



CATFISH CREEK CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Mission Statement

*"To communicate and deliver resource management services and programs
in order to achieve social and ecological harmony for the watershed"*

**A Full Authority meeting is to be held on
Thursday, April 9, 2026 at 10 a.m.**

Meeting Location:

The meeting will be conducted in the CCCA Boardroom

A G E N D A

- 1) Welcome / Call to Order.....Morgaine Griffin
- 2) Land Acknowledgement
- 3) Adoption of Agenda
- 4) Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest
- 5) Disclosure of Intention to Audio / Video Record Meeting
- 6) Adoption of Minutes of:
 - a) Annual General Meeting FA 01/2026 (February 19, 2026).....4-8
- 7) Business Arising from Minutes
- 8) Public / Special Delegations
- 9) Reports:
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11) Unfinished Business	
12) Chairperson's / Board Member's Report	
13) Notice of Motions / New Business:	
14) Correspondence:	
a) Copied:	
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15) Closed Session:

- a) Policy Review and Amendment
- b) Personnel Matter
- c) Full Authority Special Meeting 02/2026 (February 19, 2026)

16) Next Meeting of the Full Authority: June 11, 2026 at 10 a.m.

17) Termination

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

Thursday, February 19th, 2026

Meeting #01/2026

The 75th Annual General Meeting of the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority was held at the East Elgin Community Complex.

PRESENT:

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

STAFF:

Dusty Underhill	General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer
Gerrit Kremers	Resource Planning Coordinator
Brittany Bell	Communications/Program Support Assistant
Al Bradford	Conservation Areas Supervisor
Thom Polland	Conservation Areas Assistant

ABSENT:

Scott Lewis	Member	Township of Malahide
Susan Simmons	Financial Services Coordinator	
Peter Dragunas	Water Management Technician	
Noah Pineau	Field Technician	

GUESTS:

Jennifer Buchnan	Graham Scott Enns
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WELCOME / CALL TO ORDER:

Chairperson Griffin welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at (2:04 p.m.).

ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

<u>Motion # 01/2026</u>	P. Buchner	G. Clarke	CARRIED
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THAT, the Agenda for the Annual General Meeting be adopted as circulated.

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.

INTRODUCTIONS:

Chairperson Griffin introduced the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority Board of Directors, Staff, and Special Guests in attendance.

CHAIRPERSON’S MESSAGE:

Chairperson Griffin presented the Annual Chairperson’s Message to the audience. A condensed version is included on the first page of the 2025 Annual Report.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

Motion # 02/2026 G. Clarke P. Buchner CARRIED

THAT, the Minutes of Full Authority Meeting #06/2026 (December 11, 2025), be accepted as circulated.

Motion # 03/2026 G. Clarke A. Oslach CARRIED

THAT, the Special Meeting Minutes of the Full Authority (February 5, 2026) be accepted as circulated.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES:

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

ANNUAL REPORT PRESENTATION:

The General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer presented the 2025 Annual Report and provided a brief summary of each section in the report. He thanked the community for their support and involvement with the CCCA over the past year. He also thanked the staff from the CCCA and Board for their efforts in 2025.

Motion # 04/2026 P. Buchner G. Clarke CARRIED

THAT, the 2025 Annual Report be adopted as presented.

2025 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

Jennifer Buchanan, Partner at Graham Scott Enns LLP Chartered Accountants presented the 2025 Financial Statements and Auditor’s Report for the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority.

Ms. Buchanan stated that the Financial Statements present fairly, in all material respects, the statement of financial position of the CCCA as at December 31, 2025, and the statements of operations and accumulated surplus, changes in net assets, and cash flow for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for public sector entities.

The audience was advised that full copies of the Financial Statements are available at the CCCA Office and on the CCCA website upon request.

Motion # 05/2026 P. Buchner G. Clarke CARRIED

THAT, the Financial Statements of the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority and Audit Findings Letter prepared by Graham Scott Enns LLP, as of December 31, 2025, be adopted as circulated.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

Rick Cerna, past Chairperson of Catfish Creek Conservation Authority was asked to conduct the elections for Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for the year 2026.

Mr. Cerna reviewed the election procedures and declared all offices vacant. He then read the names of the current members eligible to vote and asked for the appointment of two (2) scrutineers in the event of an election.

Motion # 06/2026 A. Oslach P. Buchner CARRIED

THAT, Gerrit Kremers and Brittany Bell act as scrutineers in the event of an election; and further,

THAT, the scrutineers distribute ballots to the eligible voting members, tabulate and report the results of the vote, and destroy all ballots.

Mr. Cerna assumed chair for the elections, outlined the voting procedures, and declared all offices and positions vacant.

Mr. Cerna called for nominations for the position of Chairperson of the CCCA for 2026.

Arthur Oslach nominated Morgaine Griffin.

Nominations for the position of Chairperson were called for a second and third time.

Motion # 07/2026 A. Oslach G. Clarke CARRIED

THAT, nominations for the position of Chairperson be closed.

Morgaine Griffin was acclaimed Chairperson for 2026.

Mr. Cerna called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chairperson of the CCCA for 2026.

Gary Clarke nominated Paul Buchner.

Mr. Cerna called for nominations a second and third time.

Motion # 08/2026 A. Oslach G. Clarke CARRIED

THAT, nominations for the position of Vice-Chairperson be closed.

Paul Buchner was acclaimed Vice-Chairperson for 2026.

Morgain Griffin assumed the Chair to continue the meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Motion # 09/2026 A. Oslach P. Buchner CARRIED

THAT, the Full Authority appoint the firm Graham Scott Enns LLP Professional Accountants as the Authority's Auditor until the next Annual General Meeting in February 2027; and further,

THAT, the Full Authority appoint Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Aylmer Branch as the Authority's financial institution until the next Annual General Meeting in February 2027; and further,

THAT, the Full Authority appoint Elgin County Legal Services as the Authority's Solicitor to deal with matters of litigation until the next Annual General Meeting in February 2027; and further,

THAT, the Full Authority appoint Mark Coombes, Bowsher + Bowsher as the Authority's Solicitor to deal with matters of real estate until the next Annual General Meeting in February 2027.

Motion # 10/2026 P. Buchner G. Clarke CARRIED

THAT, the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority be authorized to borrow, on an interim basis, a sum or sums not exceeding in the aggregate \$200,000.00 from the Authority's bank at the said bank's minimum lending rate established from time to time, until the Authority has received payment of levies from member municipalities; and further,

THAT, the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson together with the General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer are hereby authorized to execute for and on behalf of the Authority, a promissory note or notes for the sum to be borrowed pursuant to this Resolution and to affix thereto the corporate seal of the Authority, and further,

THAT, TCOBI Management and Consulting Contracting, be assigned with signing authority for payroll items and utility accounts.

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP AWARD:

Member Buchner presented the 24th Annual Catfish Creek Conservation Authority Scholarship Award to Liam Howes. He plans to continue his post-secondary education in the field of Environmental Technology at Canadore College in North Bay.

CONSERVATION AWARD:

Gary Clarke was called upon to present the Conservation Award to the Elgin Stewardship Council (ESC) in recognition of their contribution to the natural environment within the Catfish Creek watershed by completing on the ground stewardship activities, providing funding for stewardship actions and contributing to conservation education. The ESC has completed numerous stewardship restoration activities, not only on the properties that they co-manage with the Ministry of Natural Resources, but also private landowner properties. The ESC manages the

Aylmer Wildlife Management Area, Fingal Wildlife Management Area and Calton Swamp Wetland Complex, part of which is owned and operated by CCCA. The ESC has restored and enhanced wetland habitat on their properties, in addition to creating and maintaining native tall grass prairie habitats at AWMA and FWMA. The ESC has also worked with CCCA to complete various different tree planting projects, notably at AWMA. These projects have included the planting of numerous windbreaks. The ESC contributes to the further of environmental land stewardship knowledge through various educational events. The ESC sponsors/hosts the southwest region Envirothon competition every year at Springwater Conservation Area, with CCCA. The program challenges students to showcase their environmental knowledge for a chance advance to the provincial competition

TERMINATION:

Motion # 11/2026

A. Oslach

P. Buchner

CARRIED

THAT, the Annual General Meeting of the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority be terminated at (3:07 p.m.).

General Manager / Secretary –Treasurer

Authority Chairperson

REPORT FA 01/2026: To The Full Authority

FROM: Peter Dragunas, Water Management Technician

SUBJECT: January February March 2026 Staff Report

DATE: March 25, 2026

Water Management Technician

Current Activities:

- January 7 and February 11 Issued a Water Safety, Watershed Condition Statement for areas within the CCCA administrative boundary.
- February 10 Issued a Catfish Creek Conservation Authority (CCCA) Flood Awareness Notice.
 - The purpose of this notice is to outline to the residents within the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority (CCCA) the Conservation Authority's, basic essential tasks during adverse weather conditions and flooding within the CCCA administrative area.
- February 16 Issued a Flood Outlook, Watershed Condition Statement for areas within the CCCA administrative boundary.
- February 17 Issued a Flood Watch, Watershed Condition Statement for areas within the CCCA administrative boundary.
- February 23 Issued a Normal All Clear, Watershed Condition Statement for areas within the CCCA administrative boundary.
- March 2 Issued a Water Safety, Watershed Condition Statement for areas within the CCCA administrative boundary.
- Flood Monitoring of the Catfish Creek watershed.
- To compensate for the 2026 winter riverine properties, watershed characteristics, weather estimates and the natural environmental control of the spring freshet a reworking of the Catfish Creek watershed hydrologic modeling for flood forecasting is required.
- Seasonally Recurring:
 - Regular Catfish Creek watershed software modeling revisions for improved integration into flood forecasting, low water response, and watershed planning.
 - Monitoring and maintaining the Catfish Creek water quality/quantity database for watershed seasonal flows (low and or high) to verify and issue Watershed Condition Statements.
 - Monitoring Lake Erie weather patterns and water levels for wind induced storm surge and subsequent shoreline flood conditions resulting in hazardous Lake Erie Shoreline Condition Statements.

Upcoming Activities:

- Continue monitoring and maintaining the Catfish Creek water quality/quantity database.
- Continue monitoring Lake Erie shoreline storms for storm surge and wave uprush conditions.
- Preliminary 3D-GIS evaluation of the Catfish Creek watershed flood plains for flood water storage capacities.

Recommendation:

THAT, Staff Report for the months of January, February March 2026, be noted and filed.

Submitted by:

Peter Dragunas

Water Management Technician

REPORT FA 02/2026: To The Full Authority

FROM: Gerrit Kremers, Resource Planning Coordinator

SUBJECT: January, February and March Monthly Staff Report

DATE: March 31, 2026

Resource Planning Coordinator

Current Activities:

- Participated in planning pre-consultation meetings with member municipalities and private landowners looking to conduct work within adjacent lands of a natural hazard feature;
- Responded to inquiries about potential natural hazards on properties of interest to buyers;
- Participated in CA Coastal Working Group meeting with colleagues from other Conservation Authorities;
- Held various site meetings with landowners to discuss CA policies, S.28, regarding future development activities on their property;
- Participated in Coastal Working Group meeting with colleagues from other Conservation Authorities;
- Completed Chainsaw Train-The-Trainer refresher training to renew accreditation as instructor;
- Assisted in flood season monitoring as part of the flood coordinators team;
- Assisted in lining up station instructors for 2026 Envirothon Competition;
- Submitted projects within watershed to Elgin Clean Water Program, for private landowner stewardship projects;
- Preparation to 2026 reforestation projects;

Upcoming Activities:

- Joint Health and Safety Committee Meeting;
- Continuation of updating the CCCA Planning and Regulations Policy and Procedure Manual;
- Planning pre-consultation meetings with member municipalities and private landowners looking to conduct work within adjacent lands of a Natural Hazard Features;
- Continue to monitor on-going s.28 work permits and associated work permit conditions;
- Forestry station lead for 2026 Envirothon Competition, hosted at Springwater Conservation Area on April 14th for workshop learning day and 28th for competition day;

Recommendation:

THAT, Staff Reports for the months of January, February and March, 2026, be noted and filed.

Submitted by:

**Gerrit Kremers
Resource Planning Coordinator**

REPORT FA 03/2026 : To the Full Authority

FROM: Al Bradford, Conservation Areas Supervisor

SUBJECT: January, February & March 2026, Monthly Staff Report

DATE: April 1, 2026

Conservation Areas Supervisor

Current Activities:

January

- Continued to obtain quotes for Cabins/Bunkies, picnic table boards, fire pits, insulation and furnace for the schoolhouse
- Operations team finished bucking and splitting firwood that ELP class that was gathered from the chainsaw course
- Worked with CCCA staff and Dan at Jaffa Outdoor Ed Centre to start booking school groups for Maple Syrup program that starts the end of Feb and potentially into April depending on the demand
- Audits - have continued gathering information on projects that need to be completed on our lands
- Upcoming Gate installs with Key West Gates and Koolen Electric, are deferred until the end of March when our maple programs are completed as well as better weather
- Operations staff and Admin staff worked together to have a plan put together for winter camping (staff would work together to check if there were people checking in over a weekend, call ahead, give a code, arrange firwood if needed) with having these arrangements in place would allow staff to deal with winter camping without being here on a weekend unless it was necessary
- Continued with hazard tree removal as required throughout our properties and campground
- Conservation Areas Workshop (CAW) committee had their first meeting to start the planning process for the 2026 workshop
- Camis meeting on additional features Camis also has to offer

February

- Winter sale for Bunkie Life has opened and I purchased 2 of the Haven's for the East Campground (https://bunkielife.com/product/haven-bunkie-with-loft/?srsltid=AfmBOopytzChUF_vtqVVEY1WGBqUWfs3wZmYaivIDOnsB86F3SB7mirN)
- EPCOR natural gas company put together a game plan on location where the gas would enter the property, and I worked on all paperwork that had to be completed (installation would not be until April/May)
- Site visit to Lake Whitaker to visit their cabins and inquire about do's & don'ts, furniture options, door locks and electrical options (Kettle staff were very helpful)
- Met with Behind the Bit (pony rides) confirmed price and booked there service for the

festival, also booked the Birds of Prey Show for 2 weekends (total of 4 shows throughout our festival), confirmed with the ELGINS (regiment from St. Thomas), Malahide Fire Prevention, OPP & numerous other vendors that will be coming out for the Maple Festival

- AGM was a success staff working together to get things set up, and the turnout was decent despite weather in the morning
- Operations team continued bucking and splitting firwood that ELP class that was gathered from the chainsaw course
- Worked with CCCA staff and Dan at Jaffa Outdoor Ed Centre to continue booking school groups for Maple Syrup program that starts the end of Feb and potentially into April depending on the demand
- Operations staff worked hard to also get our shop transformed into our Pancake House
- Malahide requested information from the planning department on our cabins
- Conducted interviews for Maple Syrup Festival and seasonal staff hires
- Public Health came and inspected the Pancake House & our water sample came back with no issues

March

- Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) Maple sugaring programs starting March 9th- 13th, Falling into our Public Festival starting March 14th -17th, 19th -22nd. On March 24th -27th more school programs. March 28th & 29th was our last days of the public festival
- Ensured paper work was filled out for upcoming project gas install, Bunkie Life, Ritchie insulation (schoolhouse basement)
- Met with EPCOR regarding what needs to be done to get natural gas hooked up at the schoolhouse
- Ensured that school groups and public festival was ready to go, communicate with all vendors and CCCA teams, volunteers and Pancake Organizers that everything is ready to go
- Dates have been set up for delivery of the two Bunkies in April 2026
- Spoken with Koolen Electric on moving forward with the work to move forward for the hydro for the new gate and pay station across from main office to take place in April, Key West is on board once hydro install is complete that the installation takes place
- Koolen Electric also will be installing the hydro once the Bunkies are in place and built

Upcoming Activities April:

- Preparing for delivery and building of the two Bunkies (coordinating with delivery company, contractors, staff)
- Potentially CCCA staff will be participating in a Prescribed Burn with the Elgin Stewardship at two of the properties (Aylmer Wildlife Unit (Police College) Fingal) this will depend on weather, but a 3-day notice has been given to staff that if we can attend and assist that we are ready unfortunately weather dictates when the PB's take place
- Ordered proper PPE so staff are able to attend and work the PB
- Preparing for pickup and delivery of rainbow trout from a hatchery in Thamesford for

- our annual trout derby that takes place here in Springwater CA
- Preparation of the campground for season opening of May 1st this year for seasonal campers and our camping season with transient sites
 - Getting ready to host once again the Envirothon taking place here in Springwater CA
 - Gasline and furnace installation will be moving forward April/May 2026 at the Springwater school house
 - Coordinating with Uplink Communication for work to be completed in the campground to finish up campground internet, Fiber will also be installed here at the CCCA office, improvements from office to gatehouse will also be taking place
 - Coordinating with a contractor to repair and widen the right entry lane going into the campground will hopefully give traffic the proper space needed to enter without getting too close to the fence

Recommendation:

THAT, Staff Reports for the months of January, February & March, be noted and filed.

