



November LRCA Board Meeting
Lakehead Region Conservation Authority
November 26, 2025, at 4:30 PM
130 Conservation Road/Microsoft Teams

Members Present:

Albert Aiello (part of meeting), Donna Blunt, Rudy Buitenhuis, Dan Calvert, Sheelagh Hendrick, Greg Johnsen, Brian Kurikka

Members Present Virtually:

Grant Arnold, Robert Beatty, Jim Vezina

Members Not Present:

Trevor Giertuga

Also Present:

Tammy Cook, Chief Administrative Officer

Mark, Ambrose, Finance Manager

Ryne Gilliam, Lands Manager

Melissa Hughson, Watershed Manager

Ryan Macket, Communications Manager

Melanie O'Riley, Administrative Clerk/Receptionist, recorder of minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

THAT: the Agenda be adopted as published.

Motion: #124/25

Motion moved by Rudy Buitenhuis and motion seconded by Brian Kurikka. **CARRIED.**

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

None.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

THAT: the Minutes of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority Ninth Regular Meeting held on October 29, 2025 be adopted as published.

Motion: #125/25

Motion moved by Brian Kurikka and motion seconded by Rudy Buitenhuis. **CARRIED.**

THAT: the Minutes of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority's Special Meeting held on November 17, 2025 be adopted as published

Motion: #126/25

Motion moved by Brian Kurikka and motion seconded by Rudy Buitenhuis. **CARRIED.**

5. IN-CAMERA AGENDA

THAT: we now go into Committee of the Whole (In-Camera) at 4:35 p.m.

Motion: #127/25

Motion moved by Rudy Buitenhuis and motion seconded by Brian Kurikka. **CARRIED.**

THAT: we go into Open Meeting at 5:03 p.m.

Motion: #128/25

Motion moved by Rudy Buitenhuis and motion seconded by Brian Kurikka. **CARRIED.**

THAT: the In-Camera Minutes of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority October 29, 2025 meeting be adopted as published.

Motion: #129/25

Motion moved by Brian Kurikka and motion seconded by Rudy Buitenhuis. **CARRIED.**

6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

6.1. Proposed regional consolidation of conservation authorities and Bill 68 Schedule 3

Members reviewed and discussed Bill 68, Plan to Protect Ontario (Budget Measures), 2025 (No.2), and Schedule 3 related to the proposed regional consolidation of conservation authorities and the proposal for the formation of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency.

With Respect to the posting by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks Environmental Registry Notice No. 025-1257 ("Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities"), proposing to reduce Ontario's 36 conservation authorities to 7 regional entities as part of a broader restructuring that would create a new Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency to provide centralized oversight and direction under the Conservation Authorities Act;

AND THAT under this proposal, the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) would be merged into a new "Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority" together with:

- Grey Sauble Conservation
- the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority
- the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority
- the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority
- the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority
- the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority

forming a single organization encompassing the eastern shores of Lake Huron, the southern shores of Georgian Bay, Lake Simcoe, and the western shores of Lake Superior in Northwestern Ontario;

AND THAT the LRCA Board acknowledges and supports the Province's goals of improved efficiency, consistency and fiscal prudence in conservation delivery,

AND THAT the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority is a self-sufficient entity that is accountable to its member municipalities;

- financially resilient;
- consistently processes permits in less than 7 days;
- operates in the City of Thunder Bay that has exceeded their housing target by 143%;
- has modern financial and IT processes that prioritize security and redundancy; and
- is a locally recognized leader in the conservation and protection of the Lakehead Watershed; and
- all staff are front line workers;

AND THAT the Board further recognizes that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority is unique as it does not abut any other Conservation Authority and solely serves Northwestern Ontario communities that face vastly different climatic, hydrological, geographic and infrastructure realities, and would be disconnected to the proposed larger overarching administrative structure that is physically based 1,500 kilometres from the north with 72 other municipalities;

The Board finds that the proposed "Huron-Superior Region" configuration would :

- Create a geographically vast and administratively complex entity, joining Northwestern Ontario with fast-growing Southern Ontario municipalities that are 1,300-1,500 kilometres apart with no shared watershed connection or economic alignment;
- dilute local accountability and municipal partnership, contrary to the principle that decisions are best made at the local level;
- generate substantial transition costs — including human-resources integration, governance restructuring, IT migration and policy harmonization, rebranding — that would divert resources from front-line service delivery and delay measurable outcomes, contrary to the Province's business-planning principles of value for money, cost containment and service continuity; and
- risk greater uncertainty and delay for builders, developers and farmers, as local permitting offices and staff familiar with local conditions are replaced by distant regional structures, making it harder for applicants to obtain timely local advice, resolve issues or expedite housing and infrastructure approvals that support the Province's "Get It Done" agenda;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Board of Directors is opposed to the proposed "Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority" boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257;

AND THAT the Board recommends that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority form the 8th Regional Conservation Authority as the "Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority";

AND THAT further provincial evaluation is conducted with a more focused specific model as a geographically coherent, cost-effective and locally accountable alternative that advances the government's priorities of efficiency, red-tape reduction and timely housing delivery;

AND THAT the Ministry engage directly with affected municipalities of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, before finalizing any consolidation boundaries or legislative amendments;

AND THAT this resolution, with a letter from the Chair, be forwarded to the Environmental Registry of Ontario consultations and to:

- the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and his Opposition critics;
- local Members of Provincial Parliament;
- local Members of Parliament;
- the Association of Municipalities of Ontario;
- Conservation Ontario;
- All local municipalities; and
- All Conservation Authorities in Ontario.

