



Raisin Region Conservation Authority

Board of Directors Meeting Agenda

February 5, 2026 – 9:00 am

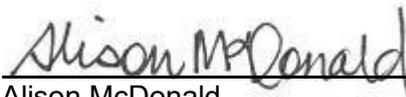
South Glengarry Fire Station 1 (Glen Walter) Fire Hall – Glen Water Park Rd, South Glengarry, ON

	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	4-6
b) Approval: 2026 Budget and Municipal Levy	7
c) Update: Proposed Regional Consolidation of Conservation Authorities	8-21
d) Annual Approval: Mileage Rate, Solicitor, Auditor	22-23
e) 2026 Committee Appointments	24-26
f) Approval - Health and Safety Policy	27-29
g) Strategic Action Plan – 2026/Q1 Progress Update	30-41
h) Grant Submissions	42-44
i) Conservation Areas Update	45-46
j) Hazard Mapping Update	
k) Staff Recognition: Years of Service	47-49
9. Correspondence	
a) Letter from the Citizens for Marshland Conservation (CMC)	50

9. Future Meetings

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

10. Adjournment

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison McDonald". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above 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

Bryan McGillis,
Chair

Alison McDonald,
General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer



To: Board of Directors
From: Sandy Crites, Finance Officer
Date: January 29, 2026
Subject: End-of-Year Variance Reports

RECOMMENDATION:

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

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

The Corporate Services Working Group recommended that a budget variance report be submitted quarterly for review. In the past, staff have presented only the operating budget variance.

Staff have prepared a 2025 year-end variance report for both the operating and capital budgets. Copies of both reports are attached. This variance report represents our best estimate of the year-end position; however, it does not reflect all year-end adjustments, which will be completed with our auditors next month.

The reports currently forecast a year-end surplus and include notes outlining the significant variances.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Goal 3: Financial Stability

- 3.1: Demonstrating financial accountability.

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

Sandy Crites,
Finance Officer

Attached:
Operating and Capital Variance Reports

Quarterly Capital Variance Report
 2025 forecasted numbers as of December 31, 2025

	Fly Creek	Garry River	St. Andrews Dyke	Cooper Marsh	Gray's Creek	Marina	Charlottenburgh Park	Equipment	General
<u>REVENUE</u>									
Reserve	10,000.00	10,000.00	6,000.00	8,500.00	9,600.00	9,900.00	20,200.00	3,500.00	37,800.00
Municipal	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	15,000.00		33,200.00
	<u>10,000.00</u>	<u>10,000.00</u>	<u>6,000.00</u>	<u>8,500.00</u>	<u>9,600.00</u>	<u>9,900.00</u>	<u>35,200.00</u>	<u>3,500.00</u>	<u>71,000.00</u>
<u>EXPENDITURES</u>									
	<u>7,555.28</u>	<u>941.21</u>	<u>2,639.91</u>	<u>6,137.60</u>	<u>4,106.42</u>	<u>4,483.96</u>	<u>18,050.54</u>	<u>27,741.91</u>	<u>54,621.02</u>
	<u>7,555.28</u>	<u>941.21</u>	<u>2,639.91</u>	<u>6,137.60</u>	<u>4,106.42</u>	<u>4,483.96</u>	<u>18,050.54</u>	<u>27,741.91</u>	<u>54,621.02</u>
Surplus/Deficit	2,444.72	9,058.79	3,360.09	2,362.40	5,493.58	5,416.04	17,149.46	-24,241.91	16,378.98
NET SURPLUS	37,422.15								

Explanation of Significant Differences

Some capital projects were paused while reserve positions were assessed
 Two sewage pumps failed at Charlottenburgh Park and needed to be replaced immediately
 Beach sand purchase was deferred to 2026
 A SUV was purchased off a lease and is now part of the fleet; this will be repaid over 4 years

Quarterly Operating Variance Report
 2025 forecasted numbers as of December 31, 2025

