

GREY SAUBLE CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
MINUTES
Full Authority Board of Directors
Wednesday, December 17, 2025, at 1:15 p.m.

The Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSCA) Board of Directors' meeting was held in a hybrid format of in-person at the Grey County Council Chambers and virtually via the meeting application, WebEx.

1. Call to Order

Chair Robert Uhrig called the meeting to order at 1:21 p.m., welcomed all those present in person and virtually, and made a land acknowledgement declaration.

Directors Present In-Person: Chair Robert Uhrig, Tobin Day, Rick Winters, Scott Greig, Tony Bell, Scott Mackey

Directors Present Virtually: Kathy Durst, Jennifer Shaw, Jon Farmer

Regrets: Vice Chair Nadia Dubyk, Alex Maxwell

Staff Present: CAO, Tim Lanthier; Administrative Assistant, Valerie Coleman; Manager of Information Services, Gloria Dangerfield, Manager of Conservation Lands, Rebecca Anthony; Communications and Education Specialist, Vicki Rowsell; Forestry Coordinator, Mike Fry; Manager of Environmental

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

The Directors were reminded to disclose any pecuniary interest that may arise during the course of the meeting.

3. Call for Additional Agenda Items

Nothing at this time.

4. Adoption of Agenda

Motion No.: FA-25-094	Moved By: Seconded By:	Tobin Day Scott Mackey
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THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve the agenda of December 17, 2025.

Carried

5. Approval of Minutes

Motion No.:
FA-25-095

Moved By: Tony Bell
Seconded By: Rick Winters

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve the Full Authority minutes of November 26, 2025.

Carried

6. Business Out of Minutes

Nothing at this time.

7. Consent Agenda

Motion No.:
FA-25-096

Moved By: Scott Greig
Seconded By: Tobin Day

THAT in consideration of the Consent Agenda Items listed on the December 17, 2025, agenda, the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors receives the following items: (i) Environmental Planning – Section 28 Permits – November 2025; (ii) Administration – Receipts & Expenses – November 2025; (iii) Minutes – BRWI AGM November 23, 2024; Friends of Hibou November 24, 2025; (iv) Correspondence – a. Ausable Bayfield Conservation – Resolution 80-25; b. Municipality of Shuniah – Resolution 380-25; c. Conmee Township – Resolution 2025-234; d. Niagara Peninsula Conservation – Resolution FA-131-2025; e. Municipality of Arran-Elderslie – Resolution 319-21-2025; f. Township of Adjala-Tosorontio – Resolution; (v) Recent Media Articles.

Carried

8. Delegation – Grey Sauble Conservation Foundation

Representatives from the Grey Sauble Conservation Foundation spoke with regard to the programs the Foundation provides and would like to see continue in the wake of the Foundation's dissolution.

Foundation Members wish to see the Memorial Forest and the Conservation Awards programs continue. Additionally, the Foundation representatives asked for the Environmental Educator position to continue.

The Foundation's financial reserve funds were reviewed and the next steps were noted.

Chair Uhrig thanked the Foundation Members for their presentation and all of the work that they have done.

CAO, Tim Lanthier, thanked the Foundation Members on behalf of the entire GSCA staff.

A Member echoed the gratitude towards the Foundation Members and asked to clarify when the conversations would happen with regard to the future of the foundation programs. Mr. Lanthier responded that staff would provide a report to the Board in the 2026 for the Board to review and discuss.

9. Business Items

i. Administration

a. Conservation Authorities Act Update and GSCA's ERO Submission

CAO, Tim Lanthier spoke to the recently proposed changes to the Conservation Authorities Act (CAA) and Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) posting 025-1257. It was noted that staff and Board Members have been very busy attending meetings, speaking with member municipal councils, local counties, local MPPs, and other stakeholders and partners to advocate against the proposed amalgamation of conservation authorities.

Mr. Lanthier expressed concern over the expected increased costs to member municipalities and the potential loss of the local voice with a regional conservation authority (RCA) of 80 municipalities.

It was noted that solutions exist that don't require amalgamation, including, partner agreements between CAs, ministry regulations, and the release of technical guidelines for planning and permitting work.