Motion: #130/25

Motion moved by Sheelagh Hendrick and motion seconded by Brian Kurikka. **CARRIED.**

7. CORRESPONDENCE

7.1. Arthur Shewchuk Memorial Bursary

It was noted that the 2024-2025 recipient of the Arthur Shewchuk Memorial Bursary was Destiny Eissner who is enrolled in the Bachelor of Engineering (Chemical) program.

8. STAFF REPORTS

8.1. WM-01-2025 Conservation Areas Water Quality Report 2025

Members reviewed and discussed Staff Report WM-01-2025 related to the 2025 Conservation Areas Water Quality Report.

THAT: the Staff Report WM-01-2025 be received AND FURTHER THAT the Conservation Area Water Monitoring Program will continue in 2026.

Motion: #131/25

Motion moved by Albert Aiello and motion seconded by Dan Calvert. **CARRIED.**

8.2. 2025 Stewardship Program Project Summary

Members reviewed and discussed Staff Report STEW-02-2025 which summarized the 2025 Stewardship Program.

THAT: Staff Report STEW-02-2025 be received.

Motion: #132/25

Motion moved by Dan Calvert and motion seconded by Sheelagh Hendrick. **CARRIED.**

9. CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

9.1. Monthly Treasurer's Report

Members were provided with the Monthly Treasurer's Report for October's Administration and Capital.

9.2. Final 2026 Budget

Members reviewed and discussed the 2026 Budget and Levy.

THAT: the 2026 Budget levy apportionment as outlined in Version 2.0 of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority Final Budget be approved AND FURTHER THAT a copy of the final budget will be provided to the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks and all Member Municipalities.

Recorded Weighted Vote:

Municipality	Member	Vote %	Vote
Conmee	Grant Arnold	1.54%	Yes
Dorion	Robert Beatty	1.03%	Yes
Gillies	Rudy Buitenhuis	0.88%	Yes
Neebing	Brian Kurikka	7.87%	Yes
O'Connor	Jim Vezina	1.65%	Yes
Oliver Paipoonge	Dan Calvert	19.30%	Yes
Shuniah	Donna Blunt	17.73%	Yes
Thunder Bay	Sheelagh Hendrick	12.50%	Yes
Thunder Bay	Trevor Giertuga	12.50%	Absent
Thunder Bay	Albert Aiello	12.50%	Absent
Thunder Bay	Greg Johnsen	12.50%	Yes

Motion: #133/25

Motion moved by Sheelagh Hendrick and motion seconded by Dan Calvert. **CARRIED.**

THAT: in 2026 the following will be appropriated from the following reserves: Operating Capital Reserve \$30,000; Vehicle and Equipment Reserve \$31,100; Conservation Area Major Maintenance Capital Reserve \$52,300; and Forest Management Reserve \$35,085.

Motion: #134/25

Motion moved by Sheelagh Hendrick and motion seconded by Dan Calvert. **CARRIED.**

THAT: the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority adopts the 2026 Budget Document, Version 2.0 for a total budget of \$3,245,679.

Motion: #135/25

Motion moved by Sheelagh Hendrick and motion seconded by Dan Calvert. **CARRIED.**

9.3. 2026 Board of Directors Meeting Schedule

Members were provided with the 2026 Board of Directors Meeting Schedule.

THAT: the 2026 Board of Directors Meeting schedule is approved.

Motion: #136/25

Motion moved by Dan Calvert and motion seconded by Sheelagh Hendrick. **CARRIED.**

10. PASSING OF ACCOUNTS

THAT: having examined the accounts for the period October 1, 2025 to October 31, 2025 cheque #3690 to #3713 for \$143,101.97 and preauthorized payments of \$153,768.86 for a total of \$296,870.83, we approve their payment.

Motion: #137/25

Motion moved by Sheelagh Hendrick and motion seconded by Dan Calvert. **CARRIED.**

11. REGULATORY ROLE

Members were provided with the Plan Review program comments and Section 28 permits issued since last meeting.

12. PROJECTS UPDATE

12.1. Communications Manager Projects Update

Members were provided with an update on the 2025 Holiday gathering and the LRCA fundraising calendar.

12.2. Lands Manager Projects Update

Members were provided with a verbal update on the Mills Block Redevelopment project.

12.3. Watershed Manager Projects Update

It was noted that the CAO, Watershed Manager and Watershed Biologist attended the Latornell Conservation Symposium on November 3-4, 2025, in Toronto. The Symposium is an annual event co-hosted by Conservation Ontario and the University of Guelph.

It was noted that the Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP) Manager (Watershed Manager) attended the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) DWSP – Conservation Ontario – Program Manager Meeting held on November 19-20, 2025, in Cambridge Ontario.

It was noted that the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway Sediment Removal Project is in progress and on schedule.

It was noted that sampling under the Provincial Ground Water Monitoring Network (PGMN) program was completed for 2025.

It was noted that the IT/GIS Specialist, Environmental Planner and Planning and Regulations Technician attended the Regional Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network meeting on November 5, 2025, in Sudbury. It was also noted that the LRCA has volunteered to participate in PWQMN's winter sampling program for 2025/2026. The first winter sampling day will occur in early December.

13. NEW BUSINESS

None.

14. NEXT MEETING

A Special Meeting will be held on December 16, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.

The following meeting will be held on January 28, 2026, at 4:30 p.m., which will be the Annual General Meeting and elections. Location will be off site due to planned renovations at the Administrative Office.

15. ADJOURNMENT

THAT: the time being 5:47 p.m. AND FURTHER THAT there being no further business we adjourn.

Motion: #138/25

Motion moved by Brian Kurikka and motion seconded by Dan Calvert. **CARRIED.**

Donna Blunt
Chair

Jammy Cook
Chief Administrative Officer