



**Mattagami Region
Conservation Authority**

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING OF THE MATTAGAMI REGION
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY HELD WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2025 AT
4:30 PM, CONSERVATION AUTHORITY OFFICE, TIMMINS, ONTARIO.**

Present: Joe Torlone-Chair Rock Whissell-Vice-Chair
Lorne Feldman Bill Gvozdanovic
Andrew Marks
David Vallier, General Manager

Recorder: Jennifer Bonsall

1.0 Territorial Acknowledgement

2.0 Change to the Agenda

7.0 Closed Session to be moved after 9.0 Items for Decision.

3.0 Delegation and Presentations—None

4.0 Adoption of Minutes

4.1 Adoption of Minutes of September 3, 2025

Resolution No. 2025-1727

Proposed by: Andrew Marks

Seconded by: Rock Whissell

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Mattagami Region Conservation Authority held on November 5, 2025 as described on pages 890 to 893 of the Minute Book are hereby approved as circulated.

December 3, 2025

Carried

5.0 Declaration of Conflict of Interest—None

6.0 Reports

6.1 General Manager Report

The Board requested clarification on the consequences to local funding programs, grants and lease agreements under the proposed conservation authorities' amalgamation. The GM noted that the details regarding governance, funding, or operations have yet to be shared with Conservation Authorities (CA). There will be a regional meeting of CAs, municipalities and Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks on December 11, 2025. It is hoped that there will be answers provided at that time.

6.2 Plan Input Report

No concerns with the report provided

6.3 DWSP Report

The Board commended the DWSP lead for their work on high school trivia events and engaging teenagers in water awareness.

6.4 Regulations Officer Report

No concerns with the report as provided.

6.5 Motion to Accept Administrative Reports

Resolution No. 2025-1728

Proposed by: Rock Whissell

Seconded by: Andrew Marks

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Administrative Reports, consisting of the General Manager's Report, Plan Input Report, the Drinking Water Source Protection Report, and the Regulations Officer Report have been received by the Board for information purposes.

December 3, 2025

Carried

B. Gvozdanovic and L. Feldman joined the meeting at this time.

7.0 Items for Discussion

7.1 Conservation Areas / Trails

Winter trail grooming at Gillies Lake and Hersey Lake Conservation Areas has begun. The Gillies Lake snowblower attachment to the side-by-side has maintenance issues being addressed. Until repairs are complete, grooming is continuing with the drag. Snowcourses began on November 15, with a second round this week. Trailhead and property garbage collection is ongoing throughout the winter on a reduced schedule.

7.2 ERO Posting: Proposed Regional Consolidation of Conservation Authorities

The GM provided a presentation regarding the Environmental Registry of Ontario posting proposing the amalgamation of 36 conservation authorities to 7 regional authorities. The MRCA would be combined with North Bay-Mattawa, Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie. The governing agency, Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency (OPCA), would have the ability to levy regional conservation authorities for cost recovery. A brief historical review of the Ministry of Natural Resources governance of conservation authorities through their Conservation Authority

Branch was provided to underscore that the Ministry holds the power to govern in this area without the addition of a new crown corporation. Discussion followed about OPCA governance, regional authority governance, amalgamation of reserves and debts, and the lack of municipal support for amalgamation throughout municipalities.

7.3 Norman Street Properties

The GM provided a review of previous discussions dating back to September 2019 noting that no resolutions or motions were tabled. Board discussions began prior to the Conservation Authorities Act amendments in 2019 which updated land management priorities. Shortly afterwards, all land sale discussions were halted due to COVID shut downs. The GM recommends that a personalized letter be sent to each property owner identifying the infractions followed by open discussions with property owners to resolve the issues. If a request for purchase is received, it will be discussed at that time. It was noted that no matter who owns the property, the owner must abide by all floodplain regulations. Any severance and survey costs would be borne by the buyer. Discussion followed about the benefits of surveying a straight 50 ft line behind the properties. Identified concerns are the cost of a survey of the entire area and if that could be recouped if only a few property owners are interested in purchasing their abutting section. The GM agreed that if the majority of property owners indicate an interest in purchase, and it makes financial sense, a complete survey will be considered.

