



Raisin Region Conservation Authority

Board of Directors Meeting Agenda

April 2, 2026 – immediately following the SPA Meeting

RRCA Administration Building, County Rd. 2, Cornwall, ON

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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 March 5, 2026	1-4
7. New Business	
a) Update on Bill 97 and Transition Committees	5-17
b) Strategic Action Plan Item 2.2 a) – RRCA Communications Plans	18-38
c) Grant Submissions	39-40
8. Correspondence	
a) Letter from Minister Todd McCarthy	41-42
9. Future Meetings	
RRCA Board of Directors starting at 9:00 am – May 7, June 4, Sep 3	
10. Adjournment	

Alison McDonald
General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer

RAISIN REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MARCH 5, 2026 MEETING
MINUTES
RRCA ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 18045 COUNTY RD. 2, CORNWALL, ON

- PRESENT: Jacques Massie, North Glengarry, Chair
Andrew Guindon, South Stormont, Vice-Chair
Bryan McGillis, South Stormont
Carilyne Hebert, City of Cornwall
Martin Lang, South Glengarry
Lachlan McDonald, South Glengarry
- STAFF: Alison McDonald, General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer
Josianne Sabourin, Executive Assistant
Sandy Crites, Finance Officer
Phil Barnes, Team Lead, Watershed Management
Scott Braithwaite, Stewardship & Planning Coordinator
Lissa Deslandes, Regulations Officer
Laura Grant, Project Manager
Pete Sabourin, Team Lead, Field Operations
Jason Symington, Project Manager
Lisa Van De Ligt, Team Lead, Communications & Stewardship
- REGRETS: Adrian Bugelli, North Stormont
Claude McIntosh, City of Cornwall

CALL TO ORDER

Jacques Massie, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:20 am

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The matter of a legal negotiations of land by the Authority be added to Closed Session.

RESOLUTION #18/26: Moved by: Lachlan McDonald
Seconded by: Andrew Guindon

THAT the agenda be approved as amended.

CARRIED

RESOLUTION #19/26: Moved by: Bryan McGillis
Seconded by: Martin Lang

THAT an amendment to the order of the agenda to move the Closed Session immediately following the Delegations/Presentations be approved.

CARRIED

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

DELEGATIONS / PRESENTATIONS

Staff presented Project Updates through a PowerPoint presentation.

CLOSED SESSION

RESOLUTION #20/26:

Moved by: Martin Lang

Seconded by: Lachlan McDonald

THAT the Board of Directors meeting move into Closed Session to discuss personnel matters and legal negotiations of land by the Authority.

CARRIED

RESOLUTION #21/26:

Moved by: Martin Lang

Seconded by: Lachlan McDonald

THAT the Board of Directors meeting move to Open Session.

CARRIED

Carilyne Hebert excused herself from the meeting at 10:20 am due to a prior commitment.

RESOLUTION #22/26:

Moved by: Andrew Guindon

Seconded by: Bryan McGillis

THAT the Board of Directors authorize staff to pursue items of action dealing with matters discussed in Closed Session.

CARRIED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLUTION #23/26:

Moved by: Bryan McGillis

Seconded by: Andrew Guindon

THAT the minutes of February 5, 2026, meeting of the Raisin Region Conservation Authority be approved.

CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS

EMPLOYEE MANUAL

RESOLUTION #24/26:

Moved by: Lachlan McDonald

Seconded by: Martin Lang

THAT the Board of Directors approve the updated Employee Manual, as amended.

CARRIED

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN ITEM 1.3 A) UPDATE – LAKEVIEW MARSH

RESOLUTION #25/26:

Moved by: Lachlan McDonald

Seconded by: Martin Lang

THAT the Board of Directors approve the designation of the properties commonly known as Lakeview Marsh (roll numbers 040600100722022, 040600100722040, and 040600100722050) as a Conservation Area under active restoration;

AND FURTHER THAT a long-term master plan for the Lakeview Marsh Conservation Area be developed following completion of site restoration activities and public consultation;

AND FURTHER THAT the Board of Directors direct staff to engage with partners regarding property restoration plans and to collaborate on the official naming of the Conservation Area.

CARRIED

GRANT SUBMISSIONS

RESOLUTION #26/26:

Moved by: Martin Lang

Seconded by: Lachlan McDonald

THAT the Board of Directors retroactively approve requesting \$6,100 from various local businesses to support the 2026 Raisin River Canoe Race;

AND FURTHER THAT the Board of Directors retroactively approve requesting \$2,875 from Nature Canada to support bird stewardship initiatives on City of Cornwall and school properties in partnership with Bird Friendly Cornwall;

AND FURTHER THAT the Board of Directors approve requesting \$3,000 from Nature Canada to support Cooper Marsh Visitors Centre enhancements;

AND FURTHER THAT the Board of Directors approve requesting \$15,000 from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources for a flood assessment of the Fly Creek Flood Control catchment area and entering into a funding agreement with the Ministry if the application is approved;

AND FURTHER THAT the Board of Directors approve entering into a Planting Delivery Agent agreement with Forests Canada for the 2025/2026 tree planting season.

CARRIED

TRANSITION WORKING GROUP

Lachlan McDonald was appointed to the Transition Working Group with Martin Lang being named as alternate.

RESOLUTION #27/26:

Moved by: Martin Lang

Seconded by: Lachlan McDonald

THAT the Board of Directors approve the Terms of Reference for the Transition Working Group;

AND FURTHER THAT the Board appoint a third Board Member to sit on the Transition Working Group.

CARRIED

ANNUAL REPORT ON PERMIT STATISTICS, TIMELINES AND COMPLIANCE

RESOLUTION #28/26:

Moved by: Lachlan McDonald

Seconded by: Martin Lang

THAT the Board of Directors receives the Annual Report on Permit Statistics, Timelines and Compliance and that the Board of Directors direct staff to post the report on the RRCA website.

CARRIED

2026 FLOOD CONTINGENCY PLAN

RESOLUTION #29/26:

Moved by: Andrew Guindon

Seconded by: Lachlan McDonald

THAT the Board of Directors receives the RRCA's 2026 Flood Contingency Plan.

CARRIED

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE – TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLUTION #30/26:

Moved by: Bryan McGillis

Seconded by: Andrew Guindon

THAT the Board of Directors approve the Joint Health and Safety Committee Terms of Reference, as presented.

CARRIED

FUTURE MEETINGS

RRCA Board of Directors starting at 9:00 am – Apr 2, May 7, Jun 4

ADJOURNMENT

RESOLUTION #31/26:

Moved by: Lachlan McDonald

Seconded by: Martin Lang

THAT the Board of Directors meeting of March 5, 2026, be adjourned.

CARRIED

Jacques Massie,
Chair

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

To: Board of Directors
From: Alison McDonald, General Manager
Date: March 26, 2026
Subject: Update on Bill 97 and Transition Committees

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board of Directors receive the Update on Bill 97 and Transition Committees.

BACKGROUND:

On November 7, 2025, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks posted a proposal for regional consolidation of conservation authorities. The Board submitted comments through the Environmental Registry and met with both the Minister and Deputy Minister during the Rural Ontario Municipal Association Conference in Toronto.

During these discussions, the Board emphasized three key priorities: reducing the size of the proposed regional boundary; ensuring the protection of local staff and continuation of local services; and securing meaningful representation for local municipalities within the new governance structure.

DISCUSSION:

On March 11, the Province issued several announcements confirming the final configuration of nine regions, provided assurances regarding the retention of front-line staff, clarified the framework for municipal representation on regional boards, and outlined the transition timeline.

On March 26, the Province introduced Bill 97, *An Act to implement Budget measures, to enact, amend or repeal various statutes and to revoke various regulations*, as part of the 2026 provincial budget. This Bill includes provisions that directly impact the regional consolidation process and transition activities.

At the upcoming meeting, staff will deliver a presentation summarizing the key elements of Schedule 3 and outline recommended action items for the Transition Working Group.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Goal 4: Organizational Excellence

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

Alison McDonald,
 General Manager, Secretary/Treasurer

**SCHEDULE 3
CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES ACT**

1 (1) The definition of “authority” in section 1 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* is amended by striking out “established by or under” and substituting “established or continued under”.

