

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CATFISH CREEK CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**

Thursday, November 27, 2025

Meeting #05/2025

PRESENT:

Paul Buchner	Vice-Chairperson	Township of South West-Oxford
Arthur Oslach	Member	Town of Aylmer
Gary Clarke	Member	City of St. Thomas
Morgaine Griffin	Chairperson	Municipality of Central Elgin
Scott Lewis	Member	Township of Malahide

STAFF:

Dusty Underhill	General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer
Susan Simmons	Financial Services Coordinator
Peter Dragunas	Water Management Technician
Brittany Bell	Communications/Program Support Assistant
Gerrit Kremers	Resource Planning Coordinator
Al Bradford	Conservation Areas Supervisor

OTHERS PRESENT:

Rob Perry Aylmer Express

WELCOME / CALL TO ORDER:

Chairperson Griffin welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at (11:02 a.m.).

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

The CCCA recognized that the land on which we gather is in the traditional territory shared between the Haudenosaunee confederacy, the Anishinabe nations, and the Attiwonderonk Neutrals.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

Motion # 54/2025 A. Oslach P. Buchner CARRIED

THAT, the Agenda for the November 27, 2025, Full Authority meeting be adopted as circulated and amended.

DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND THE GENERAL NATURE THEREOF:

No one had a pecuniary interest to disclose at this time.

DISCLOSURE OF INTENTION TO AUDIO / VIDEO RECORD MEETING:

The Chairperson asked for disclosures of intentions to audio or video record the meeting. No one indicated any such intentions at this time.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

Motion #55/2025 P. Buchner S. Lewis CARRIED

THAT, the Minutes of Full Authority Meeting #04/2025 (September 11, 2025), be adopted as circulated.

Motion #56/2025 P. Buchner A. Oslach CARRIED

THAT, the Minutes of Land Management Committee Meeting #01/2025 (June 12, 2025), be adopted as circulated.

Motion #57/2025 S. Lewis P. Buchner CARRIED

THAT, the Minutes of Special Meeting of the Full Authority (October 6, 2025), be adopted as circulated.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES:

No one reported any outstanding business to discuss from the previous Minutes.

PUBLIC / SPECIAL DELEGATIONS:

None

REPORTS:

Reports FA 41 to FA 44/2025 – Monthly Staff Reports, were presented, discussed, and resolved.

Motion # 58/2025 A. Oslach P. Buchner CARRIED

THAT, Staff Reports FA 41 to FA 44/2025 for the months September and October, 2025 be noted and filed.

Report FA 45/2025 – Summary of Revenue & Expenditures was presented, discussed, and resolved.

Motion # 59/2025 P. Buchner A. Oslach CARRIED

THAT, Report FA 45/2025 – Summary of Revenue & Expenditures, be noted and filed.

Report FA 46/2025 – Accounts Paid was presented, discussed, and resolved.

Motion # 60/2025 A. Oslach S. Lewis CARRIED

THAT, Accounts Paid totalling \$113, 773.34 be approved as presented in Report FA 46/2025.

Report FA 47/2025 – Bill 56, Building a More Competitive Economy Act, 2025 was presented, discussed, and resolved.

Motion # 61/2025 P. Buchner S. Lewis CARRIED

THAT, the Board of Directors receives Report FA 47/2025 as information.

Reports FA 48/2025 – Implications of Bill 68 – Budget Measures Act on Conservation Authorities, was presented, discussed, and resolved.

Motion # 62/2025 A. Oslach P. Buchner CARRIED

THAT, the Board of Directors receives FA 48/2025 as information.

Report FA 49/2025 – Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities, was presented, discussed, and resolved.

Motion # 63/2025 S. Lewis P. Buchner CARRIED

THAT, the Board of Directors receives FA 49/2025 as information.

Report FA 50/2025 – Conservation Ontario Council Meeting, was presented, discussed, and resolved.

Motion # 64/2025 P. Buchner A. Oslach CARRIED

THAT, the information outlined in Report FA 50/2025, be noted and filed.

Report FA 51/2025 – Christmas Office Closure, was presented, discussed, and resolved.

Motion # 65/2025 A. Oslach P. Buchner CARRIED

THAT, the Christmas Office closure schedule be approved as presented in Report FA 51/2025.

Report FA 52/2025 – Catfish Creek Channel Sounding, was presented, discussed, and resolved.

Motion # 66/2025 P. Buchner A. Oslach CARRIED

THAT, the channel sounding observations described in Report FA 52/2025, be received as information at this time.

Report FA 53/2025 – 2025 Conservation Areas Workshop, was presented, discussed, and resolved.

