



## **Raisin Region Conservation Authority**

### **Board of Directors Meeting Agenda**

January 15, 2026 – 9:00 am

**South Glengarry Fire Station 1 (Glen Walter) Fire Hall** – Glen Water Park Rd, South Glengarry, ON

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#### Page

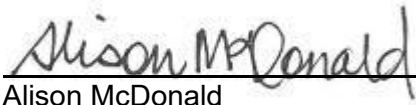
1. Call to Order
2. Land Acknowledgement
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Declaration of Conflict of Interest
5. Delegations / Presentations
  - a) RRCA Project Update – PowerPoint Presentation (Staff)
6. Approval of Minutes
  - a) Minutes of December 4, 2025 1-3
7. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

The Chair is turned over to the General Manager for the purpose of the 2026 election of Chair and Vice-Chair.
8. New Business
  - a) End-of-Year Variance Report 4
  - b) Approval – 2026 Budget and Municipal Levy 5
  - c) Update: Proposed Regional Consolidation of Conservation Authorities 6-19
  - d) Annual Approvals: Mileage Rate, Solicitor, Auditor 20-21
  - e) 2026 Committee Appointments 22-24
  - f) Approval - Health and Safety Policy 25-31
  - g) Strategic Action Plan – 2026/Q1 Progress Update 32-43
  - h) Grant Submissions 44-46
  - i) Conservation Areas Update 47-48
  - j) Flood Mapping Update 49-50
  - k) Staff Recognition: Years of Service 51-53

9. Future Meetings

RRCA Board of Directors starting at 9:00 am - Mar 5, Apr 2, May 7

10. Adjournment

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Alison McDonald", is written over a horizontal line.

Alison McDonald  
General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer

RAISIN REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
DECEMBER 4, 2025 MEETING  
MINUTES  
RRCA ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

PRESENT: Bryan McGillis, South Stormont, Chair  
Andrew Guindon, South Stormont  
Jacques Massie, North Glengarry  
Claude McIntosh, City of Cornwall  
Martin Lang, South Glengarry  
Lachlan McDonald, South Glengarry  
Adrian Bugelli, North Stormont

STAFF: Alison McDonald, General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer  
Josianne Sabourin, Executive Assistant  
Sandy Crites, Finance Officer  
Phil Barnes, Team Lead, Watershed Management  
Lisa Van De Ligt, Team Lead, Communications & Stewardship

REGRETS: Carilyne Hebert, City of Cornwall

**CALL TO ORDER**

Bryan McGillis, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 am

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

RESOLUTION #86/25: Moved by: Jacques Massie  
Seconded by: Adrian Bugelli

THAT the agenda be approved as presented.

CARRIED

**DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

RESOLUTION #87/25: Moved by: Adrian Bugelli  
Seconded by: Andrew Guindon

THAT the minutes of October 2, 2025, meeting of the Raisin Region Conservation Authority be approved.

CARRIED

RESOLUTION #88/25:

Moved by: Adrian Bugelli

Seconded by: Andrew Guindon

THAT the minutes of November 5, 2025 Special meeting of the Raisin Region Conservation Authority be approved.

CARRIED

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **UPDATE: BILL 68 AND PROPOSED REGIONAL CONSOLIDATION OF CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES**

RESOLUTION #89/25:

Moved by: Claude McIntosh

Seconded by: Martin Lang

THAT the Board of Directors receive the update on proposed regional consolidation and amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act and provide input and direction on formal submissions.

CARRIED

#### **DRAFT BUDGET – APPROVAL FOR CONSULTATION**

RESOLUTION #90/25:

Moved by: Lachlan McDonald

Seconded by: Martin Lang

THAT the Board of Directors approve the 2026 Draft Budget for circulation to member municipalities for review, as presented, and

FURTHER THAT the 2026 Draft Budget be posted on RRCA's website.

CARRIED

#### **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH STORMONT, DUNDAS, AND GLENGARRY COUNTY FOR IT SERVICES**

RESOLUTION #91/25:

Moved by: Martin Lang

Seconded by: Lachlan McDonald

THAT the Board of Directors approve entering the Memorandum of Understanding with SDG County for IT Services.

CARRIED

#### **GRANT SUBMISSIONS**

RESOLUTION #92/25:

Moved by: Martin Lang

Seconded by: Lachlan McDonald

THAT the Board of Directors retroactively approve the following requests:

1. \$360,985 from the Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks for Cooper Marsh Conservation Area and Lakeview Marsh enhancements and restoration;
2. \$4,500 from Ontario Power Generation to support the 2026 RRCA Tree Giveaway and Family Fishing Day events;
3. \$120,235 from Environment and Climate Change Canada for Lakeview Marsh enhancements and restoration;
4. \$74,545 from the Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks for Lakeview Marsh enhancements and restoration;
5. \$95,132 from the Government of Canada for summer student employment subsidies;

FURTHER THAT the Board of Directors approve partnering with Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters to host up to two invasive species technicians in 2026;

AND FURTHER THAT the Board of Directors approve entering into an agreement with funders, as required.

CARRIED

#### 2026 TREE PLANTING AND SPOT SPRAY CONTRACTS

RESOLUTION #93/25:

Moved by: Lachlan McDonald

Seconded by: Andrian Bugelli

THAT the Board of Directors approve awarding 2026 tree planting and tending contracts to SJM Tree Planting and Heritage Reforestation Inc. to a combined upset limit of \$38,000 plus HST.

CARRIED

#### **FUTURE MEETINGS**

RRCA Board of Directors starting at 9:00 am – Jan. 15, Feb 5, Mar 5

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

RESOLUTION #94/25:

Moved by: Jacques Massie

Seconded by: Adrian Bugelli

THAT the Board of Directors meeting of December 4, 2025, be adjourned.

CARRIED

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Bryan McGillis,  
Chair

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Alison McDonald,  
General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer



## Raisin Region Conservation Authority

18045 County Road 2, P.O. Box 429, Cornwall, ON K6H 5T2

Tel: 613-938-3611 [www.rrca.on.ca](http://www.rrca.on.ca)

**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Sandy Crites, Finance Officer  
**Date:** January 9, 2026  
**Subject:** End-of-Year Variance Reports

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### RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board of Directors receive the End-of-Year Variance Reports as of December 31, 2025, as presented.

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### BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

The Corporate Services Working Group recommended that a budget variance report be submitted quarterly for review.

Staff have prepared Year End variance reports for 2025 operating and capital budgets. A copy of both reports will be provided prior to the meeting.

### RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

#### Goal 3: Financial Stability

- 3.1: Demonstrating financial accountability.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandy Crites'.

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Sandy Crites,  
Finance Officer



## Raisin Region Conservation Authority

18045 County Road 2, P.O. Box 429, Cornwall, ON K6H 5T2

Tel: 613-938-3611 [www.rrca.on.ca](http://www.rrca.on.ca)

**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Alison McDonald, General Manager, Secretary-  
**Date:** Treasurer January 9, 2026  
**Subject:** Approval - 2026 Budget and Municipal Levy

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### RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board of Directors approve the 2026 Municipal Levy Apportionment Amounts Owed and that municipalities be notified of their 2026 levy;

AND FURTHER THAT the 2026 Budget of the Raisin Region Conservation Authority be adopted and posted on RRCA's website.

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### BACKGROUND:

The annual budget is prepared in accordance with Conservation Authorities Act Regulations 402/22 (Budget and Apportionment) and 401/22 (Determination of Amounts).

The draft budget was approved on December 4, 2025, for a 30-day consultation period. Presentations were delivered to municipal councils where requested. No formal comments were received.

At this meeting the Board will vote on the final phases of the budget process include Phase 3 – Approval of Amounts Owed and Phase 4 – Approval of Final Budget.

### DISCUSSION:

The Board provided direction at the December 4<sup>th</sup> meeting to review capital projects for 2026. Targeted projects were added and will be presented at the meeting.

Staff also received confirmation of new project funding during the 30-day consultation period; these revenues have been added to the budget and will support previous board direction around improvements at Lakeview Marsh Conservation Area.

Staff will be sending the updated final 2026 budget presentation for review prior to the meeting.

### RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

#### Goal 3: Financial Stability

- 3.1: Demonstrating financial accountability.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison McDonald".

Alison McDonald  
General Manager, Secretary-Treasurer



**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Alison McDonald, General Manager  
**Date:** January 8, 2026  
**Subject:** Update: Proposed Regional Consolidation of Conservation Authorities

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## RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board of Directors receive the update on proposed regional consolidation including the Environmental Registry submission.

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## BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

On November 7, 2025, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks posted a proposal on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) regarding boundaries for regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities (CAs).