	Watershed Monitoring	Watershed Management	Watershed Planning & Regulations	Watershed Stewardship	Conservation & Recreation	Corporate Services
<u>REVENUE</u>						
Provincial	19,180.41	34,972.00	361,484.65	109,749.40	0.00	53,936.00
Federal	0.00	23,278.00	0.00	238,178.02	88,213.00	5,563.00
Authority Generated	0.00	0.00	126,877.88	41,045.71	775,229.96	199,565.27
Partners	0.00	11,214.77	0.00	805,399.78	44,665.00	42,622.00
Municipal	59,877.31	252,555.50	184,132.10	0.00	106,108.29	364,922.34
	<u>79,057.72</u>	<u>322,020.26</u>	<u>672,494.63</u>	<u>1,194,372.91</u>	<u>1,014,216.25</u>	<u>666,608.61</u>
<u>EXPENDITURES</u>						
	<u>80,073.61</u>	<u>326,334.47</u>	<u>599,676.72</u>	<u>1,209,802.45</u>	<u>958,486.58</u>	<u>615,368.07</u>
	<u>80,073.61</u>	<u>326,334.47</u>	<u>599,676.72</u>	<u>1,209,802.45</u>	<u>958,486.58</u>	<u>615,368.07</u>
Surplus/Deficit	-1,015.89	-4,314.21	72,817.91	-15,429.54	55,729.67	51,240.54
Net Surplus	156,955.00					

Explanation of Significant Differences

Staffing reduction in planning services; staff have taken on additional work in-house

Successful Canada Summer Job funding resulted in higher revenues in parks and facilities

Unexpected WSIB refunds in Corporate Services

Reserve transfers planned for 2025 surplus: additional \$5,000 to equipment, \$3,000 to Charlottenburgh Park, \$25,000 to Gray's Creek, \$10,000 to Cooper Marsh

Presented as December 31st year end prior to audit adjustments; department specific surplus may change during audit.



To: Board of Directors
From: Alison McDonald, General Manager, Secretary-Treasurer
Date: January 09, 2026
Subject: Approval - 2026 Budget and Municipal Levy

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.

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 4th 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 provided the final 2026 budget presentation by email 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 29, 2026
Subject: Update: Proposed Regional Consolidation of Conservation Authorities

RECOMMENDATION:

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

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 4th 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 ERO comments highlight concerns about the loss of local decision-making authority, reduced municipal representation, service disruption, protection of knowledgeable local staff, and impacts on local programs. Our 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.
- Recognition of 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:

Representatives from RRCA, South Nation Conservation, and the United Counties of SDG met with the Minister of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks and his Deputy Minister at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association conference in Toronto.

At this delegation we recommended that the province:

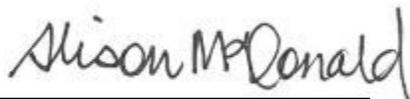
1. Reassess the consolidation model to ensure geographic coherence, cost-effectiveness, and local accountability; consider a smaller region which reflect existing municipal partnerships and shared staffing.
2. Provide confirmation that local offices will not be closed and staff will not be impacted.
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.

Staff will continue to engage with neighbouring CAs, Conservation Ontario, municipal partners, and the province and will explore opportunities to participate in any 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

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), 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



**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

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 km² 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 06, 2026
Subject: Annual Approvals: Mileage Rate, Solicitor, Auditor

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 \$20,000 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.

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 \$20,000 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.



Sandy Crites
Finance Officer



To: Board of Directors
From: Alison McDonald, General Manager, Secretary-Treasurer
Date: January 08, 2026
Subject: 2026 Committee Appointments

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

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

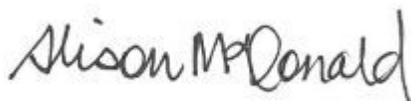
The Friends of Glengarry Trails Association (FGTA), established in 1999, is a non-profit organization dedicated to creating and maintaining recreational trails in North Glengarry. Developed with provincial funding, support from the Township, and the Raisin Region Conservation Authority (RRCA), the trails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



Alison McDonald,
General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer



To: Board of Directors
From: Josianne Sabourin, Executive Assistant
Date: January 29, 2026
Subject: Approval - Health & Safety Policy

RECOMMENDATION:

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

BACKGROUND:

RRCA is updating its Health and Safety Program in partnership with the WSIB Excellence Program. This program supports organizations in strengthening workplace health and safety through a performance-based framework that includes expert guidance, recognition opportunities, and eligibility for WSIB premium rebates.

As part of our participation, RRCA selected three required topics for 2025/26: Leadership & Commitment, Communication, and First Aid.

DISCUSSION:

To meet the requirements of these topics, staff developed procedures and supporting documentation as outlined below:

Topic 1: Leadership & Commitment

A procedure was developed to define the roles and responsibilities of senior management, the Board of Directors, and employees.

