



Essex Region Conservation Authority

Board of Directors Annual General Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Thursday, January 18, 2024

Time: 6:00 pm

Location and Details: Council Chambers, Essex Civic Centre

Attendance

Members Present:

Jim Morrison (Chair)	Larry Verbeke
Sue Desjarlais (Vice-Chair)	Dayne Malloch
Molly Allaire	Joe Bachetti
Thomas Neufeld	Tania Jobin
Katie McGuire-Blais	Angelo Marignani
Michael Akpata	Mark McKenzie
Anthony Abraham	Kieran McKenzie

Absent:

Jason Matyi

Regrets:

Peter Courtney	Tracey Bailey
Kim DeYong	Ryan McNamara

Staff Present

Tim Byrne, CAO/Secretary-Treasurer
Nicole Kupnicki, Corporate Services, Human Resources Manager/EA
Shelley McMullen, CFO/Director Corporate Services
Kevin Money, Director Conservation Services
Danielle Stuebing, Director Community and Outreach Services
James Bryant, Director Watershed Management Services
Katheryn Arthur, Restoration Biologist
Tom Dufour, GIS Technician
Dan Lebedyk, Biologist/Ecologist
Nancy Roy, Accounting Associate
Kris Ives, Curator/Education Coordinator
Katheryn Schryburt, Interpreter
Laura Neufeld, Community Outreach Coordinator
Aaron Zimmer, Multimedia Specialist
Lisa Limarzi, Administrative Associate, Corporate Services
Jacqueline Serran, DRCC Remedial Action Plan Coordinator
Katie Stammler, Water Quality Scientist/Project Manager SWP

Guests

MP Chris Lewis
MPP Trevor Jones
Mayor Dennis Rogers, Town of Kingsville
Councillor Rodney Hammond, Town of Essex
Mayor Gary McNamara, Town of Tecumseh

Councillor James Dorner, Town of Tecumseh
Brian Hillman, Director Development Services, Town of Tecumseh
Heather Grondin, Chief Relations Officer, WDBA
Grant Hilbers, Chief Capital Officer, WDBA
Marnie Pouget, Chief of Staff- Office of Chris Lewis, MP Essex
Dr. John & Pat Hartig
Ben Marginson and family
Ross Margerison
Laura Vermeer
Darlene Marshall
Tim McCarthy
Kim Verbeek
Claire Wales, President, Essex Region Conservation Foundation
Eric Naylor, Director, Essex Region Conservation Foundation
Clayton Armstrong and Susan Iatonna
Don McArthur, County of Essex
Henry Denotter, Essex Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Daniela Koppeser, Curriculum Consultant, WECD SB
John DeMarco
Donna Tuckwell
Gordon Orr
Amber Baker
Cory Trowbridge, Wildlife Preservation Canada
Melissa Coulbeck, Landscape Effects
Nash Matais, Oculus
Ashley Hooley, Hot Topic
Tamara Stomp, Kingsville
Lizanne Lebdyk
Danella Koppeger, WECD SB
John Demarco
Gordon Orr, TWEPI
Henrik Hoyer
Corrine Chiasson

1. **Call to Order**

Good evening and welcome to the January 18, 2024 meeting of the ERCA Board of Directors. I will call the meeting to order and confirm members in attendance.

We have regrets this evening from:

- Councillor Peter Courtney, Amherstburg
- Deputy Mayor, Kim DeYong, Kingsville
- Mayor Tracey Bailey, Lakeshore
- Councillor Ryan McNamara, Lakeshore

2. Land Acknowledgement

I'd 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 value the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original Peoples of Turtle Island - North America who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial.

3. Comments from the Outgoing Chair

I would like to recognize our elected officials, in particular Mayor Gary McNamara, Mayor Dennis Rogers, esteemed members of Council and their Senior Administrative teams, members of the Essex Region Conservation Foundation, ERCA staff members and all who have joined us this evening.

There are several dignitaries who bring greetings tonight, and I'd like to first welcome former Board Member, MPP Trevor Jones from the riding of Chatham/Kent/Leamington.

