, Conservation Ontario **recommends that the Province finalizes the “Low Impact Development Stormwater Management Guidance Manual” (ERO#019-4971) to provide information, best practices and encourage innovative approaches to manage rainfall, reduce flooding risks, and increase climate change resiliency.**
- To support land use planning that meets the varied needs of Ontario’s communities, the **Province may consider establishing standards for the application of EDSs, rather than prohibiting local use and application.**

4. Proposed Planning Act, City of Toronto Act, 2006, Building Code Act, 1992 and Municipal Act, 2001 Changes and Proposed Regulatory Approach to Establish a Minimum Lot Size in Urban Areas (Minimum Lot Sizes) (ERO#026-0300 and ERO#026-0311)

The Ministry is proposing changes to the *Planning Act* to enable new regulation-making authority for the Minister (MMAH) to set a minimum lot size on parcels of urban residential land, outside of the Greenbelt Area (further to consultations on ERO#025-1100). Applicable parcels would be within the settlement area of a municipality that is zoned for residential use and is fully serviced by public sewage and water.

The proposed regulation would be scoped to zoning and would not apply to subdivision control. The minimum lot size is proposed at 175 square meters, and any municipal zoning requirements for minimum frontage and/or minimum depth that would not allow the minimum lot standard to be met would be rendered inapplicable.

Conservation Ontario appreciates the clarification within the proposal that other relevant considerations will continue to apply, including PPS, 2024 prohibitions on lot creation (i.e., related to natural hazards). For greater clarity, **we recommend language be included to ensure proponents and landowners are aware that other relevant regulatory frameworks continue to apply, including the regulatory framework under the *Conservation Authorities Act*.**

As noted in Conservation Ontario’s response to a related consultation, ERO#025-1100, appropriate setbacks from hazardous lands/features and allowances for safe access to the property, play an important role in protecting people and property from potential natural hazard impacts (e.g., floodplains, erosion hazards, associated setbacks, etc.). Understanding these constraints ensures development on smaller lots can be appropriately situated outside of areas impacted by natural hazards.

- Further to the PPS, 2024, CAs and planning authorities collaborate to identify hazardous lands and hazardous sites and manage development in these areas, helping to avoid or reduce impacts.
- All CAs maintain publicly accessible mapping of natural hazard features and areas on their websites, and work with planning authorities to ensure this information is appropriately considered in municipal planning documents and processes.

5. Streamlining the information and material that planning authorities can require as part of a complete application and Proposed Changes to Various Regulations Under the Planning Act and the City of Toronto Act, 2006 to Specify Additional “Prescribed Professions” for the Purposes of a Complete Application (Complete Applications) (ERO#026-0313 and ERO#026-0314)

The Ministry is proposing changes to complete application submissions associated with municipal planning applications.

ERO#026-0314 builds on amendments introduced through Bill 17, enabling a new regulation under the *Planning Act* to specify professional engineering as a “prescribed profession” for studies and technical submissions provided as part of a planning application. The Ministry is seeking feedback on additional professions to be prescribed in regulation as “certified professionals”.

ERO#026-0313 builds upon proposals outlined in ERO#025-0462 to define a list of topics or studies that are permitted to be required by municipalities as part of a complete application. The Ministry has identified a list of proposed “core” and “contingent” studies to be outlined in regulation.

Conservation Ontario maintains that establishing clear submission requirements, timelines, and phasing at the outset of the planning process improves submission quality and supports a more efficient and predictable decision-making process.

To support the Province’s goals of improving certainty and predictability for applicants and municipalities, **Conservation Ontario recommends the Province collaborate with municipalities, CAs, and other applicable agencies to ensure the proposed lists of studies and certified professionals are appropriately scoped to achieve high quality submissions that are prepared by professionals with appropriate expertise.**

Conservation Ontario appreciates the inclusion of studies and technical information requirements related to natural hazard impacts, source water protection, and water quality / quantity. These reports, among others, are essential to ensuring development is

undertaken safely and with due regard for natural resources, which are required for sustaining healthy communities.