A Health and Safety Policy was also required under this topic, and a copy is attached for the Board's review and approval.

Topic 2: Communication

This procedure outlines:

- Roles and responsibilities of management and employees
- Methods of internal and external communication related to health and safety
- Mechanisms for receiving and responding to staff feedback

Topic 3: First Aid

This procedure outlines:

- Roles and responsibilities of management and employees
- First aid training requirements

- Transportation protocols for an injured worker
- Location, contents, and inspection requirements for first aid kits

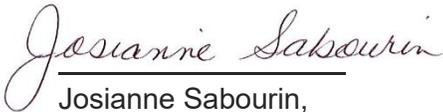
As part of annual compliance requirements under the WSIB Excellence Program, the Health and Safety Policy must be submitted to the Board of Directors for review and approval each year.

All procedures referenced above are available on the RRCA's internal server. A secure link will be sent to Board members by email, providing direct access for their review and reference.

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.



Josianne Sabourin,
Administrative Assistant

Attached:
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.

Chair, Raisin Region Conservation Authority

Date



To: Board of Directors
From: Lisa Van De Ligt, Team Lead, Communications and Stewardship
Date: January 07, 2026
Subject: Strategic Action Plan – 2026/Q1 Progress Update

RECOMMENDATION:

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

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 that reads "Lisa Van De Ligt".

Lisa Van De Ligt,
Team Lead, Communications and Stewardship

Attached: Strategic Plan Progress Tracker

2025-2028 Strategic Action Plan



PROGRESS TRACKER

January 29, 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	Josianne/Claudia	75%	Josianne researching FAQ's from other CAs. Claudia has gathered questions. Need to be reviewed.
b) Refresh and document Standard Operating Procedures, including health & safety and the purchasing process.	2026/Q4	Josianne	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/Josianne	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 February AGM.
d) Enhance onboarding process for board members and staff.	2026/Q3	Lisa/Josianne	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 28, 2026
Subject: Grant Submissions

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board of Directors retroactively approve the following requests:

- \$50,000 from Canada Water Agency to support preparing assessment reports for the St. Lawrence River (Cornwall / Akwesasne) Area of Concern;
- \$11,800 from the Invasive Species Centre to monitor and manage invasive species on RRCA conservation lands;
- \$8,000 from TD Friends of the Environment Foundation to enhance wildlife observation opportunities at Cooper Marsh Conservation Area;
- \$3,000 from TC Energy for the 2026 tree giveaways;
- \$17,875 from the Invasive Species Centre to manage invasive Phragmites at RRCA conservation areas;

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

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 (retroactive approval)

4. Project Title: 2026 RRCA Tree Giveaways

- **Funder:** Enbridge
- **Request:** \$3,000
- **Summary:** Funding will support the 2026 RRCA Tree Giveaways.
- **Submission Deadline:** January 15, 2026 (retroactive approval)

5. Project Title: Invasive Phragmites Control at RRCA Conservation Areas

- **Funder:** Ministry of Natural Resources/Invasive Species Centre – Invasive Species Action Fund
- **Request:** \$17,875
- **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 (retroactive approval)

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.



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 28, 2026
Subject: Conservation Areas Update

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board of Directors receive the Conservation Areas update.

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: 128,500 (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: 29,000 (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: 42,500 (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: World Wetlands Day event in partnership with Mohawk Council of Akwesasne
 - March 17-18, 2026: March Break workshops delivered by River Institute
 - July 20-24 and 27-31, 2026: Eco-Friends Summer Day Camp delivered by River Institute
- 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.
- Capital projects include replacement of the back lower deck, installation of a new viewing platform, and hazard tree removal near the visitor's centre.

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

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Goal 1: Environmental Conservation & Healthy Living

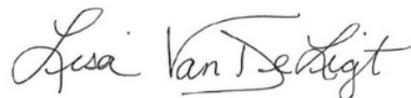
- 1.3: Connecting people with nature through positive outdoor experiences.

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



To: Board of Directors
From: Lisa Van De Ligt, Team Lead, Stewardship and Communications
Date: January 07, 2026
Subject: Recognition for Years of Service: Lisa Van De Ligt, Vincent Pilon, Mike Tessier, Phil Barnes, and Lissa Deslandes

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.