<comments from MPP Trevor Jones>

Thank you, MPP Jones. I would like to welcome another former Board Member, Chris Lewis, MP for the riding of Essex who has a few words to say. Welcome, MP Lewis.

<comments from MP Chris Lewis>

Thanks, Chris. We continue to thank you for your support. Chief Mary Duckworth of the Caldwell First Nation was hoping to attend this evening but has run into some unfortunate weather as she travels back to the region and had to send her regrets this evening along with congratulations to award winners.

Before vacating the Chair, I wish to express what a privilege it has been to serve with you all on this Board, especially in our 50th Year of Conservation. We will have the opportunity to reflect on some of our many accomplishments later this evening with our annual report video, but there are a few notable highlights that I will take with me from this past year.

I was extremely proud to have had the opportunity to celebrate the grand opening of the new Windsor-Essex Community Foundation Community Entrance, which provides another access point to our beloved Greenway trail system.

It was a great honour to welcome the many partners with whom we have worked over five decades of conservation to our 50th Anniversary celebration in July. As well, I was incredibly thankful to our senior leadership team, CAO Tim Byrne and CFO Shelley McMullen, for their leadership in negotiating the cost-apportionment agreements with each member municipality.

To the members of the Board, I thank each of you for your dedication, commitment, and support. One of the most important elements of this Board is our relationships – with each other, with all levels of government, volunteers, organizations and many others. I am pleased that we had the opportunity to strengthen our relationships and carry on our important watershed management work to ensure the sustainability of the communities we serve, and I look forward to continuing to work with you all for years to come.

4. **Declarations of Pecuniary Interest**

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

5. **Approval of Agenda**

Resolution 01/24 Moved by Joe Bachetti
Seconded by Angelo Marignani

THAT the agenda for the January 18, 2024 meeting of the ERCA Board of Directors be approved. **Carried**

6. **Adoption of Minutes**

A. **ERCA Board of Directors**

Resolution 02/24 Moved by Michael Akpata
Seconded by Sue Desjarlais

THAT the minutes for the December 14, 2023 meeting of the ERCA Board of Directors be approved as distributed. **Carried**

B. **ERCA Executive Committee**

Resolution 03/24 Moved by Larry Verbeke
Seconded by Anthony Abraham

THAT the minutes for the December 14, 2023 and December 22, 2023, meetings of the ERCA Executive Committee be approved as distributed. **Carried**

7. **Business Arising from the Previous Minutes**

8. **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

A. **Appointment of Interim Chair (CAO for purposes of Election)**

Resolution 04/24 Moved by Sue Desjarlais
Seconded by Mark McKenzie

THAT the CAO/Secretary-Treasurer of the Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA) be authorized to act as Chair for the 2024 election of Chair of the Essex Region Conservation Authority. **Carried**

B. Interim Chair Comments

I would like to thank our Chair, Vice Chair and all members of the Board for your ongoing support over the past year as we worked to implement the changes to the Conservation Authorities Act and proceed with the deliverables under ERCA's Transition Plan. ERCA is finalizing agreements with member municipalities for the implementation of non-mandatory Category 3 services. I would like to thank members of Municipal Administration for their time and efforts to assist with this process and will continue to look forward to working with them in a collegial fashion implementing all facets of the municipal agreements.

On to the elections.... I will begin by reminding members and the audience that our elections are conducted in accordance with Administrative Procedures By-Law and the Conservation Authorities Act.

C. Appointment of Scrutineers

Resolution 05/24 Moved by Katie McGuire-Blais
Seconded by Tania Jobin

THAT Claire Wales and Gordon Orr be appointed to act as scrutineers for the 2024 election of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Essex Region Conservation Authority, if needed.

Carried

D. Election of Chair

Resolution 06/24 Moved by Angelo Marignani
Seconded by Thomas Neufeld

THAT nominations for the position of Chair be closed. **Carried**

Resolution 07/24 THAT Councillor Jim Morrison is the Chair of the Essex Region Conservation Authority for the next year. **Acclaimed.**

E. Election of Vice Chair

Resolution 08/24 Moved by Larry Verbeke
Seconded by Dayne Malloch

THAT nominations for the position of Vice Chair be closed. **Carried**

Resolution 09/24 THAT Councillor Sue Desjarlais is the Vice Chair of the Essex Region Conservation Authority for the next year. **Acclaimed**

9. Remarks from Incoming Chair

Thank you for your confidence in electing (acclaiming) me as Chair, and congratulations to Sue Desjarlais on their election as Vice Chair. We look forward to serving in the Windsor-Essex-Pelee Island community in these roles. I am particularly honoured to serve in this capacity during ERCA's 51st year.