Submitted by:

**Al Bradford
Conservation Areas Supervisor**

REPORT FA 04/2026: To The Full Authority

FROM: Brittany Bell, Communications/Program Support Assistant

SUBJECT: January, February, March Monthly Staff Report

DATE: April 1, 2026

Communications/Program Support Assistant

Current Activities:

- Seasonal camper administration
- Maintained social media channels and posted entertaining content
- Monitoring CCCA website inquiries
- Catfish Creek Conservation Authority administrative and Communication duties
- Booked Springwater Conservation Area facility rentals
- Met with couples looking to book weddings at the schoolhouse, pavilions and Audreys Place Pavilion for 2026 and 2027
- Springwater Conservation Area Campground Administrative duties
- Marketing for upcoming events at Springwater Conservation Area
- Working on revamping onboarding materials for seasonal staff
- Administration preparation for Springwater Conservation Area camping
- Updating administration documents for the CCCA and Springwater Conservation Area
- Health and Safety Policy Review, ongoing
- Maple Syrup Festival administration, communications and event planning
- Interviews for maple syrup festival and seasonal summer staff
- Planning for the Maple Syrup Festival
- Advertising for seasonal camping
- Website information updates
- Work on moving SafetyHub to new platform – SafetyHub 360
- Preparation for Annual General Meeting, advertising and administration, set up
- Compiling 2025 Annual Report
- Joint Health and Safety meeting preparation
- CAWG Meeting
- CAMIS configuration – fee updates, cabin reservations etc.
- Upcoming Springwater Conservation Area event planning
- Trout Derby preparation

Upcoming Activities:

- Joint Health and Safety Committee
- Continued administration for Springwater Conservation Area
- CAMIS Implementation – yearly configurations for Go Lives (continued)
- Work on advertisements on social media channels
- Catfish Creek Conservation Authority administrative and Communications duties
- Facility Bookings
- Reviewing all policies to ensure they meet AODA Compliance

- Seasonal Staff Orientation Day planning and training

Recommendation:

THAT, Staff Reports for the months of January, February and March 2026, be noted and filed.

Submitted by:

Brittany Bell
Communications/Program Support Assistant

REPORT FA 05/2026: To The Full Authority

FROM: Dusty Underhill, General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer

SUBJECT: 2026-2027 General Insurance Program

DATE: March 2, 2026

PURPOSE:

To update the board on the General Insurance Renewal prepared by McFarland Rowlands.

DISCUSSION:

The CCCA insurance coverage is on a one-year basis from April 1 to April 1 in the subsequent year. The Authority is currently insured with Intact Public Entities through McFarland Rowlands.

McFarland Rowlands has presented a 0% overall increase and a 1% increase on cyber insurance.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT, Report FA 05/2026 be received as information at this time.

Submitted By:

**Dusty Underhill
General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer**

REPORT FA 06/2026: To The Full Authority

FROM: Dusty Underhill, General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer

SUBJECT: 2026 Budget and Levy

DATE: April 1, 2026

PURPOSE:

To approve the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority (CCCA) Budget and Municipal Levy apportionments for the 2026 fiscal year.

BACKGROUND:

A Staff Report requesting the Board to advise staff on the proposed Levy increase was presented at the November 28, 2025 Personnel and Finance Committee meeting with members directing staff to prepare a budget with a 20% Levy increase.

The Draft Budget and Levy amounts using Current Value Assessment (CVA), were presented to the Personnel/Finance committee on November 27, 2025, and circulated to the five member municipalities for their consideration, in accordance with the 30-day review period as set out in the Municipal Levy Regulation.

The Final Budget will be considered at the April Full Authority meeting and is subject to a “weighted vote”. A table has been included summarizing relative weightings for each municipality. A vote with greater than 50% weighted support of those members in attendance will pass the Budget. Votes are considered “lost” for absent members. No proxy voting is permitted.

A recorded vote will be called at the meeting in accordance with the O. Reg. 139/96: Municipal Levies.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT, the 2026 Catfish Creek Conservation Authority Budget totalling \$1,763,734.36 be adopted as presented;

AND THAT, the 2026 Municipal General Levy in the amount of \$584,066.16 be approved as presented.

Member's Name	Municipality	CVA Apportionment %	Yes	No
Scott Lewis	Township of Malahide	36.2556%		
Morgaine Halpin	Municipality of Central Elgin	28.0888%		
Arthur Oslach	Town of Aylmer	26.0182%		
Gary Clarke	City of St. Thomas	6.2277%		
Paul Buchner	Township of South-West Oxford	3.4096%		

Submitted By:

**Dusty Underhill
General Manager / Secretary - Treasurer**

REPORT FA 07/2026: To The Full Authority

FROM: Dusty Underhill, General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer

SUBJECT: **Schedule 3 of the Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2026, which amend the Conservation Authorities Act**

DATE: March 30, 2026

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of Directors of significant legislative changes proposed under Schedule 3 of the Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2026, which amend the Conservation Authorities Act, and to outline the anticipated implications for the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority (CCCA), including its proposed amalgamation into a new regional conservation authority structure.

BACKGROUND:

Schedule 3 introduces a substantial restructuring of Ontario's conservation authority system through the creation of a regional, watershed-based governance model. Under the proposed amendments, the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority is identified as a "predecessor authority" and is to be amalgamated with the Grand River, Kettle Creek, and Long Point Region Conservation Authorities to form the new Eastern Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority, effective on a transition date currently set as February 1, 2027, or such later date as may be prescribed. On this date, all assets, liabilities, rights, obligations, and operations of CCCA will transfer to the new authority, which will assume full legal and operational continuity. This includes the continuation of all agreements, permits, legal proceedings, and employment relationships without interruption or deemed termination.

The legislation establishes a comprehensive transition framework, including the creation of transition committees responsible for developing and implementing a transition plan under the oversight of a provincial agency. These committees will include representatives from each predecessor authority and will be supported by a provincially appointed project executive who will initially serve as the chief administrative officer of the new authority for a defined term. The transition process will require significant staff involvement, coordination, and information sharing, and will be subject to direction from the Province, including mandatory compliance with prescribed timelines and requirements.

Governance of the new authority will shift to a model based on municipal representation determined primarily by population, with all participating municipalities required to appoint members. Additional governance changes include provisions for watershed councils to support local input into decision-making, as well as expanded Ministerial

authority to issue binding directions to conservation authorities during the transition period. These directions may affect operational, financial, and decision-making processes and will prevail over existing legislative or regulatory provisions where conflicts arise.

The proposed changes also include restrictions during the transition period, limiting the ability of conservation authorities to undertake certain actions such as initiating amalgamations, boundary changes, or dissolution processes outside of the prescribed framework. Financial and administrative impacts are expected as the Authority prepares for integration, including potential costs associated with transition planning, alignment of systems and policies, and participation in regional governance structures. At the same time, the transition presents opportunities for enhanced watershed-scale planning, improved service coordination, and potential long-term efficiencies through consolidation.

The proposed legislative amendments represent a fundamental transformation of the conservation authority framework in Ontario and will directly affect the future structure, governance, and operations of the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority. While the transition will require careful planning and resource allocation, it is intended to support a more integrated and regionally coordinated approach to watershed management.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT, the Board of Directors of the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority receive this report for information;

AND THAT, staff be directed to monitor the progression of Schedule 3 of the Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2026, and to participate in all required transition planning activities;

AND THAT, staff report back to the Board with updates, implications, and any required decisions as additional information and direction from the Province becomes available..

Submitted By:

Dusty Underhill
General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer

SCHEDULE 3

CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES ACT

1 (1) The definition of “authority” in section 1 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* is amended by striking out “established by or under” and substituting “established or continued under”.

(2) The definition of “Minister” in section 1 of the Act is repealed and the following substituted:

“Minister” means the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks or such other member of the Executive Council to whom responsibility for the administration of this Act may be assigned or transferred under the *Executive Council Act*; (“ministre”)

2 The Act is amended by adding the following Part:

PART I.1

TRANSITION TO NEW AUTHORITIES

Interpretation

1.2 (1) In this Part,

“new authority” means an authority set out in Column 2 of the Table to section 1.3; (“nouvel office”)

“predecessor authority” means an authority set out in Column 1 of the Table to section 1.3; (“office remplacé”)

“transition committee” means, in respect of a new authority, the committee established under subsection 1.6 (1) for that authority; (“comité de transition”)

“transition date” means February 1, 2027 or such later date as may be prescribed by the regulations; (“date de transition”)

Same

(2) Despite the definition of “new authority” in subsection (1), a reference to a new authority includes, where the context so requires, the authority as it is being planned for before the amalgamation and continuation provided for under subsection 1.3 (2) occur.

Amalgamation of predecessor authorities

Interpretation

1.3 (1) In this section,

(a) a reference to a predecessor authority’s new authority is a reference to the new authority into which the predecessor authority is to be amalgamated; and

(b) a reference to a new authority’s predecessor authorities is a reference to the predecessor authorities that are to be amalgamated into the new authority.

Amalgamations

(2) On the transition date, the predecessor authorities set out in Column 1 of the Table to this section are amalgamated and continued as conservation authorities under the applicable name set out opposite the predecessor authorities in Column 2 of the Table.

Rules

(3) The following rules apply on and after the transition date to each amalgamation:

1. All rights, obligations, assets and liabilities of the predecessor authorities that existed immediately before the transition date become the rights, obligations, assets and liabilities of their new authority, and the new authority shall stand in the place of its predecessor authorities for all purposes.

2. A conviction against or a ruling, order or judgment in favour of or against one of the predecessor authorities may be enforced by or against their new authority.

3. A new authority is deemed to be the party plaintiff or the party defendant, as the case may be, in any civil action commenced by or against any of its predecessor authorities before the transition date.

4. Persons who are employees of the predecessor authorities immediately before the transition date become employees of the predecessor authorities' new authority and, for all purposes, the employment of the employees immediately before and after the transition date is continuous.

5. For all purposes, including the provisions of an employment contract, a collective agreement and the *Employment Standards Act, 2000*, the employment of the employees referred to in paragraph 4 is not terminated or severed and those employees are not constructively dismissed because the predecessor authorities were amalgamated.

6. All rights, duties and liabilities relating to all employees and former employees of the predecessor authorities that are vested in or bind the predecessor authorities immediately before the transition date are vested in or bind their new authority instead of the predecessor authorities.

7. The *Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, 1997*, except for section 36 of that Act, applies upon the amalgamation of the predecessor authorities into their new authorities.

8. The amalgamation of the predecessor authorities into their new authority is deemed to be a sale of business under section 13.1 of the *Pay Equity Act* and that section applies to the amalgamation. Each of the predecessor authorities are deemed to be a seller and the predecessor authorities' new authority is deemed to be the purchaser.

9. Section 69 of the *Labour Relations Act, 1995* does not apply to the amalgamation of the predecessor authorities into their new authority.

10. Any advisory board of a predecessor authority is continued as an advisory board of the predecessor authority's new authority.

11. An agreement or memorandum of understanding to which one of the predecessor authorities was a party immediately before the transition date has effect as if,

i. its new authority was substituted for the predecessor authority as a party to the agreement or memorandum of understanding, and

ii. any reference in the agreement or memorandum of understanding to the predecessor authority were a reference to its new authority.

12. The amalgamation of the predecessor authorities into their new authority shall not constitute a change of control of any of the predecessor authorities in respect of any asset, liability, right or obligation of the predecessor authorities.

13. Despite any other Act that requires notice or registration in respect of the amalgamation of the predecessor authorities into their new authority, the amalgamation is binding on their new authority and all other persons.

14. The amalgamation of the predecessor authorities into their new authority is deemed not to,

i. constitute a breach, termination, repudiation or frustration of any agreement, including a contract of employment or insurance or a collective agreement,

ii. create any cause of action in favour of a party to an agreement with one of the predecessor authorities that was entered into before the amalgamation,

iii. constitute a breach of any Act, regulation or municipal by-law,

iv. constitute an event of default or force majeure,

v. give rise to a breach, termination, repudiation or frustration of any licence, permit or other right,

vi. give rise to any right to terminate or repudiate an agreement, licence, permit or other right, or

vii. give rise to any estoppel.

15. The *Land Transfer Tax Act* and the *Retail Sales Tax Act* do not apply to the amalgamation of the predecessor authorities into their new authority.

16. The area over which a new authority has jurisdiction is the area consisting of the areas over which all of its predecessor authorities had jurisdiction immediately before the transition date.

17. Despite any designation of the participating municipalities of a predecessor authority under this Act before the transition date, the participating municipalities of a new authority shall be the single-tier municipalities and the upper-tier municipalities that are located in whole or in part within its area of jurisdiction.

18. Any agreement between a predecessor authority and a lower-tier municipality under section 21.1.2 that was in effect immediately before the transition date shall continue to be in effect and is deemed to be an agreement between the new

authority of the predecessor authority and the upper-tier participating municipality in which the lower-tier municipality is located.

19. Any debt due to a predecessor authority immediately before the transition date, including a debt due under section 25, 27 or 27.2, becomes a debt due to the predecessor authority's new authority.

20. Any application that was made before the transition date to a predecessor authority for a permit to engage in an activity that would otherwise be prohibited under section 28 that was not decided on before the transition date is continued as an application to the predecessor authority's new authority.

21. A request for a hearing that was made to a predecessor authority or a hearing that has commenced before a predecessor authority before the transition date but that was not disposed of before the transition date is continued as a request for a hearing to or a hearing before the predecessor authority's new authority.

22. If a predecessor authority was a party to a hearing, review or appeal that was requested or commenced before the transition date, its new authority is deemed to be the party to the hearing, review or appeal.

23. Persons who are appointed officers by a predecessor authority under section 30.1 immediately before the transition date become officers appointed by the predecessor authority's new authority under section 30.1.

24. Any commencement of a proceeding under the *Provincial Offences Act* by a predecessor authority is continued in the name of its new authority.

25. Such other rules, including transitional rules, as may be prescribed by the regulations.

Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, 1997

(4) For the purposes of the *Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, 1997* and paragraph 7 of subsection (3),

(a) the predecessor authorities are the predecessor employers and their new authorities are the successor employers; and

(b) the changeover date is the transition date.

TABLE

Amalgamation

Item	Column 1 Predecessor authorities to be amalgamated	Column 2 New authority
1.	Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority Toronto and Region Conservation Authority	Central Lake Ontario Regional Office régional de protection d
2.	Catfish Creek Conservation Authority Grand River Conservation Authority Kettle Creek Conservation Authority Long Point Region Conservation Authority	Eastern Lake Erie Regional Con Office régional de protection d
3.	Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority Crowe Valley Conservation Authority Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority Kawartha Region Conservation Authority Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority Otonabee Region Conservation Authority Quinte Conservation Authority	Eastern Lake Ontario Regional Office régional de protection d

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>4. Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority
 Grey Sauble Conservation Authority
 Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority
 Maitland Valley Conservation Authority
 Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority
 Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority</p> | <p>Lake Huron Regional Conserva
 Office régional de protection d</p> |
| <p>5. Mattagami Region Conservation Authority
 Nickel District Conservation Authority
 North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority
 Sault Ste. Marie Region Conservation Authority</p> | <p>Northeastern Ontario Regional
 Office régional de protection d</p> |
| <p>6. Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority
 Raisin Region Conservation Authority
 Rideau Valley Conservation Authority
 South Nation River Conservation Authority</p> | <p>St. Lawrence River Regional Co
 Office régional de protection d</p> |
| <p>7. Essex Region Conservation Authority
 Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority
 St. Clair Region Conservation Authority
 Upper Thames River Conservation Authority</p> | <p>Western Lake Erie Regional Co
 Office régional de protection d</p> |
| <p>8. Credit Valley Conservation Authority
 Halton Region Conservation Authority
 Hamilton Region Conservation Authority
 Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority</p> | <p>Western Lake Ontario Regiona
 Office régional de protection d</p> |

Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, continuation

1.4 (1) On the transition date, the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority is continued as a conservation authority under the name Northwestern Ontario

Regional Conservation Authority in English and Office régional de protection de la nature du Nord-Ouest de l'Ontario in French.

Participating municipalities

(2) The participating municipalities of the Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority shall be the municipalities that were the participating municipalities of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority immediately before the transition date.