On December 4<sup>th</sup> the Board provided input and feedback on the proposal and directed staff to make a submission through the ERO (attached). The Board and staff are concerned that the proposed region will be too large to deliver effective governance, oversight, and accountability. The comments also highlight concerns about the loss of local decision-making authority, reduced municipal representation, service disruption, and impacts on local programs. Out letter suggested alternative options such as voluntary consolidation, smaller regional groupings, or shared corporate service agreements at a regional level.

CAs across Ontario made submissions ranging from supportive to oppositional, with most landing somewhere in the middle. Approximately 120 municipal resolutions were received including from local municipalities and Counties, and the City of Ottawa. Submissions were also received from other agencies including Conservation Ontario, Wildlife Conservation Society, AMO, and the OFA. Of note, local donors and concerned citizen groups also reached out to discuss comments.

Consistent concerns:

- The large geographical scale of the regions poses a risk to on-going service delivery; the regional boundaries should be reconsidered in consultation with CAs and municipalities.
- The importance of local governance, local staff, and municipal representation.
- Requirements for provincial funding both for any transition costs as well as for category one programs and services (AMO suggesting 50% municipal, 50% provincial).



## **NEXT STEPS:**

RRCA recommends the province:

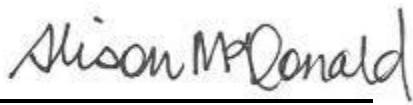
1. Reassess the consolidation model to ensure geographic coherence, cost-effectiveness, and local accountability; consider source protection region alignments which reflect existing municipal partnerships and shared staffing.
2. Consider alternative approaches such as voluntary consolidation, smaller regional groupings, or shared corporate service agreements.
3. Protect local municipalities and taxpayers from financial pressures related to the consolidation and the provincial agency.
4. Ensure there is appropriate representation of municipalities, including local governance bodies, to protect municipal representation, reserves, locally funded assets, and watershed priorities.
5. Consider a longer implementation timeline to address clear governance frameworks, timelines, and change management strategies to maintain service continuity and staff retention.

We recently received confirmation of our delegation request with the Minister of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks for the upcoming ROMA conference which will be led by SDG. Staff also continue to engage with neighbouring CAs, Conservation Ontario, municipal partners, and the province and will explore opportunities to participate in working groups.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

### Goal 4: Organizational Excellence

- 4.2: Empowering our team and fostering a culture of excellence, inclusion and professionalism.



Alison McDonald  
General Manager, Secretary/Treasurer

*Attached:*

*RRCA ERO Submission*

*AMO – CO Joint Recommendations*

Sent by email to: [minister.mecp@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.mecp@ontario.ca)

December 24, 2025

The Honourable Todd McCarthy  
Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks  
5th Floor, 777 Bay Street  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2J3

**Subject: Recommendations for Successful Conservation Authority Transformation**

Dear Minister McCarthy,

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario and Conservation Ontario are writing to provide joint feedback on ERO 025-1257 – Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities (CAs) complementing our respective and separate ERO submissions.

**We support the goals of this proposal.** Accelerating local approvals helps protect Ontario's economy amid global uncertainty. Faster, more predictable approvals, that maintain environmental protections and prioritize frontline conservation can unlock the new infrastructure and development required for a growing, competitive province.

**Municipal and local partnership is key to CA success.** The success of the CA model is local: expertise, governance, community trust, and partnerships. If regionalization results in structures that cover too large a geographic area, we risk losing what makes CAs effective:

- **Loss of local expertise:** Watershed-based CAs have extensive on-the-ground expertise and understanding of unique environmental conditions, enabling timely and effective decision-making on local development, and real-time responsiveness during storms and emergencies.
- **Loss of effective municipal oversight:** Municipal accountability and oversight help CAs effectively balance watershed management and community growth.
- **Loss of strong local relationships:** Key stakeholders (such as municipalities, Indigenous communities, businesses, the agricultural community, watershed residents, and other partners) provide funding, donations, and build public trust.

Over 100 municipalities have passed or are considering resolutions urging the Province to move forward by working together with municipalities and CAs to achieve provincial objectives while preserving local governance, accountability, and expertise.

AMO and CO propose a right-sized, simplified regional model that:

- is grounded in science-based watershed boundaries
- maintains strong municipal involvement and oversight
- preserves local relationships and community trust
- balances the need to stay connected at the community level with the needs of certainty, predictability, and consistency of service delivery standards for permitting and approvals
- avoids unnecessary complexity by allowing lands, major agreements (including employment), reserve funds etc. to remain within existing corporations

**To achieve this, AMO and CO recommend that the Province:**

1. Work together with an implementation working group (including AMO, Conservation Ontario and select CAs, municipal, developers, and Indigenous representatives) to jointly develop practical solutions, including:
  - service standards, permitting faster and standardized approvals
  - governance and boundary design
  - funding models, allocations, and reserve structures
  - shared “back office” efficiencies and,
  - clear transition planning including: service continuity; points of contact; permitting continuity measures; board and staff communications; and staff retention measures.
2. Commit to a clear implementation timeline and transition plan supported by the implementation working group to position transformation for success. This will ensure continuity of service certainty for all stakeholders.
3. Share comprehensive financial, operational, and governance impact analysis to support evidence-based decision-making.
4. Restore a 50-50 municipal-provincial funding partnership for CAs, reflecting expanded Provincial role in CA operations while ensuring affordability and long-term stability.

All stakeholders, including the development industry, benefit from certainty. This approach minimizes the risk of multiple significant changes occurring at the same time, limits disruption to program delivery, and creates conditions for better outcomes and buy-in.

Ministry McCarthy, we thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback and look forward to discussing these concerns with you. Please contact Karen Nesbitt, Director of Policy and Government Relations at AMO ([knesbitt@amo.on.ca](mailto:knesbitt@amo.on.ca)), to arrange a meeting at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Robin Jones  
AMO President  
Mayor of the Village of Westport



Dave Barton  
Chair, Conservation Ontario  
Vice-Chair, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority  
Mayor, Township of Uxbridge

cc: The Honourable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Sarah Harrison, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks  
Martha Greenberg, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing



## Raisin Region Conservation Authority

18045 County Road 2, P.O. Box 429, Cornwall, ON K6H 5T2

Tel: 613-938-3611 [www.rrca.on.ca](http://www.rrca.on.ca)

### Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities (ERO #025-1257)

**Organization Name:** Raisin Region Conservation Authority

**Date:** December 22, 2025

**Address:** 18045 County Road 2, Cornwall Ontario, K6H 5T2

**Email Address:** [Alison.McDonald@rrca.on.ca](mailto:Alison.McDonald@rrca.on.ca)

**Phone Number:** (613) 938-3611 ext. 222

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on ERO #025-1257 regarding the proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities. This feedback is the result of consultation with Raisin Region Conservation Authority (RRCA) staff, Board of Directors, municipalities, partners, and rightsholders.

While RRCA supports the province's objectives to modernize service delivery and strengthen hazard protection, we have significant concerns about the proposed consolidation model. Effective watershed management relies on strong connections to local needs, priorities, and expertise. The creation of a St. Lawrence Regional Conservation Authority spanning 46 municipalities and 18,500 km<sup>2</sup> risks undermining effective watershed management.

We are concerned that the proposed region will be too large to deliver effective governance, oversight, and accountability. We are worried about the loss of local decision-making authority, reduced municipal representation, service disruption, and impacts on local programs. We are also concerned this large Regional CA will not be able to maintain development review timelines and customer service standards.

RRCA recommends that the province:

1. **Reassess the consolidation model** to ensure geographic coherence, cost-effectiveness, and local accountability; consider source protection region alignments which reflect existing municipal partnerships and shared staffing.
2. **Consider alternative approaches** such as voluntary consolidation, smaller regional groupings, or shared corporate service agreements.
3. **Protect local municipalities and taxpayers** from any financial pressures related to the consolidation and the provincial agency.
4. **Ensure there is appropriate representation** of municipalities, including local governance bodies, to protect municipal representation, reserves, locally funded assets, and watershed priorities.
5. **Consider a longer implementation timeline** to address clear governance frameworks, timelines, and change management strategies to maintain service continuity and staff retention.

RRCA is committed to collaboration and encourages the province to take the necessary time to engage with Conservation Authorities and our partners in evaluating alternatives. These could include voluntary consolidation, smaller regional groupings, or shared corporate service agreements at a regional level.

If the province chooses to move forward with the current proposal, we respectfully request the opportunity for continued engagement to help achieving outcomes that serve both the province and local communities effectively.

**ERO #025-1257 Questions:****1. What do you see as key factors to support a successful transition and outcome of regional conservation authority consolidation?**

If consolidation fails, the following could be lost:

- On-the-ground expertise,
- Understanding of local environmental conditions and records (e.g., localized infrastructure flooding),
- Strong relationships and funding support from: municipalities, Indigenous communities, donors, businesses, the agricultural community, watershed residents, and other partners,
- The ability to provide real-time response during storms and emergencies,
- High standards of customer service in development review,
- Support from the scientific community, and
- Effective oversight and buy-in from municipal funding partners.