The following items are standard business practice of the Authority and that Auditor, Financial Institutions, Solicitor and Insurance Company receive endorsement through resolution by the Board.

10. Actions

A. Appointment of ERCA Auditor, Financial Institutions, Solicitor, and Insurance Company for 2024

i. Auditor

Resolution 10/24 Moved by Larry Verbeke
Seconded by Anthony Abraham

THAT the firm of Hicks, MacPherson, latonna and Driedger LLP be appointed as the Authority's Auditor for 2024. **Carried**

ii. Financial Institution

Resolution 11/24 Moved by Katie McGuire-Blais
Seconded by Joe Bachetti

THAT the CIBC and the Windsor Family Credit Union be appointed as the ERCA financial institutions and utilized for banking, including borrowing and short-term investments, for 2024. **Carried**

iii. Solicitors

Resolution 12/24 Moved by Angelo Marignani
Seconded by Mark McKenzie

THAT the firms of Shibley Righton, LLP, M. Gordner Law Professional Corporation, and McTague Law Firm be appointed the ERCA Solicitors for 2024. **Carried**

iv. Insurance Company

Resolution 13/24 Moved by Kieran McKenzie
Seconded by Tania Jobin

THAT ERCA continues to participate in the Conservation Ontario Group Insurance program for its insurance coverage for 2024. **Carried**

B. Approval for ERCA Borrowing Resolution

Resolution 14/24 Moved by Molly Alliare
Seconded by Sue Desjarlais

WHEREAS it is necessary for the Essex Region Conservation Authority (hereinafter called the "Authority") to borrow the sum of up to 1,500,000 dollars required for its purposes until payment to the Authority by participating municipalities, designated as such under the Conservation Authorities Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter C.27, and grant payments received from senior levels of government.

Be It Therefore Resolved:

THAT the Authority borrow, at the lowest effective interest rate, from any one of its appointed financial institutions or participating municipalities, a sum not to exceed in the aggregate 1,500,000 dollars at any one time necessary for its purposes by way of loans, advances, overdrafts, or promissory note, or notes of the Authority until payment to the Authority of any grants and of sums to be paid to the Authority by participating municipalities.

11. Reports for Approval

None

12. Reports for Information

A. Environmental Registry Reports

None

B. Correspondence

- i. Letter from MNRF regarding Minister's direction for conservation authorities regarding fee changes associated with planning, development and permitting fees dated December 13, 2023
- i. Letter from MNRF regarding Extension to meet requirements under O.Reg. 687/21 Transition Plan and Agreements dated December 13, 2023
- ii. Letter from Ministry Tourism, Culture and Sport regarding the Community Museum Operating Grant for 2023-2024 dated December 20, 2023

Resolution 15/24 Moved by Molly Alliare
Seconded by Tania Jobin

THAT correspondence be received for Member's information. **Carried**

13. 2023 Essex Region Conservation Authority Annual Report

Resolution 16/24 Moved by Larry Verbeke
Seconded by Anthony Abraham

THAT the 2023 Annual Report be received for Member's information. **Carried**

14. ERCA Staff Awards

The accomplishments we celebrate here tonight would not have been possible without the small, hardworking team of staff who implement them. We are so fortunate to have staff who, over many years, continue to contribute to the sustainability of the region. These people are among the most dedicated staff members I have had the pleasure of working with.

We have undertaken the practice of recognizing special milestones, and planting a tree to signify years of service to the region. I would ask Tim Byrne to introduce the staff members we celebrate this year.

Kate Arthur – 20 Years

Two decades ago, Kate came to ERCA with a great deal of enthusiasm which has never diminished. Her job as ERCA's Restoration Biologist is a great match for her creativity as she develops restoration projects, plans and creates prairie restoration sites and designs productive wetlands that provide new homes for wildlife, and improve water quality.