3 (1) The Act is amended by adding the following section:

First members of new authority

1.5 (1) No later than the day immediately before the transition date, the council of each municipality that will be a participating municipality of a new authority shall appoint to the new authority such number of members as determined in accordance with subsections (3), (5) and (6), which members must be resident in a participating municipality of the new authority.

Same, Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority

(2) No later than the day immediately before the transition date, the council of each municipality that will be a participating municipality of the Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority shall appoint to the authority such number of members as determined in accordance with subsections (3), (5) and (6), which members must be resident in a participating municipality of the authority.

Minimum number

(3) The number of members to be appointed to the authority under subsection (1) or (2) by each municipality that will be a participating municipality of the applicable

authority shall be determined in accordance with the method prescribed by the regulations, but a minimum of one member shall be appointed by the council of each municipality that will be a participating municipality.

Method

(4) The method mentioned in subsection (3) for determining the number of members to be appointed by each municipality that will be a participating municipality shall be based on each municipality's population within the authority's area of jurisdiction in proportion to the total population within that area of jurisdiction.

Maximum number, single participating municipality

(5) The maximum number of members to be appointed to the authority by a single municipality that will be a participating municipality is the number prescribed by the regulations.

Same, all participating municipalities

(6) The maximum number of members to be appointed to the authority by all municipalities that will be participating municipalities is the number prescribed by the regulations.

Considerations

(7) When appointing a person as a member of an authority under subsection (1) or (2) who is not a member of the council of the participating municipality, the council shall take into consideration,

(a) the person's knowledge and experience in public administration, corporate governance and finance;

(b) the person's knowledge of programs and services provided by authorities;
and

(c) such other matters as the Minister may prescribe by regulation.

Notice

(8) The council shall, as soon as possible after making its appointments under this section, give the Agency written notice of the appointments.

Term

(9) A member shall be appointed for a term of up to four years, as may be determined by the council that appoints the member.

Same

(10) A member's term begins at the first meeting of the new authority or the Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority, as the case may be, and expires immediately before the first meeting of that authority after the appointment of their replacement.

Replacement of member

(11) Despite subsections (9) and (10), a member may be replaced by the council of the participating municipality that appointed the member.

(2) Section 1.5 of the Act, as enacted by subsection (1), is repealed.

4 (1) The Act is amended by adding the following sections:

Transition committees

1.6 (1) The Agency shall, for each new authority, establish a committee in accordance with this section whose purpose is to prepare for the amalgamation of the predecessor authorities into the new authority.

Appointments by predecessor authorities

(2) No later than 90 days after the day the *Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2026* receives Royal Assent, each predecessor authority shall appoint the following individuals to be members of the transition committee for its new authority:

1. One of its members that is a member of a municipal council.
2. Subject to subsection (3), the chief administrative officer or general manager of the predecessor authority.

Same

(3) If a predecessor authority is of the opinion that its chief administrative officer or general manager is not available to serve on the transition committee, the predecessor authority may instead appoint another officer or senior staff member of the predecessor authority.

Same

(4) If a predecessor authority does not appoint one or both of the individuals in accordance with subsection (2) or (3), the Agency shall appoint any individuals still required to be appointed under subsection (2) on behalf of the applicable predecessor authority.

Replacement of member

(5) A member appointed under subsection (2) or (3) may be replaced by the predecessor authority that appointed the member.

Agency may appoint other individuals

(6) The Agency may appoint such other individuals as it considers advisable to be members of a transition committee.

Replacement of member, Agency

(7) A member appointed under subsection (4) or (6) may be replaced by the Agency.

Project executive to chair transition committee

(8) The Agency shall appoint an individual as a project executive for each transition committee who shall serve as chair of the committee.

Project executive not employee

(9) A project executive appointed under subsection (8) is not an employee of the Agency and shall be paid compensation and expenses as agreed to with the Agency.

Replacement of project executive

(10) The Agency may replace an individual appointed under subsection (8) as a project executive.

Dissolution of transition committees

(11) The Agency may dissolve a transition committee by providing written notice to the members of the transition committee and the applicable new authority.

Same, effective date

(12) The effective date of a dissolution of a transition committee is the date specified by the Agency in the notice, which date shall not be earlier than the transition date.

Agency direction to transition committee

1.7 (1) The Agency may issue directions to a transition committee, the transition committee's project executive or to both, in accordance with this section, governing the roles, responsibilities, practices and procedures of the transition committee and project executive and requiring the transition committee, project executive or both to take specified actions to prepare for the amalgamation of the predecessor authorities into the new authority, which may include actions respecting the development of a transition plan mentioned in subsection 1.10 (1) and the plan's contents.

Copy of direction

(2) The Agency shall provide a copy of each direction issued under this section to the transition committee's project executive, every member of the transition committee and to the chair of each of the new authority's predecessor authorities.

Compliance

(3) A transition committee and a project executive shall comply with a direction issued to them under this section within the time specified in the direction.

General or particular

(4) A direction issued under this section may be general or particular in its application.

Non-application of *Legislation Act, 2006*

(5) Part III (Regulations) of the *Legislation Act, 2006* does not apply to directions issued under this section.

Project executive, etc may require information

1.8 (1) For the purposes of ensuring a transition committee and its project executive satisfy the requirements of this Act and any applicable directions of the Agency, the project executive may require one or more of the new authority's predecessor authorities to provide information to the project executive at the time and in the manner specified by the project executive.

Same

(2) Subsections 35.23 (2) to (8) apply in respect of a requirement by a project executive to provide information under subsection (1), subject to necessary modifications.

Obligations of predecessor authority

1.9 Every member, employee and agent of a new authority's predecessor authorities shall co-operate with the new authority's transition committee and the transition committee's project executive and shall assist the transition committee and the project executive when requested by them for the purposes of ensuring the transition committee and the project executive satisfy the requirements of this Act and any applicable directions of the Agency.

Development of transition plan

1.10 (1) Each transition committee shall develop a transition plan to prepare for the amalgamation of the predecessor authorities into its new authority.

Submission to Agency

(2) The transition committee shall submit the transition plan to the Agency for the Agency's review by the date specified by the Agency.

Revisions to transition plan

(3) After the Agency has reviewed the transition plan, the Agency shall,

(a) provide comments on the plan and may issue directions to the transition committee respecting revisions that the committee must make to the plan including the date by which the revisions must be made; or

(b) confirm that no revisions to the plan are necessary.

Same

(4) Upon receipt of the Agency's comments or a direction under subsection (3), the transition committee shall revise the transition plan in accordance with the direction, if any, and with regard to the Agency's comments.

Development of transition plan, Agency

(5) If the transition committee does not submit a transition plan to the Agency for the Agency's review by the date specified by the Agency under subsection (2), the Agency shall develop the transition plan on behalf of the committee.

Delivery of transition plan

(6) After receiving confirmation that no revisions are necessary under subsection (3) or completing any revisions under subsection (4), the transition committee shall provide a copy of the final transition plan to the new authority's predecessor authorities and the Agency by the date specified by the Agency.

Same

(7) If the Agency develops a transition plan under subsection (5), the Agency shall provide a copy of the final transition plan to the new authority's predecessor authorities and to the transition committee's project executive.

Summary of transition plan

(8) By the date specified by the Agency, the transition committee shall provide a summary of the final transition plan to the participating municipalities of the new authority's predecessor authorities and to the municipalities that will be the participating municipalities of the new authority.

Same

(9) If the Agency develops a transition plan under subsection (5), the Agency shall provide a summary of the final transition plan to the participating municipalities of the new authority's predecessor authorities and to the municipalities that will be the participating municipalities of the new authority.

Delivery of transition plan to new authority

(10) On or after the transition date, the transition committee's project executive shall provide a copy of the final transition plan to each member of the new authority.

Implementation of transition plan

1.11 (1) Each new authority shall implement the final transition plan provided to its members under subsection 1.10 (10), or the amended final transition plan if any amendments are made to the plan under this section.

Request for amendments

(2) The new authority may request, in writing, that the Agency authorize the authority to amend the final transition plan.

Contents of request

(3) A request under subsection (2) must identify the portions of the final transition plan that the new authority wishes to amend, describe its proposed amendments and explain the rationale for the proposed amendments.

Agency review of request

(4) The Agency shall consider a request under subsection (2) and do one or more of the following by providing written notice to the new authority:

1. Authorize the new authority to make some or all of the proposed amendments to the transition plan.
2. Refuse some or all of the proposed amendments to the transition plan.
3. Make such amendments to the transition plan in respect of the request as the Agency considers appropriate.

Progress report

(5) The new authority shall report to the Agency on its progress respecting implementation of the transition plan in accordance with such requirements as may be specified by the Agency.

First chief administrative officer

1.12 (1) Despite subsection 18 (1.1) and subject to subsections (2) and (3), starting on the transition date, the project executive appointed in respect of a transition committee for a new authority is the chief administrative officer of the new authority for a term of two years.

Notice re replacement of chief administrative officer

(2) During the two-year term mentioned in subsection (1), the Agency may provide written notice to the authority and the project executive that the project executive mentioned in subsection (1) is no longer the chief administrative officer of the authority, effective on such date as may be specified in the notice.

Same

(3) If a notice is provided under subsection (2), the Agency may also include in the notice to the authority the name of a new individual appointed by the Agency as the chief administrative officer for the remainder of the two-year term mentioned in subsection (1).

Same

(4) If the notice does not identify an individual appointed as the chief administrative officer, the authority shall appoint a chief administrative officer for such term as the authority specifies.

Prohibitions during transition period

Establishment of authority

1.13 (1) Despite sections 2, 3 and 9,

(a) no request shall be made to the Minister to call a meeting mentioned in subsection 2 (1) or section 9;

(b) the Minister shall not call a meeting mentioned in subsection 2 (1) or section 9; and

(c) no conservation authority shall be established by the Lieutenant Governor in Council under section 3.

Enlargement of authority's area

(2) Despite section 10,

(a) no council of a municipality shall call a meeting mentioned in subsection 10 (1); and

(b) no resolution mentioned in subsection 10 (4) shall be passed.

Amalgamation of authorities

(3) Despite section 11,

(a) no authority or council of a municipality shall call a meeting mentioned in subsection 11 (1); and

(b) the Minister shall not approve a resolution described in subsection 11 (4), with or without changes, terms and conditions.

Dissolution of authority

(4) Despite section 13.1,

(a) no authority shall call a meeting mentioned in subsection 13.1 (1); and

(b) the Lieutenant Governor in Council shall not dissolve an authority under subsection 13.1 (6).

Minister's direction

1.14 (1) The Minister may, for the purpose of facilitating the transition to a regional watershed-based framework for authorities, issue a direction to an authority,

(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).

Same

(2) Without limiting the generality of clause (1) (a), a direction under that clause may require an authority to do any of the following before making a decision:

1. Notify a person specified in the direction of the intended decision.
2. Give a person specified in the direction information respecting the intended decision.
3. Prohibit the authority from making the decision until a person specified in the direction gives the authority written authorization to do so.

Compliance

(3) An authority that receives a direction under subsection (1) shall comply with the direction within the time specified in the direction.

Expiry

(4) A direction expires on the earlier of the expiration date specified in the direction and the transition date.

Directions prevail

(5) In the event of a conflict between a direction issued under this section and a provision of this Act or the regulations, the direction prevails.

Contravention of direction

(6) If an authority makes a decision in contravention of a direction issued under clause (1) (a), the authority's decision has no effect and any agreement that the authority enters into that is in contravention of the direction is void.

General or particular

(7) A direction issued under this section may be general or particular in its application.

Non-application of *Legislation Act, 2006*

(8) Part III (Regulations) of the *Legislation Act, 2006* does not apply to directions issued under this section.

Non-application of *Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993*

(9) Part II of the *Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993* does not apply to directions issued under this section.

(2) Sections 1.6 to 1.12 of the Act, as enacted by subsection (1), are repealed.

(3) Section 1.13 of the Act, as enacted by subsection (1), is repealed.

(4) Section 1.14 of the Act, as enacted by subsection (1), is repealed.

5 Subsection 3 (3) of the Act is repealed.

6 Sections 4 to 7 of the Act are repealed.

7 Section 14 of the Act is repealed and the following substituted:

Members of authority

14 (1) The council of each participating municipality of an authority shall appoint to the authority such number of members as determined in accordance with subsections (2), (4) and (5) which members must be resident in a participating municipality of the authority.

Minimum number

(2) The number of members to be appointed to the authority by each participating municipality shall be determined in accordance with the method prescribed by the regulations, but a minimum of one member shall be appointed by the council of each participating municipality.

Method

(3) The method mentioned in subsection (2) for determining the number of members to be appointed by each participating municipality shall be based on each municipality's population within the authority's area of jurisdiction in proportion to the total population within that area of jurisdiction.

Maximum number, single participating municipality

(4) The maximum number of members to be appointed to the authority by a single participating municipality is the number prescribed by the regulations.

Same, all participating municipalities

(5) The maximum number of members to be appointed to the authority by all participating municipalities is the number prescribed by the regulations.

Agreement on number of members

(6) Despite subsections (1), (2) and (3), the number of members that each participating municipality may appoint may be based on a method other than the method prescribed by the regulations in circumstances where the following criteria are satisfied:

1. All the participating municipalities have entered into an agreement respecting the method.
2. The agreement does not provide for the number of members to be appointed to exceed the maximum numbers provided for under subsections (4) and (5).
3. Such other criteria as may be prescribed in the regulations.

Municipal agreement

(7) If the participating municipalities of an authority enter into an agreement mentioned in subsection (6), the authority shall, within 60 days after the agreement is executed,

- (a) provide a copy of the agreement to the Agency; and
- (b) make the agreement available to the public by posting it on the authority's website and by any other means the authority considers appropriate.

Considerations

(8) When appointing a person as a member of the authority under subsection (1) who are not members of the council of the participating municipality, the council shall take into consideration,

(a) the person's knowledge and experience in public administration, corporate governance and finance;

(b) the person's knowledge of programs and services provided by authorities;
and

(c) such other matters as the Minister may prescribe by regulation.

Member from agricultural sector appointed

(9) In addition to the members of an authority appointed by a council under this section, an additional member may be appointed to the authority by the Minister as a representative of the agricultural sector.

Limitation on voting

(10) The member of an authority appointed under subsection (9) shall not vote on,

(a) a resolution to enlarge an authority's area of jurisdiction that is presented at a meeting called under section 10;

(b) a resolution to amalgamate an authority with another authority that is presented at a meeting called under section 11;

(c) a resolution to dissolve the authority that is presented at a meeting called under section 13.1; or

(d) a resolution relating to any budgetary matter that is presented at a meeting held under section 16.

Term

(11) A member shall be appointed for a term of up to four years, as may be determined by the council that appoints the member or, in the case of a member appointed under subsection (9), by the Minister.

Same

(12) A member's term begins at the first meeting of the authority after their appointment and expires immediately before the first meeting of the authority after the appointment of their replacement.

Replacement of member

(13) Despite subsections (11) and (12), a member may be replaced by the council of the participating municipality that appointed the member or, in the case of a member appointed under subsection (9), by the Minister.

Reappointment

(14) A member is eligible to be reappointed.

8 Subsections 17 (1) to (1.3) of the Act are repealed and the following substituted:

Chair, vice-chair

(1) If, at the first meeting held in each year or at such other meeting as may be specified by the authority's by-laws, there is a vacancy in the office of chair or vice-chair, the authority shall appoint a chair and one or more vice-chairs, as the case may be, from among the members of the authority.

Term of chair, vice-chair

(1.1) A chair or vice-chair appointed under subsection (1) shall hold office for a term not exceeding two years and shall serve as chair or vice-chair for no more than eight years in total, whether the years are served consecutively or otherwise.

9 Section 18 of the Act is amended by adding the following subsection:

Chief administrative officer

(1.1) An authority shall appoint a chief administrative officer who shall be responsible for performing such duties as are assigned by the authority in the authority's by-laws.

10 The Act is amended by adding the following section:

Watershed councils

18.1 (1) An authority shall, in accordance with the regulations, if any, establish one or more watershed councils for the purposes of assisting the authority in identifying local priorities with respect to its programs and services and to ensure that local interests are considered as part of the authority's decision-making process.

Same

(2) An authority shall comply with any requirements that may be prescribed by the regulations with respect to the composition, functions, powers, duties, activities and procedures of a watershed council.

11 (1) Subsection 19.1 (1) of the Act is amended by striking out the portion before clause (a) and substituting the following:

(1) An authority shall make such by-laws as are necessary for its proper administration, which may include,

.

(2) Clause 19.1 (1) (b) of the Act is amended by adding “and chief administrative officer” at the end.

(3) Subsection 19.1 (5) of the Act is repealed.

12 Subsection 21.1 (2) of the Act is amended by striking out “Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority” and substituting “Lake Huron Regional Conservation Authority”.