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 longtime resident of Cornwall and South Glengarry, 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.



Lisa Van De Ligt,
Team Lead, Communications and Stewardship



P.O. Box 602
Lancaster, Ontario
K0C 1N0



To the Board of Directors, Raisin Region Conservation Authority

I am writing on behalf of Citizens for Marshland Conservation to express our sincere regrets regarding the recent article published about the Lakeview Marsh. It has come to our attention that the tone and framing of the piece may have unintentionally suggested that the RRCA bore responsibility for the marsh's degradation. This was never our intention, and we deeply regret any concern or misunderstanding this may have caused.

The purpose of the article was to inform our readership about the important rehabilitation efforts currently underway at Lakeview Marsh and to highlight the positive steps being taken by the RRCA. Unfortunately, the final presentation of the article did not accurately reflect that intention, and we recognize that this may have created an unintended negative impression.

The CMC holds the work of the RRCA in the highest regard. We are genuinely appreciative of the leadership shown by Alison McDonald and her team in securing funding and advancing the restoration and improvement of the marsh. Their commitment to conservation has been essential to the progress being made, and we value the strong partnership that has developed between our organizations.

On behalf of myself and the entire Citizens for Marshland Conservation, I extend a sincere apology to the Board for any negative impact the article may have had. We greatly value our collaborative relationship with the RRCA and would never wish to jeopardize the trust and goodwill that support our shared conservation goals.

To prevent similar issues in the future, the CMC will be implementing additional measures to ensure that any interviews or communications with the press are carefully reviewed for accuracy and clarity. We are committed to maintaining open, respectful, and constructive communication as we continue working together to protect and restore wetlands in the SDG counties.

Thank you for your understanding, and please know that we remain fully committed to supporting the RRCA's ongoing efforts.

Sincerely,

Yvon Duchesne Board Chairperson

Citizens for Marshland Conservation



Raisin Region Conservation Authority

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

Tel: 613-938-3611 www.rrca.on.ca

Ontario Ministry of Finance: 2026 Budget Consultation

Date: January 29, 2026

Organization Name: Raisin Region Conservation Authority

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

Email Address: Alison.McDonald@rrca.on.ca

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

Raisin Region Conservation Authority (RRCA) is one of Ontario's 36 conservation authorities. For over 60 years, we have served the City of Cornwall and the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry. Our 16 full-time staff bring excellent local knowledge and experience to the region, and each year we provide employment and training opportunities to approximately 15 local students.

We appreciated the opportunity to participate in the community budget consultation held in Cornwall on January 7th, and we welcome the chance to provide the following written submission.

The RRCA works on behalf of the province and our municipal partners to protect people and property from flooding and other natural hazards, safeguard municipal drinking water sources, protect Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River water quality, and manage local conservation lands that receive over 175,000 visitors annually. High-quality, timely, and personalized customer service is central to our strong relationships with residents and municipal partners.

We are grateful for the province's commitment to multi-year funding for the Ontario Drinking Water Source Protection Program. This stability allows us to retain skilled staff, strengthen partnerships, leverage additional funding opportunities, and deliver on our mandate to protect critical drinking water sources, including the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers.

Stable, long-term funding is essential to support modernization, strengthen technical capacity, and achieve measurable performance outcomes. It is especially important for maintaining aging dam infrastructure, updating floodplain mapping, and scaling on-the-ground actions needed to address climate change and intensified development pressures.

Investments in natural hazard prevention and watershed health provide significant returns - helping avoid the social, environmental, and economic costs associated with severe weather and climate-related events.

Conservation authority natural hazard programs are primarily funded through municipal levy contributions. We respectfully request that the province match municipal funding commitments to deliver these provincially mandated programs. Provincial matching funds for federal disaster mitigation and flood hazard programs would also support essential infrastructure and floodplain mapping improvements.

In addition, we encourage the province to continue investing in local shoreline restoration and wetland conservation through the Canada-Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health. These efforts provide direct, measurable benefits to our communities.

Supporting the watershed-based work of conservation authorities delivers clear and lasting outcomes: reduced risks and costs from flooding and erosion, safer development, cleaner and

more sustainable drinking water sources, vibrant community green spaces, and local job creation including meaningful youth employment opportunities that strengthen Ontario's rural and urban communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a pre-budget submission and delegation. 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