The province should consider if the proposal is the best possible way to achieve the stated goals and objectives; many CA's have noted that modernization goals could be achieved through the current 36 CA corporations using legislative and regulatory amendments, technological solutions, and performance metrics/indicators. If the proposal moves forward, we suggest the following for consideration.

**I. *Municipal and Partner Support***

The RRCA currently enjoys several partnerships, funding relationships, municipal agreements and a variety of self-generated revenue streams. These relationships are already being impacted by the proposed consolidation model. One of our long-term partners indicated they will not renew a significant agreement due to the change from 'local' to 'regional'. This has a large financial impact on our organization.

Should the province move forward with the proposal, the principle of "pay for say" must be maintained to retain the trust of municipal decision makers, funders, and taxpayers. The proposed St. Lawrence Regional Conservation Authority will change from five municipalities to 46, stretching oversight and "pay for say" to the point it may undermine confidence in CA governance. Municipal priorities must be maintained by defining local governance structures that include all participating municipalities. Each existing CA should maintain a distinct watershed-based operating division so that local knowledge, municipal relationships, and watershed-specific conditions remain central to decision-making.

Our local conservation areas form part of a limited public land portfolio in Eastern Ontario. To maintain municipal and partner support, long-standing conservation and land management priorities, along with the community benefits provided by these local areas, must remain stable. Additionally, strong guarantees are needed to ensure that reserves (built over decades through local municipal and partner investment) are not diverted to support unrelated regional priorities.

## II. *Working Group and Communications/Transition Plan*

*The province should collaborate with a working group (Conservation Ontario, CAs, municipalities, and other experts) to evaluate proposed solutions including forms of local governance (watershed committees, local councils, etc.).*

The working group should help prepare a clear transition plan including:

- Designation of established leadership teams,
- Transition plans with clear milestones,
- Transition boards with representation from each existing CA, and
- Well thought out change management strategies for staff, partners, municipalities, and the public.

A clear and well-coordinated communication strategy will also be essential to support the transition. The province must ensure early and consistent provincial guidance on mandate, expectations, governance structure, and transition objectives. Where transitional staffing is established, regional leadership should be available to attend local offices to address issues as often as possible.

Personalized engagement, including council presentations, small-group stakeholder meetings, and one-on-one conversations with municipal representatives would provide opportunities for input on region-specific questions.

## III. *Protecting Local Service Delivery and Staff Retention*

*Staff retention strategies should be prepared and communicated to manage the proposed consolidation. Engaging existing leadership should be a key priority.*

The uncertainty around consolidation presents a significant risk to workforce stability, recruitment, and retention. Effective watershed management depends on local integrated expertise in hydrology/hydraulics, natural hazards, ecology, and familiarity with the unique conditions of each watershed.

RRCA's timely and personalized customer service is key to our strong relationships with residents and municipal partners. We are concerned that consolidation will cause service delays as new teams, processes, and expectations are established. RRCA currently delivers among

the fastest permit timelines in Ontario with routine permits often issued within 24 hours. Staff are directly integrated with partner municipal offices and regularly attend meetings with developers to expedite projects. Our staff are highly accessible through walk-ins, meetings, events, and site visits.

CAs also depend on well established partnerships with stewardship organizations, private landowners, farmers, Drainage Superintendents, and the development industry to deliver programs and services effectively. These partnerships are crucial for navigating complex regulatory frameworks, accessing funding programs, and advancing projects on the ground.

All stakeholders, including the development industry, benefit from certainty. The proposed consolidation will introduce unknowns and new processes at an already uncertain time in the market. Consolidation would require merging multiple IT systems, protocols, databases, HR and payroll systems, GIS platforms, and finance software. The potential for permit timeline delays is very high. The geographic size of the proposed region also creates uncertainty around the availability of in-person access and timeliness of field inspections.

Staff retention ensures continuity, preserves local watershed knowledge, protects decades of cultivated relationships, and maintains both service quality and community confidence. Ignorance of local concerns or issues will create distrust, lack of participation, conflict, and lack of partner or municipal support. The consolidation proposal has already introduced uncertainty and concern in staff. Clarity, consistency, and on-going support is essential throughout the proposed transition.

## **2. What opportunities or benefits may come from a regional conservation authority framework?**

Most of the stated provincial objectives (shared digital tools, modernized systems, stronger technical capacity, and more consistent standards) can be achieved through existing provincial authority, recent legislative amendments, and the influence of the OPCA without the need for consolidation. If consolidation proceeds, RRCA recommends leveraging the following as opportunities.

### *1. Consistency*

Right-sized consolidation could result in consistent permitting practices, technical standards, service levels, and fees which, in the long-term, contributes to a predictable development review environment. However, the RRCA already maintains low fees, quick turnaround times, and highly personalized service. Our municipalities do not want to go backwards with more complicated policies or increased fees. Harmonizing policies and fee structures must be done collaboratively to ensure they respect local delivery standards and do not drastically increase review fees.



Provincial approvals of policies, guidance, and standards have not kept pace with modern needs, and our core mandate has suffered from inadequate funding support. The creation of the OPCA should improve collaboration between CAs and the province resulting in alignment with provincial expectations including consistent permitting systems, GIS platforms, and public portals.

This alignment should result in additional funding and technical support to continue to modernize service delivery, improve technical capacity, and improve data access. Provincial guidance should be updated and stable, and multi-year funding should be directed to programs including floodplain mapping, monitoring, and water and erosion mitigation infrastructure.

## *II. Shared Staffing, Resources, and Partnerships*

The regional model will provide for shared corporate services and staffing that may have been limited by availability, local budgets, or strategic priorities. A regional CA may also have greater ability to attract, retain, and coordinate senior leadership and technical expertise.

RRCA has investigated opportunities for shared corporate services; we would benefit from access to high-level finance, human resources, GIS, IT, legal as well as shared investments in technology and modernization (LIDAR, software licensing, records management, asset management, and flood warning). Consolidating shared services at the regional level would improve efficiency and consistency. Local offices could continue to focus on operations and local service delivery.

A regional CA may be better positioned to secure funding for broad, high-impact projects and support and enhance relationships with interest holders through regional groups for specific program areas (i.e., development approval best practices and consistent technical standards). Conversely, the region may lose connections with smaller, local funders and donors and may lose the trust of local interest holders.

### **3. Do you have suggestions for how governance could be structured at the regional conservation authority level, including suggestions around board size, make-up, and the municipal representative appointment process?**

*The governance structures must maintain strong connections to local priorities, local expertise, and municipal perspectives. Achieving the right balance between strategic and effective centralized oversight and fair and transparent local involvement is essential for successful, ongoing, watershed management.*

The proposed consolidation requires careful consideration of governance and funding principles; specifically, ensuring large urban municipalities do not disproportionately control

regional priorities. Small, rural municipalities must be heard, supported, prioritized, and represented.

To mitigate this, a two-tier (or sub-regional or federated) governance model should be considered. By maintaining a local governance body with clear roles, the region can ensure decision-making is collaborative, transparent, and respectful of municipal autonomy. It will be important to ensure this does not create duplication while providing appropriate, delegated decision-making for local programs and services.

### *I. Regional Governance*

Regional governance must balance representation, transparency, logistics, and efficiency. The regional board should include delegates from each CA (sub-regional/local office) to direct funding/budgets, policy, strategic priorities, and shared programs/services (GIS, IT, data management, legal, human resources, training, reporting). Upper and single tier appointments may be the simplest approach.

The size of the regional board must be reasonable for efficient decision making; however, municipal representation must be fair and provide meaningful engagement. For example, the Chair and Vice-Chair should be held by different local watersheds to ensure equal opportunities for these positions. Also, term lengths should similarly be limited.

The relationship between the regional CA Board and the OPCA should be clarified to ensure the regional boards can be independent and that board members understand the scope of meaningful decision-making and local accountability. The OPCA board should consider including members from each regional board to ensure direct connection back to each watershed.

### *II. Local Governance*

Local councils (or watershed committees, advisory committees, etc.) would support pay-for-say representation and local decision making. The regional CA could appoint representatives from member municipalities to the local council. This ensures that municipalities who do not have an appointee on the regional CA have a clear ability to communicate with the region.

Local councils can provide advice and local context on program policy, advise on watershed-level programs and services, update watershed plans, prioritize category 2 and 3 services, and offer input on budget priorities. The regional CA could delegate additional responsibilities and functions to the local committee, as needed.

Additional regional, or watershed scale committees can be established based on local needs (agricultural advisory groups, St. Lawrence River Area of Concern, home-builder liaison committees). The Eastern Ontario First Nations Working Group (hosted by South Nation Conservation) should be supported to ensure that Indigenous perspectives are incorporated respectfully and consistently into decision-making.