13 Section 21.1.1 of the Act is amended by adding the following subsection:

Definition

(6) In this section,

“municipality” means a lower-tier municipality, an upper-tier municipality or a single-tier municipality.

14 Section 21.1.4 of the Act is repealed.

15 (1) Subsection 25 (1.1) of the Act is amended by striking out “subsections (1.2) and (1.3)” and substituting “subsection (1.2)”.

(2) Subsection 25 (1.3) of the Act is repealed.

16 (1) Subsection 27 (1.1) of the Act is amended by striking out “subsections (1.2) and (1.3)” and substituting “subsection (1.2)”.

(2) Subsection 27 (1.3) of the Act is repealed.

17 (1) Subsection 35.16 (4) of the Act is amended by adding “within the time specified in the direction” at the end.

(2) Section 35.16 of the Act is amended by adding the following subsection:

Non-application of *Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993*

(9) Part II of the *Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993* does not apply to directions issued under this section.

18 (1) Section 35.21 of the Act is amended by adding the following subsection:

Non-application of *Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993*

(6.1) Part II of the *Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993* does not apply to the Minister’s consideration of a proposed direction under this section or to any decision the Minister makes in respect of a proposed direction.

(2) Subsection 35.21 (7) of the Act is amended by adding “within the time specified in the direction” at the end.

19 (1) Clause 35.25 (1) (a) of the Act is repealed and the following substituted:

(a) establish and require the payment of fees in respect of any matter related to the performance of its duties and the exercise of its powers under this Act, including,

(i) respecting a direction issued under section 35.21, and

(ii) respecting the appointment of a project executive in relation to their role as chief administrative officer under subsection 1.12 (1) and respecting any individual appointed as a chief administrative officer under subsection 1.12 (3);

(2) Clause 35.25 (1) (a) of the Act, as re-enacted by subsection (1), is repealed and the following substituted:

(a) establish and require the payment of fees in respect of any matter related to the performance of its duties and the exercise of its powers under this Act, including respecting a direction issued under section 35.21;

20 Subsection 39.2 (1) of the Act is repealed and the following substituted:

No personal liability

(1) No cause of action arises against any current or former member, director, officer, volunteer, employee or agent of the Agency, any person appointed as a member or project executive of a transition committee established by the Agency under section 1.6 or any person appointed to a council, committee or other body established by the Agency under section 35.11 for any act done in good faith in the exercise or performance, or intended exercise or performance, of the person's powers, duties or functions under this Act or for any alleged neglect, default or other omission in the exercise or performance in good faith of those powers, duties or functions.

21 (1) Subsection 40 (1) of the Act is amended by adding the following clauses:

(0.a) prescribing a date for the purposes of the definition of "transition date" in subsection 1.2 (1);

(0.b) for the purposes of Part I.1,

(i) prescribing the method for determining the number of members to be appointed to an authority under subsection 1.5 (3),

(ii) prescribing the maximum number of members to be appointed to an authority under subsection 1.5 (5) by a single municipality that will be a participating municipality, and

(iii) prescribing the maximum number of members to be appointed to an authority under subsection 1.5 (6) by all municipalities that will be participating municipalities;

(2) Clause 40 (1) (0.a) of the Act, as enacted by subsection (1), is repealed.

(3) Clause 40 (1) (0.b) of the Act, as enacted by subsection (1), is repealed.

(4) Subsection 40 (1) of the Act is amended by adding the following clauses:

(0.c) prescribing the method for determining the number of members to be appointed to an authority under subsection 14 (2) by each participating municipality of the authority;

(0.d) prescribing the maximum number of members to be appointed to an authority under subsection 14 (4) by a single participating municipality;

(0.e) prescribing the maximum number of members to be appointed to an authority under subsection 14 (5) by all participating municipalities of the authority;

(0.f) prescribing criteria for the purposes of paragraph 3 of subsection 14 (6);

(5) Subsection 40 (3) of the Act is amended by adding the following clause:

(0.a) for the purposes of Part I.1,

(i) prescribing rules for the purposes for paragraph 25 of subsection 1.3 (3),
and

(ii) prescribing matters for the purposes of clause 1.5 (7) (c);

(6) Clause 40 (3) (0.a) of the Act, as enacted by subsection (5), is repealed.

(7) Subsection 40 (3) of the Act is amended by adding the following clauses:

(0.b) prescribing matters for the purposes of clause 14 (8) (c);

(0.c) governing watershed councils established under section 18.1, including,

(i) governing the number of watershed councils an authority may or must establish, including setting a fixed number of councils, setting a minimum or maximum number of councils or both, and

(ii) prescribing requirements with respect to the composition, functions, powers, duties, activities and procedures of any watershed council;

(8) Clause 40 (3) (g) of the Act is repealed.

Commencement

22 (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, this Schedule comes into force on a day to be named by order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

(2) Sections 1 and 2, subsection 4 (1), sections 5, 8 and 13 to 18, subsection 19 (1), section 20 and subsections 21 (1), (5) and (8) come into force on the day the *Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2026* receives Royal Assent.

REPORT FA 08/2026: To The Full Authority

FROM: Dusty Underhill, General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer

SUBJECT: **Conservation Ontario Overview Schedule 3, Bill 97 (Plan to Protect Ontario Act) (Budget Measures), 2026**

DATE: March 24, 2026

PURPOSE:

To provide the members with Conservation Ontario's overview of Bill 97 (Plan to Protect Ontario Act) (Budget Measures), 2026.

BACKGROUND:

Schedule 3 of Bill 97 introduces a provincially led restructuring of Ontario's conservation authority system, following a policy direction signaled in the April 15, 2025 Throne Speech and subsequent steps including the October 31, 2025 announcement of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA), consultations on regional boundaries in November–December 2025, and a final consolidation decision on March 10, 2026. The legislation, introduced March 26, 2026, amends multiple statutes, including the Conservation Authorities Act, to enable the amalgamation of 36 conservation authorities, with transition expected to occur on February 1, 2027 or a later prescribed date. Upon transition, new authorities will assume all assets, liabilities, agreements, staff, permits, and ongoing proceedings of predecessor authorities, with no disruption to service or contractual arrangements.

The framework establishes a detailed transition process led by the OPCA, including mandatory transition committees composed of municipal and conservation authority representatives, supported by OPCA-appointed Project Executives who will serve as initial CAOs for a two-year term. These committees are responsible for developing transition plans, subject to OPCA review and direction, with implementation and progress reporting continuing into the post-transition period. Governance provisions set out requirements for municipal appointment of board members based on population, with terms of up to four years, alongside new rules for chairs, vice-chairs, and watershed councils to maintain local input. The legislation also grants expanded regulation-making authority to the Lieutenant Governor in Council and the Minister to prescribe transition rules, board composition, watershed council structures, and other operational matters. During the transition period, certain activities (such as further amalgamations) are restricted, and the Minister may issue binding directions on conservation authority decisions, budgets, and apportionments, reinforcing a centralized oversight model while maintaining continuity of existing programs and services.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

THAT, Report FA 08/2026 be received as information at this time.

Submitted By:

**Dusty Underhill
General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer**



Conservation
ONTARIO

Schedule 3, Bill 97 (Plan to Protect Ontario Act) (Budget Measures), 2026

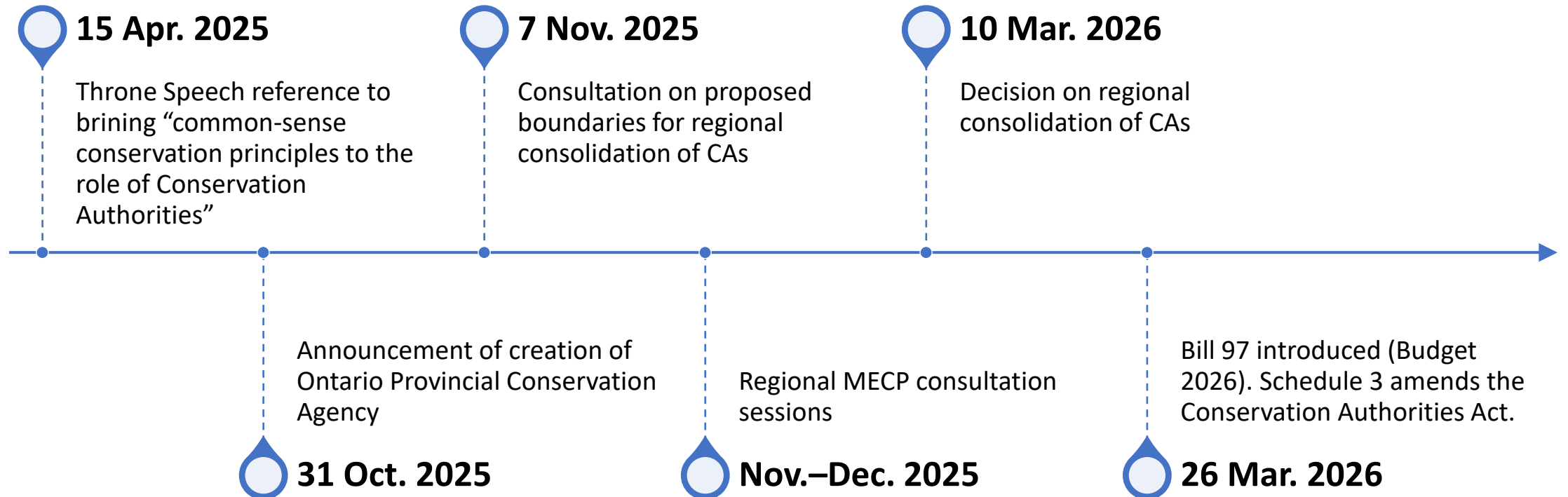
Preliminary Summary of Amendments

March 30, 2026



Conservation
ONTARIO

Timeline Overview





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Bill 97 Overview

- Introduced March 26, 2026.
- Amends 17 pieces of legislation, including the *Conservation Authorities Act*.
- No associated ERO proposals currently.
- Expected to move quickly to Royal Assent.






Schedule 3 Overview (CA Act Amendments)


- Amendment to facilitate the amalgamation of 35 CAs into 8 new CAs, and continuation of the LRCA under new name.
- CAA amendments include:
 - **Transitional Matters** (Committees, Project Executives, Service Continuity, Transition Plans, etc.)
 - **Governance Matters** (Membership, Chair/VC, First CAO, By-Laws, Watershed Councils)
 - **New LGIC Regulation-Making Authorities**







Schedule 3 Amendments Transitional Matters - Overview


 New Authority assumes the rights, obligations, assets and liabilities of the predecessor Authority.

 Participating municipalities are all single- and upper-tiers within the jurisdiction.

 Amalgamation does not constitute a breach or termination of contract / agreement in place.

 Agreements and MOUs continue with the new Authority substituted as a party to the agreement / MOU

 Prohibitions during transition period – requests for establishment of an authority, and meetings to enlarge, amalgamate or dissolve an authority

 Minister may issue directions (prohibiting CA decisions, governing budgetary and apportionment matters, etc.)



Schedule 3 Amendments Transitional Matters - Overview

Examples of what continues under new CA:

- Advisory boards of predecessor CA
- Employees of predecessor CA (no break in service)
- “Other” Programs and Services agreements in place between a lower-tier and CA continue between the new CA and applicable upper-tier
- Permit applications underway
- Requests for hearings
- Provincial Offences Officers appointed
- *Provincial Offences Act* proceedings commenced



Schedule 3 Amendments

Transitional Matters – Committees

- Committees to be established by the OPCA, to prepare for the amalgamation of predecessor Authorities.
- **Predecessor CAs must appoint two members to Committee within 90 days** of Bill 97 Royal Assent (One member that is a member of municipal council, and either the CAO/GM or other Authority officer or senior staff).
- OPCA may appoint members (if the above is not completed or as they consider advisable). Members can be replaced by their appointing body.
- OPCA may issue direction to Committee (roles, responsibilities, practices, etc.)
- Dissolution of a transition committee by OPCA not to be earlier than the transition date (i.e., February 1, 2027, or later date prescribed in regulation)



Schedule 3 Amendments

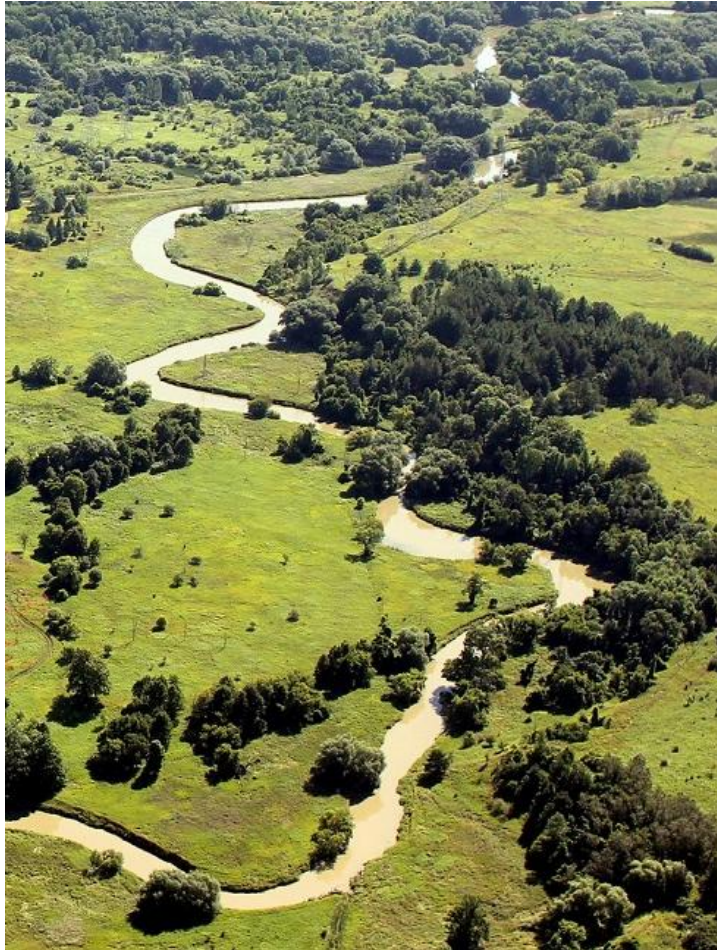
Transitional Matters – Transition Plans

- Committees must develop a transition plan for submission and review by OPCA (date to be specified).
- OPCA will review and may provide edits / comments.
- Final copy of Plan to be provided to OPCA and predecessor CAs. Also, to members of new Authority on or after transition date.
- Summary of transition plan also provided to all current and new participating municipalities.
- New CAs will implement the transition plan and may request amendments to OPCA.
- Progress reports to OPCA required further to OPCA direction (requirements)



Schedule 3 Amendments

Transitional Matters – Project Executives



- Project Executives (PE) appointed by the OPCA to serve as Chair of Transition Committee.
- PE not an employee of the OPCA and shall be paid compensation and expenses as agreed to with the OPCA.
- PE may request information from predecessor CAs (cooperation required).
- OPCA may replace the PE.
- On the transition date (February 1, 2027, or later date per regulation), the PE will become the new CAO of the new Authority for a term of 2-years.
- During 2-year term, OPCA may remove and replace CAO, or, if no replacement named, new CA will appoint CAO.