Kate's dedication to improving biodiversity in our region is as outstanding as her ability to overcome adversity in the field. Kate takes on new tasks and challenges with enthusiasm and is able to find the humor even in horrible weather conditions, equipment breakdowns and more of the regular challenges encountered in the field. She is never deterred.

Kate's hard work, charismatic personality and customer service excellence has helped create hundreds of acres of tree planting projects, new prairie habitat for pollinators and over 100 acres of new wetlands. Our region's biodiversity has improved because of Kate's efforts, and we thank her for her continued hard work at ERCA!

Tom Dufour – 20 years

For 20 years, Tom Dufour has served as ERCA's Geomatics Technician. He manages all services related to GIS such as cartography, spatial analysis, aerial photography and web mapping, to name just a few.

Tom has moved ERCA forward in its adoption and use of new Geomatics Technologies that have supported countless projects. He helped develop the Detroit River Shoreline Assessment project and created mapping to highlight years of restoration success as well as target future restoration opportunities. His work was also critical in generating updated habitat layers and linking climate vulnerable species at risk to future restoration sites in collaboration with Point Pelee National Park.

His work continues to provide the necessary mapping and processes related to flood and the wetland restoration projects, Source Water Protection, our Conservation Areas Lands Inventory and associated Strategy, and so many more initiatives. An innovative project that Tom developed was Digital Elevation Modelling, which continues to allow us to digitally target the best locations for soil control BMPs to improve water quality. The DEM also enables Watershed Management Services to review development files with an understanding of the surrounding topography. Most recently, Tom's work in supporting the evaluation of the impacts caused by the flood in August 2023 was crucial to support the municipalities in obtaining Disaster Recovery Assistance Funding from the Province.

Tom, thank you for 20 years of service.

Bill Tate – 15 years

Bill Tate has dedicated the past 15 years as ERCA's Superintendent of Field Operations. He began his career here at ERCA as part of our survey crew before leaving us for a short while to obtain his certification in and gain experience as a Civil Engineering Technologist. When we had an opening in our team to lead our field staff and operations, we knew immediately that Bill was the ideal candidate for the job. Bill possesses extensive knowledge of construction, carpentry and automotive skills. He is a creative problem-solver who is constantly considering inventive ways to help improve our Conservation Areas.

Bill is flexible with his schedule to accommodate his coworkers' needs and respond to whatever mother nature throws his way! His staff, Director and co-workers agree that Bill has an enthusiasm, work ethic and positive attitude not matched by many.

Bill and his small team have the unique challenge of taking care of over 4000 acres of land, public facilities at our conservation areas, almost 100 kms of trails, our fleet of vehicles, new construction projects and much, much more. Bill is always up to the challenge of his job with a smile on his face and lots of laughter. While Bill was not able to join us this evening, we are certainly fortunate to have him as part of the ERCA team.

Dan Lebedyk – 33 Years of Service

I would also like to recognize an individual who has dedicated the past 33 years to ERCA. While he will be honoured at a retirement celebration later this month, it is fitting to also recognize his countless contributions to our region here tonight.

Since his employment with the Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA) began in 1990, Dan Lebedyk has fulfilled a variety of roles with the Authority. He first served as an Interpreter, has served as a surveyor and draftsman, to his current position as ERCA's Biologist/Ecologist, a role that he has held since 1993.

Dan has been a remarkable resource to and for the Conservation Authority. He has provided guidance and advice to every municipality within our region to ensure natural heritage features are protected as development is undertaken. He is a sought-after spokesperson and expert on matters related to the biology of this region, has represented the Windsor-Essex region provincially and federally, and has served on numerous local and provincial committees and task forces.

Dan was appointed as a provincial offences officer by the conservation Authority in 1995. In 2003, he was appointed as a **Special Constable** by the Ontario Minister of Public Safety and Security exercising the powers of the Solicitor General, for the purpose of enforcing regulations pursuant to Section 29 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*. He has also been certified by the Province as a Low Complexity Prescribed Burn Boss, qualified to plan and lead low complexity Prescribed Burns for ecosystem management including the supervision of Ignition and Suppression Crews.