A Member acknowledged the significant costs through staff time and travel in putting together these documents and meeting with municipal councils.

A Member asked what next steps are after the submission has been completed, and what further steps of advocacy. Mr. Lanthier noted that once the Dec 22 deadline passes nothing further will be happening until March of 2026. Mr. Lanthier has been meeting with other CAOs in the proposed RCA and around the province.

A Member expressed disappointment at the waste of time and resources and asked if the local MPP was able to express the Province's reasoning and what the expected outcomes are. Mr. Lanthier responded that MPP Vickers provided the same messaging as the Province. It was noted that CAs are formed by local municipalities to work for the local community.

A Member noted that MPP Vickers had served as a GSCA Board Member at one time, it was hoped that he would have provided a more informed response.

Chair Uhrig responded that MPP Vickers expressed understanding regarding the loss of the local voice.

Chair Uhrig thanked CAO Lanthier and GSCA staff for the significant amount of work that has been put into the ERO posting submission and time spent meeting with member municipalities. Mr. Uhrig urged Members to push their municipalities to continue to "push back".

Motion No.:
FA-25-097

Moved By: Jon Farmer
Seconded By: Scott Mackey

WHEREAS the Province of Ontario has posted Environmental Registry Notice No. 025-1257 ("Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities"), proposing to reduce Ontario's 36 conservation authorities to 7 regional entities as part of a broader restructuring; and

WHEREAS Bill 68 (Schedule 3) has effectively created the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency whose objects include overseeing conservation authorities and the transition to a regional watershed-based framework for conservation authorities in Ontario with municipal cost contribution yet to be defined; and

WHEREAS the Conservation Authorities Act enables municipalities to establish local conservation authorities, and when municipalities choose to form such authorities, they assume responsibility for governance and funding through the appointment of a Board of Directors and the provision of an annual levy to cover expenses; and

WHEREAS the municipalities within the northern portions of Bruce and Grey Counties established the North Grey Region Conservation Authority in 1957 and the Sauble Valley Conservation Authority in 1958 which amalgamated into the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSCA) in 1985; and

WHEREAS GSCA generates approximately 50 percent of its own revenues and local municipalities provide approximately 43% of total GSCA funding, while the Province of Ontario provides less than 7%; and

WHEREAS under this proposal, the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSCA) would be consolidated into a new “Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority” that is over 23,000 square kilometres in size and consists of 80 municipalities; and

WHEREAS municipalities have governed their respective conservation authorities for decades, tailoring programs and services to local watershed needs, maintaining accountable service standards, and ensuring fair and predictable costs for ratepayers; and

WHEREAS conservation authorities collectively own and manage thousands of hectares of land, much of which was donated or sold by local residents and entrusted to conservation authorities as a personal legacy for long-term protection, stewardship, and the public good, with the expectation that such lands would be cared for by locally governed conservation authorities; and

WHEREAS no governance model has been provided to ensure that local municipalities are still able to make local decisions related to the functioning and programs of the conservation authorities; and

WHEREAS no business plan, cost-benefit analysis, or feasibility assessment has been provided to justify the proposed consolidation; and

WHEREAS the Province already has the authority to establish overarching legislation, regulations and standards through the Conservation Authorities Act and the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks to address issues related to permitting, by establishing guidance, online permitting platforms and technical standards through legislation that could help build homes; and

WHEREAS the GSCA has already undertaken significant modernization work aligned with provincial objectives, including Information Technology / Information Management, and leveraging technology to streamline planning and permit review processes processing 100% of major permits within the provincial timelines in 2024.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT the Board of Directors of the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority calls on the Government of Ontario to maintain local, independent, municipally governed, watershed-based conservation authorities to ensure strong local representation in decisions related to municipal levies, community-focused service delivery, and the protection and management of conservation lands; and

THAT the Board of Directors of the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority does not support the proposed “Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority” boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257 as the proposal lacks sufficient justification, would significantly diminish local governance, and fails to recognize the

effectiveness and efficiencies already achieved within existing watershed-based models; and

