

GREY SAUBLE CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (GSCA)

Board Meeting Highlights 08/25/2021



Water Management

a. Report on the 2021 Owen Sound Mill Dam Operations

Staff provided a report on the new Owen Sound Mill Dam Operation Manual. Staff noted that the gate's operation is an older system using a manual hydraulic hand pump. Typically, the gates are installed in early May and before waterfowl nesting to reduce stress on migrating waterfowl. In the fall, staff raise the gates to prepare for the spring runoff or freshet. Of particular concern is debris getting caught under the open gates and restricting the operation of the gates. This needs to be monitored closely. Staff noted that the dam does require maintenance and the hydraulic system needs to be kept in good working order for short notice raising or lowering of gates.

CAO, Tim Lanthier thanked staff for their hard work and diligence in monitoring the water levels and adjusting the dam level when needed, day or night.



Environmental Planning

a. Regulation Mapping Update

Staff provided an update on GSCA's regulation mapping. The mapping is used as a visual aid to flag areas subject to Ontario Regulation 151/06. Although staff utilize best efforts and best available data to produce the mapping, the text of the regulation takes precedence over the mapping.

Staff continually update mapping with the best available data. Updates are brought to the Board and sent to municipal partners annually. GSCA has partnered with NDMNRF and member municipalities to acquire new ortho photos every five years. Staff utilizes 3D mapping technology to accurately map regulated features on a site-by-site basis.

GSCA will be providing the updated data to member municipalities and local counties staff.

b. RFP Award Recommendation: Environmental Planning Service Rates and Fees Review

Staff presented the results of the advertised RFP to review the Environmental Planning service rates and fees. The review is intended to align the service rates and fees with the total costs of providing these services.

The RFP was advertised on MERX, Bids and Tenders, and GSCA's website.

GSCA received two qualified responses, one from Watson and Associates, and one from BMA. After a review of the proposals, GSCA has awarded the contract to Watson and Associates. Work will begin immediately and is anticipated to be finalized by the end of 2021.

Forestry

a. Tree Planting and Sales Update

Staff provided an update to the 2021 Spring Tree Sale and 2021 tree planting season. GSCA provided pre-order tree sales this year with a modified tree pickup procedure, utilizing an online pickup booking system to ensure safe pick up of orders. The system was very successful and will continue to be used in the future.

More than 29,000 seedlings and 1,800 landscape trees were sold through pre-orders, generating over \$84,000 in revenue.

Forestry staff planted over 81,000 trees, between May 7th to June 11th with five tree planters, including four new staff. This is up from 71,000 in 2020. There was a total of 37 projects covering 53 hectares (132 acres). Additionally, staff completed a contract through Enbridge to replant areas that were disturbed by the construction of the Enbridge gas line. Enbridge provided funds to replant two acres for every acre affected.

Grants from Forests Ontario, One Tree Planted, and 2 private individuals allowed GSCA to pass significant savings on to landowners resulting in a reduction of the average per tree cost from \$2.06 to \$0.37.



Administration

a. Q2 Budget Update

Staff provided an update of the Budget to the end of the Second Quarter. It was noted that position vacancies and replacements have resulted in an anticipated surplus in salaries and wages. Due to some projects being delayed in the 2020 budget year, contracts and services appear over budget, however the related 2020 surplus is still intended to these projects.

Stewardship and Forestry received more funding than had been budgeted for, resulting in increased revenues and related expenses for these programs. GSCA was awarded funding through the Healthy Lake Huron program. The additional funding has allowed for additional expenditures on stewardship projects.

As previously reported, GSCA has had a significant Insurance Premium increase for 2021.

b. Q2 Investment Update

Staff reviewed the TD Investment update. The fund sits at \$1.331 million as of June 30, 2021, up 4% for the quarter and 8% for the year. As per the Board's direction, an additional \$200,000 has been moved into the portfolio and the approved funds will be transferred into the ESG fund when it will be most advantageous for GSCA. As of mid-August 2021, GSCA's investment portfolio has a market value of \$1.552 million.