Dan is highly intuitive, and able to adapt effectively to changing situations. He is an accomplished orator, and effective communicator. He has appeared at the Ontario Municipal Board and is recognized as an expert in his field.

An accomplished researcher, Dan has authored and contributed to dozens of research studies and publications. He was a major contributor to the evolution of the Herb Gray Parkway. From the onset of the project, the Province of Ontario requested that Dan be available full time as a resource to the Province on endangered species placement and natural heritage matters to ensure this massive project proceeded in an environmentally sensitive manner.

In addition to Dan's skills and credentials as described above, Dan also was instrumental in assisting the Authority with acquiring, installing and making fully operational anything and everything associated with the conversion to computerization in the late 80's and early 90's.

For nearly three and a half decades, Dan Lebedyk has dedicated his career to protecting the environment of the Windsor-Essex-Pelee Island region. His contributions have left a lasting legacy towards the environmental sustainability of our region, and he has helped to mentor younger biologists to continue fighting this good fight.

Dan, we thank you for your incredible contributions not only to this organization, but to this region as a whole, and wish you every good thing in your retirement.

15. ERCA Conservation Awards Presentation

Taking the time to honour those organizations and individuals who have made significant contributions to protecting and improving our region's environment is one of the most exciting elements of each year's annual meeting.

Conservation Awards have been presented annually since 1992, and once again, we are delighted to recognize those who have made a difference in enriching our region.

At this time, I'd like to invite Danielle Breault Stuebing, our Director of Communications & Outreach to assist in announcing this year's Award recipients, and Vice Chair Sue Desjarlais to join me in presenting these awards.

Conservation Farm Award – Clayton Armstrong and Susan Iatonna

We begin tonight with the Conservation Farm Award, which is jointly presented by ERCA and the Essex Soil and Crop Improvement Association to the farming operation which best displays conservation minded farming practices. The farms are graded on tillage practices, crop rotation, chemical use and storage, knowledge of fertility programs, Best Management Practices and overall farm maintenance.

Clayton Armstrong and Susan Iatonna have established many conservation practices on their fields over the years. Their farming practices include minimum and no-till cropping; precision soil sampling; variable rate fertilizer application; water and sediment control structures and rock

chutes to reduce soil erosion. They also use buffer strips along water courses to help improve water quality in their region.

Clayton and Susan, together with Clayton's father in years past, have planted hundreds of white cedar trees in windbreaks on many of their farms in the Deerbrook area. They have added solar panels in an effort to become net zero energy users. Clayton and Susan have participated in the Canada-Ontario Environmental Farm Plan program, and ERCA's Clean Water ~ Green spaces program to implement many Best Management Practices to become good stewards of the land for the next generations, and it is our honour to recognize them with the Conservation Farm Award.

John R. Park Homestead Award – Darlene Marshall

The John R. Park Homestead Award recognizes an individual or group for preservation and promotion of human and natural history in the Essex Region, and we are pleased to honour Darlene Marshall with this award.

Darlene is a proud Anishinaabe woman and member of Caldwell First Nation, Turtle Clan. Darlene has been an outstanding educator with the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board for nearly 30 years. She has been an elementary classroom teacher, an ESL Teacher supporting multilingual students, and for the past 7 years, has served as the Indigenous Education Lead. Darlene is the first hold this significant role in her board.

Darlene leads programming and supports educators with infusing Indigenous histories, cultures and perspectives across the curriculum with authentic resources and learning opportunities. She is a passionate advocate for Indigenous education, building strong relationships with educators, families, and community to support the achievement and well-being of a growing number of self-identified Indigenous students. Darlene also teaches courses in Indigenous Education to future educators.

Darlene is active in inspiring others to examine their own programs and in challenging them to tell a more full history of our region. Darlene leads by example and is very generous in sharing her time, knowledge, and resources to help non-Indigenous partners on their journey to reconciliation. Darlene is dedicated to working with local community and organizations, like ERCA, to indigenize programming, to include "two-eyed ways of seeing", and to recognize the rich local Indigenous history, traditions, and continued contributions.