Schedule 3 Amendments

Transitional Matters – First Members



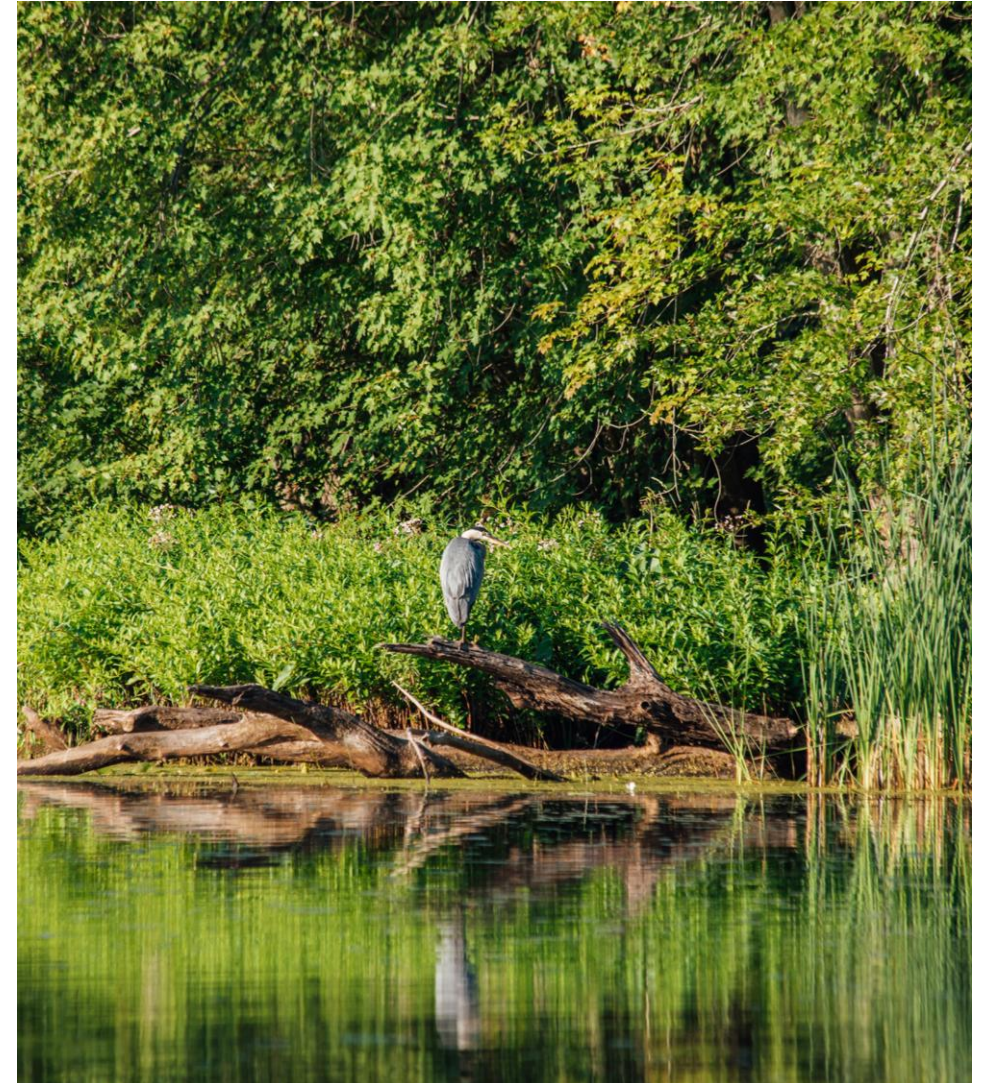
- Participating municipalities need to appoint members by the day before the transition date.
- Regulations establish a method for determining # of members, (minimum of 1 each).
- Method for determining # of members based on municipal population within area of jurisdiction (AoJ), in proportion to the total population in AoJ.
- Regulations will establish a maximum # to be appointed by a single participating municipality, as well as by all participating municipalities.
- Members appointed for term up to 4 years.
- Municipal councils need to notify the OPCA of appointments in writing.



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Schedule 3 Amendments Governance Matters

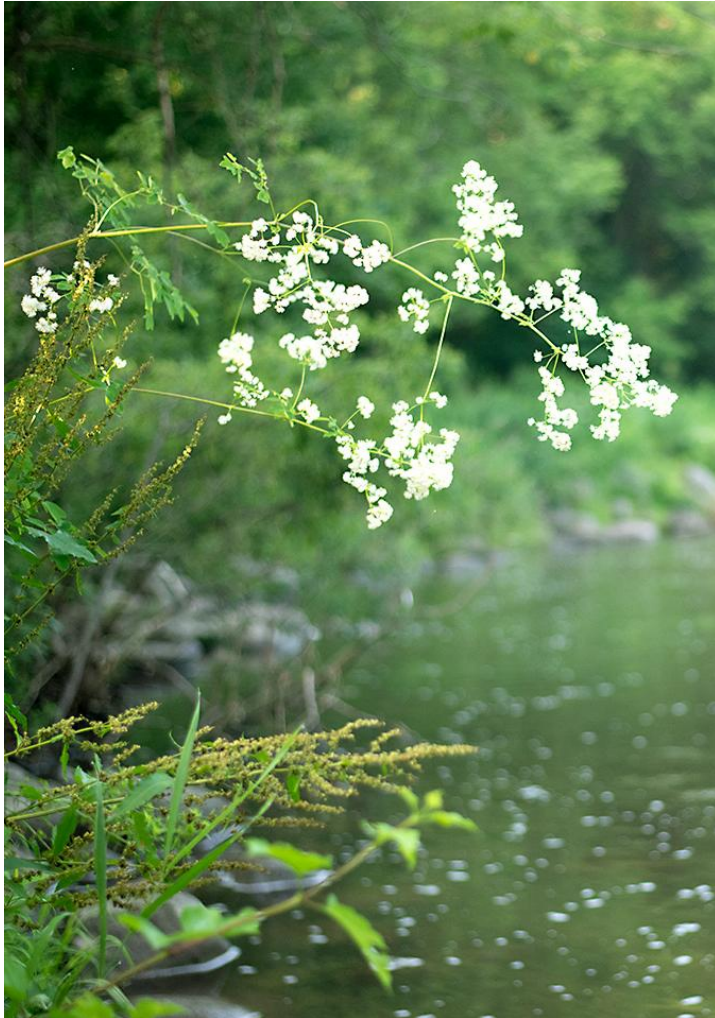
- Regulations to establish **methods for appointment of members** (number of members, minimum, maximum per municipality and maximum overall).
- Method for determining number of members **based on municipal population in proportion to the total population within CA area of jurisdiction.**
- All participating municipalities may enter into **alternative agreement** re: appointment of members. Agreement provided to Agency and on website.
- Legislation (and potentially regulations) set out **matters for municipalities to consider** when appointing member not on council.





Schedule 3 Amendments

Governance Matters - Continued



- **Members are appointed for a term up to four years**, and members can be replaced by their appointing council. Members are eligible for re-appointment.
- **Chairs and vice chairs may serve a term of two years, and not more than eight years total** (whether served consecutively or otherwise)
- Minister may appoint additional **agricultural sector member** with same voting limitations as in current CA Act.
- Authority **will appoint CAO** responsible for duties as provided in CA by-laws.
- Authority shall establish **one or more watershed council**.
- Authorities **shall make by-laws** necessary for proper administration.



Schedule 3 Amendments Implementing Regulations

- Schedule 3 provides new LGIC and Minister regulation-making authorities. Upon Royal Assent (RA), the following regulations may be implemented to facilitate the transition:
 1. Prescribing a “transition date” (legislated as February 1, 2027, or later)
 2. Prescribing member details (method for determining number of members, maximum members appointed by a single participating municipality, maximum members appointed to an Authority)
 3. Prescribing criteria for consideration when appointing a member who is not a member of municipal council.
 4. Prescribing any additional “transition rules”
 5. Governing watershed councils (# that may or must be established, requirements for composition, functions, powers duties, activities and procedures)



Current Understanding of Commencement

Upon Royal Assent of Bill 97:

- Transition rules
- Transition Committees
- Project Executives
- Transition Plans
- First CAO
- New Chair/ViceChair provisions
- Amendments to fees paid to the Agency
- Amendments to Agency liability
- Regulation-making authorities

On a date named by order of the LGIC:

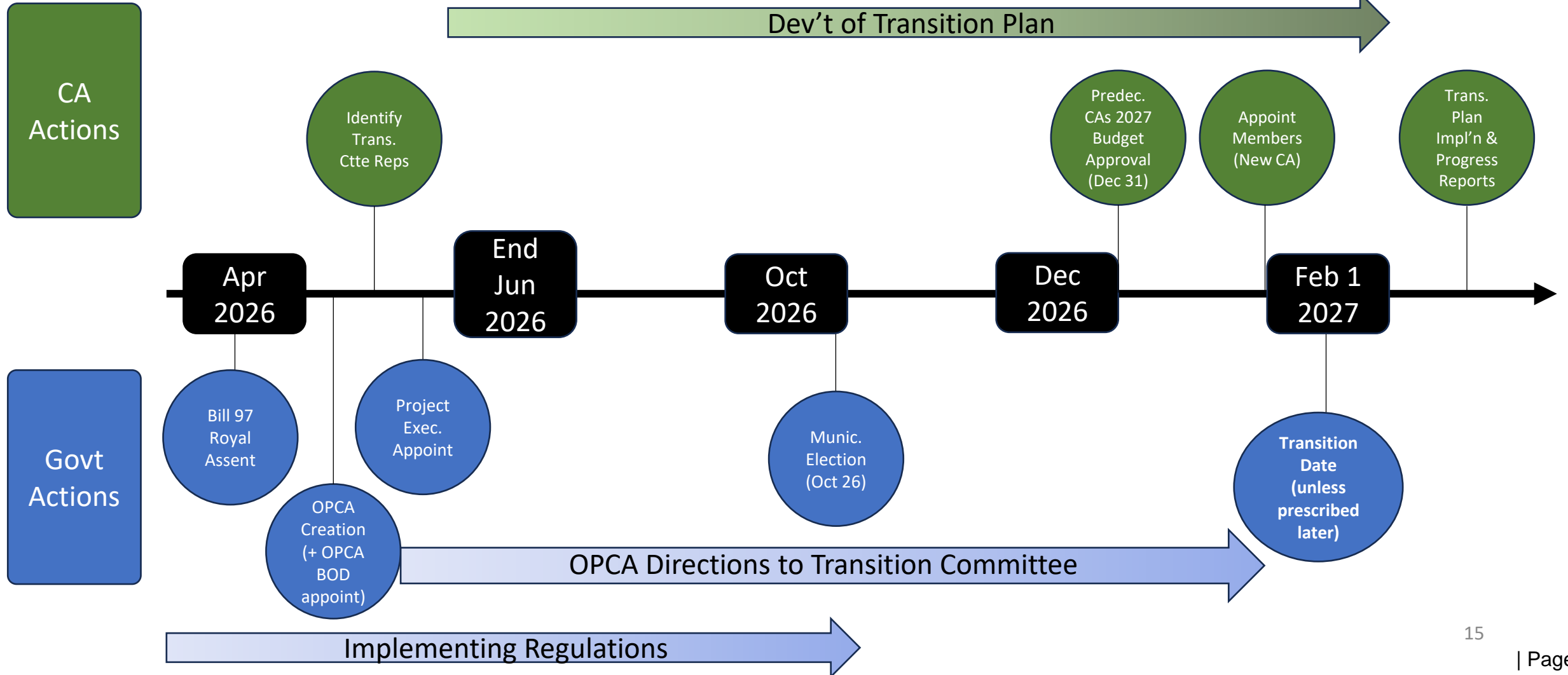
Remainder of Schedule 3, e.g.,

- First Members of New Authority
- Members of Authority, minimum number, etc. [S. 14(1)]
- CAO
- Watershed Councils



Conservation
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Interpreted Transition Timeline





Key Notes/Messages for Board and Staff

Appointments to Transition Committees will be required within the coming months (within 90 days after Budget received RA).

New participating municipalities are upper- and single-tier municipalities.

Watershed Council(s) will be established to ensure local perspective can be considered by new CA Board.

Transition date is February 1, 2027, unless otherwise prescribed in LGIC regulation

All MOUs and agreements, including Category 2 and 3, will continue under the new CA.

All employees of current CAs continue under the new CA.

CA permits, hearings, and proceedings underway continue under new CA.



Conservation
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REPORT FA 09/2026: To The Full Authority

FROM: Dusty Underhill, General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer

SUBJECT: **Transition Plan and Committee for the Amalgamation of Eastern Lake Erie and Grand River Conservation Authorities, with Focus on Catfish Creek**

DATE: March 24, 2026

PURPOSE:

The following report provides a detailed overview of the Transition Committee's role and the development of the Transition Plan for the proposed amalgamation of the Kettle Creek Conservation Authority, Long Point Region Conservation Authority, Catfish Creek Conservation Authority, and Grand River Conservation Authority into a single Eastern Lake Erie River Regional Conservation Authority.

BACKGROUND:

This consolidation aligns with the provincial government's initiative under the Conservation Authorities Act to improve efficiency, standardize programs, and enhance watershed-based management while ensuring consistent provincial standards across Ontario's conservation authorities. The Transition Committee has been established to ensure a coordinated, transparent, and accountable integration process that safeguards ongoing service delivery, preserves technical expertise, and maintains stakeholder engagement.

TRANSITION COMMITTEE COMPOSITION AND MANDATE:

The Transition Committee is composed of senior administrative staff from each participating authority, board representatives, municipal officials, and technical advisors in finance, human resources, and watershed management. Chaired by a Project Executive appointed by the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA), the committee's mandate is to oversee all aspects of the amalgamation process. This includes the development of a detailed Transition Plan addressing governance, financial integration, operational alignment, human resources, asset management, and stakeholder engagement. The committee ensures that each participating authority including Catfish Creek, is fully represented and that local watershed priorities remain integrated into the broader regional strategy.

TRANSITION PLAN OVERVIEW:

The Transition Plan outlines the steps required to create a unified regional conservation

authority while preserving service continuity. Governance integration is a core focus: a new board structure will be designed to ensure equitable municipal representation across the merged authorities, with population-based voting and sub-watershed advisory councils providing localized input. For Catfish Creek, this means maintaining direct input on board decisions affecting its watershed while also participating in broader regional planning that may influence flood management, agricultural stewardship, and shoreline protection initiatives according to the Province.

Financial integration involves harmonizing municipal levies, consolidating budgets and reserves, and aligning capital planning across all four authorities. For Catfish Creek, there are potential benefits in accessing larger pooled resources, which could enable infrastructure improvements such as enhanced flood mitigation, erosion control, and long-term watershed monitoring that may not be feasible under the current, smaller authority structure. Conversely, there may be short-term challenges, including adjustments to levy formulas or reallocation of funds, which could temporarily affect local project priorities.

Operational alignment within the Transition Plan focuses on standardizing core programs, including flood forecasting, permitting, watershed planning, conservation area management, and stewardship initiatives. Catfish Creek will benefit from access to shared expertise, advanced modeling tools, and regional-scale environmental programs that enhance overall watershed resilience. However, some non-core, locally tailored programs may be reduced or restructured to meet regional efficiency goals, potentially limiting certain initiatives that were historically specific to Catfish Creek's community and environmental needs.

Human resource planning emphasizes minimizing disruption to staff while aligning organizational structures and compensation frameworks. For Catfish Creek, this may involve adjustments to reporting structures, potential redeployment of specialized staff, and integration into larger regional teams. Maintaining institutional knowledge is critical, and the committee is developing strategies to ensure that local technical expertise and historical watershed knowledge are preserved throughout the transition.

Asset management planning consolidates lands, conservation areas, dams, and infrastructure across the four authorities. Catfish Creek will benefit from integrated maintenance programs, pooled resources for capital projects, and more comprehensive regional asset monitoring. However, there may be delays in implementing certain site-specific initiatives during the transition period as priorities are harmonized across the broader regional authority.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND LOCAL IMPACT:

Stakeholder engagement is a central component of the Transition Plan. The committee has conducted consultations with municipalities, Indigenous communities, agricultural stakeholders, and local residents to identify priorities and concerns. For Catfish Creek, watershed councils and advisory committees will continue to provide a forum for local

voices, ensuring that decisions regarding flood protection, agricultural practices, and natural habitat management reflect community needs. While regionalization may reduce the direct autonomy of Catfish Creek's board, local input mechanisms are being designed to preserve influence over watershed-specific issues.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR CATFISH CREEK:

Positive impacts include increased access to resources, expertise, and regional-scale programs that enhance flood resilience, environmental monitoring, and conservation initiatives. Shared services and standardized practices may improve efficiency and reduce administrative burden, allowing Catfish Creek to focus more on strategic watershed management. Potential challenges include a temporary reduction in local program control, adjustments to levy contributions, and the need to align priorities within a larger regional framework, which may lead to delays or re-prioritization of certain local initiatives.

IMPLEMENTATION OVERSIGHT:

Implementation of the Transition Plan will occur in phases, beginning with provincial and municipal approvals, followed by the legal establishment of the new regional authority, appointment of the inaugural board, and transfer of assets, liabilities, and personnel. The Transition Committee will maintain oversight during this period, ensuring continuity of services, monitoring progress, and resolving issues as they arise. By providing a structured, transparent, and inclusive approach, the committee aims to deliver a strong, resilient, and efficient regional conservation authority that balances both regional and local watershed needs.

RECCOMENDATIONS:

THAT, Report FA 09/2026 be received as information at this time.

Submitted By:

**Dusty Underhill
General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer**

Report FA 10/2026 : To The Full Authority

FROM: Dusty Underhill, General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer

SUBJECT: 2027 Budget Timelines

DATE: March 31, 2026

PURPOSE:

To discuss the timeline of the 2027 Budget.