THAT the Board of Directors of the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority affirms that large-scale regional consolidation is unnecessary, would introduce substantial transition costs, and would divert resources away from frontline watershed programs. The Council further asserts that restructuring at this scale would erode local decision-making, weaken municipal accountability, and disrupt long-standing community partnerships that are central to delivering responsive watershed management; and

THAT while the Board of Directors of the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority supports provincial goals for consistent permit approval processes, shared services, and digital modernization, imposing a new top-down approach structure without strong local accountability and governance risks creating unnecessary cost, red-tape, and bureaucracy, thereby undermining efficiency and responsiveness to local community needs; and

THAT the Board of Directors of the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority urges the Province to strengthen centralized standards, resources, and tools rather than undertaking broad structural amalgamation and to provide sustainable, predictable provincial funding across conservation authorities to enable local CAs to advance ongoing digitization and systemization work that has already resulted in improved efficiency and consistency in recent years; and

THAT the Board of Directors of the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority believes that the Province's proposed new online permitting portal can be implemented within the existing conservation authority framework without requiring structural amalgamation; and

THAT the Board of Directors of the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority requests that the Ministry engage meaningfully and collaboratively with affected municipalities, conservation authorities, and local First Nations before advancing any consolidation, to ensure that any changes reflect both local needs and the practical realities of implementation; and

THAT this resolution be included in the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority's ERO response and forwarded to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, local MPPs, all of Ontario's municipalities, conservation authorities, AMO, and Conservation Ontario.

Carried

b. 2026 GSCA Board of Directors Meeting Schedule

CAO Lanthier noted the changes and deviations from the established schedule of the 4th Wednesday of each month for October and December.

Motion No.:
FA-25-098

Moved By: Tony Bell
Seconded By: Scott Greig

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve the 2026 BOD's meeting dates as follows:

January 28th (AGM)

February 25th;

March 25th;

April 22nd;
May 27th;
June 24th;
July 22nd (optional);
August 26th;
September 23rd;
October 21st; and
December 16th.

Carried

A Member put forth an amendment to remove the December meeting date from the 2026 schedule.

Motion No.:
FA-25-099

Moved By: Scott Mackey
Seconded By: Jennifer Shaw

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors amend the 2026 BOD's meeting dates as follows:

January 28th (AGM)
February 25th;
March 25th;
April 22nd;
May 27th;
June 24th;
July 22nd (optional);
August 26th;
September 23rd;
October 21st.

Defeated

Discussion was had around the pros and cons of the leaving the date as a place holder. It was noted that the schedule could be amended later if necessary.

ii. Conservation Lands
a. Ash Management Strategy

Manager of Conservation Lands, Rebecca Anthony, spoke to the drafted Ash Management Strategy for GSCA properties.

A Member asked if there were opportunities to partner with other member municipalities and/or counties to help share costs of removal.

A Member noted that staff will likely be attacking the issue with ash trees with a combination of all of the strategies presented and expressed just how big the problem is.

Motion No.: FA-25-100	Moved By: Seconded By:	Jon Farmer Tobin Day
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WHEREAS, the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSCA) under Section 9(1)(2)(ii) of Regulation 686/21 (Mandatory Programs and Services) of the Conservation Authorities Act, GSCA is required to provide programs and services to maintain any facilities, trails or other amenities that support public access and recreational activities in conservation areas and that can be provided without the direct support or supervision of staff employed by the authority or by another person or body;

AND FURTHER WHEREAS, GSCA has the responsibility to manage risks on Authority-owned lands as per our Risk Management Guideline and the Occupier's Liability Act.

THAT the GSCA Board of Directors approve the Ash Management Strategy for GSCA-owned Lands, in principle.

Carried

iii. Communications
a. Public Communication Policy

Communications and Education Specialist, Vicki Rowsell, spoke to the drafted Public Communications policy, the need for the policy and highlighted the key features of the updated policy.

Motion No.: FA-25-101	Moved By: Seconded By:	Rick Winters Jon Farmer
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WHEREAS, GSCA recognizes the need for clear, consistent, and accessible public communications to strengthen community trust and engagement, and to guide staff, board members and volunteers.

AND WHEREAS, the previous External Public Communications Policy (2017) is outdated and does not reflect current accessibility standards, branding guidelines, or social media practices.