**4. Do you have suggestions on how to maintain a transparent and consultative budgeting process across member municipalities within a regional conservation authority?**

Local watershed input in budget processes is essential if the province moves forward with the proposed consolidation. Our municipalities currently fund 24% of the RRCA's operating budget due to substantial external investments and user fees. We have also carefully tailored our programs and services to meet the needs of local taxpayers while keeping costs low. We are concerned that our municipal apportionment will increase in the large regional budget model. Locally funded reserves, land assets, and long-term capital programs must also be preserved for their local and intended use.

Local councils could follow a similar budgeting process as they do today. The proposed local budgets and apportionments could then be proposed to the regional CA for final approval. Alternatively, a Budget Advisory Committee could be established with membership from the local watershed council. There must be clear communication, expectations, and guidelines for developing budgets and agreements for Category 2 and 3 programs to assist in transparency, consistency, and accountability.

Budget documents should be publicly available, written in clear language, and shared early enough to align with municipal budget cycles. The regional board should consider a multi-year budget framework to improve predictability for municipal budgets.

RRCA regularly meets with municipal CAOs and senior staff to review workplans and presents the budget to municipal councils; these types of engagement opportunities should be preserved and prioritized. Regular regional financial reporting must be provided to municipalities including budget documents with local watershed focus.

**5. How can regional conservation authorities maintain and strengthen relationships with local communities and stakeholders?**

We have serious concerns that the proposed St. Lawrence Region is too large to function effectively and risks undermining the principles of watershed-based management. Municipalities are concerned they will be under-represented, and that our local watershed needs (agricultural issues, drinking water management, localized flooding, conservation

lands) will be diluted. Source Protection Regions should be considered as a consolidation model, recognizing that these communities and staff are already working together.

Our local municipalities depend on our office for responsive access to staff and clear pathways for conflict resolution. Maintaining local offices, programming, municipal service agreements, local knowledge, on the ground presence, consistent access to staff, and brand identity is essential. Permitting decisions should also continue to be made at the local level.

A clear, well-coordinated communication strategy must provide timely and accessible information on the new regional boundaries, updated points of contact, any changes to permitting or operational processes, and how municipal relationships and responsibilities will function throughout the transition period. Regional CAs will depend on local watershed councils to ensure local concerns are addressed. An early announcement of these local councils would help maintain stability and function during the transition.

Proactive outreach to municipalities, Indigenous communities, landowners, agricultural groups, developers, and other key interest holders will set expectations and reduce uncertainty. It will be critical for regional leaders to build trust and respect. Regional staff should be available to attend local offices to address issues as often as possible. Personalized engagement, including council presentations, small-group meetings, and one-on-one conversations with municipal representatives, provide opportunities to address region-specific questions and reinforce local connections.

### **Additional Comments:**

#### **Ontario Provincial Conservation Authority**

CAs and Municipalities have expressed concern about the proposed governance structure of the OPCA. As currently designed, the agency will report to a provincial ministry and be governed entirely by provincially appointed board members. CAs, and therefore municipalities, will be required to fund a portion of the agency's operations through existing levy/apportionment processes. This means that municipalities may contribute a significant share of the OPCA's budget without having any meaningful role in shaping its governance, its priorities, or its strategic direction.

Not only would this be a precedent-setting method for funding a provincial agency, it establishes a system in which municipalities help fund a provincial agency but have no formal avenue to participate in its oversight. This raises significant concerns about accountability, responsiveness, and the long-term alignment of provincial direction with local needs.

The OPCA should be fully funded by the province with no cost recovery from CAs and should work collaboratively with municipalities, CAs and other key stakeholders to ensure changes are constructive, achieve desired outcomes, and do not erode local municipal governance of CAs.

If municipalities will fund the new regional authorities and OPCA, municipalities expect a meaningful governance model to ensure strong municipal input on watershed-specific issues. The OPCA should ensure its Board of Directors includes municipal, CA, and Conservation Ontario representation from urban and rural communities as well as from different geographical areas of the province.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide comments on the *Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities (ERO#025-1257)*. If you have any questions about these comments, please feel free to contact the undersigned.



Alison McDonald,  
**General Manager, Secretary-Treasurer**  
Raisin Region Conservation Authority  
alison.mcdonald@rrca.on.ca

*Submitted on behalf of the Raisin Region Board of Directors*



**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Sandy Crites, Finance Officer  
**Date:** January 6, 2026  
**Subject:** Annual Approvals: Mileage Rate, Solicitor, Auditor

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT for banking purposes, the Authority signing officers be one of: Chair or Vice-Chair; and one of General Manager or Finance Officer. Any of the above may sign for all other purposes which fall within their signing limit and/or there is a Board Resolution, or is part of the approved budget;

AND FURTHER THAT the Chartered Accountants MNP LLP be appointed Auditors for the 2026 calendar year at an estimated cost of \$22,500 plus fees (5%), plus HST;

AND FURTHER THAT the firm of Ault & Ault LLP be appointed as the RRCA's Solicitor for general Authority business;

AND FURTHER THAT the RRCA use the Canada Revenue Agency's approved per-kilometer rate, paid per Canada Revenue Agency guidelines.

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**DISCUSSION:**

The RRCA Board of Directors Administrative Bylaw requires yearly resolutions from the Board of Directors for the following appointments:

Authority's Signing Officers

All deeds, transfers, assignments, contracts, and obligations entered into by the Authority shall be signed by the signing officers of the Authority. Signing officers will be appointed each year by resolution at the Annual Meeting.

Signing Officers will include the Chair, Vice-Chair, General Manager, and the Finance Officer.

Authority's Auditor

The Authority shall cause its accounts and transactions to be audited annually by a person licensed under the Public Accounting Act, 2004. The Authority will ensure the annual audit is

prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles for local governments recommended by the Public Sector Accounting Board of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada.

Staff recommend MNP LLP be appointed to provide auditing services for the 2026 calendar year at an estimated cost of \$22,500 plus fees (5%), plus HST.

#### Authority's Solicitor

The Board of Directors shall appoint a solicitor(s) to act as the Authority's legal counsel by resolution.

Staff is recommending the law firm of Ault & Ault LLP continue as solicitor for general Authority business. Specialized legal advice will be obtained from other firms when necessary.

#### Mileage Rate

The Authority will establish a per-kilometer rate to be paid for use of a personal vehicle using the current Canada Revenue Agency approved rate. Requests for such reimbursements shall be submitted within a timely fashion and shall be consistent with Canada Revenue Agency guidelines.

### **RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

#### Goal 4: Organizational Excellence

- 4.1: Continuously improving day-to-day operations to become more effective, efficient, and customer focused.



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Sandy Crites  
Finance Officer



**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Alison McDonald, General Manager, Secretary-Treasurer  
**Date:** January 8, 2026  
**Subject:** 2026 Committee Appointments

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

That representatives be appointed to various Committees and Associations for 2026, as follows:

**Source Protection Committee**

RRCA Chair

**Source Protection Management Committee**

RRCA Chair

RRCA Vice-Chair

Claude McIntosh

Alison McDonald

**Conservation Ontario Council**

RRCA Chair – Voting Delegate

RRCA Vice-Chair – First Alternate

Alison McDonald – Second Alternate

**St. Lawrence River Restoration Council**

Lisa Van De Ligt

Brendan Jacobs (Alternate)

**City of Cornwall Environment & Climate Change Committee**

Lisa Van De Ligt

**SDG Community Forestry Working Group**

Lisa Van De Ligt

**South Glengarry Environment Committee**

Lissa Deslandes

**Friends of the Glengarry Trails Association**

Matt Levac

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## **DISCUSSION:**

The Raisin Region Conservation Authority (RRCA) appoints members to various internal and external committees, as follows:

### **Source Protection Committee**

Source Protection Committees (SPC) were established for each of the 19 Source Protection Regions in Ontario. The committees are made up of municipal, public and sector representatives appointed by the Source Protection Authority (SPA). The committees are responsible for preparing Assessment Reports and Source Protection Plans to meet the requirements of the *Clean Water Act, 2006*. The SPC also reviews Annual Reporting to the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP).

The Raisin-South Nation SPC is made up of 15 members plus a chairperson appointed by the province. There are additional (non-voting) liaison members representing the Raisin Region SPA, the South Nation SPA, MECP, and the Eastern Ontario Health Unit. In the past, the Raisin Region SPA liaison representative on this committee has been the RRCA Chair.

### **Source Protection Management Committee**

A Source Protection Management Committee (SPMC) has been established to provide guidance on the overall administration and coordination of source protection activities, as required. This Committee meets on an as needed basis.

The SPMC is made up of the General Manager, Chair, Vice-Chair and a third member from the RRCA and South Nation Conservation. The committee is chaired by the Chair of the RRCA.