Chi-miigwech to Darlene Marshall for her contributions to the preservation and promotion of human and natural history in the Essex Region, and we are so honoured to present her with the John R. Park Homestead Conservation Award.

Youth Award - Ben Margerison

For many years, Leamington District Secondary School student Ben Margerison has been an outstanding advocate for environmental sustainability throughout Essex County, and we are pleased to present him with the Youth Conservation Award.

From a very young age, Ben demonstrated an intense curiosity for the natural world and he regularly participated in young naturalist programs. This innate interest evolved into a commitment to protecting our local ecosystems and when he started high school, Ben immediately joined the EcoTeam so he could work within a group of like-minded young environmentalists.

Ben has been the most dedicated member of the LDSS EcoTeam for the past four years - he can always be depended on to take the lead in maintaining the school's pollinator gardens, for recruiting volunteers for ERCA's tree planting events and for developing and delivering environmental awareness campaigns to better inform his fellow students about environmental issues like climate change and biodiversity loss.

Last year, Ben worked with a few classmates to raise awareness about the environmental impacts of textile waste and the campaign culminated in a clothing drive and fashion show featuring only second hand clothing. Next year, Ben intends to pursue a university program in Marine Biology - a perfect fit for someone who cares so deeply about protecting our planet. We wish him every success with his future pursuits, and are honoured to recognize him with this award.

Environmental Achievement – Dr. John Hartig

Dr. John Hartig is currently a Visiting Scholar at the Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research at the University of Windsor. His multi-disciplinary research focuses on cleanup of the most polluted areas of Great Lakes. John also serves as the chair of the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan's Great Lakes Way Advisory Committee and is on the Board of Directors of the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy. Dr. Hartig is this year's recipient of the Conservation Award for Environmental Achievement.

In 1997, President Bill Clinton named the Detroit River as one of 14 American Heritage Rivers, a designation that would bring millions of dollars for cleanup and restoration. John Hartig was appointed Detroit River Navigator, and was integral in aiding ERCA in obtaining the Canadian Heritage Rivers designation in a concurrent process. Following that, for 14 years he served as Refuge Manager for the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. John has received numerous awards for his work, including a 2022 Michigan Notable Leader in Sustainability from Carin's Detroit Business, a 2018 Honor Award for Meritorious Service from U.S. Department of Interior, the 2017 Community Peacemaker Award from Wayne State University's Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, and the 2015 Conservationist of the Year Award from the John Muir Association.

He has authored or co-authored over 100 publications on the environment, and has published seven books. His most recent book titled *Waterfront Porch* won a 2020 Next Generation Indie Book Award in the "nature/environment" category. He also writes a monthly blog titled Great Lakes Moment for Detroit Public Television's Great Lakes Now.

He is currently writing a report on how Conservation Authorities in Canada and Watershed Councils in the United States are on the cutting edge of implementing the ecosystem approach to resource management.

Dr. John Hartig has dedicated his career to advocating for the Great Lakes and inspiring others to get involved, and we are honoured to present him with the Conservation Award for Environmental Achievement.

Environmental Achievement – Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority

Created in 2012, Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority, known as the WDBA, is a not-for-profit Canadian Crown corporation. While wholly owned by the Government of Canada, it is structured like a private company and operates independently from government. We are honoured to recognize the WDBA's significant contributions with the Award for Environmental Achievement.

The WDBA oversees construction, operation and maintenance of the Gordie Howe International Bridge through a public-private partnership. Since the inception of this partnership, the Gordie Howe International Bridge project has been committed to the principles of sustainable infrastructure – striving to be socially, environmentally and economically responsible, contribute to a cleaner environment and protect communities on both sides of the border from the impacts of climate change.

Its efforts are widely recognized and in November, the Gordie Howe International Bridge project team was honoured with the inaugural National Environmental, Social and Governance Award from the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships. Some of the environmental highlights for which it was recognized include:

- the integration of energy-efficient LED lighting
- buildings designed to meet LEED v4 Silver ratings
- installation of a peregrine falcon box on the bridge to facilitate nesting
- the relocation of over 2,600 SAR plants and 2,000 seeds from native prairie species from the site
- incorporation of green roofs on select buildings
- employing green infrastructure and stormwater management design principles; and
- establishing significant buffers around the ports of entry to maximize the distance between operations and adjacent receptors.