(2) The definition of “Minister” in section 1 of the Act is repealed and the following substituted:

“Minister” means the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks or such other member of the Executive Council to whom responsibility for the administration of this Act may be assigned or transferred under the *Executive Council Act*; (“ministre”)

2 The Act is amended by adding the following Part:

**PART I.1
TRANSITION TO NEW AUTHORITIES**

Interpretation

1.2 (1) In this Part,

“new authority” means an authority set out in Column 2 of the Table to section 1.3; (“nouvel office”)

“predecessor authority” means an authority set out in Column 1 of the Table to section 1.3; (“office remplacé”)

“transition committee” means, in respect of a new authority, the committee established under subsection 1.6 (1) for that authority; (“comité de transition”)

“transition date” means February 1, 2027 or such later date as may be prescribed by the regulations; (“date de transition”)

Same

(2) Despite the definition of “new authority” in subsection (1), a reference to a new authority includes, where the context so requires, the authority as it is being planned for before the amalgamation and continuation provided for under subsection 1.3 (2) occur.

Amalgamation of predecessor authorities

Interpretation

1.3 (1) In this section,

(a) a reference to a predecessor authority’s new authority is a reference to the new authority into which the predecessor authority is to be amalgamated; and

(b) a reference to a new authority’s predecessor authorities is a reference to the predecessor authorities that are to be amalgamated into the new authority.

Amalgamations

(2) On the transition date, the predecessor authorities set out in Column 1 of the Table to this section are amalgamated and continued as conservation authorities under the applicable name set out opposite the predecessor authorities in Column 2 of the Table.

Rules

(3) The following rules apply on and after the transition date to each amalgamation:

1. All rights, obligations, assets and liabilities of the predecessor authorities that existed immediately before the transition date become the rights, obligations, assets and liabilities of their new authority, and the new authority shall stand in the place of its predecessor authorities for all purposes.
2. A conviction against or a ruling, order or judgment in favour of or against one of the predecessor authorities may be enforced by or against their new authority.
3. A new authority is deemed to be the party plaintiff or the party defendant, as the case may be, in any civil action commenced by or against any of its predecessor authorities before the transition date.
4. Persons who are employees of the predecessor authorities immediately before the transition date become employees of the predecessor authorities’ new authority and, for all purposes, the employment of the employees immediately before and after the transition date is continuous.
5. For all purposes, including the provisions of an employment contract, a collective agreement and the *Employment Standards Act, 2000*, the employment of the employees referred to in paragraph 4 is not terminated or severed and those employees are not constructively dismissed because the predecessor authorities were amalgamated.

6. All rights, duties and liabilities relating to all employees and former employees of the predecessor authorities that are vested in or bind the predecessor authorities immediately before the transition date are vested in or bind their new authority instead of the predecessor authorities.
7. The *Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, 1997*, except for section 36 of that Act, applies upon the amalgamation of the predecessor authorities into their new authorities.
8. The amalgamation of the predecessor authorities into their new authority is deemed to be a sale of business under section 13.1 of the *Pay Equity Act* and that section applies to the amalgamation. Each of the predecessor authorities are deemed to be a seller and the predecessor authorities' new authority is deemed to be the purchaser.
9. Section 69 of the *Labour Relations Act, 1995* does not apply to the amalgamation of the predecessor authorities into their new authority.
10. Any advisory board of a predecessor authority is continued as an advisory board of the predecessor authority's new authority.
11. An agreement or memorandum of understanding to which one of the predecessor authorities was a party immediately before the transition date has effect as if,
 - i. its new authority was substituted for the predecessor authority as a party to the agreement or memorandum of understanding, and
 - ii. any reference in the agreement or memorandum of understanding to the predecessor authority were a reference to its new authority.
12. The amalgamation of the predecessor authorities into their new authority shall not constitute a change of control of any of the predecessor authorities in respect of any asset, liability, right or obligation of the predecessor authorities.
13. Despite any other Act that requires notice or registration in respect of the amalgamation of the predecessor authorities into their new authority, the amalgamation is binding on their new authority and all other persons.
14. The amalgamation of the predecessor authorities into their new authority is deemed not to,
 - i. constitute a breach, termination, repudiation or frustration of any agreement, including a contract of employment or insurance or a collective agreement,
 - ii. create any cause of action in favour of a party to an agreement with one of the predecessor authorities that was entered into before the amalgamation,
 - iii. constitute a breach of any Act, regulation or municipal by-law,
 - iv. constitute an event of default or force majeure,
 - v. give rise to a breach, termination, repudiation or frustration of any licence, permit or other right,
 - vi. give rise to any right to terminate or repudiate an agreement, licence, permit or other right, or
 - vii. give rise to any estoppel.
15. The *Land Transfer Tax Act* and the *Retail Sales Tax Act* do not apply to the amalgamation of the predecessor authorities into their new authority.
16. The area over which a new authority has jurisdiction is the area consisting of the areas over which all of its predecessor authorities had jurisdiction immediately before the transition date.
17. Despite any designation of the participating municipalities of a predecessor authority under this Act before the transition date, the participating municipalities of a new authority shall be the single-tier municipalities and the upper-tier municipalities that are located in whole or in part within its area of jurisdiction.
18. Any agreement between a predecessor authority and a lower-tier municipality under section 21.1.2 that was in effect immediately before the transition date shall continue to be in effect and is deemed to be an agreement between the new authority of the predecessor authority and the upper-tier participating municipality in which the lower-tier municipality is located.
19. Any debt due to a predecessor authority immediately before the transition date, including a debt due under section 25, 27 or 27.2, becomes a debt due to the predecessor authority's new authority.
20. Any application that was made before the transition date to a predecessor authority for a permit to engage in an activity that would otherwise be prohibited under section 28 that was not decided on before the transition date is continued as an application to the predecessor authority's new authority.

21. A request for a hearing that was made to a predecessor authority or a hearing that has commenced before a predecessor authority before the transition date but that was not disposed of before the transition date is continued as a request for a hearing to or a hearing before the predecessor authority's new authority.
22. If a predecessor authority was a party to a hearing, review or appeal that was requested or commenced before the transition date, its new authority is deemed to be the party to the hearing, review or appeal.
23. Persons who are appointed officers by a predecessor authority under section 30.1 immediately before the transition date become officers appointed by the predecessor authority's new authority under section 30.1.
24. Any commencement of a proceeding under the *Provincial Offences Act* by a predecessor authority is continued in the name of its new authority.
25. Such other rules, including transitional rules, as may be prescribed by the regulations.

Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, 1997

- (4) For the purposes of the *Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, 1997* and paragraph 7 of subsection (3),
 - (a) the predecessor authorities are the predecessor employers and their new authorities are the successor employers; and
 - (b) the changeover date is the transition date.

TABLE
AMALGAMATION

Item	Column 1 Predecessor authorities to be amalgamated	Column 2 New authority
1.	Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority Toronto and Region Conservation Authority	Central Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority Office régional de protection de la nature du centre du lac Ontario
2.	Catfish Creek Conservation Authority Grand River Conservation Authority Kettle Creek Conservation Authority Long Point Region Conservation Authority	Eastern Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority Office régional de protection de la nature de l'Est du lac Érié
3.	Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority Crowe Valley Conservation Authority Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority Kawartha Region Conservation Authority Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority Otonabee Region Conservation Authority Quinte Conservation Authority	Eastern Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority Office régional de protection de la nature de l'Est du lac Ontario
4.	Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority Maitland Valley Conservation Authority Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority	Lake Huron Regional Conservation Authority Office régional de protection de la nature du lac Huron
5.	Mattagami Region Conservation Authority Nickel District Conservation Authority North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority Sault Ste. Marie Region Conservation Authority	Northeastern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority Office régional de protection de la nature du Nord-Est de l'Ontario
6.	Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority Raisin Region Conservation Authority Rideau Valley Conservation Authority South Nation River Conservation Authority	St. Lawrence River Regional Conservation Authority Office régional de protection de la nature du fleuve Saint-Laurent
7.	Essex Region Conservation Authority Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority St. Clair Region Conservation Authority Upper Thames River Conservation Authority	Western Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority Office régional de protection de la nature de l'Ouest du lac Érié
8.	Credit Valley Conservation Authority Halton Region Conservation Authority Hamilton Region Conservation Authority Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority	Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority Office régional de protection de la nature de l'Ouest du lac Ontario

Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, continuation

1.4 (1) On the transition date, the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority is continued as a conservation authority under the name Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority in English and Office régional de protection de la nature du Nord-Ouest de l'Ontario in French.

Participating municipalities

(2) The participating municipalities of the Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority shall be the municipalities that were the participating municipalities of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority immediately before the transition date.

3 (1) The Act is amended by adding the following section:

First members of new authority

1.5 (1) No later than the day immediately before the transition date, the council of each municipality that will be a participating municipality of a new authority shall appoint to the new authority such number of members as determined in accordance with subsections (3), (5) and (6), which members must be resident in a participating municipality of the new authority.