DISCUSSION:

The Board of the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority is being asked to provide direction on the timing of the 2027 budget, specifically whether it should be developed and approved in advance of the 2026 municipal elections. This consideration arises in the context of anticipated changes to Board composition following the election, as well as ongoing uncertainty related to Bill 97 (Plan to Protect Ontario Act, 2026) and the proposed amalgamation of conservation authorities. Proceeding with early budget approval is recommended as a means of providing financial stability, ensuring continuity in staffing and program delivery, and offering clarity to municipal partners during a period of transition; however, it is further recommended that this be undertaken with flexibility built to allow the incoming Board to make adjustments if necessary. Alternatively, should the Board prefer to maintain the traditional post-election timeline, it is recommended that staff proceed with the development of a detailed draft 2027 budget in advance of the election to support a smooth transition, minimize delays, and provide incoming members with a strong foundation for timely review and approval. Both approaches aim to balance stability with adaptability during this period of organizational and provincial change.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT, the Board of the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority direct staff to proceed with the development and approval of the 2027 budget in advance of the 2026 municipal elections to provide financial stability, support continuity in staffing and program delivery, and ensure clarity for municipal partners during a period of uncertainty associated with Bill 97 (Plan to Protect Ontario Act, 2026),

OR THAT, the Board determines that approval prior to the election is not preferred, that staff be directed to prepare a comprehensive draft 2027 budget in advance of the municipal elections to facilitate timely consideration and approval by the incoming Board, minimize operational disruptions, and maintain continuity of services.

Submitted By:

**Dusty Underhill
General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer**

Report FA 11/2026: To The Full Authority

FROM: Dusty Underhill, General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer

SUBJECT: CCCA Committees

DATE: February 5, 2026

PURPOSE:

To appoint the Authority’s Committees for the year 2026.

DISCUSSION:

The Catfish Creek Conservation Authority Resolutions, Procedures, and Rules of Order state that the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson will converse prior to the first Full Authority meeting following the Annual General Meeting to discuss and recommend the members and a Chairperson for the various Committees to the Full Authority for adoption.

In accordance with the Regulation, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson have recommended the following appointments to the respective Committees for the year 2026.

Personnel / Finance Committee (5) Paul Buchner, Chairperson Full Membership	Land Management Committee (5) Gary Clarke, Chairperson Full Membership
Health and Safety Committee (5) Dusty Underhill, Management Representative Gerrit Kremers, Employee Representative (Chair) Thom Polland, Employee Representative Brittany Bell, Employee Representative Al Bradford, Committee Member	Conservation Ontario Council Morgaine Griffin, Voting Delegate, (Chairperson) Paul Buchner, (Vice Chairperson), 1st Alternate Dusty Underhill, (General Manager), 2nd Alternate
Interview Committee Dusty Underhill, Committee Member Scott Lewis, Committee Member	Lake Erie Source Protection Region Morgaine Griffin, Committee Member Dusty Underhill, Committee Member

<p><i>* ** At least Two IC members required for hiring all contract or permanent staff.</i></p>	
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RECOMMENDATION:

THAT, the Full Authority approve the Committee appointments for the year 2026 as amended and presented in Report FA 11/2026.

Submitted By:

**Dusty Underhill
General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer**

REPORT FA 12/2026: To The Full Authority

FROM: Dusty Underhill, General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer

SUBJECT: **Approval of Standard Data Licence Agreement for GIS Data Distribution.**

DATE: March 30, 2026

PURPOSE:

To seek Board approval for the adoption and use of a standardized Data License Agreement governing the distribution and use of the Authority's Digital Geographic Information System (GIS) data.

DISCUSSION:

The implementation of a standardized Data Licence Agreement is intended to bring consistency and clarity to how GIS data is distributed by the Authority. By establishing clear terms of use, the agreement ensures that all users understand their rights and limitations, while reinforcing the Authority's ownership of its data and protecting its intellectual property. The agreement provides for a non-exclusive, non-transferable licence limited to personal, non-commercial use, which reflects a cautious approach to data sharing and helps reduce the risk of misuse or unauthorized redistribution.

From a risk management perspective, the agreement includes comprehensive disclaimers regarding the accuracy, completeness, and reliability of the data, as well as strong limitations of liability. These provisions are important in protecting the Authority from potential claims arising from reliance on the data by third parties. At the same time, the restrictive nature of the licence may limit broader use by external stakeholders such as consultants, municipalities, or other partners who may require the data for project-related or commercial purposes. In such cases, staff may need to consider alternative arrangements or permissions on a case-by-case basis.

The agreement also supports cost recovery for certain datasets, particularly those requiring staff time to retrieve, process, and distribute. The established rate of \$82 per hour, with a minimum one-hour charge, aligns with the Authority's objective of ensuring that resources are used efficiently and that the costs associated with data provision are appropriately recovered. Overall, the adoption of a standard agreement is expected to improve administrative efficiency, reduce inconsistencies in how data requests are handled, and provide a more transparent and defensible framework for data distribution.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT, the Board of Directors of the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority approve the Standard Data Licence Agreement for use in the distribution of GIS data;

AND THAT, staff be authorized to implement and administer the agreement for all applicable data requests.

Submitted By:

**Dusty Underhill
General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer**



CATFISH CREEK CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
8079 Springwater Road, RR# 5, Aylmer, Ontario N5H 2R4
PHONE: (519) 773-9037 • FAX: 519-765-1489
e-mail: admin@catfishcreek.ca • www.catfishcreek.ca

CATFISH CREEK CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (CCCA) STANDARD DATA LICENCE AGREEMENT

1. Definitions

In this Agreement:

- **“Licensor”** means the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority (CCCA).
- **“Licensee”** or **“User”** means the individual or entity accepting this Agreement.
- **“Licensed Products”** means the Digital Geographic Information System (GIS) data identified as: **[INSERT DATA FILE NAME]**, including any associated maps, charts, and documentation.
- **“Permitted Use”** means personal, non-commercial use by the Licensee.

2. Grant of Licence

Subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement, the Licensor grants to the Licensee a **non-exclusive, non-transferable, revocable licence** to access, view, and print one (1) copy of the Licensed Products solely for Permitted Use.

3. Restrictions on Use

Except as expressly permitted in this Agreement, the Licensee shall not:

- Copy, reproduce, modify, adapt, translate, or create derivative works from the Licensed Products;
- Distribute, publish, transmit, sublicense, assign, sell, loan, or otherwise transfer the Licensed Products to any third party;
- Use the Licensed Products for any commercial purpose;
- Make the Licensed Products available on any website or network;

- Extract or scrape data from the Licensed Products by automated or manual means.

All maps and charts derived from the Licensed Products remain the property of the Licensor and shall not be altered or redistributed.

4. Ownership and Intellectual Property

The Licensed Products are owned by the Licensor and its suppliers and are protected by applicable intellectual property laws.

No ownership rights are transferred to the Licensee. All rights not expressly granted in this Agreement are reserved by the Licensor.

5. No Maintenance or Support

The Licensor is under no obligation to provide updates, enhancements, maintenance, or support for the Licensed Products.

6. Disclaimer of Warranties

The Licensed Products are provided “**as is**” and “**as available**”, without warranties of any kind, whether express or implied, including but not limited to warranties of accuracy, completeness, reliability, merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose, or non-infringement.

The Licensee assumes all risks arising from the use of the Licensed Products.

7. Limitation of Liability

To the maximum extent permitted by law:

- The Licensor shall not be liable for any indirect, incidental, consequential, or special damages, including loss of data, revenue, or profits.
- The total liability of the Licensor for any claim arising out of or related to this Agreement shall not exceed **one dollar (\$1.00 CAD)**.

8. Term and Termination

This Agreement is effective upon acceptance and continues until terminated.

The Agreement will terminate immediately if the Licensee:

- Breaches any term of this Agreement;
- Infringes intellectual property rights in the Licensed Products; or
- Uses the Licensed Products in violation of applicable law.

Upon termination, the Licensee shall:

- Cease all use of the Licensed Products;
- Destroy all copies in any format;
- Provide written confirmation of destruction upon request.

9. Assignment

The Licensee may not assign or transfer this Agreement without the prior written consent of the Licensor.

10. Fees

Certain datasets, including Regulation and Floodplain mapping, may be subject to a cost recovery fee of **\$82 CAD per hour (minimum one hour)**.

All applicable fees must be paid in full prior to delivery of the Licensed Products.

11. Governing Law

This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the Province of Ontario and the laws of Canada applicable therein.

12. Entire Agreement

This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the parties with respect to the Licensed Products and supersedes all prior agreements or understandings.

13. Acceptance

By accessing or using the Licensed Products, the Licensee acknowledges that they have read, understood, and agree to be bound by the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

Catfish Creek Conservation Authority

General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer: _____

Licensee (User): _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

DRAFT



Mission Statement: "To communicate and deliver resource management services and programs

In order to achieve social and ecological harmony for the watershed"

REPORT FA 13/2026: To The Full Authority

FROM: Dusty Underhill, General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer

SUBJECT: Watershed Tour

DATE: March 2, 2026

PURPOSE:

To provide background information and highlight our unique Conservation Areas.

BACKGROUND:

Staff have found it beneficial to conduct a Watershed Tour with the Board of Directors to highlight some of our Conservation Areas and the work we accomplish throughout the watershed on both authority and privately owned lands.

It gives the members a chance to familiarize themselves with our geographical area while gaining a better understanding of the authorities work within the watershed.

Staff are proposing to conduct a Watershed Tour immediately following the June 11, 2026, Full Authority meeting.

RECCOMENDATIONS:

THAT, the Board of Directors support a Watershed Tour immediately commencing the June 11th, 2026, Full Authority meeting.

Submitted By:

**Dusty Underhill
General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer**

REPORT FA 14/2026: To The Full Authority

FROM: Gerrit Kremers, Resource Planning Coordinator

SUBJECT: Approved Section 28 Regulation Applications

DATE: March 31, 2026

PURPOSE:

To outline the 'Ontario Regulation 41/24: Prohibited Activities, Exemptions, Permits' applications approved by staff from January, February and March 2026.

DISCUSSION:

PERMIT NO.	LOCATION	PROPOSAL	DATE ISSUED
FR-1-26 (Site 1)	Whaley Drain Branch A Township of South-West Oxford	* This proposal involves the creation of an additional Municipal Drain branch to an existing Drain; * Work to be completed outside the fish timing window and have sediment control in place;	January 9 th , 2026
FR-2-26 (Site 2)	48245 Rush Creek Line Township of Malahide	* This proposal involves the construction of a residential dwelling; * Top of Foundation to conform with flood proofing elevation;	March 12 th , 2026
FR-3-26 (Site 3)	9790 Springwater Road Township of Malahide	* This proposal involves the construction of a detached garage; * Compliance with geotechnical engineer report;	March 24 th , 2026
FR-4-26 (Site 4)	163514 Brownsville Road; Township of South-West Oxford	* This proposal involves the construction of a detached garage; * All electrical utilities to be 0.9 metres above grade;	March 30 th , 2026

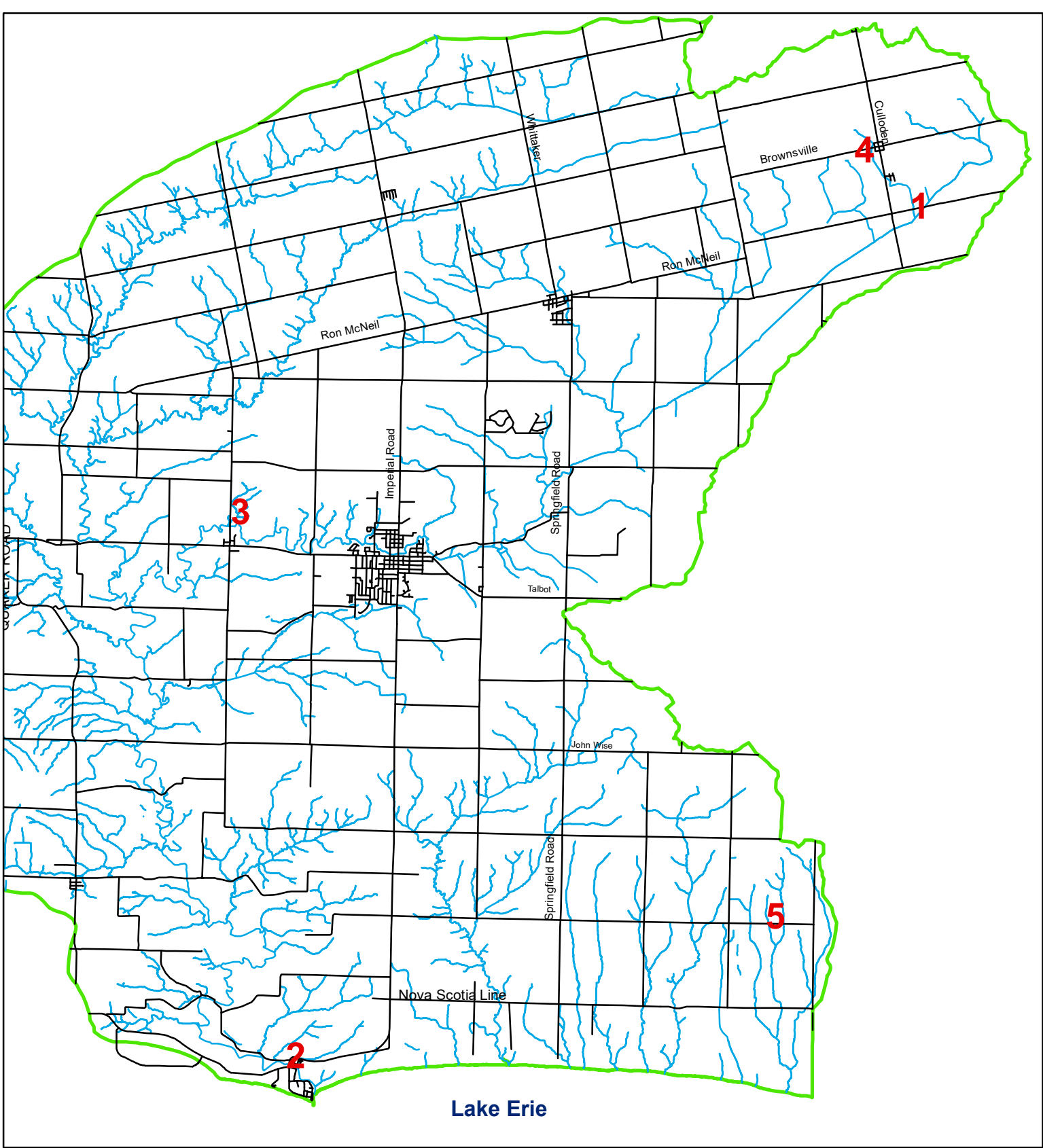
<p>FR-5-26 (Site 5)</p>	<p>53004 Vienna Line; Township of Malahide</p>	<p>* This proposal involves the construction of an addition to an existing dwelling; *Final grading to satisfy CCCA requirements;</p>	<p>March 31st, 2026</p>
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RECOMMENDATION:

THAT, the Full Authority receive the staff approved Section 28 Regulation Applications Report FA 14/2026, as information.

Submitted by:

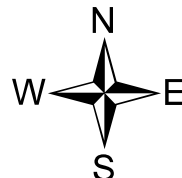
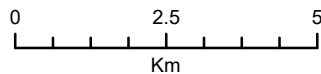
Gerrit Kremers
Resource Planning Coordinator



REGULATIONS REPORT MAP

March 2026

1 Work Permit Location



I delivered a comprehensive budget presentation for Malahide regarding the proposed 2026 levy. The presentation outlined projected revenue requirements, anticipated expenditures, and the overall financial strategy for the upcoming year. It included a detailed breakdown of cost drivers, funding allocations, and the rationale behind the levy adjustment. I also addressed the potential impact on residents and local stakeholders, explained how the funds would be invested to support community services and infrastructure, and provided comparative data from previous years to give context to the proposal. The session concluded with an open discussion, allowing attendees to ask questions and provide feedback on the 2026 levy plan.

Prepared extensively for the 75th Annual General Meeting (AGM), ensuring that all reports, financial statements, and supporting documentation were accurate, up to date, and clearly presented. This involved coordinating with key stakeholders, reviewing agenda items, and compiling comprehensive briefing materials for attendees. I also assisted in drafting presentations, preparing speaking notes, and organizing relevant data to facilitate informed discussions and decision-making. In addition, I ensured that all logistical arrangements were in place, including scheduling, communication with members, and compliance with governance requirements. The preparation process focused on maintaining transparency, promoting engagement, and supporting a productive and well-structured 75th AGM.

Prepared thoroughly for the 2026 Personnel and Finance Committee meeting by reviewing all relevant financial reports, staffing updates, and budget forecasts in advance. This included analyzing expenditure trends, evaluating personnel costs, and ensuring that all supporting documentation was accurate and complete. I worked closely with key team members to gather updated data, clarify agenda items, and identify any areas requiring discussion or decision. In addition, I assisted in drafting briefing notes, preparing financial summaries, and organizing presentation materials to ensure the meeting ran efficiently and effectively.

