

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT #48/17**

**TO:** Directors, Maitland Valley Conservation Authority  
**FROM:** Stewart Lockie, Conservation Areas Coordinator;  
Jayne Thompson, Communications Coordinator  
**DATE:** September 19, 2017 (to be presented September 27, 2017)  
**SUBJECT:** Gorrie Conservation Area Update

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### **PURPOSE:**

- To update the Board on the work undertaken at the Gorrie Conservation Area.
- To obtain direction from the Board regarding the possible hiring of an engineering firm to assist the authority with the identification of the technical requirements for investigating options for the structure as required by MNRF.
- To update the Board on communications activities.

### **BACKGROUND:**

At the July 19<sup>th</sup> board meeting, Maitland Conservation staff provided an update on the progress made and the work required by MNRF to address safety and erosion hazards resulting from the June flood event at the Gorrie Conservation Area. The Board approved retaining BM Ross and Associates Limited to prepare the plans to address the safety and erosion issues identified by MNRF.

The Board also requested that a new gate be installed at the entrance to the conservation area.

The Board also recommended that staff investigate the engineering requirements for three options (repair, replace/redesign, and decommissioning) of the dam structure with MNRF.

### **Progress to date:**

1. July 24<sup>th</sup>, MNRF finalized the list of safety and erosion measures to be addressed.
2. July 28<sup>th</sup>, Maitland Conservation staff submitted an application for a work permit to the MNRF. The application included detailed plans prepared by BM Ross and Associates Limited. The safety measures that MVCA was required to address included: stabilization of the eroded berms, filling in of the scour holes and removal of the damaged sections of the turbine bay located beside the Maitland Mill.
3. August 1<sup>st</sup>, MNRF issued a Work permit for the safety measures as described in the application. The stabilization work approved by MNRF is considered temporary for up to 5 years to provide MVCA with time to investigate options for the structure. The permit was issued with a construction deadline of September 14<sup>th</sup>.
4. August 1<sup>st</sup>, Maitland Conservation staff installed a new gate at the main entrance.
5. August 8<sup>th</sup>, contractors notified of proposed works and provided with the opportunity to meet on-site. Quotes were to be submitted by Aug 18<sup>th</sup>. Quotes were to include a price for machine and labor costs along with a price per yard to supply materials that were unavailable for salvage from the site (stone, clay, riprap, and topsoil).

The Authority only received two quotes. The other contractors indicated they were unable to bid on the project as they could not undertake the work within the timelines required by MNRF.

6. The Board approved that the Chair and two Vice Chairs review the quotes and approve the lowest bid. The lowest quote was from D.C. Craig Excavating: \$9,633.25 plus tax and materials.
7. September 12<sup>th</sup>, contractor started repairs. Wet weather caused the contractor to postpone undertaking the work until later in the week. Staff requested an extension for the work permit from MNRF due to the inability of the contractor to complete the work by September 14<sup>th</sup>. MNRF approved an extension until September 22<sup>nd</sup>.
8. September 19<sup>th</sup>, contractor completed the work with the exception of requirements for spreading topsoil and seeding the site. This work will be undertaken when weather permits.
9. September 19<sup>th</sup>, contractors contacted re: quotes for repairing the picnic shelter.

**Additional work to be undertaken:**

1. Complete picnic shelter repairs.
2. Install new barrier posts along parking lot.

**MNRF Requirements Lakes & Rivers Improvement Act:**

Staff contacted MNRF to determine the engineering requirements for the three options (repair, replacement, and decommissioning). MNRF staff recommended that MVCA review the Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act (LRIA) guides and technical bulletins for guidance. The LRIA is administered by MNRF and regulates any alterations, improvements, or repairs to a dam. The LRIA was established to ensure that dams are safely constructed and operated to protect people, property, waterways, wildlife and environmental resources. Any option to be investigated would have to meet the requirements of the LRIA.

MNRF indicated that they cannot confirm all engineering and submission requirements for each option until a submission is made and reviewed for completeness. The technical and engineering requirements that would need to be considered under the LRIA are extensive.

An engineering assessment will also have to take into consideration the existing site conditions (susceptibility to piping of water under the structure, deficiencies in the board removal system, existing berm construction and limited spillway openings). These issues were identified by B.M. Ross and Associates back in 1977 but not addressed as part of the repairs undertaken in 1979.