Same, Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority

(2) No later than the day immediately before the transition date, the council of each municipality that will be a participating municipality of the Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority shall appoint to the authority such number of members as determined in accordance with subsections (3), (5) and (6), which members must be resident in a participating municipality of the authority.

Minimum number

(3) The number of members to be appointed to the authority under subsection (1) or (2) by each municipality that will be a participating municipality of the applicable authority shall be determined in accordance with the method prescribed by the regulations, but a minimum of one member shall be appointed by the council of each municipality that will be a participating municipality.

Method

(4) The method mentioned in subsection (3) for determining the number of members to be appointed by each municipality that will be a participating municipality shall be based on each municipality's population within the authority's area of jurisdiction in proportion to the total population within that area of jurisdiction.

Maximum number, single participating municipality

(5) The maximum number of members to be appointed to the authority by a single municipality that will be a participating municipality is the number prescribed by the regulations.

Same, all participating municipalities

(6) The maximum number of members to be appointed to the authority by all municipalities that will be participating municipalities is the number prescribed by the regulations.

Considerations

(7) When appointing a person as a member of an authority under subsection (1) or (2) who is not a member of the council of the participating municipality, the council shall take into consideration,

- (a) the person's knowledge and experience in public administration, corporate governance and finance;
- (b) the person's knowledge of programs and services provided by authorities; and
- (c) such other matters as the Minister may prescribe by regulation.

Notice

(8) The council shall, as soon as possible after making its appointments under this section, give the Agency written notice of the appointments.

Term

(9) A member shall be appointed for a term of up to four years, as may be determined by the council that appoints the member.

Same

(10) A member's term begins at the first meeting of the new authority or the Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority, as the case may be, and expires immediately before the first meeting of that authority after the appointment of their replacement.

Replacement of member

(11) Despite subsections (9) and (10), a member may be replaced by the council of the participating municipality that appointed the member.

(2) Section 1.5 of the Act, as enacted by subsection (1), is repealed.

4 (1) The Act is amended by adding the following sections:

Transition committees

1.6 (1) The Agency shall, for each new authority, establish a committee in accordance with this section whose purpose is to prepare for the amalgamation of the predecessor authorities into the new authority.

Appointments by predecessor authorities

(2) No later than 90 days after the day the *Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2026* receives Royal Assent, each predecessor authority shall appoint the following individuals to be members of the transition committee for its new authority:

1. One of its members that is a member of a municipal council.
2. Subject to subsection (3), the chief administrative officer or general manager of the predecessor authority.

Same

(3) If a predecessor authority is of the opinion that its chief administrative officer or general manager is not available to serve on the transition committee, the predecessor authority may instead appoint another officer or senior staff member of the predecessor authority.

Same

(4) If a predecessor authority does not appoint one or both of the individuals in accordance with subsection (2) or (3), the Agency shall appoint any individuals still required to be appointed under subsection (2) on behalf of the applicable predecessor authority.

Replacement of member

(5) A member appointed under subsection (2) or (3) may be replaced by the predecessor authority that appointed the member.

Agency may appoint other individuals

(6) The Agency may appoint such other individuals as it considers advisable to be members of a transition committee.

Replacement of member, Agency

(7) A member appointed under subsection (4) or (6) may be replaced by the Agency.

Project executive to chair transition committee

(8) The Agency shall appoint an individual as a project executive for each transition committee who shall serve as chair of the committee.

Project executive not employee

(9) A project executive appointed under subsection (8) is not an employee of the Agency and shall be paid compensation and expenses as agreed to with the Agency.

Replacement of project executive

(10) The Agency may replace an individual appointed under subsection (8) as a project executive.

Dissolution of transition committees

(11) The Agency may dissolve a transition committee by providing written notice to the members of the transition committee and the applicable new authority.

Same, effective date

(12) The effective date of a dissolution of a transition committee is the date specified by the Agency in the notice, which date shall not be earlier than the transition date.

Agency direction to transition committee

1.7 (1) The Agency may issue directions to a transition committee, the transition committee's project executive or to both, in accordance with this section, governing the roles, responsibilities, practices and procedures of the transition committee and project executive and requiring the transition committee, project executive or both to take specified actions to prepare for the amalgamation of the predecessor authorities into the new authority, which may include actions respecting the development of a transition plan mentioned in subsection 1.10 (1) and the plan's contents.

Copy of direction

(2) The Agency shall provide a copy of each direction issued under this section to the transition committee's project executive, every member of the transition committee and to the chair of each of the new authority's predecessor authorities.

Compliance

(3) A transition committee and a project executive shall comply with a direction issued to them under this section within the time specified in the direction.

General or particular

(4) A direction issued under this section may be general or particular in its application.

Non-application of *Legislation Act, 2006*

(5) Part III (Regulations) of the *Legislation Act, 2006* does not apply to directions issued under this section.

Project executive, etc may require information

1.8 (1) For the purposes of ensuring a transition committee and its project executive satisfy the requirements of this Act and any applicable directions of the Agency, the project executive may require one or more of the new authority's predecessor authorities to provide information to the project executive at the time and in the manner specified by the project executive.

Same

(2) Subsections 35.23 (2) to (8) apply in respect of a requirement by a project executive to provide information under subsection (1), subject to necessary modifications.

Obligations of predecessor authority

1.9 Every member, employee and agent of a new authority's predecessor authorities shall co-operate with the new authority's transition committee and the transition committee's project executive and shall assist the transition committee and the project executive when requested by them for the purposes of ensuring the transition committee and the project executive satisfy the requirements of this Act and any applicable directions of the Agency.

Development of transition plan

1.10 (1) Each transition committee shall develop a transition plan to prepare for the amalgamation of the predecessor authorities into its new authority.

Submission to Agency

(2) The transition committee shall submit the transition plan to the Agency for the Agency's review by the date specified by the Agency.

Revisions to transition plan

(3) After the Agency has reviewed the transition plan, the Agency shall,

- (a) provide comments on the plan and may issue directions to the transition committee respecting revisions that the committee must make to the plan including the date by which the revisions must be made; or
- (b) confirm that no revisions to the plan are necessary.

Same

(4) Upon receipt of the Agency's comments or a direction under subsection (3), the transition committee shall revise the transition plan in accordance with the direction, if any, and with regard to the Agency's comments.

Development of transition plan, Agency

(5) If the transition committee does not submit a transition plan to the Agency for the Agency's review by the date specified by the Agency under subsection (2), the Agency shall develop the transition plan on behalf of the committee.

Delivery of transition plan

(6) After receiving confirmation that no revisions are necessary under subsection (3) or completing any revisions under subsection (4), the transition committee shall provide a copy of the final transition plan to the new authority's predecessor authorities and the Agency by the date specified by the Agency.

Same

(7) If the Agency develops a transition plan under subsection (5), the Agency shall provide a copy of the final transition plan to the new authority's predecessor authorities and to the transition committee's project executive.

Summary of transition plan

(8) By the date specified by the Agency, the transition committee shall provide a summary of the final transition plan to the participating municipalities of the new authority's predecessor authorities and to the municipalities that will be the participating municipalities of the new authority.

Same

(9) If the Agency develops a transition plan under subsection (5), the Agency shall provide a summary of the final transition plan to the participating municipalities of the new authority's predecessor authorities and to the municipalities that will be the participating municipalities of the new authority.

Delivery of transition plan to new authority

(10) On or after the transition date, the transition committee's project executive shall provide a copy of the final transition plan to each member of the new authority.

Implementation of transition plan

1.11 (1) Each new authority shall implement the final transition plan provided to its members under subsection 1.10 (10), or the amended final transition plan if any amendments are made to the plan under this section.

Request for amendments

(2) The new authority may request, in writing, that the Agency authorize the authority to amend the final transition plan.

Contents of request

(3) A request under subsection (2) must identify the portions of the final transition plan that the new authority wishes to amend, describe its proposed amendments and explain the rationale for the proposed amendments.

Agency review of request

(4) The Agency shall consider a request under subsection (2) and do one or more of the following by providing written notice to the new authority:

1. Authorize the new authority to make some or all of the proposed amendments to the transition plan.
2. Refuse some or all of the proposed amendments to the transition plan.
3. Make such amendments to the transition plan in respect of the request as the Agency considers appropriate.

Progress report

(5) The new authority shall report to the Agency on its progress respecting implementation of the transition plan in accordance with such requirements as may be specified by the Agency.