### **Conservation Ontario Council**

Conservation Ontario (CO) is the umbrella organization which represents all 36 conservation authorities in Ontario. Conservation Ontario is governed by a six-member elected Board of Directors. The Council is comprised of appointed and elected municipal officials from the 36 Conservation Authorities Boards of Directors and Conservation Authorities staff.

Meetings are held in Toronto or via Zoom, four times per year.

### **St. Lawrence River Restoration Council**

The St. Lawrence River Restoration Council (SLRRC) was established in 1998 to complete remedial actions and address the beneficial use impairments in the St. Lawrence River (Cornwall) Area of Concern. The SLRRC is comprised of members from local organizations, public, industry, municipalities, the River Institute, the RRCA, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, Environment Canada and Climate Change, Ministry of Natural Resources, and MECP.

### **City of Cornwall Environment & Climate Change Committee**

The primary mandate of this Committee is to provide a local perspective on climate change initiatives with respect to greenhouse gas emission targets as well as provide a framework to work towards climate change goals, strategic direction and priority actions.

### **SDG Community Forestry Working Group**

The United Counties of SDG Community Forestry Working Group assists in the development of the recreational Forest-Use Policy for SDG County Forests. The Terms of Reference includes a member from the RRCA.

### **South Glengarry Environment Committee**

The Township of South Glengarry Environment Committee (EC) is a group of citizens and Councillors who discuss and review information regarding environmental matters in the Township of South Glengarry. The EC will also provide advice on environmental matters per Council's request. The EC shall assist the Corporation of South Glengarry to green their operations and infrastructure and be good stewards of the environment. The RRCA was invited to participate in this committee in 2026 as a non-voting, advisory member.

The Committee typically meets five (5) times each year during the evening at a Township facility.

### **The Friends of Glengarry Trails Association**

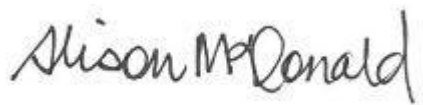
The Friends of Glengarry Trails Association (FGTA), established in 1999, is a non-profit organization dedicated to creating and maintaining recreational trails in North Glengarry. Developed with provincial funding, support from the Township, and the Raisin Region Conservation Authority (RRCA), the trails are maintained year-round by volunteers and funded through memberships and fundraising.

The FGTA operates under a volunteer Board of Directors, including representatives from the Township of North Glengarry (1) and the RRCA (1). Board members meet monthly to ensure trail safety, financial compliance, and adherence to non-profit regulations.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

### **Goal 2: Strong Partnerships & Engaged Residents**

- 2.1: Strengthening our relationships with community partners



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Alison McDonald,  
General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer



## Raisin Region Conservation Authority

18045 County Road 2, P.O. Box 429, Cornwall, ON K6H 5T2

Tel: 613-938-3611 [www.rrca.on.ca](http://www.rrca.on.ca)

**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Josianne Sabourin, Executive Assistant  
**Date:** January 5, 2026  
**Subject:** Approval - Health & Safety Policy

---

### RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Directors approve the Health and Safety Policy, as presented.

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### BACKGROUND:

RRCA is updating its Health and Safety Program in partnership with the WSIB Excellence Program, which supports organizations in enhancing workplace safety through a performance-based framework. This program provides WSIB premium rebates, access to expert guidance, and recognition for demonstrating stronger health and safety practices.

### DISCUSSION:

One of the topics selected under the WSIB Excellence Program is Leadership & Commitment. To meet the requirements of this topic, we developed procedures that outline the responsibilities of senior management and prepared a health and safety policy. As part of our compliance and accountability review, this policy must be submitted annually to the Board of Directors for review and approval.

A copy of the Leadership and Commitment procedure is attached for review. The Health and Safety Policy is attached for approval.

### RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

#### Goal 4: Organizational Excellence

- 4.1 b): Refresh and document Standard Operating Procedures, including health and safety and the purchasing process.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Josianne Sabourin".

Josianne Sabourin,  
Administrative Assistant

*Attached:*  
*Leadership and Commitment Procedure*  
*Health and Safety Policy*

## WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAM POLICY STATEMENT

The Raisin Region Conservation Authority (RRCA) and its Board of Directors recognize its ultimate responsibility for governance and oversight of health and safety matters. We are committed to providing leadership, approving policies, allocating resources, and monitoring safety performance to ensure a safe environment for employees, volunteers, and visitors. We will work collaboratively with management to ensure compliance with all applicable health and safety legislation and foster a culture of safety throughout the organization.

RRCA and its Board of Directors is committed to the prevention of occupational illnesses and injuries and will maintain a healthy and safe workplace for all by maintaining and continuously improving our Health & Safety processes.

The psychological safety of our employees is also an important part of a healthy and safe workplace. We are committed to fostering a workplace where workers are protected from harassment, discrimination, and violence, which requires ensuring everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

The General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer, on behalf of the Board of Directors, will be responsible for worker health and safety, monitoring safety performance to ensure a safe environment for employees, complying with their duties under the Act, and fostering a safety-first culture where all workers understand and share responsibility for their safety.

Team Leads will be held accountable for the health and safety of workers under their supervision. Team Leads are subject to various duties in the workplace, including the duty to ensure that machinery and equipment are safe, and that workers work in compliance with established safe work practices and procedures.

Every worker must protect their own health and safety by working in compliance with the law and with safe work practices and procedures established by the General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer. Workers will receive information, training and competent supervision in their specific work tasks to protect their health and safety.

It is in the best interest of all parties to consider health and safety in every activity as it is fundamental to our success. A safe workplace not only protects our employees but also enhances productivity, morale, and the overall well-being of our organization. Commitment from all levels of management to the workers is essential to preventing injuries and creating a culture of care and responsibility.

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Chair, Raisin Region Conservation Authority

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Date

## WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAM LEADERSHIP & COMMITMENT PROCEDURE

<b>Date of Issue:</b> December 16, 2025	<b>Review date:</b> December 16, 2026
<b>Written by:</b> Josianne Sabourin	<b>Date:</b> September 12, 2025
<b>Reviewed by:</b> General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer and Team Leads	<b>Date:</b> September 23, 2025, and October 1, 2025
<b>Approved by:</b> Alison McDonald, General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer	<b>Date:</b> December 16, 2025

DEFINITIONS	
RRCA	The Raisin Region Conservation Authority (employer)
IRS	Internal Responsibility System: everyone in the workplace has a role to play in the maintenance of health and safety in the workplace. It is a shared responsibility among the workplace parties (employer, manager, team leads, and employees).
TEAM LEAD	Performs supervisory duties as per the OHSA
JHSC	Joint Health and Safety Committee
OHSA	Occupational Health and Safety Act
MLITSD	Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development

RELATED DOCUMENTATION	
Internal	Workplace Health & Safety Policy
External	OHSA

### PURPOSE

Effective leadership and commitment from the General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer for the health and well-being of everyone in the workplace is essential. The General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer is committed to implementing an occupational health and safety program including a policy outlining our commitment to occupational health and safety.

The purpose of this procedure is to define the health and safety responsibilities of Management with various levels of authority in the organization, following obligations established in health and safety legislation, and any standards the RRCA conforms with.

### SCOPE

The Health and Safety program will apply to the employer, all levels of management, all current and future employees.

## **ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

### Board of Directors is responsible for:

- Board directors are responsible for delivering strategic guidance, approving health and safety policies, allocating adequate resources, and ensuring management is held accountable for maintaining health and safety standards.
- Authorizing the organization's health and safety policy ensuring alignment with its broader business objectives and core values.
- Demonstrate commitment through actions and foster a robust safety culture that places health and safety at the forefront across all levels of the organization.

### General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer is responsible for:

- The General Manager will represent the Employer in all matters related to health and safety, ensuring that the organization's policies and practices comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and applicable regulations.
- Accountable to the Board of Directors for health and safety performance and for carrying out the Board of Directors' vision for the RRCA's health and safety.
- Developing and enforcing health and safety policies and procedures that meet legislative requirements and reflect best practices, ensuring organizational compliance.
- Promoting a safety culture throughout the organization by leading by example and demonstrating a visible commitment to health and safety.
- Supporting the Health and Safety Program and proper functioning of the IRS.
- Ensuring meetings are held to review health and safety performance, including the review of incidents and investigations, workplace inspections, etc.
- Ensuring all Team Leads are competent people.
- May Participate in monthly workplace inspections with the JHSC
- Reviewing and approving the JHSC Terms of Reference on behalf of the employer, on an annual basis.
- Ensuring all employees are aware of their health and safety responsibilities and that all employees put the rules, procedures, and regulations into practice.
- Updating the RRCA Board of Directors on health and safety performance to protect the organization.