The assessment will also have to take into consideration the changes that are taking place in the climate and the increased probability of future flood events. In order to address the requirements of the MNRF and the limitations associated with the existing structure and site, staff would recommend that the Board consider retaining an engineering firm with expertise in mill dams to assist MVCA staff to identify all of these technical considerations. An engineering firm would be able to help the Board identify

the cost to investigate each of the options and to determine how feasible each option is. It is unknown at this time what it would cost to retain an engineering firm to undertake this work.

Staff could research engineering firms who have the expertise and try and determine what the costs would be to identify what investigative work would be required to address the LRIA and the existing site/structure. This information could be reviewed at the November 15<sup>th</sup> Board meeting when 2018 projects are reviewed by the Board.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**To be developed at the meeting.**

### **Communications Activities:**

On July 19<sup>th</sup> the Board approved using the following tools to provide information on the Gorrie Conservation Area:

- a) **Newsletters**
- b) **Social Media Posts**
- c) **Media Releases**
- d) **Respond to Inquiries**
- e) **Possible Community Clean-Up Event**
- f) **Provide Information to the Township of Howick**
- g) **Notice Board**

In addition to the above MVCA could establish a micro website that is specifically about the Gorrie Conservation Area. This would involve adding a section to MVCA's website where newsletters, photos, board reports, and possibly technical reports could be made available to the public. A button could be added to the MVCA website homepage taking visitors directly to this information. It is estimated that this work will cost approximately \$400.

On Aug. 10<sup>th</sup> a second newsletter was mailed to 460 residences and businesses in the Gorrie area. A copy of the newsletter is attached. The newsletter was also:

- Emailed to the Township of Howick
- Emailed to Gorrie residents who have requested to be on our mailing list
- Reworked as a media release and sent to the Wingham Advance Times and CKNX Radio
- Added to the Maitland website and referenced in Facebook and Twitter posts
- Laminated and posted on the notice board at the Maitland Mill

When the work to address safety and erosion issues at the site was about to begin, a notice was placed on MVCA's Facebook page and posted on the notice board at the Maitland Mill.

Since the first newsletter was issued in July, we have received emails, calls and Facebook comments from 14 individuals about the erosion of the berm. In all cases the residents expressed their wish to see the berm repaired and the mill pond maintained. The key concerns expressed by residents include:

- Possible reduction in property values
- Loss of a community recreational amenity
- Weeds growing in the area, potential allergic reactions

One resident has expressed concern that the MVCA did not consult the community about the work that was done to address safety issues. This resident has also requested that a public meeting be held to discuss the erosion of the berm.

There have been some comments on MVCA's Facebook page suggesting that the Gorrie community should take over the operation of the dam.

Two residents have indicated that they are interested in helping with clean-up work at the Conservation Area.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**To be developed at the meeting.**

# Gorrie Conservation Area

## August 2017



Over the past month Maitland Conservation has begun preliminary work on cleaning up Gorrie Conservation Area and considering options for the Gorrie dam. The site was severely affected by flooding on June 23 - 24, 2017. This was same flood event that caused an estimated \$11-million of damage in Harriston.

- A meeting of the Maitland Conservation Board of Directors was held on July 19, 2017. At that meeting, the Board decided to proceed with obtaining engineering requirements for three options for the Gorrie dam from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. The MNR oversees the operation of dams in Ontario. The three options include: repairing the dam, dam replacement/redesign and decommissioning the dam. It is important to note that this is the first step in what will be a lengthy process of assessing these options.
- Maitland Conservation has been working with B. M. Ross and Associates to gather the information required by the MNR in order to obtain a work permit for the site. It is anticipated that work will begin in mid-August to stabilize the damaged berm, fill in scour holes left by the flood waters and remove concrete from the head race area.
- A swing gate and improved fencing has been installed at the Victoria St. entrance to the Conservation Area. Debris has been cleared from the dam area and the large silver maple tree that was uprooted has been removed. Damaged barrier posts in the parking area have been taken out and the kiosk has also been temporarily removed. The south side of the Conservation Area remains closed due to safety concerns.
- We are posting information on the Maitland Conservation website to keep the community up-to-date on our progress in Gorrie. A notice board has been placed on the front of the Maitland Mill. We will also continue to send out newsletters to the community as information becomes available.
- If you'd like to join the Gorrie Conservation Area email list, please send your address to [jthompson@mvca.on.ca](mailto:jthompson@mvca.on.ca) . You may unsubscribe from the list at any time and your address will not be released to any other organizations.

### Questions?

If you have questions please contact:  
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