

We have quorum with 9 members present, and 1 member present by Zoom. I will call the meeting to order at this time, 4:05 pm.

2. Land Acknowledgement

We would like to begin by acknowledging that this land is the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations, comprised of the Ojibway, the Odawa, and the Potawatomi Peoples. We recognize the people's long-standing relationship with the land in this area.

As always, we like to start with a statement of gratitude and hope so today I'm very grateful to Jackie and DRCC for this new owl camera system. I'm happy that you're all here and hope that we can figure out how to write policies for salt and snow storage.

3. Chair's Welcome

At a meeting of the program managers, the province advised that instead of us having to apply annually for funding, we will now have a 3-year funding window. That is good news. The province has also amended our agreement for this fiscal year and given us more money to study blue/green algae.

The other good news in terms of funding is that Source Water is one of the 4 core mandate programs left after Bill 23 created changes in the Conservation Authorities Act. The Conservation Authority is now able to levy its members for our program.

Katie attended a program managers' meeting virtually in Peterborough. One of the original chairs (Max Christie of the Quinte Region) retired. The issue that he very actively promoted was protection for source water systems that weren't in source water areas, but which did serve a community. Most of northern Ontario isn't covered by source water protection plans. He was able to get the province to develop a best practices document. We wish him well.

There is an SPA meeting tomorrow night. They are going to review about half of our update package as we have it at this point.

We have 1 ½ vacancies on our committee. 1 from Lakeshore. Albert Dionne retired. And there is one member who has not participated so he may need to be replaced.

We welcome Tom Dufour, Amy Weinz and Warren Higgins.

4. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

5. Approval of Agenda

Resolution SPC 20/23 Moved by John Barnett
Seconded by Bill Dukes

That the agenda for the December 13, 2023 meeting of the Essex Region Source Protection Committee be approved.

Carried

6. Adoption of Minutes

A. Essex Region Source Protection Committee

Resolution SPC 21/23 Moved by Tim Mousseau
Seconded by Matthew Merrett

That the minutes for the September 13, 2023 meeting of the Essex Region Source Protection Committee (ERSPC) be approved and the recommendations therein be adopted as distributed.

Carried

B. Essex Region Source Protection Authority

None.

7. Correspondence

None.

8. MECP Liaison's Update

None.

9. Presentations

None.

10. Reports for Approval

A. Report SPC 09/23 – S.36 Update – Re-delineation of Event Based Area

THAT the SPC approve the amended Event Based Area as described in Report 09/23 to be submitted to the MECP for early engagement

Resolution SPC 22/23 Moved by Jim Drummond
Seconded by Ron Barrette

Carried

B. Report SPC 10/23 – S.36 Update – Road Salt Policies

THAT Report 10/23 be received and further;

THAT ERSPA prepare draft policies at the SPC's direction

Resolution SPC 23/23 Moved by Bill Dukes
Seconded by Antonietta Giofu

Carried

C. Report SPC 11/23 – S.36 Update – Snow Storage Policies

THAT Report 11/23 be received and further;

THAT ERSPA prepare draft policies at the SPC's direction

Resolution SPC 24/23 Moved by Chris Snip
Seconded by Bill Dukes

Carried

11. New Business

None.

12. Other Business

In regard to the changes to the Conservation Authorities Act, Conservation Authorities can now only levy for four things. Authorities can implement Source Water Protection, we can manage the lands that we own, we can administer regulations under Section 28 and we can do very specific water quality monitoring through the provincial water quality monitoring network and the provincial ground water monitoring network. Those are things that we can charge levy for starting on January 1, 2024, and those are the only things that we can use levy for. We have never used levy for Source Water Protection. The province has been very clear, especially since they have advised that they are giving us this 3-year agreement, that it is not a download to the municipalities.

What is in the new legislation is that the implementation of Source Protection Policies can be levied by the Conservation Authority. Those policies would be the policies that name the Conservation Authority as the implementing body. Those could be our education and outreach policies. We didn't go that way this year with our budget, but it's something that we might need to explore. Our education and outreach policies are written in a way that say they are dependent on having the funding to do them. We've been fortunate in the past to have had grant funds that have supported this.

What the Conservation Authority had to do was to catalogue all of the activities that we do and put them into categories. So we have Category 1, which are those mandatory, leviable, services. Category 2 is anything we do on behalf of a municipality at their request by an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding), that includes risk management. Category 2 activities are the municipality's responsibility, but they pay us to do them. Category 3 is everything else that we do; our education programs, the events that we hold, tree planting, restoration, agricultural stewardship, any of the additional water quality research type projects that we do, all fall under Category 3. We have to obtain external funding to undertake Category 3 items or we have to get the municipalities to sign an additional MOU saying that they will support those activities.

One thing I want to address is agricultural stewardship, which is one way that we implement our education and outreach policy for reducing nutrients that have an impact on harmful algal blooms. In the past, we've been able to implement that education and outreach policy through external grants. We don't currently have those external grants. The budget for Category 3 activities, including agricultural stewardship, went to all regional municipalities, and the rural, lower tier municipalities all approved it as is, but the City of Windsor picked two things out of the budget, one of which was agricultural stewardship. And the reason was that we hold to the proportional system, so the City was being asked to support agricultural stewardship at 48 percent, and the City maintains that they don't have 48 percent of the agricultural lands in the County and they were only willing to support agricultural stewardship at 5 percent. The result of that vote was the immediate cessation of our agricultural stewardship program and the immediate layoff of our agricultural technician. I think that agricultural stewardship is extremely important, and we are committed to continuing to work with the agricultural community in some way. I wanted to make this committee aware of this situation and of the fact that, through the perfectly imperfect storm where we lost our grant funding, the changes to the Conservation Authorities Act and the decision by the City, all resulted in the loss of this important work that we do, which does have an impact on our ability to deliver that particular policy in the Source Protection Plan. Tomorrow night, the Source Protection Authority will be receiving about half of our package of updated policies, including the microcystin policy and a reminder that they are the implementers of that policy.

13. Adjournment

Resolution SPC 25/23 Moved by Tim Mousseau
Seconded by Matthew Merrett

That the December 13, 2023 meeting of the Essex Region Source Protection Committee
be adjourned at 6:05 pm. **Carried**

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Essex Region Source Protection Committee will tentatively be held on February 14, 2024 starting at 4:00 pm at the Essex Civic Centre, Room TBD.



Tom Fuerth
Chair



Katie Stammler
Water Quality Scientist/
Project Manager Source Water Protection