Chaired the Lake Erie Region Management Committee meeting, providing leadership and structure to ensure a focused and productive session. I facilitated discussions across key agenda items, encouraged open dialogue among committee members, and ensured that all perspectives were considered before decisions were made.

Led the negotiation process for the CCCA insurance renewal, working closely with brokers and insurance providers to secure comprehensive coverage at competitive rates. This involved reviewing the existing policy terms, assessing current risk exposures, and identifying areas where coverage could be enhanced or streamlined. Throughout the process, I advocated for favorable terms and conditions, negotiated pricing adjustments where possible, and sought clarity on coverage limits, exclusions,

and deductibles. In addition, I ensured that the renewed policy aligned with the organization's operational needs and risk management strategy. The outcome was a well-structured insurance renewal that balanced cost efficiency with appropriate protection for the organization's assets, members, and activities.

I participated in and facilitated multiple meetings both locally and with the Lake Erie Region Management Unit regarding the proposed CA amalgamation. These meetings focused on evaluating the strategic, operational, and financial implications of the amalgamation, as well as identifying opportunities to strengthen regional collaboration and service delivery. At the local level we are addressing concerns, and ensuring transparency throughout the process. With the Lake Erie Region Management Unit, discussions centered on governance structures, resource allocation, staffing considerations, and long-term sustainability. My involvement ensured clear communication between all parties, alignment on objectives, and a structured approach to decision-making throughout the CA amalgamation process.

I attended the SCRCA, and KCCA Annual General Meetings to strengthen regional collaboration, maintain active engagement with partner Conservation Authorities, and stay informed on shared priorities and emerging issues. My participation provided an opportunity to observe governance practices, review financial and operational updates, and better understand how each organization is addressing common challenges such as funding pressures, regulatory changes, and watershed management initiatives. Attending these AGMs also allowed me to build and maintain professional relationships with board members, senior staff, and regional stakeholders. These connections are valuable in supporting knowledge sharing, identifying best practices, and fostering coordinated approaches across jurisdictions. In addition, my presence demonstrated our organization's commitment to regional cooperation and transparency, particularly in the context of ongoing discussions and strategic initiatives that impact multiple Conservation Authorities.

Attended multiple Conservation Authority (CA) General Manager meetings to ensure our organization remains informed, aligned, and responsive in an increasingly complex and evolving operating environment. In today's climate, marked by regulatory changes, funding constraints, climate variability, and heightened public scrutiny, regular engagement at the GM level is essential. These meetings provide a forum to discuss legislative updates, provincial policy direction, watershed management priorities, and emerging risks. Staying actively involved ensures we can anticipate changes rather than react to them, allowing for proactive planning and sound decision-making. Participation also supports regional consistency and collaboration. Many of the challenges facing Conservation Authorities, such as flood risk management, infrastructure pressures, development impacts, and environmental protection, cross municipal boundaries. GM meetings create opportunities to share best practices, coordinate responses, and advocate collectively on sector-wide issues. In addition, these sessions strengthen professional networks, foster transparency, and promote unified messaging across the CA sector. Attending multiple GM meetings demonstrates a commitment to strong

governance, informed leadership, and strategic collaboration, particularly important in today's rapidly changing regulatory and financial landscape.

I assisted as a mentor for the Youth Conservation Program, providing guidance, support, and practical insight to participants throughout the program. My role involved sharing knowledge about environmental stewardship, watershed management, and conservation practices, while helping participants connect their learning to real-world applications. Serving as a mentor was particularly important in fostering the next generation of environmental leaders. By offering encouragement, sharing professional experiences, and modeling strong work ethics and community engagement, I contributed to creating a positive and impactful learning experience for the youth involved in the program.

I attended the Path of Honour meeting at the Ontario Police College to coordinate and schedule the upcoming work day, ensuring that timelines, responsibilities, and site logistics were clearly defined. The discussion focused on aligning expectations, confirming scope of work, reviewing maintenance requirements, and ensuring that all activities would be completed safely and efficiently. In addition to scheduling, I engaged in discussions regarding the renewal of the service contract. This involved reviewing the current agreement, evaluating performance outcomes, and clarifying deliverables for the upcoming term. I negotiated key terms including pricing, scope adjustments, timelines, and service standards to ensure the renewed contract reflected both operational needs and value for money.

I worked closely with Dorbar to review and renew my employee health benefits plan, ensuring that coverage continued to meet both personal needs and cost-effectiveness objectives. This process involved assessing the existing plan, analyzing available options, and comparing alternative providers and coverage levels. I evaluated factors such as premiums, deductibles, prescription coverage, and additional wellness benefits to determine the best fit. Throughout the process, I engaged in detailed discussions with Dorbar to clarify terms, address potential gaps in coverage, and negotiate adjustments that optimized both protection and affordability.

I successfully renegotiated the cell phone bills for the CCCA, achieving significant cost savings while maintaining essential service levels. I engaged directly with service providers to explore alternative plans, clarify billing discrepancies, and negotiate more favorable terms, including lower rates, optimized data packages, and additional features where beneficial. By carefully analyzing the organization's communication needs and advocating for cost-effective solutions, I was able to secure a reduction in recurring expenses without compromising service quality.

I have been actively keeping up with the developments surrounding Bill 97 and the proposed amalgamation of conservation authorities by regularly reviewing government updates, attending local meetings where possible, and following coverage from reputable news sources. I've taken the time to understand how these changes could impact environmental oversight, watershed management, and local decision-making

processes. In addition, I've engaged in discussions with community members and stakeholders to hear a range of perspectives, which has helped me form a more balanced and informed view on the implications of the legislation and the restructuring of conservation authorities.

March 30, 2026

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

RE: Provincial Announcement – Next Steps to Improve Ontario’s Conservation Authority System

Please be advised that at the NPCA’s Full Authority Meeting held on March 27, 2026, the following resolution pertaining to Report FA-02-26 RE: Provincial Announcement – Next Steps to Improve Ontario’s Conservation Authority System was passed:

Resolution No. FA-31-2026

Moved by: Stew Beattie

Seconded by: Michelle Seaborn

WHEREAS on October 31, 2025, the provincial government announced a proposal to establish the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA) to lead the implementation of a new regional conservation authority framework;

AND WHEREAS on November 6, 2025, Bill 68, *Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2025 (No.2)* was introduced in the Ontario Legislature, which proposed amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* to establish OPCA, and on November 27, 2025, Bill 68 received Royal Assent;

AND WHEREAS on November 7, 2025, the provincial government posted a policy proposal on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO #025-1257) to consolidate Ontario’s 36 conservation authorities into seven regional conservation authorities and provided a 45-day commenting period on proposed boundaries and the criteria applied to inform the proposed boundaries;

AND WHEREAS on December 5, 2025, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) Board of Directors passed Resolution No. FA-131-2025, that stated the Board does not support the “Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority” boundary configuration as the proposal lacks sufficient justification, would significantly diminish local governance, and fails to recognize the effectiveness and efficiencies already achieved within existing watershed-based models;

AND WHEREAS NPCA’s participating municipalities of Niagara Region, City of Hamilton and Haldimand County, and several watershed lower-tier municipalities passed Council resolutions and submitted comments to the provincial government demonstrating support for the position of the NPCA Board of Directors;

AND WHEREAS on March 10, 2025, the provincial government announced their decision on the boundaries for Ontario’s new nine regional conservation authorities, with the “Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority” boundaries remaining unchanged, and provided further information related to governance and the transition process;

March 30, 2026

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

AND WHEREAS amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act*, and implementing Regulations will be required to facilitate the statutory amalgamation of regional conservation authorities;

Now Therefore Be It Resolved:

THAT Report No. FA-02-26 RE: Provincial Announcement – Next Steps to Improve Ontario’s Conservation Authority System **BE RECEIVED**;

AND THAT the NPCA Board of Directors reaffirms their position stated through Resolution No. FA-131-2025;

AND THAT should the provincial government proceed with implementing the proposed regional conservation authority framework and “Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority”, the NPCA will be committed to working constructively with OPCA, local area MPPs, neighbouring conservation authorities, municipalities, sector partners and interested partners to ensure local voices, municipal representations, and unique watershed characteristics continue to guide decisions;

AND THAT the Board requests that OPCA engages meaningfully and collaboratively with affected municipalities, conservation authorities, and local First Nations before advancing any consolidation, to ensure that any changes reflect both local needs and the practical realities of implementation;

AND THAT this resolution and Report No. FA-02-26 be forwarded to Niagara Region; the lower-tier municipalities within Niagara Region; City of Hamilton; Haldimand County; Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation; Six Nations of the Grand River; Niagara Peninsula Source Protection Committee; Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks; Ontario’s Chief Conservation Executive; local area MPPs; Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO); Conservation Ontario; and all conservation authorities in Ontario.

CARRIED

A copy of Report No. FA-02-26 has been attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,



Melanie Davis
Manager, Office of the CAO & Board
Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

March 30, 2026

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

cc: Leilani Lee-Yates, CAO/Secretary – Treasurer
Regional Municipality of Niagara
Local Area Municipalities
City of Hamilton
Haldimand County
Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation
Six Nations of the Grand River
Hon. Todd McCarthy, Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks
Hassaan Basit, Chief Conservation Executive
Hon. Sam Oosterhoff, Niagara West MPP
Hon. Donna Skelly, Flamborough – Glanbrook MPP
Jennie Stevens, St. Catharines MPP
Wayne Gates, Niagara Falls MPP
Jeff Burch, Niagara Centre MPP
Bobbi-Ann Brady, Haldimand – Norfolk MPP
Niagara Peninsula Source Protection Committee
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Conservation Authorities in Ontario

Report To: Board of Directors

Subject: Provincial Announcement – Next Steps to Improve Ontario’s Conservation Authority System

Report No: FA-02-26

Date: March 27, 2026

Recommendation:

WHEREAS on October 31, 2025, the provincial government announced a proposal to establish the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA) to lead the implementation of a new regional conservation authority framework;

AND WHEREAS on November 6, 2025, Bill 68, *Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2025 (No.2)* was introduced in the Ontario Legislature, which proposed amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* to establish OPCA, and on November 27, 2025, Bill 68 received Royal Assent;

AND WHEREAS on November 7, 2025, the provincial government posted a policy proposal on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO #025-1257) to consolidate Ontario’s 36 conservation authorities into seven regional conservation authorities and provided a 45-day commenting period on proposed boundaries and the criteria applied to inform the proposed boundaries;

AND WHEREAS on December 5, 2025, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) Board of Directors passed Resolution No. FA-131-2025, that stated the Board does not support the “Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority” boundary configuration as the proposal lacks sufficient justification, would significantly diminish local governance, and fails to recognize the effectiveness and efficiencies already achieved within existing watershed-based models;

AND WHEREAS NPCA’s participating municipalities of Niagara Region, City of Hamilton and Haldimand County, and several watershed lower-tier municipalities passed Council resolutions and submitted comments to the provincial government demonstrating support for the position of the NPCA Board of Directors;

AND WHEREAS on March 10, 2025, the provincial government announced their decision on the boundaries for Ontario’s new nine regional conservation authorities, with the “Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority” boundaries remaining unchanged, and provided further information related to governance and the transition process;

AND WHEREAS amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act*, and implementing Regulations will be required to facilitate the statutory amalgamation of regional conservation authorities;

Now Therefore Be It Resolved:

THAT Report No. FA-02-26 RE: Provincial Announcement – Next Steps to Improve Ontario’s Conservation Authority System **BE RECEIVED**;

AND THAT the NPCA Board of Directors reaffirms their position stated through Resolution No. FA-131-2025;

AND THAT should the provincial government proceed with implementing the proposed regional conservation authority framework and “Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority”, the NPCA will be committed to working constructively with OPCA, neighbouring conservation authorities, municipalities, sector partners and interested partners to ensure local voices, municipal representations, and unique watershed characteristics continue to guide decisions;

AND THAT the Board requests that OPCA engages meaningfully and collaboratively with affected municipalities, conservation authorities, and local First Nations before advancing any consolidation, to ensure that any changes reflect both local needs and the practical realities of implementation;

AND THAT this resolution and Report No. FA-02-26 be forwarded to Niagara Region; the lower-tier municipalities within Niagara Region; City of Hamilton; Haldimand County; Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation; Six Nations of the Grand River; Niagara Peninsula Source Protection Committee; Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks; Ontario’s Chief Conservation Executive; local area MPPs; Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO); Conservation Ontario; and all conservation authorities in Ontario.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the decision notice in relation to ERO #025-1257 and next steps proposed by the Province of Ontario for the regional consolidation of Ontario’s conservation authorities.

Background:

On November 7, 2025, the Province posted a policy proposal on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO #025-1257) to consolidate Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities (CAs) into seven Regional Conservation Authorities (RCAs) and provided a 45-day commenting period on proposed boundaries and the criteria applied to inform the proposed boundaries.

Under this proposal, NPCA would fall under the Western Lake Ontario RCA, along with Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA), Conservation Halton (CH), and Credit Valley Conservation (CVC). The boundaries of the Western Lake Ontario RCA extend along the western Lake Ontario shoreline from Niagara through Halton and Peel, encompassing urban and rural watersheds that support the Greater Toronto-Hamilton corridor.

The Western Lake Ontario RCA is primarily based on the western portion of the Northern Lake Ontario and Niagara River Secondary Watershed. The RCA would also include the Niagara Peninsula Source Protection Area, Halton-Hamilton Source Protection Region, and Credit Valley Source Protection Area (which is part of Credit Valley – Toronto and Region – Central Lake Ontario Source Protection Region).

On November 27, 2025, Bill 68, *Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2025 (No.2)* received Royal Assent and the amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* allow for the establishment of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA) to implement a new regional conservation authority framework.

On December 5, 2025, NPCA held a Special Meeting of the Full Authority Board to review the ERO comment submission (Report No. FA-59-25) and passed Resolution No. FA-131-2025, that stated the Board does not support the "Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority" boundary configuration as the proposal lacks sufficient justification, would significantly diminish local governance, and fails to recognize the effectiveness and efficiencies already achieved within existing watershed-based models.

On March 10, 2026, Hon. Todd McCarthy, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and Chief Conservation Executive, Mr. Hassaan Basit announced [next steps for the consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities](#), including the decision to proceed with a total of nine (9) RCAs. NPCA remains part of the Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority with HCA, CH, and CVC. [Decision details pertaining to ERO #025-1257](#) were posted for review later that day. Over 14,000 comment submissions were received by the provincial government.

Further, on March 10, 2026, the Chairs of the current 36 CAs received a letter from Minister McCarthy regarding next steps for the planned consolidation of regional conservation authorities.

Discussion:

The decision of the provincial government to consolidate the current 36 CAs into nine RCAs was based on feedback received through the ERO consultation process as a part of the government's plan to improve Ontario's conservation authority systems, to ensure CAs have the tools required to protect the communities they serve, supporting economic prosperity while balancing environmental protection and development needs.

The final boundaries were adjusted based on the feedback that the proposed boundaries were too large, did not align with watersheds and covered areas of differing environmental needs. Adjustments were made to accommodate areas with distinct geographies and development contexts, better balance differing priorities across rural, urban, and northern areas and improve alignment with watersheds and with source protection regions.

The new nine RCAs are:

- Central Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority
- Eastern Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority
- Eastern Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority
- Lake Huron Regional Conservation Authority
- Northeastern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority
- Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority
- St. Lawrence River Regional Conservation Authority
- Western Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority
- Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority

Maps of the planned boundaries for the nine RCA's can be viewed on the [OPCA website](#). This spring, the government plans to introduce amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* that, if passed, will enable the consolidation of Ontario's CAs through statutory amalgamation.

Statutory Amalgamation

To address concerns raised around service continuity for communities, the provincial government is proposing statutory amalgamation that intends to avoid disruptions to existing partnerships and agreements with municipalities, Indigenous communities, and other partners. On the transition date to occur in early 2027, or a later date prescribed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the former CAs would be amalgamated creating the RCA, and legal continuation is provided for:

- Ensuring all rights, obligations, assets and liabilities from the CAs would become those of the new RCAs.
- Providing for the continuation of all existing agreements, contracts, permitting or other actions underway.

- Ensuring the current jurisdiction of the individual CAs are combined to become the jurisdiction of the consolidated RCA.
- Specifying that the provisions of the *Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act* would apply to the consolidation of CAs.

The assets, liabilities and agreements of the predecessor CAs would become those of the new RCA. The province indicated that residents would continue to work with the same local teams who know their watershed, understand local issues and provide on-the-ground support.