Motion # 67/2025 A. Oslach S. Lewis CARRIED

THAT, Report FA 53/2025, 2025 Conservation Areas Workshop be received as information at this time.

Report FA 54/2025 – 2026 Draft Budget, was presented, discussed, and resolved.

Motion # 68/2025 A. Oslach P. Buchner CARRIED

THAT, the Full Authority approve the Draft Budget presented in Report FA 54/2025 as Amended;

AND THAT, the Draft Budget and General Levies be circulated to the member municipalities for the 30-day notice in accordance with the Budget and Apportionment Regulation made under the Conservation Authorities Act.

GENERAL MANAGERS REPORT:

Over the past months, a number of key activities and initiatives have taken place that support our strategic objectives, strengthen partnerships, and enhance the visibility and effectiveness of the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority (CCCA):

Budget Meeting

A budget meeting was held with staff to establish the organization's wants and needs for the upcoming 2026 fiscal year. The purpose of the meeting was to engage in

strategic financial planning and ensure that the budget aligns with the organization's goals and priorities for the new fiscal cycle. By involving staff in the discussion, leadership sought to gather firsthand insight from those directly involved in day-to-day operations, ensuring that budget decisions are both practical and reflective of actual operational demands. The meeting focused on distinguishing between essential expenses, or "needs," and nonessential but beneficial expenditures, or "wants," to ensure that critical functions and resources receive priority funding. This collaborative approach also encouraged accountability and transparency, allowing staff to understand the financial constraints and participate actively in setting realistic priorities. Additionally, the meeting provided an opportunity to review current spending trends, forecast future costs, and identify potential areas for cost savings or reallocation. The information gathered will serve as the foundation for developing a comprehensive 2026 fiscal year budget proposal to be reviewed and approved by leadership or the governing board. Ultimately, this meeting was an important step in preparing for a financially responsible and strategically aligned fiscal year.

Windphone

A wind phone was installed and completed at the Springwater Conservation Area as part of an initiative to provide visitors with a peaceful and reflective space to connect with nature and process feelings of loss or remembrance. The project aimed to create a meaningful and comforting experience within the park, offering a quiet place for individuals to "speak" to loved ones who have passed away in a serene outdoor setting. The installation involved selecting an appropriate location that ensured privacy and accessibility, constructing the wind phone with durable materials to withstand outdoor conditions, and ensuring it blended naturally with the surrounding environment. Completing this project demonstrates a commitment to enhancing the emotional and mental well-being of visitors while promoting the conservation area as a place of healing, reflection, and connection with the natural world.

Level 1 Low Water Advisory

A low water advisory was issued for the watershed in conjunction with the Water Resources Technician after careful monitoring and assessment of current environmental conditions. The decision was made due to a noticeable decline in water levels, reduced stream flows, and a lack of significant rainfall over an extended period, all of which indicated increasing stress on local water resources. By declaring a low water advisory, the goal was to raise awareness among residents, landowners, and local municipalities about the need to conserve water and minimize non-essential usage. Working collaboratively with the Water Resources Technician ensured that the advisory was based on accurate data and aligned with provincial low water response guidelines. This proactive measure was taken to protect aquatic ecosystems, maintain adequate water supplies for essential needs, and prevent further environmental degradation as drought-like conditions persisted within the watershed.

CO Council Meeting

I attended the Conservation Ontario Council meeting in Toronto, which provided a valuable opportunity to connect with representatives from conservation authorities across the province. Attending this meeting was important for building professional relationships, sharing knowledge, and staying informed about emerging issues, policies,

and initiatives affecting watershed management and environmental conservation. The event also served as a platform to exchange ideas, discuss common challenges, and explore potential partnerships that could lead to new opportunities for collaboration and program development. Participating in the council meeting helped strengthen connections within the conservation community and ensured that our organization remains engaged and aligned with provincial priorities and best practices.

Lake Erie Coastal Tour

I assisted in hosting a Lake Erie coastal tour that traveled from Port Stanley to Long Point to showcase the littoral cell and demonstrate how sediment movement occurs along the shoreline. The purpose of the tour was to provide participants with a firsthand understanding of the natural processes that shape the Lake Erie coast, including erosion, deposition, and sediment transport. Throughout the tour, key locations were highlighted to illustrate how wind, waves, and currents influence shoreline changes and impact coastal habitats, infrastructure, and communities. By helping to organize and facilitate the event, I contributed to promoting awareness of coastal dynamics and the importance of sustainable shoreline management practices. The tour served as an educational and collaborative experience for stakeholders, fostering a deeper appreciation for the interconnected nature of coastal systems within the Lake Erie watershed.