First chief administrative officer

1.12 (1) Despite subsection 18 (1.1) and subject to subsections (2) and (3), starting on the transition date, the project executive appointed in respect of a transition committee for a new authority is the chief administrative officer of the new authority for a term of two years.

Notice re replacement of chief administrative officer

(2) During the two-year term mentioned in subsection (1), the Agency may provide written notice to the authority and the project executive that the project executive mentioned in subsection (1) is no longer the chief administrative officer of the authority, effective on such date as may be specified in the notice.

Same

(3) If a notice is provided under subsection (2), the Agency may also include in the notice to the authority the name of a new individual appointed by the Agency as the chief administrative officer for the remainder of the two-year term mentioned in subsection (1).

Same

(4) If the notice does not identify an individual appointed as the chief administrative officer, the authority shall appoint a chief administrative officer for such term as the authority specifies.

Prohibitions during transition period

Establishment of authority

1.13 (1) Despite sections 2, 3 and 9,

- (a) no request shall be made to the Minister to call a meeting mentioned in subsection 2 (1) or section 9;
- (b) the Minister shall not call a meeting mentioned in subsection 2 (1) or section 9; and
- (c) no conservation authority shall be established by the Lieutenant Governor in Council under section 3.

Enlargement of authority's area

(2) Despite section 10,

- (a) no council of a municipality shall call a meeting mentioned in subsection 10 (1); and
- (b) no resolution mentioned in subsection 10 (4) shall be passed.

Amalgamation of authorities

(3) Despite section 11,

- (a) no authority or council of a municipality shall call a meeting mentioned in subsection 11 (1); and
- (b) the Minister shall not approve a resolution described in subsection 11 (4), with or without changes, terms and conditions.

Dissolution of authority

(4) Despite section 13.1,

- (a) no authority shall call a meeting mentioned in subsection 13.1 (1); and
- (b) the Lieutenant Governor in Council shall not dissolve an authority under subsection 13.1 (6).

Minister's direction

1.14 (1) The Minister may, for the purpose of facilitating the transition to a regional watershed-based framework for authorities, issue a direction to an authority,

- (a) prohibiting the authority from making a decision in relation to its exercise of any of its powers under this Act or any other Act in the circumstances specified in the direction and subject to any specified conditions;
- (b) requiring the authority to give notice, in accordance with the direction, of a decision that it has made;
- (c) requiring the authority to send notices under subsection 25 (2), 27 (3) or 27.2 (3) by the date specified in the direction;
- (d) governing budgetary and apportionment matters relating to the authority that are otherwise addressed in a regulation made under clause 40 (1) (c), (e) or (f) or clause 40 (3) (k).

Same

(2) Without limiting the generality of clause (1) (a), a direction under that clause may require an authority to do any of the following before making a decision:

1. Notify a person specified in the direction of the intended decision.
2. Give a person specified in the direction information respecting the intended decision.
3. Prohibit the authority from making the decision until a person specified in the direction gives the authority written authorization to do so.

Compliance

(3) An authority that receives a direction under subsection (1) shall comply with the direction within the time specified in the direction.

Expiry

(4) A direction expires on the earlier of the expiration date specified in the direction and the transition date.

Directions prevail

(5) In the event of a conflict between a direction issued under this section and a provision of this Act or the regulations, the direction prevails.

Contravention of direction

(6) If an authority makes a decision in contravention of a direction issued under clause (1) (a), the authority's decision has no effect and any agreement that the authority enters into that is in contravention of the direction is void.

General or particular

(7) A direction issued under this section may be general or particular in its application.

Non-application of *Legislation Act, 2006*

(8) Part III (Regulations) of the *Legislation Act, 2006* does not apply to directions issued under this section.

Non-application of *Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993*

(9) Part II of the *Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993* does not apply to directions issued under this section.

(2) Sections 1.6 to 1.12 of the Act, as enacted by subsection (1), are repealed.

(3) Section 1.13 of the Act, as enacted by subsection (1), is repealed.

(4) Section 1.14 of the Act, as enacted by subsection (1), is repealed.

5 Subsection 3 (3) of the Act is repealed.

6 Sections 4 to 7 of the Act are repealed.

7 Section 14 of the Act is repealed and the following substituted:

Members of authority

14 (1) The council of each participating municipality of an authority shall appoint to the authority such number of members as determined in accordance with subsections (2), (4) and (5) which members must be resident in a participating municipality of the authority.

Minimum number

(2) The number of members to be appointed to the authority by each participating municipality shall be determined in accordance with the method prescribed by the regulations, but a minimum of one member shall be appointed by the council of each participating municipality.

Method

(3) The method mentioned in subsection (2) for determining the number of members to be appointed by each participating municipality shall be based on each municipality's population within the authority's area of jurisdiction in proportion to the total population within that area of jurisdiction.

Maximum number, single participating municipality

(4) The maximum number of members to be appointed to the authority by a single participating municipality is the number prescribed by the regulations.

Same, all participating municipalities

(5) The maximum number of members to be appointed to the authority by all participating municipalities is the number prescribed by the regulations.

Agreement on number of members

(6) Despite subsections (1), (2) and (3), the number of members that each participating municipality may appoint may be based on a method other than the method prescribed by the regulations in circumstances where the following criteria are satisfied:

1. All the participating municipalities have entered into an agreement respecting the method.
2. The agreement does not provide for the number of members to be appointed to exceed the maximum numbers provided for under subsections (4) and (5).
3. Such other criteria as may be prescribed in the regulations.

Municipal agreement

(7) If the participating municipalities of an authority enter into an agreement mentioned in subsection (6), the authority shall, within 60 days after the agreement is executed,

- (a) provide a copy of the agreement to the Agency; and
- (b) make the agreement available to the public by posting it on the authority's website and by any other means the authority considers appropriate.

Considerations

(8) When appointing a person as a member of the authority under subsection (1) who are not members of the council of the participating municipality, the council shall take into consideration,

- (a) the person's knowledge and experience in public administration, corporate governance and finance;
- (b) the person's knowledge of programs and services provided by authorities; and
- (c) such other matters as the Minister may prescribe by regulation.

Member from agricultural sector appointed

(9) In addition to the members of an authority appointed by a council under this section, an additional member may be appointed to the authority by the Minister as a representative of the agricultural sector.

Limitation on voting

(10) The member of an authority appointed under subsection (9) shall not vote on,

- (a) a resolution to enlarge an authority's area of jurisdiction that is presented at a meeting called under section 10;
- (b) a resolution to amalgamate an authority with another authority that is presented at a meeting called under section 11;
- (c) a resolution to dissolve the authority that is presented at a meeting called under section 13.1; or
- (d) a resolution relating to any budgetary matter that is presented at a meeting held under section 16.

Term

(11) A member shall be appointed for a term of up to four years, as may be determined by the council that appoints the member or, in the case of a member appointed under subsection (9), by the Minister.

Same

(12) A member's term begins at the first meeting of the authority after their appointment and expires immediately before the first meeting of the authority after the appointment of their replacement.

Replacement of member

(13) Despite subsections (11) and (12), a member may be replaced by the council of the participating municipality that appointed the member or, in the case of a member appointed under subsection (9), by the Minister.

Reappointment

(14) A member is eligible to be reappointed.

8 Subsections 17 (1) to (1.3) of the Act are repealed and the following substituted:**Chair, vice-chair**

(1) If, at the first meeting held in each year or at such other meeting as may be specified by the authority's by-laws, there is a vacancy in the office of chair or vice-chair, the authority shall appoint a chair and one or more vice-chairs, as the case may be, from among the members of the authority.

Term of chair, vice-chair

(1.1) A chair or vice-chair appointed under subsection (1) shall hold office for a term not exceeding two years and shall serve as chair or vice-chair for no more than eight years in total, whether the years are served consecutively or otherwise.

9 Section 18 of the Act is amended by adding the following subsection:**Chief administrative officer**

(1.1) An authority shall appoint a chief administrative officer who shall be responsible for performing such duties as are assigned by the authority in the authority's by-laws.

10 The Act is amended by adding the following section:**Watershed councils**

18.1 (1) An authority shall, in accordance with the regulations, if any, establish one or more watershed councils for the purposes of assisting the authority in identifying local priorities with respect to its programs and services and to ensure that local interests are considered as part of the authority's decision-making process.

Same

(2) An authority shall comply with any requirements that may be prescribed by the regulations with respect to the composition, functions, powers, duties, activities and procedures of a watershed council.

11 (1) Subsection 19.1 (1) of the Act is amended by striking out the portion before clause (a) and substituting the following:

(1) An authority shall make such by-laws as are necessary for its proper administration, which may include,

.