AND WHEREAS, the updated Public Communications Policy aligns with GSCA's Strategic Plan goals to Strengthen Environmental Education and Communication and Achieve Organizational Excellence.

THAT, the GSCA Board of Directors approve the public communications policy as presented and commit to adhering to this policy.

Carried

b. GSCA Explore Guide

Communications and Education Specialist, Vicki Rowsell, presented the updated Explore Guide noting improved maps and formatting. Ms. Rowsell also noted that the one major change is the removal of advertising space. Adding that this saved on printing costs by removing four pages of the guide.

A Member asked with regard to distribution plan of the guide. Ms. Rowsell explained that the guide goes out to all of the major tourist information hubs in the area, local libraries, and that staff respond to requests for guides to be displayed in areas further afield.

A Member asked with regard to removal of advertising. Ms. Rowsell responded that there were several deciding factors. One of which was that as the guide is not printed on a yearly basis, advertising can become outdated and sited that one of the phone numbers in the current guide no longer exists.

iv. Environmental Planning

a. Bruce County Planning Agreement

Manager of Environmental Planning, MacLean Plewes, spoke to the drafted planning agreement between Bruce County and Grey Sauble and Saugeen Valley Conservation Authorities.

Motion No.:
FA-25-102

Moved By: Jennifer Shaw
Seconded By: Tobin Day

WHEREAS Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSCA) is responsible for providing comments, technical support or information related to natural hazards, to ensure decisions made under the Planning Act are consistent with the natural hazard policies of the Provincial Planning Statement,

AND WHEREAS municipalities and counties are local planning authorities responsible for making decisions under the Planning Act,

AND WHEREAS, to ensure GSCA comments are provided in an effective, timely manner and in accordance with GSCA's Planning Fee Schedule,

THAT GSCA staff be directed to renew Planning Services Agreements with watershed municipalities and Bruce County.

Carried

10. New Business

Nothing at this time.

11. CAO's Report

CAO Tim Lanthier noted that his time has largely been consumed by the proposed changes to the CAA and travelling to member municipalities to provide information.

Additionally, Mr. Lanthier applied to be on the agenda of several member municipal councils to present GSCA's draft 2026 budget.

Mr. Lanthier thanked the GSCA staff for their hard work and the perseverance they have shown in 2025.

12. Chair's Report

Chair Robert Uhrig noted that most of his time as Chair this past month has been spent dealing with the CAA changes and

Chair Uhrig thanked GSCA staff for their hard work in 2025 and expressed that they have and continue to have the Board's support.

The Meeting recessed for a 10-minute break at 2:50 p.m.

The Meeting resumed at 3:00 p.m.

13. Resolution to Move into Closed Session

Motion No.:	Moved By:	Scott Mackey
FA-25-103	Seconded By:	Rick Winters

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors proceed into closed session at 3:00 pm to discuss matters related to the following:

- i. Minutes of the Closed Session of the Regular Board of Directors Meeting held on November 26, 2025; and,**
- ii. CAO Performance Review – closed as it relates to personal matters about an identifiable individual including Authority directors or Authority employees (GSCA Administrative By-Law, Section 4 (xvii)(b)).**

AND FURTHER THAT CAO, Tim Lanthier and Administrative Assistant, Valerie Coleman, will be present.

Carried

14. Resolution Approving the Closed Session Minutes

Motion No.:
FA-25-104

Moved By: Tony Bell
Seconded By: Rick Winters

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve the November 26, 2025, Closed Session minutes as presented in the closed session agenda.

Carried

15. Reporting out of Closed Session

Chair Uhrig reported that the Members approved the closed session minutes of November 26, 2025, and discussed and gave direction to staff on items that were identified and nothing else.

16. Other Business

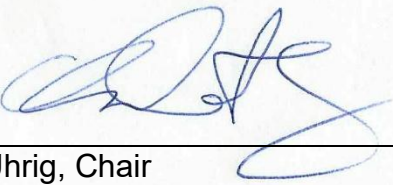
Nothing at this time.

17. Next Full Authority Meeting

Wednesday January 28, 2026

18. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:27 p.m.



Robert Uhrig, Chair



Valerie Coleman
Administrative Assistant