Conservation Areas Workshop

I attended the Conservation Areas Workshop as a panelist, representing one of only two General Managers provincially invited to participate. During the discussion, I shared key takeaways with the audience that emphasized the importance of celebrating and reflecting on our shared conservation history, recognizing the foundation built by those who came before us. I highlighted the value of leadership from the ground up, noting that today's conservation leaders hold knowledge and experience that should be passed on to the next generation. The discussion also reinforced that collaboration and community engagement are essential to achieving long-term conservation success. Additionally, I emphasized how conservation efforts and access to nature contribute to both healthy environments and healthy communities. The session concluded with an encouraging message to celebrate our collective achievements and look forward to a bright and sustainable future for conservation in Ontario.

CA Planning Roles

I participated in a meeting with other General Managers to discuss the future of planning and the evolving role of conservation authorities within that framework. The discussion focused on how changes in legislation, development pressures, and environmental priorities are shaping the way conservation authorities engage in land use planning and watershed management. Together, we explored strategies to strengthen our role in guiding sustainable growth, protecting natural heritage, and ensuring that environmental considerations remain central to planning decisions. The meeting also provided an opportunity to share perspectives, identify common challenges, and discuss how collaboration across conservation authorities can enhance consistency and effectiveness province-wide. Overall, the session was valuable in

helping define our collective direction and reaffirming our commitment to balancing development needs with long-term environmental stewardship.

Tisdale CA Trail Opener

I attended the Tisdale Conservation Area Trail Opening Ceremony, which marked the official launch of a newly developed trail designed to enhance public access to nature and promote outdoor recreation. The event celebrated the collaborative efforts of staff, community partners, and volunteers who contributed to the planning, construction, and restoration work that made the trail possible. The ceremony highlighted the importance of creating accessible green spaces that encourage people to explore and appreciate the natural environment while supporting local biodiversity and conservation education. Attendees had the opportunity to walk the new trail, experience the surrounding landscape, and learn about the environmental features that make the Tisdale Conservation Area unique. Overall, the opening ceremony was a meaningful occasion that underscored the value of community involvement and the continued commitment to connecting people with nature.

Provincial Transfer Payment Quarterly Report

Completed the quarterly report for MNR in regard to the small transfer payment we receive.

NEW BUSINESS:

Report FA 55/2025 – ERO (No. 025-1257 Regional Consolidation of CA's, was presented, discussed, and resolved.

Motion # 69/2025

P. Buchner

A. Oslach

CARRIED

THAT, the Board of Directors directs staff to prepare and submit a detailed response to the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) posting on the proposed consolidation of Conservation Authorities, emphasizing the importance of municipal involvement in the consultation process.

AND THAT the Board of Directors encourage all municipal partners to complete the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) questions and provide their own detailed submissions on the proposed Conservation Authority consolidation, specifically highlighting:

1. Local operational impacts, including potential changes to permitting functions, service levels, watershed planning responsibilities, and emergency response capacity.
2. Financial implications, such as cost redistribution, administrative pressures, and the potential for service disruption.

3. Watershed-specific considerations, including flood-prone areas, infrastructure vulnerabilities, unique ecological features, and development pressures; and
4. The need for clear governance, accountability frameworks, and transition planning to ensure continuity and reliability of natural hazard management and watershed-based services throughout and following the consolidation process.

AND THAT the Municipality formally states its non-support for the proposed consolidation of Conservation Authorities, based on identified risks to local service delivery, watershed-specific expertise, permitting timelines, emergency response coordination, and potential financial impacts on municipal partners.

AND THAT Council submits this position through the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) consultation process to ensure the Municipality's concerns are clearly represented to the province.

AND THAT this resolution be circulated to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP), local Member of Provincial Parliament, Conservation Ontario, the affected Conservation Authorities, and all neighboring municipalities.

AND THAT Municipalities encourage other municipal partners to adopt similar resolutions, emphasizing the need to maintain locally responsive, accountable, and effective watershed management services.

Report FA 56/2025 – Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities CCCA Board Resolution, was presented, discussed, and resolved.

Motion # 70/2025 A. Oslach P. Buchner CARRIED

THAT, the Board of Directors receives Report FA 56/2025 as information.

CORRESPONDENCE:

a) Copied:

- Correspondence Register for September and October, 2025.

Motion # 71/2025 P. Buchner A. Oslach CARRIED

THAT, the Copied Correspondence and Correspondence Register for the months of September and October, 2025, be noted and filed.

CLOSED SESSION:

None

NEXT MEETING / TERMINATION:

The next meeting of the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority will be held on Thursday, December 11, 2025 at 12:00 p.m.

Motion # 72/2025

A. Oslach

S. Lewis

CARRIED

THAT, the Full Authority be terminated at 12:12 p.m.



General Manager / Secretary –Treasurer



Authority Chairperson