(2) **Clause 19.1 (1) (b) of the Act is amended by adding "and chief administrative officer" at the end.**

(3) **Subsection 19.1 (5) of the Act is repealed.**

12 Subsection 21.1 (2) of the Act is amended by striking out "Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority" and substituting "Lake Huron Regional Conservation Authority".

13 Section 21.1.1 of the Act is amended by adding the following subsection:**Definition**

(6) In this section,

"municipality" means a lower-tier municipality, an upper-tier municipality or a single-tier municipality.

14 Section 21.1.4 of the Act is repealed.

15 (1) Subsection 25 (1.1) of the Act is amended by striking out "subsections (1.2) and (1.3)" and substituting "subsection (1.2)".

(2) **Subsection 25 (1.3) of the Act is repealed.**

16 (1) Subsection 27 (1.1) of the Act is amended by striking out “subsections (1.2) and (1.3)” and substituting “subsection (1.2)”.

(2) Subsection 27 (1.3) of the Act is repealed.

17 (1) Subsection 35.16 (4) of the Act is amended by adding “within the time specified in the direction” at the end.

(2) Section 35.16 of the Act is amended by adding the following subsection:

Non-application of *Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993*

(9) Part II of the *Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993* does not apply to directions issued under this section.

18 (1) Section 35.21 of the Act is amended by adding the following subsection:

Non-application of *Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993*

(6.1) Part II of the *Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993* does not apply to the Minister’s consideration of a proposed direction under this section or to any decision the Minister makes in respect of a proposed direction.

(2) Subsection 35.21 (7) of the Act is amended by adding “within the time specified in the direction” at the end.

19 (1) Clause 35.25 (1) (a) of the Act is repealed and the following substituted:

- (a) establish and require the payment of fees in respect of any matter related to the performance of its duties and the exercise of its powers under this Act, including,
 - (i) respecting a direction issued under section 35.21, and
 - (ii) respecting the appointment of a project executive in relation to their role as chief administrative officer under subsection 1.12 (1) and respecting any individual appointed as a chief administrative officer under subsection 1.12 (3);

(2) Clause 35.25 (1) (a) of the Act, as re-enacted by subsection (1), is repealed and the following substituted:

- (a) establish and require the payment of fees in respect of any matter related to the performance of its duties and the exercise of its powers under this Act, including respecting a direction issued under section 35.21;

20 Subsection 39.2 (1) of the Act is repealed and the following substituted:

No personal liability

(1) No cause of action arises against any current or former member, director, officer, volunteer, employee or agent of the Agency, any person appointed as a member or project executive of a transition committee established by the Agency under section 1.6 or any person appointed to a council, committee or other body established by the Agency under section 35.11 for any act done in good faith in the exercise or performance, or intended exercise or performance, of the person’s powers, duties or functions under this Act or for any alleged neglect, default or other omission in the exercise or performance in good faith of those powers, duties or functions.

21 (1) Subsection 40 (1) of the Act is amended by adding the following clauses:

- (0.a) prescribing a date for the purposes of the definition of “transition date” in subsection 1.2 (1);
- (0.b) for the purposes of Part I.1,
 - (i) prescribing the method for determining the number of members to be appointed to an authority under subsection 1.5 (3),
 - (ii) prescribing the maximum number of members to be appointed to an authority under subsection 1.5 (5) by a single municipality that will be a participating municipality, and
 - (iii) prescribing the maximum number of members to be appointed to an authority under subsection 1.5 (6) by all municipalities that will be participating municipalities;

(2) Clause 40 (1) (0.a) of the Act, as enacted by subsection (1), is repealed.

(3) Clause 40 (1) (0.b) of the Act, as enacted by subsection (1), is repealed.

(4) Subsection 40 (1) of the Act is amended by adding the following clauses:

- (0.c) prescribing the method for determining the number of members to be appointed to an authority under subsection 14 (2) by each participating municipality of the authority;
- (0.d) prescribing the maximum number of members to be appointed to an authority under subsection 14 (4) by a single participating municipality;
- (0.e) prescribing the maximum number of members to be appointed to an authority under subsection 14 (5) by all participating municipalities of the authority;

(0.f) prescribing criteria for the purposes of paragraph 3 of subsection 14 (6);

(5) Subsection 40 (3) of the Act is amended by adding the following clause:

(0.a) for the purposes of Part I.1,

(i) prescribing rules for the purposes for paragraph 25 of subsection 1.3 (3), and

(ii) prescribing matters for the purposes of clause 1.5 (7) (c);

(6) Clause 40 (3) (0.a) of the Act, as enacted by subsection (5), is repealed.

(7) Subsection 40 (3) of the Act is amended by adding the following clauses:

(0.b) prescribing matters for the purposes of clause 14 (8) (c);

(0.c) governing watershed councils established under section 18.1, including,

(i) governing the number of watershed councils an authority may or must establish, including setting a fixed number of councils, setting a minimum or maximum number of councils or both, and

(ii) prescribing requirements with respect to the composition, functions, powers, duties, activities and procedures of any watershed council;

(8) Clause 40 (3) (g) of the Act is repealed.

Commencement

22 (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, this Schedule comes into force on a day to be named by order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

(2) Sections 1 and 2, subsection 4 (1), sections 5, 8 and 13 to 18, subsection 19 (1), section 20 and subsections 21 (1), (5) and (8) come into force on the day the *Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2026* receives Royal Assent.



Raisin Region Conservation Authority

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

To: Board of Directors
From: Vincent Pilon, Communications Specialist
 Lisa Van De Ligt, Team Lead, Communications and Stewardship
Date: March 5, 2026
Subject: Strategic Action Plan Item 2.2 a) – RRCA Communications Plans

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board of Directors approve the draft Communications Plan as per the 2025-2028 RRCA Strategic Action Plan action item 2.2 a).

BACKGROUND:

The RRCA 2025-2028 Strategic Action Plan directs staff to “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.” This Action Item has a Winter 2026 completion date.

DISCUSSION:

The insights gathered through the Strategic Action Plan consultations in 2025 informed the identification of four guiding principles proposed in the appended draft Communications Plan:

- RRCA core mandates should be strategically connected to all public communications.
- Storytelling best practices will facilitate public outreach.
- Social media is a key tool for engagement.
- All staff and Board members play a role in communications.

The Communications Plan – Outreach and Engagement is attached for Board review. Sector-specific outreach and engagement plans with Indigenous Peoples and land development professionals are additional action items in the Strategic Action Plan with a targeted Fall 2026 completion date. These plans will be added to the RRCA Communications Plan.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Goal 2: Strong partnerships and engaged residents.

2.2 Embracing meaningful community engagement.

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.

Vincent Pilon
 Communications Specialist

Lisa Van De Ligt,
 Team Lead, Communications and
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Raisin Region Conservation Authority Communications Plan *Outreach and Engagement*

March 24, 2026

To guide our community in the protection, enhancement, and restoration of our natural environment through programs that balance human, environmental, and economic needs for a sustainable future.



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1. Introduction

The Raisin Region Conservation Authority (RRCA) delivers community-led, watershed-based natural resource management. RRCA's integrated approach to watershed management includes a wide range of programs and services including sustainable development, drinking water source protection, watershed management, watershed stewardship, community outreach, conservation areas, and more. While these programs all help conserve the health and resilience of local watersheds, their wide-ranging nature requires clear and coordinated messaging for the RRCA to engage effectively with the public.

Today's media landscape is also changing at a rapid pace, and sources of information and audience attention are increasingly fragmented. The RRCA can no longer primarily rely on traditional channels (e.g., print advertising, local media, etc.) to convey information to the public. To continue reaching its audiences and safeguarding its image as an effective, respected, and trusted organization, RRCA's communications should stay flexible, diversified, and ready to take advantage of emerging opportunities.

This Communications Plan provides RRCA staff and Board members with clear, practical guidance on the Authority's public communications principles, priorities, channels, and tools for outreach and engagement.

2. Strategic Alignment and Consultation

The creation of this Communications Plan is listed as one of the action items in RRCA's 2025–2028 Strategic Action Plan under goal 2.2: Embracing meaningful community engagement.

A key element in developing the Strategic Action Plan's goals and action items was extensive consultation with RRCA Board members, staff, partners, and the public through interviews, engagement sessions, and questionnaires. The insights gathered through this process informed the identification of the four guiding principles outlined in Section 3 of this Communications Plan.