### Team Leads are responsible for

- Assisting in developing, implementing, and enforcing the RRCA's policies and procedures.
- Continually promote health and safety awareness with instructions, information, training, and supervision to ensure the safe performance of employees.
- Informing workers about hazards and dangers and responding to their concerns.
- Review Health and Safety Policy Statement with their workers.
- Utilizing the process of hazard identification, risk management, and incident investigation.
- Making sure workers follow the law, and the workplace health and safety policies and procedures.



- Ensure machinery and equipment are safe and that employees work in compliance with established safe working practices and procedures.
- May participate in monthly workplace inspections with the JHSC.
- Include Health and Safety discussion in regular Team meetings
- Report any health and safety reports to the General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer as per the Health and Safety Communication procedure.

The Health and Safety Designate (Executive Assistant) is responsible for:

- Coordinating the Health and Safety program with management (General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer and Team Leads) and consult with JHSC.
- Consult with government agencies to ensure workplace health and safety compliance.
- Acting as liaison between the JHSC, management and staff.
- Supporting management with the development of safety procedures.
- Assisting with the development of the health and safety policy, obtaining the necessary signatures for approval.
- Assisting with design and development of RRCA's company policies and procedures on workplace health and safety issues.
- Providing health and safety onboarding to new staff.
- Posting a copy of the Health and Safety Policy in the workplace, where workers will be most likely to see it, or in a readily accessible electronic format.

Workers are responsible for:

- Reviewing the Health and Safety Policy Statement.
- Notify the General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer or Team Lead of any health and safety concerns so they may be dealt with promptly.
- Working in compliance with the law and with established safe work practices and procedures to protect his or her own health and safety.
- Use appropriate personal protective equipment, as required.
- Completing required occupational health and safety training.
- Reporting any incident, injury, or hazard (including acts of violence or harassment) as outlined in procedures.
- Reporting any hazards in the workplace, including the absence of or defect in any equipment or protective device of which the worker is aware that may endanger himself/herself or another worker.

## **PROCEDURE**

Health and Safety Designate

- The General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer has appointed the Executive Assistant as the Health and Safety designate to assist with the coordination of a health and safety program. This appointment will be a fixed term of two (2) years and reviewed at the end of the term to assess performance and

determine renewal or continued service. Reappointment of a new designate may occur following an annual review, at the discretion of the General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer.

- The Health and Safety Designate will work jointly with all levels of management and the JHSC to coordinate, develop, implement, monitor, and improve the Health and Safety Program, ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and organizational policies.

#### General Health and Safety

- Employees that voice or identify a health and safety concern will not be subject to retaliation and are encouraged to inform the General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer or their Team Lead of any matter they perceive to be an actual or potential workplace hazard.
- Health and safety comments will be reviewed by the General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer and Executive Assistant, for potential areas for further control.
- Employees will be encouraged to participate in safety training and hazard reporting.
- The Health and Safety Program will be reviewed quarterly. Updates will be communicated to all employees to ensure ongoing engagement and relevance.

#### Health and Safety Policy Statement

- The Health and Safety Designate will develop the draft Health and Safety Policy Statement and forward it to the JHSC for review.
- At a minimum, the statement will confirm the employer's commitment in the following areas of health and safety:
  - Commitment to preventing occupational illness and injury in the workplace.
  - Commitment to meet all legal requirements.
  - Involving workers in the development of the policy
  - Commitment to continually improve the health and safety program and health and safety performance.
- Once the JHSC has reviewed the Health and Safety Policy Statement, the draft will be forwarded to the General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer, who will review and adjust, as required.
- The final version will be forwarded to the Board of Directors for review and approval and signed by the Chair of the RRCA.
- The signed and approved policy statement will be returned to the Health and Safety Designate, who will ensure it is posted at all relevant sites, in high traffic areas.
- Health & Safety Designate will notify staff when a newly approved policy statement is posted and highlight any changes that there may be from the previous year.
- The Health & Safety Policy statement will be reviewed and dated every year as per the Leadership & Commitment procedure.





UPDATES CHANGES - TRACKING	
DETAILS OF UPDATES/CHANGES	DATE UPDATED/CHANGED



**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Lisa Van De Ligt, Team Lead, Communications and Stewardship  
**Date:** January 7, 2026  
**Subject:** Strategic Action Plan – 2026/Q1 Progress Update

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT the Board of Directors receive the Strategic Action Plan – 2026/Q1 Progress Update.

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**BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:**

The 2025-2028 RRCA Strategic Action Plan was approved by the Board in June 2025. A public version of the Plan was circulated to Board members, member municipalities, and partners.

Staff have created workplans and assigned tasks for each strategic action. The strategic action progress tracker is also attached for review.

**RELATIONSHIP TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN:**

This report summarizes the quarterly progress on the 2025-2028 RRCA Strategic Action Plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lisa Van De Ligt", is positioned above a horizontal line.

Lisa Van De Ligt,  
Team Lead, Communications and Stewardship

*Attached: Strategic Plan Progress Tracker*

# **2025-2028 Strategic Action Plan**

## **PROGRESS TRACKER**

January 7, 2026



### **Goal 1: Environmental Conservation & Healthy Living**

Protect people and property from water hazards; support environmental conservation and safe drinking water; and provide exceptional outdoor experiences.

### **Goal 2: Strong Partnerships & Engaged Residents**

Pursue meaningful and creative opportunities to collaborate with our partners and engage our residents.

### **Goal 3: Financial Stability**

Build a strong financial foundation to support infrastructure renewal and operational excellence.

### **Goal 4: Organizational Excellence**

A cohesive team achieving positive results in a respectful and professional working environment.



# Goal 1: Environmental Conservation & Healthy Living

## 1.1 Embracing a science-based approach to watershed management and environmental stewardship.

ACTIONS	TARGET DATE	LEAD	% COMPLETE	COMMENTS
a) Review RRCA land stewardship initiatives to ensure they are aligned with the SDG Counties' Natural Heritage System Study.	2026/Q3	Lisa	10%	Preliminary internal discussions completed.
b) Collaborate with local partners and all levels of government to develop strong science-based strategies for the St. Lawrence River and tributaries.	ongoing	Lisa	n/a	Preliminary internal discussions completed. On-going action plan will be developed.
c) Expand our involvement in supporting private property ecosystem enhancements.	ongoing	Lisa	n/a	Preliminary internal discussions completed. On-going action plan will be developed.



no progress



in progress



complete

# Goal 1: Environmental Conservation & Healthy Living

## 1.2 Protect from flooding and erosion hazards.

ACTIONS	TARGET DATE	LEAD	% COMPLETE	COMMENTS
a) Improve the online geoportal by expanding available data and making it more user-friendly.	2025/Q4	Jason	2%	Jason is reviewing the new ArcGIS Online hosting protocols and will be assessing the migration of data to that platform.
b) Improve permitting process to ensure people and property are safe from water related hazards.	2026/Q1	Phil	20%	Phil will prepare a list of action items that can be prioritized to facilitate this.
c) Develop an outreach plan to provide valuable training for land development professionals working in lands near municipal drinking water systems and adjacent to and within RRCA regulated areas.	2026/Q4	Lisa	20%	Preliminary communications discussions completed; funding secured for outreach material.
d) Acquire state of the art floodplain mapping for four priority watersheds as identified in the RRCA Flood Priority Report.	2028/Q1	Laura	10%	Laura is managing FHIMP projects for two priority watersheds to be completed in 2027. Two additional watersheds require funding commitments from RRCA and partners.



no progress



in progress



complete

# Goal 1: Environmental Conservation & Healthy Living

## 1.3: Connecting people to nature through positive outdoor experiences.

ACTIONS	TARGET DATE	LEAD	% COMPLETE	COMMENTS
a) Complete a business case - with location options, timelines, and costing – for the creation of a new conservation area.	2025/Q4	Lisa	75%	Received Board direction in October 2025 to proceed with Lakeview Marsh. Restoration funding secured. Timelines and budget will be finalized by March 2026.
b) Negotiate new lease for Charlottenburgh Park.	2026/Q2	Alison	90%	Lease extension for 2026 confirmed; updated lease on hold pending regional consolidation
c) Implement maintenance standards for all RRCA properties based on the asset maintenance/replacement strategy.	2027/Q1	Alison	0%	Asset Management Planning on hold pending regional consolidation proposal



no progress



in progress



complete

## Goal 2: Strong Partnerships & Engaged Residents

### 2.1 Strengthening our relationships with community partners.

ACTIONS	TARGET DATE	LEAD	% COMPLETE	COMMENTS
a) Establish a list of annual priority community events for RRCA staff to participate in.	2025/Q4	Lisa	100%	Approved by RRCA Board in October 2025.
b) Introduce annual working sessions with the Algonquin Nation and the Mohawks of Akwesasne to identify needs/priorities and explore partnering opportunities for the upcoming year.	2026/Q4	Lisa	10%	Preliminary internal discussions completed.
c) Facilitate annual engagement sessions with each member municipality to identify their needs/priorities and explore partnering opportunities (including Category 2 agreements) for the upcoming year.	2025/Q3	Alison	100%	Met with each CAO and delivered presentations to Council on request. Discussed common budget issues at SDG CAO working group
d) Partner with a member municipality on a “one-window” development application pilot project.	2026/Q4	Phil/Alison	0%	



no progress



in progress



complete



## Goal 2: Strong Partnerships & Engaged Residents

### 2.2 Embracing meaningful community engagement.

ACTIONS	TARGET DATE	LEAD	% COMPLETE	COMMENTS
a) Develop a communications plan - including a social media strategy - that establishes priority messages, target audiences, and metrics; provide quarterly Board updates on communication activities and achievements.	2026/Q1 ongoing	Lisa	n/a	Draft prepared. Will be presented to Board in March.
b) Review the use of RRCA spaces and identify opportunities to enhance community use of these spaces; establish community use policies and rates.	2026/Q3	Josianne	0%	
c) Develop a RRCA Achievements online dashboard on the RRCA website to profile RRCA achievements.	2027/Q2	Lisa	1%	Preliminary internal discussions completed.