8.0 Items for Decision

8.1 ERO Posting

Resolution No. 2025-1729

*Proposed by: Lorne Feldman
Seconded by: Bill Gvozdanovic*

WHEREAS the Government of Ontario has requested comments on Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) Notice No. 025-1257 regarding the proposed consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities; and

WHEREAS the Mattagami Region Conservation Authority (MRCA) Board of Directors has reviewed the proposal and identified significant implications for local watershed management and service delivery; and

WHEREAS the Board wishes to formally communicate its position, reflecting the MRCA's unique local context and single-municipality watershed;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. *The General Manager be authorized to prepare and submit a formal response to ERO Notice No. 025-1257 on behalf of the MRCA Board.*

2. *The submission shall reflect the concerns and positions discussed at the December 3, 2025 Board meeting, emphasizing the importance of local autonomy and existing partnerships.*
3. *The General Manager may make any necessary adjustments or provide additional information to complete the submission by the December 22, 2025 deadline.*

December 3, 2025

Carried

8.2 Consolidation of Conservation Authorities

Resolution No. 2025-1730

*Proposed by: Andrew Marks
Seconded by: Lorne Feldman*

WHEREAS the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks 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 that would create a new Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency to provide centralized oversight and direction under the Conservation Authorities Act; and

WHEREAS under this proposal, the Mattagami Region Conservation Authority (MRCA) would be merged into a new “Northeastern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority” together with the:

*Nickel District Conservation Authority
North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority
Sault Ste. Marie Conservation Authority
forming a single fragmented organization stretching from Sault Ste. Marie north to Timmins and southeast to Mattawa; and*

WHEREAS the Board acknowledges and supports the Province’s goals of improved efficiency, consistency and fiscal prudence in conservation delivery, but finds that the proposed “Northeastern Ontario Region” configuration would:

1. *Create a geographically vast and administratively complex entity throughout the province with little shared watershed connection or economic alignment;*
2. *Dilute local accountability and municipal partnerships, contrary to the principle that decisions are best made closest to the communities they affect;*
3. *Generate substantial transition costs — including human-resources integration, governance restructuring, IT migration and policy harmonization — that would divert resources from front-line service delivery and delay measurable outcomes, contrary to the Province’s own business-planning principles of value for money, cost containment and service continuity;*
4. *Risk greater uncertainty and delays in program delivery, permitting and hazard management where local staff are merged with larger and more distant regional structures; and*

WHEREAS the MRCA has consistently demonstrated fiscal responsibility, effective stewardship, and strong partnerships with municipalities, Indigenous communities, landowners, and stakeholders throughout the region; and

WHEREAS the Board further recognizes that the MRCA serves the City of Timmins, within the Arctic watershed and faces vastly different climatic, hydrological and infrastructure realities, which would be ill-served by a larger overarching administrative structure extending over 600 kilometres to the Great Lakes; and

WHEREAS the Province already possesses the authority to establish overarching legislation, regulations and standards through the Conservation Authorities Act and its administrative Ministry;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Mattagami Region Conservation Authority Board of Directors:

1. *Formally opposes the proposed conservation authority amalgamations as they pertain to the MRCA and their member municipality as outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257; and*
2. *Urges the Province of Ontario to maintain the existing watershed-based governance structure, which ensures local accountability, comprehensive hazard management, and effective environmental protection; and*
3. *Requests meaningful consultation with municipalities, Indigenous communities, and Conservation Authority boards prior to any legislative or structural changes affecting watershed management in Ontario; and*
4. *THAT copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Minister of Environment Conservation and Parks, local Members of Provincial Parliament, the City of Timmins, Wabun Tribal Council, Mushkegowuk Council, Conservation Ontario, and Conservation Authorities.*

December 3, 2025

Carried

9.0 Closed Session

Resolution No. 2025-1731

*Proposed by: Bill Gvozdanovic
Seconded by: Rock Whissell*

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Authority Board meeting move into Closed Session at 5:22 p.m. to discuss a potential litigation matter.

December 3, 2025

Carried

Resolution No. 2025-1731

Proposed by: Lorne Feldman

Seconded by: Bill Gvozdanovic

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Authority Board meeting move into Open Session at 5:40 p.m.

December 3, 2025

Carried

10.0 For Your Information—None

11.0 Date for Next Meeting – To be determined

12.0 Adjournment

Resolution No. 2025-1733

Proposed by: Rock Whissell

Seconded by: Bill Gvozdanovic

THAT this meeting adjourn at 5:41 p.m.

December 3, 2025

Carried



Joe Torlone, Chair

January 7, 2026
Date