Key communications-related feedback from the Strategic Action Plan consultation included:

- clarifying and focusing RRCA's messaging on core mandates and programs/services,
- telling stories demonstrating RRCA's value to the community (success stories, project updates, staff features, etc.),
- using social media to connect with the public, and
- facilitating inter-departmental teamwork for communications.

3. Guiding Principles

Based on feedback collected during its Strategic Action Plan consultations, the RRCA identified the following four guiding principles for effective public communications, outreach, and engagement:

- Core mandates should be strategically connected to all public communications.
- Storytelling best practices will facilitate public outreach.
- Social media is a key tool for engagement.
- All staff and Board members play a role in communications.

More information on each guiding principle is included below.

3.1 Guiding Principle: Core mandates should be strategically connected to all public communications.

RRCA's communications should connect all messaging to its core mandates under the *Conservation Authorities Act*, which can be generally described as:

- protecting people and property from natural hazards like flooding and erosion,
- protecting municipal drinking water sources, and
- conserving and managing environmentally significant land.

Given the broad scope of RRCA's work in integrated watershed management, there is a risk that messaging could become fragmented or unclear without a strategic, planned, and coordinated connection to core mandates. Aligning messaging to core mandates facilitates the public's understanding of the RRCA's core role and illustrates how RRCA's work is science-based, fair, and transparent. In some cases, messaging not related to core mandates may be necessary for other local initiatives approved by the Board (e.g., marina, campground, etc.).

Implementation Strategies:

- Consistently evaluate messaging to confirm connection to core mandates.
- Maintain an annual strategic communication calendar (i.e., a 12-month strategic planning document that visually maps out major communication activities, campaigns, key dates, etc.).
- Use consistent RRCA corporate branding standards and key messages to quickly establish trust and recognition in audiences.

3.2 Guiding Principle: Storytelling best practices will facilitate public outreach.

Good storytelling can help the RRCA make complex, technical work understandable and relevant to everyday life and all audiences. By framing science, data, and regulations in clear, relatable, human-centered stories, RRCA can show how its work benefits local homes, businesses, farms, communities, and natural spaces in its watershed jurisdiction. This makes RRCA's mandates easier to grasp and more meaningful to a wider audience.

Effective storytelling can also build emotional connection and trust and inspire a sense of ownership and responsibility in residents for their local watershed. While facts can raise awareness, stories can motivate people to care, support stewardship and conservation efforts, and understand the reasons and benefits behind regulations. Building on storytelling best practices can uphold RRCA's position as a trusted, community-focused leader for healthy and resilient watersheds.

Implementation Strategies:

- Capitalize on the many good news stories that come from RRCA's work (e.g., Conservation Area enhancements, land stewardship projects, government or corporate investments, monitoring network, technical studies, etc.).
- Leverage RRCA's strong relationships with multiple community champions and partners who can help illustrate the local, human-focused benefits of RRCA's work (e.g., agricultural stewardship champions, municipal partners, etc.).
- Use RRCA's growing bank of visual materials to support effective storytelling (i.e., a photo is worth a thousand words).
- Audit communications practices and key messages to identify and assess new opportunities, efficiencies, and redundancies.

3.3 Guiding Principle: Social media is a key tool for engagement.

Leveraging social media for public engagement was identified as a priority during consultation and engagement for RRCA's Strategic Action Plan. Notably, 85 percent of respondents to RRCA's public questionnaire said the best way the RRCA could increase awareness of its programs and activities was through more social media posts.

Social media makes it possible for RRCA to connect and engage in real time with audiences; share timely notices on success stories, programs, services, and opportunities; engage in two-way communication; and listen, respond, and provide clarification to the public, as needed. Through social media, RRCA can address misconceptions early, highlight community voices, and build trust by being visible, responsive, and human. Social media can also amplify a message's reach and impact and help make RRCA's work tangible and shareable. This can strengthen public understanding and reinforce RRCA's role as a modern, transparent, and community-focused organization.

The RRCA currently enjoys a relatively successful social media following (see Appendix A).

Implementation Strategies:

- Enable RRCA communications staff to participate in social media training opportunities, when funding and resources are available, to stay up to date with evolving trends, tools, technologies, and best practices.
- Track social media engagement monthly and annually to help identify best practices specific to RRCA audiences.
- Use RRCA’s social media strategy (see Appendix A) for direction on leveraging social media for effective engagement.

3.4 Guiding Principle: All staff and Board members play a role in communications.

While administration and communications staff are generally the first points of contact with the public, all staff and Board members can and should be informed and aligned on RRCA priorities, key messages, and decisions so they can respond accurately, reinforce shared messages, and act as effective ambassadors for the organization in their respective capacities.

Effective internal communications among RRCA staff helps ensure all aspects of RRCA’s integrated watershed management are represented in a clear, accurate, and balanced manner.

A breakdown of key communications responsibilities can be found in Appendix B.

Implementation Strategies:

- RRCA communications staff will continue consulting and engaging with staff from other departments to ensure public communications are reflective of the range of programs and services offered by the RRCA.
- Communications staff will equip and guide other staff on how to best capture photos and videos of their work for later use in public communications.
- Communications staff will equip Board members and staff with communications toolkits, as required, containing key messages and communications guidelines.

4. Public Audiences

RRCA's various programs and services cater to multiple public audiences within RRCA's watershed jurisdiction (estimated population: 86,500) in Cornwall and surrounding area of SDG. The public audiences generally consist of property owners or prospective owners, developers, farmers, business owners, volunteer organizations, nature/outdoor enthusiasts, boaters and campers, and media.

The RRCA is committed to upholding professional service standards in communications with all audiences – treating everyone with courtesy, respect, and fairness. RRCA will continue striving to effectively serve its diverse audiences by using a broad mix of communication channels and tools. It may also prioritize specific channels and tools to deliver targeted, audience-specific communications. A list of current communications tools and channels used by the RRCA is included in Appendix C.

5. Evaluation, Measurement and Updates

Regular evaluation ensures RRCA's communications remain effective, relevant, and aligned with this Plan's guiding principles. By monitoring performance and gathering feedback, RRCA can identify successes, address gaps, and continuously improve its approach. Insights from these efforts will inform future communications planning and updates.

Communications effectiveness may be evaluated through:

- website, social media, and newsletter analytics;
- media coverage analysis;
- public participation at meetings and events; and
- feedback from municipalities, interest-holders and the public.

RRCA staff will keep the Board informed on RRCA communications through quarterly updates reporting the following metrics:

- social media posts published,
- media releases issued,
- newsletters circulated,
- social media followers,
- newsletter subscribers, and
- event participation.

Communications Plan Review:

This Communications Plan may be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with RRCA's strategic priorities, legislative changes, and evolving communication needs and tools.

Appendix A: Social Media Strategy

1. Introduction

RRCA's social media should connect all messaging to its core mandates under the *Conservation Authorities Act*, which can be generally described as:

- protecting people and property from natural hazards like flooding and erosion,
- protecting municipal drinking water sources, and
- conserving and managing environmentally significant land.

When social media content is framed through RRCA's mandates, it becomes easier to justify, clearer to the public, and more valuable during high-visibility periods. In some cases, messaging not related to core mandates may be necessary for other local initiatives approved by the Board (e.g., marina, campground, etc.). Social media content should not be considered purely promotional; it can also serve as a public education, engagement, and risk-reduction tool.

For example, an effective RRCA social media presence can:






- show how RRCA's mandates protect the health and resilience of its watershed jurisdiction;
- provide time-sensitive information quickly;
- increase public understanding, compliance, trust, and participation in RRCA programs;
- encourage responsible land stewardship for healthy and resilient watersheds; and
- promote the use of RRCA's publicly accessible Conservation Areas, including the use of revenue-generating amenities such as RRCA's marina and campground.

2. Platforms

The RRCA uses three industry-standard social media platforms (i.e., Facebook, Instagram and X) to share content at least once per business day. More details on RRCA social media platforms are found in Table 1.

A social media management tool, Hootsuite, is used as a central hub for scheduling, monitoring, and analyzing social media posts.

Table 1: RRCA Social Media Platforms

Platform		Follow Count (March. 2026)	Post Frequency	Notes
	Facebook	5,400	Daily (Mon-Fri)	Primary platform for engagement and paid promotion (i.e., boosted posts).
	Instagram	1,185	Daily (Mon-Fri)	
	X	950	Daily (Mon-Fri)	
	YouTube	50	Occasionally	Used as a home for video content embedded or shared elsewhere.
	LinkedIn	322	Occasionally	Used exclusively for job postings.