no progress



in progress



complete

## Goal 3: Financial Stability

### 3.1 Demonstrating financial accountability.

ACTIONS	TARGET DATE	LEAD	% COMPLETE	COMMENTS
a) Form a board sub-committee - Corporate Services Working Group - to work with RRCA management to review and provide recommendations to the Board on accounting/finance and human resource-related processes.	2025/Q3	Alison	100%	Completed the Reserve Policy and updated budget presentation. Working group current on hold.
b) Provide detailed statement of operations at monthly Board meetings.	2025/Q3 ongoing	Sandy	n/a	New quarterly variance report introduced. Capital budget variance to be introduced starting in 2026
c) Develop a long-term financial plan that includes an asset maintenance/replacement strategy and an infrastructure reserve policy.	2026/Q3	Alison	2%	Engineering review of authority owned structures to establish baseline repair/scheduling/reserve strategy on hold pending regional consolidation.



no progress



in progress



complete

# Goal 3: Financial Stability

## 3.2 Diversifying our revenue sources.

ACTIONS	TARGET DATE	LEAD	% COMPLETE	COMMENTS
a) Submit joint grant application with the Township of North Glengarry to rehabilitate Garry River water infrastructure.	2025/Q2	Jason	100%	Application was submitted but was ultimately not successful
b) Investigate the feasibility of creating an RRCA Foundation.	2026/Q2	Sandy	1%	To be discussed with the Corporate Services Working Group. On hold pending regional consolidation.
c) Investigate grant management technology to improve the grant application process.	2027/Q1	Lisa	15%	Grant management technology being explored.



no progress



in progress



complete

## Goal 4: Organizational Excellence

### 4.1 Continuously improving day-to-day operations to become more effective, efficient, and customer focused.

ACTIONS	TARGET DATE	LEAD	% COMPLETE	COMMENTS
a) Enhance the Frequently Asked Questions checklist to support front-line staff in responding to common inquiries.	2025/Q4	Josi/Claudia	75%	Josi researching FAQ's from other CA's. Claudia has gathered questions. Need to be reviewed.
b) Refresh and document Standard Operating Procedures, including health & safety and the purchasing process.	2026/Q4	Josi	25%	
c) Provide technology training (e.g. artificial intelligence, cyber security) for staff as required.	2026/Q4	Phil	30%	AI Guidelines finalized and discussed at staff meeting. Additional training to be completed by SDG
d) Improve file/document management system and process and identify who is responsible for ongoing file management.	2028/Q2	Alison/Josi	25%	
e) Complete a main office space optimization plan including physical layout with options, timelines and estimated costs.	2026/Q3	Alison	0%	Determining MNRF requirements for leased space moving forward.



no progress



in progress



complete

## Goal 4: Organizational Excellence

### 4.2 Empowering our team and fostering a culture of excellence, inclusion, and professionalism.

ACTIONS	TARGET DATE	LEAD	% COMPLETE	COMMENTS
a) Complete an organizational review to clarify roles/responsibilities; identify skillset gaps and duplication of effort; enable succession planning; support effective career path and professional development; and identify opportunities to achieve enhanced operational effectiveness.	2026/Q2	Alison	0%	On hold pending regional consolidation update
b) Enhance opportunities for training and professional development by developing annual career planning/development plans for RRCA employees.	2025/Q4	Alison/Team Leads	75%	Training plans completed for most staff. Team Leads meeting in January to develop project assignments
c) Introduce an annual Board-staff session to celebrate wins and encourage collaboration.	2025/Q4 ongoing	Alison	n/a	Staff recognition event at the January AGM
d) Enhance onboarding process for board members and staff.	2026/Q3	Lisa/Josi	0%	Will be initiated in 2026/Q1.
e) Review and update the Employee Manual including employee benefits.	2026/Q4	Alison	80%	Final draft to be presented to the board by 2026 Q1



no progress



in progress



complete



**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Lisa Van De Ligt, Team Lead, Communications and Stewardship  
**Date:** January 7, 2026  
**Subject:** Grant Submissions

---

**RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT the Board of Directors retroactively approve requesting \$50,000 from Canada Water Agency to support preparing assessment reports for the St. Lawrence River (Cornwall / Akwesasne) Area of Concern;

AND FURTHER THAT the Board of Directors retroactively approve requesting \$11,800 from the Invasive Species Centre to monitor and manage invasive species on RRCA conservation lands;

AND FURTHER THAT the Board of Directors approve requesting \$8,000 from TD Friends of the Environment Foundation to enhance wildlife observation opportunities at Cooper Marsh Conservation Area;

AND FURTHER THAT the Board of Directors approve requesting up to \$25,000 from the Invasive Species Centre to manage invasive Phragmites at RRCA conservation areas;

AND FURTHER THAT the Board of Directors approve requesting \$3,000 from TC Energy for the 2026 tree giveaways;

AND FURTHER THAT the Board of Directors approve entering into an agreement with funders, as required.

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**BACKGROUND:**

To support and enhance the RRCA's programs and services, staff consistently investigate funding and partnership opportunities and submit grant applications when applicable. Funding opportunities may be annual grants typically secured by the RRCA or new funding opportunities. When a funder offers a different funding amount than the RRCA's original request, staff will adjust the workplan accordingly prior to accepting the funding.

Summary of 2025 grant application requests:

- Requested: \$1,890,281
- Approved: \$1,265,025
- Pending: \$565,256
- Not approved: \$60,000

## **DISCUSSION:**

The following funding opportunities were identified by staff as a potential source of revenue for RRCA programs and projects:

### **1. Project Title: Assessment Report Support for the St. Lawrence River (Cornwall / Akwesasne) Area of Concern**

- **Funder:** Canada Water Agency - Great Lakes Freshwater Ecosystem Initiative
- **Request:** \$50,000 over two years
- **Summary:** In recognition of our long-standing involvement in the St. Lawrence River (Cornwall/Akwesasne) Remedial Action Plan, the RRCA has been asked to support the development of assessment reports for Beneficial Use Impairment 8 (Eutrophication or Undesirable Algae) and Beneficial Use Impairment 14 (Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat).
- **Submission Deadline:** December 18, 2025 (retroactive approval)

### **2. Project Title: Proactive Surveillance and Management of Invasive Species on RRCA Conservation Lands**

- **Funder:** Ministry of Natural Resources/Invasive Species Centre – Invasive Species Action Fund
- **Request:** \$11,800
- **Summary:** The funding will offset staff time and costs to monitor and manage the spread of current and emerging invasive species on RRCA conservation lands.
- **Submission Deadline:** January 8, 2026 (retroactive approval)

### **3. Project Title: Enhancing Wildlife Observation Opportunities at Cooper Marsh Conservation Area**

- **Funder:** TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
- **Request:** \$8,000
- **Summary:** Funding will be allocated towards the construction of a wildlife observation platform at Cooper Marsh Conservation Area adjacent to the recently created open-water habitat.
- **Submission Deadline:** January 15, 2026

### **4. Project Title: Invasive Phragmites Control at RRCA Conservation Areas**

- **Funder:** Ministry of Natural Resources/Invasive Species Centre – Invasive Species Action Fund
- **Request:** up to \$25,000
- **Summary:** The funding would offset continued invasive Phragmites control at Cooper Marsh and Gray's Creek Conservation Areas using targeted herbicide application in established stands and selective spading for removal of small, scattered patches.
- **Submission Deadline:** January 23, 2026

**5. Project Title:** 2026 RRCA Tree Giveaways

- **Funder:** Enbridge
- **Request:** \$3,000
- **Summary:** Funding will support the 2026 RRCA Tree Giveaways.
- **Submission Deadline:** February 2026

**RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

Goal 1: Environmental Conservation & Healthy Living

1.3: Connecting people with nature through positive outdoor experiences.