Transition to Consolidated Conservation Authorities

The transition process will be led by OPCA, providing the tools and resources to coordinate the transition over the next year with the target date of early 2027. The province also announced \$20 million in initial funding to support OPCA in leading the transition and implementation, with an additional \$3 million this year and every following year to be administered by OPCA to support RCAs with program improvements and service delivery.

The Ministry plans to propose amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* to facilitate the transition process that would:

- Suspend existing provisions in the *Conservation Authorities Act* allowing for the establishment, enlargement, amalgamation, and dissolution of CAs during the transition period.
- Enable the Minister to issue immediate temporary restrictions on certain activities by CAs, to facilitate the planned consolidation. The intent is to restrict activities related to extraordinary financial, asset, or employment decisions to mitigate risk and ensure a stable transition to the new regional structure. These directions would expire upon consolidation, at the latest.
- Require OPCA to:
 - Establish Transition Committees for each RCA to include the CAO/General Manager and one municipally elected board member from each of the current CAs, and any other members as appointed by OPCA.
 - Appoint Project Executives who will chair the Transition Committees, and upon regional consolidation would serve as inaugural CAO of the RCA for up to 24 months. Following this period, the Board members of the RCA will assume responsibility for long-term CAO decisions.
- Mandate Transition Committees to develop a transition plan to prepare for the consolidation subject to OPCA's review. Project Executives will be able to request information from CAs as needed to support the development of the transition plan.
- Require Board members of RCAs to be selected by the participating municipalities prior to the date of consolidation.

- Require new RCAs to implement the transition plan, with the opportunity to make revisions subject to OPCA's approval, and report on progress of implementation to OPCA.

Governance of Consolidated Conservation Authorities

The RCAs would continue to be municipally governed organizations. The provincial government's plan would make participating municipalities those that are at the upper and single-tier levels, which is already the case for the NPCA. The number of members appointed to each RCA would be streamlined with around 15-20 members, with population-based representation. Each participating municipality would be guaranteed a member, and limitations would be placed on the number of members appointed by any one municipality to ensure fairness and balance.

Participating municipalities for the proposed Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority would include the City of Hamilton, Dufferin County, Haldimand County, Halton Region, Niagara Region, Peel Region, and Wellington County.

The Ministry plans to propose further amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* that would:

- Enable the Minister to issue directions regarding the budget and apportionment process for 2027 CA budgets that occurs during 2026.
- Update the CA governance structure for RCAs with participating municipalities being the upper-tier and single-tier municipalities within a CA's area of jurisdiction.
- Set out that the method for determining the number of Board members that each participating municipality appoints to the RCA would be prescribed in regulation based on each participating municipality's proportion of the population in the RCA's jurisdiction; each participating municipality would be guaranteed at least one member. The maximum number of members appointed by all participating municipalities of a CA (maximum board size), and the maximum number of members that any one municipality could appoint are to be established through regulations if legislative amendments are passed, to ensure fairness and balance.
- Update other governance provisions including removing the requirement that 70 per cent of appointments of members to the CA by a participating municipality be elected officials and that the positions of chair and vice chair be filled on a rotating basis between participating municipalities.
- Add that certain knowledge and experience must be considered by municipalities when appointing members to the CA who do not sit on municipal council.

- Update that chairs and vice-chairs may be appointed for two-year terms, and up to a maximum of eight total years served.

Establishing Local Watershed Councils

In response to feedback that emphasized the need for RCAs to continue to rely on the deep local expertise, knowledge and relationships built, the province plans to mandate that each RCA would be required to establish at least one watershed council to ensure local interests are considered and that watershed planning continues to be guided by local knowledge and input. These advisory councils would enable diverse participation from lower-tier municipalities, Indigenous communities and other interested parties that aim to ensure local voices and on-the-ground insights are considered in regional decision-making.

The Ministry plans to propose amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* that would require one or more watershed councils for each RCA and create regulation-making authority to the Minister to outline the number, composition, functions, powers, duties, activities and procedures of watershed councils.

NPCA's Commitment to Continuous Process Improvement and Modernization

While the NPCA supports the proposed provincial investments in technology, standardization and modernization, concerns remain regarding the uncertainties and potential risks associated with regional consolidation including risk to local representation and decision-making, potential loss of local expertise including staff subject matter expertise, and the continued ability to deliver high quality programs and services specific to unique watersheds and communities including natural hazard management.

Should the provincial government move forward with implementing the proposed regional conservation authority framework and Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority, the NPCA will be committed to working constructively with OPCA, neighbouring conservation authorities, municipalities, sector partners and interested partners to ensure local voices, municipal representations, and unique watershed characteristics continue to guide decisions.

NPCA will also ensure that as part of the proposed Transition Committee, our successes and strengths in process improvements and modernization are underscored as best management practices.. Over the last several years, the NPCA has undertaken tremendous work to improve governance, operations, policies, and processes to strengthen the delivery of programs and services. NPCA has implemented all 20 recommendations within the 2018 Auditor General report and is focused on continuous improvements through updating planning and permitting policies, updating corporate policies, developing new guiding strategies, enhancing procedures, and implementing other modernization initiatives, including investments in software and data management.

Since 2014, the NPCA has invested over \$3 million on GIS data; regulation mapping updates (including floodplain mapping); planning policy and procedural updates; dam safety reviews; IT support improvements; and corporate enterprise resource software to support planning and permitting, human resources, budgeting, asset inventory management, and capital planning. This long-term investment has included:

- **CityView** – First launched in 2016, it is the main filing system for all development application activity in the Planning and Development Division. By 2021, CityView has been storing/processing an average of 1,404 file types per year. In addition to providing a consistent workflow for application reviews, CityView query functionality tracks a wide range of metrics for application review times and staff efficiency. During 2026, the NPCA will be implementing several improvements to CityView including additional data fields for metrics tracking, an online Permit application intake portal, and a new module for our Compliance and Enforcement Department. As a significant capital investment for the NPCA, CityView is a powerful system to help provide timely permit approvals and planning application reviews.
- **CityWide and FMW** – NPCA’s enterprise system used for asset management, corporate operating and capital budgeting, and financial reporting, providing a centralized platform to track Authority-owned assets, support annual budget development and financial planning. The system improves data accuracy, consistency, and accountability by standardizing asset and financial information across the organization. Investment includes software licensing and vendor support, with staff time concentrated around the annual budget cycle and ongoing effort for system administration and data maintenance.
- **ArcGIS** – NPCA’s enterprise geographic information system, supporting mapping, spatial analysis, and decision-making related to watershed management, planning, and operations. The platform enables both internal analysis and public-facing maps and applications that improve transparency and access to conservation authority information. Investment includes software licensing, infrastructure, and specialized staff resources to maintain data, systems, and public-facing services.
- **Laserfiche** – NPCA’s enterprise records management system, used to store, manage, and retrieve official corporate records in a secure and compliant manner. It supports improved information governance, efficient retrieval, and reduced reliance on shared drives and paper records. Investment includes licensing and ongoing support, with staff time required for system administration, records structure maintenance, and user onboarding.

NPCA has set an example for how CAs can implement best management practices and we remain committed to continuously improving the delivery of our programs and services for the health and well-being of our local watersheds and communities.

Financial Implications:

Any consolidation of the NPCA with other CAs would require closer examination to determine financial implications with respect to items such as operating and capital budgets, asset management, salaries and benefits for both union and non-union roles, changes to fee schedules, and cost apportionment to the OPCA.

Although not mentioned as part of the proposed regional consolidation of CAs, many CAs, including the NPCA, have a Foundation. Any consolidation of NPCA with other CAs will need to examine financial and governance implications for the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation.

Links to Policy/Strategic Plan:

Goal 4.1 – Strengthen government relations toward collective outcomes and impact

Related Reports and Appendices:

Report No. FA-59-25 RE: Draft Comments Pertaining to ERO #025-1257 Regarding Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario’s Conservation Authorities

Report No. FA-56-25 RE: Proposed Amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* to establish the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency, and Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario’s Conservation Authorities

Authored by:

Original Signed by:

Leilani Lee-Yates, BES, MSPL.RPD, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer/Secretary-Treasurer

Reviewed by:

Original Signed by:

David Decluce, MCIP, RPP
Director, Planning and Development

Submitted by:

Original Signed by:

Leilani Lee-Yates, BES, MSPL.RPD, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer/Secretary-Treasurer

**Catfish Creek Conservation Authority
Correspondence Register – February 1 – March 30, 2026**

Date	Type	Agency	Topic
February 2, 2026	Email/ Response	Malahide	Ice Thickness
February 2, 2026	Email/ Response	Canada Life	PA User Changes - Canada Life Policy
February 3, 2026	Email/ Response	CIBC Commercial Department	Signature Form Updated
February 3, 2026	Email	Graham Scott Enns	Cheques from 2025
February 4, 2026	Email	CO	FOR REVIEW & FEEDBACK: A Renewed Ontario Invasive Species Strategic Plan (ERO#025-1334)
February 4, 2026	Email/ Response	Graham Scott Enns	Legal letters
February 4, 2026	Email/ Response	KCCA AGM Invite	Invitation to AGM
February 4, 2026	Email	Champlain Township	Support Resolution 2026-034 - Bill 68 and Proposed Consolidation of Conservation Authorities
February 4, 2026	Email	FOSPW	Financial Disclosure
February 4, 2026	Email/ Response	UTRCA	Confirmed Southwest General Managers Meeting - In person [In-person]
February 5, 2026	Email	CO	OMAA Spring Workshop: April 17, 2026
February 5, 2026	Email	ERCA	Advocacy for C/A
February 6, 2026	Email	LERMC	SWP Invoices - January 2026
February 6, 2026	Email	Central Elgin	Local CA Meeting.
February 6, 2026	Email	McFarland Rowland	Insurance Update

February 6, 2026	Email		Register today! 2026 CAW Winter Site Visit - Feb 19 - Hamilton Conservation Authority
February 8, 2026	Email/ Repsonse	PBRA	Ice Measurements for 2026 in Port Bruce
February 9, 2026	Email	CO	CA Watershed Stewardship, Restoration and Forestry Meeting March 10th, and 11th
February 9, 2026	Email	CIBC	RE: CCCA Business Account
February 9, 2026	Email	CO	June General Managers' Meeting: Overnight Accommodations Survey
February 9, 2026	Email/ Response	Port Bruce Residents	Flood Mitigation in Port Bruce & Amalgamation of Ontario Conservation Authorities?
February 10, 2026	Email	Graham Scott Enns	Documents for Board Signature
February 10, 2026	Email/ Response	Keemokee	Request for Cost Estimates Managed Forest Plan (Charitable Camp Property)
February 10, 2026	Email	CO	Reminder: Request for CA 2025 Permit Timeline and Compliance Reporting
February 10, 2026	Email	ERCA	RE: Advocacy for C/A
February 10, 2026	Email/ Response	Port Bruce Residents	Flood Mitigation in Port Bruce & Amalgamation of Ontario Conservation Authorities?

February 11, 2026	Email/	Response	Re: Confirmed Southwest General Managers Meeting - In person [In-person]
February 11, 2026	Email	MEDJT	Resources for Application Completion: Habitat Creation and Enhancement: St. Thomas Developments Program
February 11, 2026	Email/ Response	Graham Scott Enns	Summary Financial Statements for AGM
February 13, 2026	Email	Graham Scott Enns	Complete with Docusign: Catfish Creek Conservation Authority 2025 T3010 for CRA Filing.pdf
February 14, 2026	Email/ Response	Malahide	Re: Port Bruce Harbour
February 17, 2026	Email/ Reply	ERCA	Meeting Request
February 18, 2026	Email/ Reply	KCCA	RE: Annual General Meeting Invitation - Kettle Creek Conservation Authority
February 19, 2026	Email/ Reply	McFarlan Rowlands	Insurance Renewal
February 19, 2026	Email/ Reply	OPP	Long overdue Hello! from OPP WR PLT
February 20, 2026	Email	CRA	New mail from the Canada Revenue Agency
February 23, 2026	Email/ Reply	PBRA	Thank You Letter
February 23, 2026	Email/ Reply	CO	Final CO ERO Submission - Ontario's Renewed Ontario Invasive Species Strategic Plan
February 24, 2026	Email/ Reply	CO	Archive and Followup - Data Breaches: Municipal

			Preparedness and Response - Thursday, Feb. 12, 2026
February 24, 2026	Email/ Reply	CO	Final Amended CO-Hydro One MOU (December 2025)
February 25, 2026	Email/ Reply	DFO	Approved Critical Habitat Order for Silver Chub (Great Lakes - Upper St. Lawrence populations)
February 26, 2026	Email/ Reply	Malahide	Site Plan Control Deposit Receipt
February 26, 2026	Email/ Reply	LERMC	2025 Annual Report to CCSPA
February 27, 2026	Email/ Reply	City of St Thomas	City of St. Thomas EFT Vendor Remittance. Payment 00000000000241709
March 2, 2026	Email/ Reply	Ron Casier	Chestnut Trees
March 2, 2026	Email/ Reply	GRCA	SPP Hours Invoiced
March 2, 2026	Email/ Reply	MEDJT	Habitat Restoration
March 2, 2026	Email/ Reply	KCCA	Letter to Minister McCarthy
March 3, 2026	Email/ Reply	McFarland Rowland	2026 Insurance
March 4, 2026	Email	CO	EAPWSS Final Report 2026
March 4, 2026	Email	MNR	WECl
March 4, 2026	Email/ Reply	SCRCA	St. Clair Region Conservation Authority 2025 Annual Report
March 4, 2026	Email/ Reply	CIBC Commercial	Signature Form Updated
March 4, 2026	Email/ Reply	Elgin County	Reminder: Elgin County Drowning Prevention Coalition Meeting: March 6th

March 5, 2026	Email	CO	Request to Share Green Infrastructure Asset Management Planning (GIAMP) Training Opportunity
March 5, 2026	Email/ Reply	MFIPPA	Annual. Statistical Survey
March 9, 2026	Email/ Reply	CO	CA Coastal Network Workshop and Field Tour
March 10, 2026	Email/ Reply	OPP	Long overdue Hello! from OPP WR PLT
March 10, 2026	Email/ Reply	OLTA	Webinar and Citizen Science opportunities
March 10, 2026	Email/ Reply	CO	Ontario and Peel Celebrate Success of Groundbreaking Emergency Training Project
March 10, 2026	Email/ Reply	Center for Land Conservation	Legal Defence Survey Deadline Extended
March 10, 2026	Email	NPCA	Ministry Meetings
March 10, 2026	Email	MECP	Briefing Invitation March 10, 12:00-12:45pm – Ontario's next steps to improve conservation authorities
March 11, 2026	Email/ Reply	CO	Sample Messages Board and Staff
March 11, 2026	Email/ Reply	Town of Aylmer	Aylmer Community Festival Participation
March 11, 2026	Email	CO	Registration Open: 2026 Level 1 Provincial Offences Officer Training Course (Spaces Limited)
March 11, 2026	Email/ Reply	MECP	Minister's Direction Re: Fee Changes (March 10, 2026)
March 12, 2026	Email/ Reply	Information and Privacy	The deadline to submit your statistics is fast approaching

		Commisioner Ontario	
March 12, 2026	Email/ Reply	CIBC	Signature Form Updated
March 13, 2026	Email/ Reply	PBRA	Request for you to Speak at the PBRA AGM
March 16, 2026	Email/ Reply	CWA/AEC	Lake Erie Action Plan: next meeting and summary from October 2025 workshop
March 16, 2026	Email/ Reply	CO	Help shape Canada Water Agency programming
March 18, 2026	Email/ Reply	Oxford COunty	FW: leigh Farms Ltd) andNotice of Public Meeting - ZN 4-25-15 (Rob ZN 4-25-09 (Jacob Hiebert)
March 18, 2026	Email/ Reply	CO	For information: LERSPC Agenda Package - March 26 (KCCA is SPA Liaison)
March 23, 2026	Email/ Reply	CO	Reminder: legislative/regulatory requirements 2026 Budget and 2025 Audited Financial Statements
March 24, 2026	Email/ Reply	CO	Conservation Ontario AGM moved from Monday April 13
March 24, 2026	Email/ Reply		FW: Canada's National Freshwater Data Strategy Webinar Materials & Recording
March 25, 2026	Email/ Reply	CO	Cross-sector coalition of Ontarians will be calling on the provincial government to halt its plan to consolidate Ontario's 36

			conservation authorities
March 26, 2026	Email/ Reply	McFarland Rowland	Insurance Renewals
March 27, 2026	Email/ Reply	MECP	Info Session on proposed amendments setting out CA transition and consolidation – April 9
March 31, 2026	Email/ Reply	MECP	Info Session on proposed amendments setting out CA transition and consolidation