3. Content Calendar and Visuals Bank

A simple month-by-month social media content planner is currently in use. An archive of the visuals (e.g., photo, infographic, video clip, etc.) used for each individual post are maintained for easy reference and potential re-use.

When using photos in social media posts, RRCA staff should prioritize creating or sourcing images that feature RRCA staff, properties, projects, partners, etc. RRCA communications staff will equip staff from other departments to capture images specific to their department for later use on RRCA social media channels.

4. Engagement Guidelines

The opportunity to engage directly in two-way communications with the public and partners is one of the advantages of maintaining a strong social media presence. Questions and comments on social media should be regularly encouraged. The guidelines below will help communications staff efficiently engage directly with the public in a clear, timely, and professional manner.

Standard Response Times:

- general inquiries or comments: within 1 business day (24 hours)
- technical or detailed inquiries requiring internal consultation: within 2–3 business days
- public safety-related questions (e.g., flooding): as soon as possible, ideally within 4 regular business hours

After-Hours Monitoring:

- Accounts are monitored during regular business hours.
- During emergencies or higher-stakes public relations events, monitoring may occur outside regular hours, as required.

Community Standards:

RRCA encourages respectful dialogue. Public comments on RRCA social media platforms are welcome provided they:

- are relevant to the topic;
- do not contain profanity, hate speech, harassment, threats, or discriminatory language;
- do not promote commercial products or services; and
- do not share personal or confidential information.

RRCA reserves the right to hide or delete comments that violate these standards and may block repeat offenders.

Approach to Negative Comments:

RRCA recognizes that criticism and differing opinions are part of public engagement. Negative comments may be handled using a tiered response model, which is described in Table 2.

Table 2: Three-tiered approach for responding to negative comments on RRCA social media

Tier	Description	Examples	Response Guide	Notes
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> constructive criticism minor complaints misinformed criticism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dissatisfaction with a conservation area condition disagreement with a regulation frustration about program delays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> respond within standard timelines acknowledge the concern provide factual information or clarification offer next steps or contact information if appropriate 	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repetitive, misinformed, or escalating criticism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repeated posting of the same complaint sharing inaccurate information about RRCA programs increasingly hostile tone (but not abusive) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> respond once with clear, factual information correct misinformation calmly and with evidence where possible. avoid prolonged public back-and-forth exchanges if discussion becomes circular, invite the individual to continue the conversation offline (email or phone) 	Communications staff may consult with management or technical staff before responding.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> abusive, defamatory, or threatening content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> profanity or hate speech personal attacks against staff or board members threats of violence defamatory statements presented as fact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> do not engage publicly in debate screenshot and document the comment hide or delete the comment if it violates community standards report threats to senior management and, if necessary, law enforcement block repeat offenders as appropriate 	Depending on the content, may warrant immediate notification to Team Lead, Communications and Stewardship, or General Manager.

5. Personal Social Media Guidelines for Staff

This social media strategy does not encompass employees' personal social media use; however, staff are expected to adhere to the guidelines below when referencing the RRCA in personal capacities to maintain professionalism and protect the RRCA's reputation, integrity, and public trust.

These guidelines apply to:

- all full-time, part-time, seasonal, and contract employees;
- all personal social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, TikTok, blogs, discussion forums, etc.); and
- posts made both during and outside working hours when referencing RRCA or when an employee's affiliation with RRCA is publicly identifiable.

Employees are encouraged to:

- share official RRCA posts (employees should avoid altering the message in ways that could misrepresent RRCA's position);
- promote RRCA initiatives and events;
- express pride in their work in a respectful, accurate, and appropriate manner; and
- engage in discussions on RRCA-related topics in a positive and constructive way.

Employees must not:

- announce or comment on official decisions before public release;
- engage in online arguments about RRCA policies, projects, or decisions;
- criticize RRCA colleagues, Board members, or partners publicly; and
- share misleading or unverified information related to the RRCA.

Use of RRCA Branding

Employees must not use RRCA logos, official graphics, or branded materials on personal social media accounts without permission from the Team Lead, Communications and Stewardship. Wearing RRCA corporate apparel or uniforms or displaying logos in personal posts should be done thoughtfully and in a professional manner.

Appendix B: Communications Roles and Responsibilities

Clear roles and responsibilities help ensure that communications from the RRCA are consistent, accurate, and timely. While all staff and Board members serve as representatives of the RRCA in their respective capacities, the following outlines how specific communications functions are distributed across leadership, communications staff, and technical experts to support effective public information sharing.

Board Chair

- primary Board of Directors spokesperson on governance matters, strategic direction, and decisions of the Board of Directors

General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer

- overall oversight of communications
- primary operational spokesperson, addressing day-to-day activities, programs, and organizational performance

Communications Staff

- day-to-day communications coordination
- product and content development
- media relations
- social media and website updates
- events coordination

Technical Staff

- provide subject-matter expertise
- support public and media inquiries, as required

Appendix C: Public Communications Channels and Tools

The RRCA communicates with the public through a variety of channels, which are described in Table 3. The RRCA strives to effectively serve its diverse audiences by using a broad mix of communication channels and tools. It may also prioritize specific channels and tools to deliver targeted, audience-specific communications. Some channels or tools may be tied to specific projects or funding. The RRCA ensures that public communications are timely and relevant by following the predetermined publishing frequency for several channels and tools described in Table 4.

Table 3: RRCA Communications Channels and Tools

Channel/Tool	Purpose	Notes
Website (rrca.on.ca)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> primary public information and document access hub 	<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> general information staff directory governance information conservation area information programs and regulations information flood and Low Water messaging electronic and downloadable forms news events calendar <p>The website is regularly audited for content timeliness and user experience.</p>
Administration Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in-person access to staff 	<p>A literature/brochure display is accessible beside the front desk.</p> <p>The office is located at 18045 County Road 2, Cornwall, ON K6H 5T2.</p>
Public Engagement Initiatives (As Needed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consult and engage with community and interest-holders 	<p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> online surveys in-person open houses virtual information centres public presentations <p>Initiatives are often connected to specific projects/funding.</p>

<p>Community Events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage directly with residents and interest-holders increase community visibility promote programs and services 	<p>For a list of priority community events, see Appendix D.</p>
<p>Workshops and Tours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide a targeted audience with specific information, experiences, or resources 	<p>Typically tied to specific projects/funding.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> watershed tour farm stewardship tours community tree plantings
<p>Education Programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> engaging community in conservation 	<p>Cooper Marsh: RRCA has a longstanding education partnership with the River Institute, who deliver education programs at Cooper Marsh Conservation Area. During the summer months, RRCA hosts a Nature Interpreter at Cooper Marsh to operate the Marsh’s Visitors Centre, provide access to an educational lending library, and lead guided tours.</p> <p>Other: RRCA also offers several self-guided tours through interpretive signage and QR codes, as well as a self-guided geocaching tour (i.e., Raisin Region GeoAdventure).</p> <p>Additional education programs are offered when funding and resources permit.</p>
<p>Signage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> indicate property ownership list Conservation Area amenities share educational or interpretive content acknowledgement project funding 	<p>QR codes on signs can provide opportunities for information and content updates. All new signage should be bilingual.</p>

Official Correspondences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide information, requests, or support 	<p>May include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • municipal memoranda/letters • letters to MPs/MPPs • letters of support
Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide timely updates • promote programs or events • share resources, education, or outreach 	<p>See Appendix A: RRCA Social Media Strategy.</p> <p>Social media engagement level is monitored and recorded monthly and annually to assess and refine social media practices.</p>
Media Releases and Kits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicate timely RRCA news, opportunities, resources 	<p>All media releases can be found on the RRCA website at rrca.on.ca/News.</p>
Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct subscriber access to communicate updates, summaries, resource-sharing, program promotion, etc. 	<p>Anyone can subscribe for free and view past issues at rrca.on.ca/Newsletter.</p>
Annual Reports and Strategic Action Plan Public Document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide accountability, transparency • share information on RRCA programs, goals, and accomplishments 	<p>Past annual reports can be found at rrca.on.ca/AR.</p> <p>Strategic Action Plan can be found at rrca.on.ca/Governance.</p>
Printed Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mailing, handing out, or offering information and resources 	<p>May include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fact sheets • postcards • flyers • trail maps • guidebooks • posters <p>Select print materials are available to the public at RRCA Conservation Area offices. Additionally, some material may be provided for display in municipal offices and other locations.</p>

Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote select programs (e.g., forestry services, agriculture best practices, etc.) • record live events for a wider online audience (e.g., virtual project tours, workshops, Canoe Race highlights, etc.) • serve as a general outreach tool (e.g., 60-second “about the RRCA” video) 	As video production is typically more resource-intensive, it is often tied to specific projects/funding.
Paid Advertisements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • widen or ensure audience reach when required and when funding is available • comply with RRCA policies (i.e., advertising tender opportunities) 	May include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social media advertising • print ads in local newspapers • prints in local tourism publications
Media Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inform RRCA management on relevant news coverage 	Monitored and archived weekly.
Online Reviews Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review feedback on RRCA and its Conservation Areas 	May include platforms such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Reviews • Tripadvisor • AllTrails
Media list	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain a current email list of local and regional media. 	Used when distributing media releases, advisories, invitations, etc.