Goal 3: Financial Stability

3.2: Diversifying our revenue sources.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lisa Van De Ligt". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Lisa Van De Ligt,  
Team Lead, Communications and Stewardship





**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Pete Sabourin, Team Lead, Field Operations  
Lisa Van De Ligt, Team Lead, Communications and Stewardship  
**Date:** January 7, 2026  
**Subject:** Conservation Areas Update

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## RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board of Directors receive the Conservation Areas update.

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## BACKGROUND:

The RRCA owns and manages three Conservation Areas which enable residents and visitors to step into nature through various amenities such as park and picnic areas, wildlife viewing blinds and platforms, a marina, campground, interpretive centre, and trails.

## DISCUSSION:

Below is an update on the RRCA's three Conservation Areas:

### *Gray's Creek Conservation Area*

- 2025 visitation (up to December 1, 2025): 125,373 (2024 total: 113,000)
- Marina will be open May 4 to September 27, 2026
- Three Marina Attendants will be recruited
- Flower bed enhancements underway (supported by TD Friends of the Environment Foundation)
- Marina building improvements planned for 2026; looking for grants to support capital improvements

### *Charlottenburgh Park Conservation Area*

- 2025 visitation (up to December 1, 2025): 28,258 (2024 total: 26,000)
- Campground will be open May 15 to October 12, 2026
- Nine summer staff will be recruited
- 2026 boat dock enhancements: additional lighting and adjustments to accommodate larger boats
- Outreach improvements: funding secured under the St. Lawrence River Remedial Action Plan to replace wetland interpretive signage along trails

### *Cooper Marsh Conservation Area*

- 2025 visitation (up to December 2, 2025): 40,596 (2024 total: 34,500)
- One summer staff (i.e. Nature Interpreter) will be recruited
- Visitors Centre will re-open May 1 to August 28, 2026\*
  - Weekend guided walks will be offered by Nature Interpreter
  - Lending library available (e.g. binoculars, dip nets, species identification guides)
- Upcoming outreach:
  - January 31, 2026 event: World Wetlands Day in partnership with Mohawk Council of Akwesasne
- Funding secured under St. Lawrence River Remedial Action Plan for wetland outreach (e.g. World Wetlands Day event, Visitors Centre enhancements), biological inventories, and habitat enhancements
  - Habitat enhancements (i.e. creation of additional open-water habitat) will take place this winter. Trail closures will not be required.

\*Dates are subject to change based on available staffing resources.

### **RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

#### Goal 1: Environmental Conservation & Healthy Living

- 1.3: Connecting people with nature through positive outdoor experiences.

#### Goal 2: Strong Partnerships & Engaged Residents

- 2.2: Embracing meaningful community engagement.



Pete Sabourin,  
Team Lead, Field Operations



Lisa Van De Ligt,  
Team Lead, Communications and Stewardship



## Raisin Region Conservation Authority

18045 County Road 2, P.O. Box 429, Cornwall, ON K6H 5T2

Tel: 613-938-3611 [www.rrca.on.ca](http://www.rrca.on.ca)

**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Laura Grant, Project Manager  
**Date:** January 8, 2026  
**Subject:** Hazard Mapping Update

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### RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Directors receive the update on the hazard mapping projects for Gray's Creek and South Branch of the Raisin River; and further

That the Board of Directors delegate authority to the General Manager to approve the successful consultant(s).

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### BACKGROUND:

The Raisin Region Conservation Authority is coordinating two flood mapping projects for priority watersheds within our jurisdiction: Gray's Creek and South Branch of the Raisin River. The project was initiated in 2025 and will continue over the next two years. The total project value is \$290,000.

Funding for the projects is:

- 50% from the Federal Government, administered in Ontario through Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (\$145,000)
- 16.66% from the City of Cornwall (\$48,333)
- 16.66% from the United Counties of SDG (\$48,333)
- 16.67% from the RRCA (\$48,334) as staffing for project management.

### DISCUSSION:

Funding agreements have been signed between the RRCA and the Ministry of Natural Resources, the City of Cornwall, and the United Counties of SDG.

Requests for proposals were drafted and posted to MERX and the RRCA website on December 16, 2025. The deadline for receiving proposals is January 23, 2026. The RRCA intends to initiate the work with the successful consultant(s) in early March 2026. The total value of the consulting contract is expected to be \$201,700.

Staff are not planning to hold a meeting in February; however, the Purchasing Policy requires Board approval to enter into a contract over \$50,000. Staff are requesting the Board delegate signing authority to the General Manager to enter into an agreement with the successful consultant(s), provided the contract value is within the approved project budget.

## RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

### Goal 1: Environmental Conservation and Healthy Living

- 1.2 d) Acquire state-of-the-art floodplain mapping for four priority watersheds as identified in the RRCA Flood Priority Report.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'L Grant', is written over a horizontal line.

Laura Grant, P.Geo.  
Project Manager



**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Lisa Van De Ligt, Team Lead, Stewardship and Communications  
**Date:** January 7, 2026  
**Subject:** Recognition for Years of Service: Lisa Van De Ligt, Vincent Pilon, Mike Tessier, Phil Barnes, and Lissa Deslandes

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## RECOMMENDATION:

That the Raisin Region Conservation Authority Board of Directors congratulate Lisa Van De Ligt, Vincent Pilon, Mike Tessier, Phil Barnes, and Lissa Deslandes for their years of service at the RRCA.

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### 5 Years

*Lisa Van De Ligt (Note: 5 years as of 2024)*

A lifelong resident of South Glengarry, Lisa's interest in the natural environment led her to the University of Guelph, where she studied biological sciences. While a summer student with the Township of South Glengarry, she developed an interest in a career in public service and discovered that conservation authorities were a perfect fit. After graduating in 2008, she joined South Nation Conservation, where she held roles in planning, engineering, and communications.

In 2019, Lisa joined the RRCA as Communications Specialist and advanced to Team Lead, Communications and Stewardship in 2021. She is always keen to expand her knowledge and skillset and recently completed Conservation Authority University and Municipal Clerks Institute – Level 1 training.

*Vincent Pilon*

A lifelong Cornwall resident, Vincent developed a passion for communications at a young age, which led him to complete a journalism diploma at St. Lawrence College. While working with various organizations, he also built a successful freelance videography practice, producing promotional content for local municipalities and government agencies.

Vincent joined the RRCA in 2021 as Public Information Coordinator and advanced to Communications Specialist in 2023. His broad skillset - including graphic design, event

coordination, customer service, bilingual communication, and strong attention to detail - makes him a valued asset to the RRCA.

## **10 Years**

### *Mike Tessier*

Mike joined the RRCA in 2014 on a short-term contract supporting the Cooper Marsh boardwalks rebuild. He returned in 2016 as a seasonal skilled labourer and advanced to Charlottenburgh Park Supervisor in 2019.

In 2022, Mike joined the Field Operations team, contributing to the year-round maintenance of all RRCA Conservation Areas. His extensive experience as a skilled labourer has been an asset to the RRCA, with contributions including many Conservation Area amenity projects (e.g. viewing blinds, dock repairs, decks), trail and parking lot maintenance, water control structure operations, and watershed monitoring (e.g. snow surveys).

Mike's professionalism, approachable nature, and commitment to maintaining high-quality conservation areas for public enjoyment are greatly valued.

## **15 Years**

### *Phil Barnes (Notes: 15 years as of 2022; had a two-year departure)*

Phil joined the RRCA in 2006 and has supported the RRCA in a wide range of capacities, contributing to engineering, watershed planning, regulatory review, Canoe Race coordinator, and IT support. He is known for his ability to navigate complex processes with practical, client-focused solutions and often provides office morale boosts.

A licensed Professional Engineer, Phil is committed to high standards of integrity, thoughtfulness, and excellence in his work. His contributions include mentoring junior staff and co-op students, supporting colleagues across disciplines, and helping raise the profile of the RRCA within the local community.

## **25 Years**

### *Lissa Deslandes*

Since joining the RRCA in 2001, Lissa has contributed to a wide range of programs and initiatives, with roles spanning field assistance, project coordination, fish and wildlife management, habitat review, communications, canoe race coordination, and regulatory services.

A graduate of Environmental and Wildlife Management from Vanier College in Montreal, Lissa is widely respected for her dedication to wildlife conservation and her practical, collaborative approach. She is known within the community as a well respected and effective Regulations Officer, valued by developers, drainage superintendents, residents, and colleagues alike for her professionalism and commitment to the RRCA's work.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

### Goal 4: Organizational Excellence

- 4.2: Empowering our team and fostering a culture of excellence, inclusion, and professionalism.
  - c) Introduce an annual Board–staff session to celebrate wins and encourage collaboration.



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Lisa Van De Ligt,  
Team Lead, Communications and Stewardship