- The “objectives” of many of the proposed studies include the assessment of impacts but does not necessarily provide for the characterization of these features. Including both the identification and the assessment within the objective allows planning authorities and commenting agencies to better understand, for instance, hazard features, to make informed decisions, potentially helping further scope or refine requirements for other technical studies. **Conservation Ontario recommends the Province provide clarity that studies may be required for both purposes.**
- Successful implementation of this framework would be supported by additional details on what information should be contained in the studies to support municipal decision-making. **Conservation Ontario recommends the Province consult with municipalities, CAs and other relevant agencies to advance Terms of Reference, “minimum standards” documents or other requirements to ensure studies utilize accepted methodologies and contain necessary decision-making details.** Clarifying information requirements for technical submissions may help improve submission quality and reduce re-circulations with requests for additional information / clarification.

Regarding the expansion of the “certified professionals” framework, **Conservation Ontario continues to recommend the regulation speak to specific designations and expertise for “prescribed professionals” to ensure that studies are prepared by appropriate professionals.** For example, preparation of coastal engineering reports typically requires professional engineers with coastal engineering expertise.

- Conservation Ontario maintains that studies prepared by professionals with applicable expertise may enhance submission quality and reduce circulations with requests for additional information / clarification.
- As the Province considers expansion of “certified professionals”, **consideration could be given to inclusion of Registered Professional Planners (RPP) (e.g., to support planning justification reports) and Professional Geoscientists (P. Geo) (e.g., to support geotechnical and hydrogeological reports).**

For clarity purposes, a section 59 restricted land uses notice may still be required under the *Clean Water Act, 2006*.

6. Proposal to reform site plan control under the Planning Act and the City of Toronto Act, 2006 (Site Plan Control Reform) (ERO#026-0310)

The Ministry is seeking feedback on “bold and transformational changes” to site plan control under the *Planning Act* and *City of Toronto Act, 2006*. Further to concerns that the municipal site plan approvals process is exceeding legislated timelines, several initiatives are outlined for feedback including potential removal of site plan control as a tool, limiting circulations between applicants and municipalities, scoping the site plan approval process, among others.

Conservation Ontario supports the retention of the site plan control process as it is an important mechanism for municipalities to receive input from CAs on detailed design aspects such as setbacks and locations of buildings as they relate to hazardous lands and features. While the ERO posting states that details such as “allowable land uses” should be addressed at the zoning stage, it is acknowledged that municipal zoning may require updates to reflect CA regulated areas/natural hazards and more recent updates to Source Protection Plans. As such, site plan control can play an important role in ensuring public health and safety.

Conservation Ontario does not support the full removal of site plan control as a land use planning tool.

However, Conservation Ontario is supportive of exploring opportunities to enable a faster, more predictable, and coordinated site plan approval process for planning authorities and applicants.

- Conservation Ontario is supportive of the proposed “three circulation” provisions that result in a mandatory meeting to discuss and resolve outstanding issues. It is recommended that this process be coupled with robust pre-consultation to ensure application requirements and technical details are clearly communicated and understood at the outset of the process; ensuring the mandatory meeting is only required for files with added complexity. **Conservation Ontario recommends the Province clarify that the intent of the mandatory meeting is to discuss and resolve outstanding submission deficiencies to advance a municipal decision, as opposed to approving files that remain incomplete or non-compliant.** Where appropriate, staff from applicable review agencies (e.g., CAs) should be invited to attend the meeting.
- Conservation Ontario is supportive of the proposed “site plan approval streams” to advance less complex files through a triaged, expedited stream. CAs may become involved in site plan review further to their mandatory municipal plan review and commenting roles (natural hazards and source water protection) and remain committed to supporting efficient and responsive review processes.

- Coordination with review agencies such as CAs, as well as appropriate phasing in the site plan review process, can support efficient reviews for subsequent approvals (e.g., section 28.1 permits under the *Conservation Authorities Act*, etc.) by addressing any outstanding matters in the site plan process, often resulting in expedited permit issuance.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide **consolidated comments on Bill 98 legislative and regulatory proposals affecting the *Planning Act* (ERO # 026-0300, 026-0309, 026-0310, 026-0311, 026-0312, 026-0313, 026-0314, and 026-0315)**. We would be pleased to further discuss these comments at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Fischer

Nicholas Fischer
Policy and Planning Specialist

c.c. All CA CAOs/GMs

12. Other Business

13. Adjournment