Table 4: Frequency of RRCA Communications Channels and Tools

Channel/Tool	Mon-Fri	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	As Needed
Social Media	✓				
Media release / news webpage update		✓			
Media monitoring		✓			
Newsletter			✓		
Board meeting summary memoranda			✓		
RRCA Annual Report				✓	
ALUS Annual Report				✓	
Community event participation				✓	
RRCA-hosted events				✓	
Flood and low water notices					✓
Memoranda to municipalities					✓
RRCA website updates					✓
ALUS webpage updates					✓
Drinking Water Source Protection website updates					✓
Targeted Canada Post mail campaigns				✓	✓
RRCA website event calendar					✓
RRCA Strategic Action Plan (public-facing)					✓
Media invitations					✓
Social media advertising					✓
GeoAdventure					✓

Appendix D: Priority Community Events List

To strengthen relationships with community partners and engage residents, the 2025–2028 RRCA Strategic Action Plan action item 2.1 a) directed staff to establish a list of annual priority community events for RRCA staff to participate in.

In addition to hosting events, the RRCA also attends various community events to promote its programs and services to residents and partners. Traditionally, the RRCA’s community presence is based on the following criteria:

- relevance to RRCA programs and services,
- reach throughout the RRCA’s jurisdiction (i.e., balanced distribution throughout the RRCA’s member municipalities),
- program requirements (e.g., services such as ALUS Ontario East and Raisin–South Nation Source Protection Program with outreach beyond the RRCA jurisdiction),
- partner support (i.e., strengthen partnerships with member municipalities and partners), and
- available resources (note: when resources do not permit RRCA’s in-person attendance, an unstaffed display or program information provided through a partner is considered).

As new events arise throughout the year, staff will follow the criteria above to gauge RRCA participation. The current events list can be found in Table 5.

Table 5: Community Events List

Event	Date (2026)	Municipality	Presence as	RRCA Event
World Wetlands Day	January 31	South Glengarry	RRCA	✓
Eco Farm Day	February 28	Other	ALUS	
Ottawa Valley Farm Show	March 10–12	Other	ALUS	
Raisin River Canoe Race	April 11	South Stormont South Glengarry	RRCA	✓
Cornwall’s Eco Day	April 18	Cornwall	RRCA	
Tree Giveaways (5 events)	April–May	All member municipalities	RRCA	✓
Family Fishing Afternoon	July 3	Cornwall	RRCA	✓
Williamstown Fair	August 7–9	South Glengarry	RRCA / ALUS	
Glengarry Honey Festival	August 23	North Glengarry	RRCA / ALUS	
Kids’ Nature Zone	September 19	South Stormont	RRCA	
Children’s Water Festival	October	Cornwall	RRCA	
TD Tree Days	October	South Glengarry Cornwall	RRCA	✓
River Symposium	October 22–24	Cornwall	RRCA / ALUS	



Raisin Region Conservation Authority

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

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

To: Board of Directors
From: Lisa Van De Ligt, Team Lead, Communications and Stewardship
Date: March 19, 2026
Subject: Grant Submissions

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board of Directors retroactively approve requesting \$2,500 from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources to update Martintown Dam signage;

AND FURTHER THAT the Board of Directors retroactively approve requesting \$5,800 from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources to install a new gantry system and chain hoist at the Martintown Dam;

AND FURTHER THAT the Board of Directors approve requesting up to \$8,000 from TD Bank Group to host a TD Tree Days event;

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.

Below is a summary of the 2026 grant application requests to date:

- Requested: \$139,406
- Approved: \$0
- Pending: \$139,406
- Not approved: \$0

DISCUSSION:

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

1. Project Title: Martintown Dam – Safety Signage

- **Funder:** Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure program)
- **Request:** \$2,500 (1:1 matching funds required; matching funds were included in the 2026 RRCA Budget)
- **Summary:** The funding will support replacement of signage at Martintown Dam to align with provincial best practices.
- **Submission Deadline:** March 31, 2026 (retroactive approval)

2. Project Title: Martintown Dam – Gantry System

- **Funder:** Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure program)
- **Request:** \$5,800 (1:1 matching funds required; matching funds were included in the 2026 RRCA Budget)
- **Summary:** The funding will support the installation of a new gantry system and chain hoist at Martintown Dam to ensure the safe and efficient operation of the dam.
- **Submission Deadline:** March 31, 2026 (retroactive approval)

3. Project Title: TD Tree Days

- **Funder:** TD Bank Group
- **Request:** up to \$8,000
- **Summary:** Since 2018, the RRCA has partnered with TD Bank Group to host TD Tree Days, a community tree planting event, and proposes to partner with TD again in 2026 to plant 300 trees at Gray’s Creek Conservation Area.
- **Submission Deadline:** April 24, 2026

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Goal 1: Environmental Conservation & Healthy Living

- 1.2 Protecting from flooding and erosion hazards.
- 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

**Ministry of the Environment,
Conservation and Parks**

**Ministère de l'Environnement,
de la Protection de la nature et des
Parcs**



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357-2026-754

March 10, 2026

Dear Chairs:

I am writing to provide an update as we move into the next phase of improving Ontario's conservation authority system. This spring, the government intends to introduce legislative amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* (CAA) that, if passed, would implement this next phase.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the consultation process. We listened closely, and the feedback we received directly shaped and strengthened our plan. Based on the feedback, we adjusted the planned regional boundaries—from the originally proposed boundaries that would have created seven regional conservation authorities—and optimized to boundaries that create nine new regional conservation authorities. These planned boundaries would accommodate areas with distinct geographies and development contexts, better balance differing priorities across rural, urban and northern areas and improve alignment with watersheds and with source protection regions.

We are also building in clear mechanisms to ensure local knowledge continues to guide decision-making. The plan is for the newly created regional CAs to create one or more Watershed Councils to ensure watershed planning is guided by local insights. Regional CAs will continue to operate as independent public bodies with municipally appointed boards that maintain strong local representation and oversight.

The planned consolidation to regional conservation authorities is targeted to occur in early 2027 and is designed to strengthen the system—not weaken it—by increasing consistency, modernizing standards, and providing better tools and resources to support the frontline work your teams deliver every day. Under this plan, regional conservation authorities will continue to rely on the deep local expertise, knowledge, and relationships that your staff bring to their communities. Those who know the watershed best will remain central to delivering local programs and on-the-ground support, helping to ensure decisions reflect the unique environmental priorities of each area.

...2

This plan to transition to regional conservation authorities marks the beginning of a renewed relationship—one that builds on local strengths while establishing greater consistency and shared capacity across the province. As part of this plan, the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA) will lead a gradual, carefully managed transition to ensure stability and continuity. Services, programs, and permitting will continue uninterrupted as planning for transition progresses toward early 2027. There will be no cuts to front line jobs. Protecting local service delivery is a guiding principle of this planned transition, and communities will continue to work with the same local teams at conservation authorities they rely on today.

To ensure a smooth and organized transition, the province is providing \$3 million in annual funding, to be administered by OPCA. These resources are planned to be used by OPCA to support conservation authorities throughout the transition period and, in the longer term, will enable regional conservation authorities to achieve program improvements.

Your leadership is vital as we begin this new chapter. I encourage you to share this message with your staff to provide reassurance that their work, expertise, and community relationships remain at the heart of Ontario's conservation system. In the coming weeks, you will be invited to technical briefings to provide further information on the next steps in the planned transition process.

For questions regarding the planned consolidation and the transition process, please contact CCEO@ontario.ca. If you have questions about the planned legislative amendments or day-to-day CA business, please reach out to MECP staff at ca.office@ontario.ca.

Thank you for your continued partnership and commitment. We look forward to working with you over the next year to make important improvements to Ontario's conservation authority system.

Sincerely,



Todd McCarthy
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

c: Hassaan Basit, Chief Conservation Executive, MECP
Chloe Stuart, Assistant Deputy Minister, Land and Water Division, MECP