The WDBA has also been recognized with a Brownie Award for its dedication to the rehabilitation of brownfield sites. The Gordie Howe International Bridge strategically acquired brownfield lands for its Canadian Port of Entry and bridge site; extensively remediated them and undertook innovative approaches to obtain capital financing for economic and ecological restoration.

Another key feature of the Gordie Howe International Bridge is its Community Benefits Plan which supports opportunities that can advance economic, social or environmental conditions for the local communities.

There are many accomplishments that have been achieved thanks to this program, including the Triple Tree Impact projects undertaken in partnership with ERCA to plant hundreds of trees in Sandwich. In addition, the Malden Park Observation Area has been opened, content has been developed for the Windsor-Detroit Cross-River Tour in partnership with the University of Windsor and University of Michigan, as well as greenspace conservation and Jesuit pear reclamation.

It's also exciting that the WDBA has committed to a pedestrian and cycling-crossing, and is investigating additional cycling infrastructure investments in Southwest Detroit and along Sandwich Street in Windsor to further help reduce carbon footprints while supporting cross-border tourism efforts.

The legacy of these countless investments and dedication toward sustainability will be felt in the community for generations to come, and we are pleased to add to the Windsor Detroit Bridge Authority many accolades with this Award for Environmental Achievement.

Dennis Chase Staff Award – Nancy Roy

The Dennis Chase Staff Award honours longtime staff member Dennis Chase and recognizes those who demonstrate the traits that Dennis upheld: dedication, commitment, conscientiousness, kindness to colleagues, enthusiasm, pride in a job well done, and good humour.

Nancy Roy is ERCA's Accounting Associate, and while she's been with ERCA for less than two years, she has quickly become the team cheerleader. She's the first to congratulate, support and praise whenever a co-worker has made an achievement. She goes out of her way to engage customers, clients and new employees and makes them feel welcome and cared for.

Nancy always shows up with a smile and a heart full of gratitude and respect. She is able to diffuse difficult situations with aplomb and a quick wit and she is a delightful presence in the workplace. She approaches everyone she meets with a positive, warm and welcoming demeanour. Her naturally upbeat perspective ensures that every individual interacting with her feels genuinely heard and that their needs will be well taken care of. Her enthusiasm is contagious, and she doesn't hesitate to say "YES" whenever someone needs help or she is asked to participate in new things.

While Nancy has had several jobs throughout her career, with ERCA, she has identified that she has found her calling. She takes pride in her Health & Safety Committee duties and loves getting out to inspect our various conservation areas. Nancy is able to put everyone she interacts with at ease with her approachable demeanor and quick sense of humour.

Here's what some of her colleagues had to say:

"If you're ever having a bad day – go talk to Nancy and you will immediately feel better. Her beautiful smile, positive attitude and her ability to find a way to give you a sincere compliment are unfailing. If you need help with anything, Nancy is always there to lend a hand. And, despite her small frame – she can do some pretty heavy lifting!"

Nancy embodies the Maya Angelou quote that “People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel”. Nancy has the rare ability to make us all feel better for our interactions with her.

For these reasons and more, we are pleased to present her with the Dennis Chase Staff Award.

Congratulations to all, and thank you for your incredible contributions to sustainability in our region.

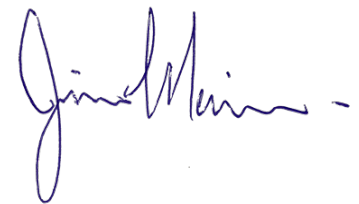
16. Other Business

A. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the ERCA Board of Directors will be held on February 15, 2024 starting at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, Essex Civic Centre.

17. Adjournment

Resolution 17/24 Moved by Molly Alliare
Seconded by Katie McGuire-Blais
THAT the 2024 Annual General Meeting of the Essex Region Conservation Authority Board of Directors be adjourned. **Carried**



Jim Morrison, Chair



Tim Byrne, CAO/Secretary-Treasurer