

Annual Meeting of the Membership#2-2026

February 25, 2026

Members Present: Alison Lobb, Ed McGugan, Ed Podniewicz, Anita Van Hittersum, Andrew Fournier, Evan Hicky, Sharen Zinn, Matt Ducnan, Alvin McLellan

Members Absent: Megan Gibson, Vanessa McMillan, Evan Hicky

Staff Present: Phil Beard, Jayne Thompson, Michelle Quipp, Stewart Lockie, Barry Skinn, Donna Clarkson, Elizabeth Huber-Kidby, Patrick Huber-Kidby, Karlene Zurbrigg, Tim Prentice, Dave Nuhn, Laura Hopkins, Amber Leis, Adam Youngblut, Erin Gouthro, Jason Moir, Cheryl Dobbyn, Danielle Livingston, Alaina Lennox

Others Present: Chris Akiwenzie, Dylan White, Cory Bilyea, Peter Shepherd, Art Versteeg, John Thompson, Walter McKenzie, Jim Ginn, Jamie Heffer, Paul Heffer, Marg Beard, Emily, Sophia and Finnley Hopf, Davin Heinbuck, Ray Chartrand, Erik Downing, Susan Chan, Wendy Hoernig, Steve McCabe, Shawn Loughlin, Glen McNeil, Dean Trentowsky, Jordan Nairn, Richard Keeso, Kriss Snell, Deb Shewfelt, David Yates

1. Welcome by the Chair

Chair, Ed McGugan, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 2:04 pm.

2. Introduction of the Members of Maitland Conservation for 2026

Chair McGugan invited all the Members of the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority to introduce themselves and the Municipalities that they represent.

3. Introduction of Guests: Chair, Ed McGugan

Chair McGugan invited the following dignitaries to bring remarks:

Jamie Heffer –Warden of County of Huron

Dean Trentowsky – Warden of the County of Perth

Jim Ginn – Mayor of Central Huron
Walter McKenzie – Mayor of West Perth
Paul Heffer – Reeve of the Township of North Huron
Ray Chartrand – Chair of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority
Steve McCabe – Councillor, Township of Wellington North
John Thompson – Councillor, Town of Goderich
Glen McNeil – Mayor of the Municipality of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh
Erik Downing – General Manager, Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority

4. Remarks from Angela Coleman, Executive Director, Conservation Ontario

Chair McGugan provided remarks on her behalf as Angela and Lisa Thompson as they were unable to attend the meeting.

5. Chair's Remarks: Ed McGuan

Good afternoon everyone. Thank you for being here today.

It has become common practice nowadays to do a land acknowledgment at the beginning of any public meeting. I would like to expand that today a little bit.

I would like to acknowledge the contributions of the indigenous peoples who have been here on this land for a long time and continue to live here.

I would like to acknowledge the pioneers who settled this land and who in many cases were escaping to here, from severe abuse and tyranny.

I would like to acknowledge the immigrants who have come to this land and this Country both for the opportunities and again, to escape war and starvation.

And I would like to acknowledge all of our veterans, who have fought and died and suffered unspeakably so that we may live in freedom here in this country.

We have made mistakes. Lots of them. Big ones too. Such is the stuff of history throughout this world and the sweep of history. And in this nation.

However, this country, this land, has been a beacon of hope and promise to very many people around the world.

This is a beautiful land that has been given to us to steward. It is a productive land. A land populated by a vast array of people who are industrious, hardworking and caring.

And they care for this land. Including its lakes and streams, rivers and forests.

And where we live, here in Ontario, as our Premier so recently pointed out, we are quite unusual in North America at least, in that we have Conservation Authorities.

That is not normal. Most places do not have dedicated, statutory organizations specifically focused on flood and erosion hazard protection of people and property. Organizations that protect environmentally sensitive lands and preserve beautiful areas where the public can go and enjoy the woods, the streams, rivers and lakes.

We have a great deal to be thankful and grateful for.

And today, I want to continue by thanking each one of you. All who support this Maitland Valley Conservation Authority. Those who work for the Authority, those who support the Authority, those on the Maitland Conservation Foundation and those Members of the Board.

A tremendous amount of thought, planning, consultation and work goes into the care of the land we are responsible for.

Sometimes we are obligated to make tough decisions. Decisions that are not necessarily popular. But decisions that follow our Mission and our Vision, decisions that **prioritize** the safety of the people we share some responsibility for.

We have strived to always keep in mind that it is rarely the wrong time to do the right thing. And to do the right thing, to make the right decision, in the right way. With lots of discussion, careful consideration and compassion.

Because it matters. The people affected matter. The land, the environment matter. Again because the people who live here, who live in this land matter.

One of the phrases I've heard this past year is: A Healthy Environment equals a Healthy People, which equals a Healthy Economy.

If you have any doubt about that, look around the world. Look at the sub-Saharan regions among others. The environment, while sensitive, is in bad shape. And consequently the people are not healthy. And the economy is in tatters.

A Healthy Environment, a Healthy People, and a Healthy Economy. That is one of the key things we bring to the table. We understand the principles and the details of our watershed.

There is a whole lot to be learned and in the last few years we have done a Forest Health Assessment and we are now underway with a streams and watercourses study.

We are continuing to work with the Wildlife Conservation Society, the University of Guelph and the One Health Institute on the environmental component of the Healthy Watersheds, People and Wildlife initiative.

We are continuing our efforts to collaborate with first nations and Metis Councils through the Shared Pathways initiative.

We are continuing to update our flood hazard mapping and working on the Restoring Natural Sediment Pathways project at the Goderich Harbour.

And, along with our partners, work is continuing and expanding on the Watershed Stewardship Services program that incorporates better farming and land management practices that keep the soil on the land for future generations and out of the streams, rivers and lakes.

There was a participatory seminar recently where the round table was shared between three indigenous leaders and one white haired guy in a wheelchair. And they explained their understanding of the Seven Generation Principle to me in a way that was somewhat revelatory.

And the Principle, as they stated it, goes like this:

You are one generation.

And you normally know your parents, and hopefully their parents, your grandparents.

That is three generations.

And you are blessed if you got to meet your great-grandparents. I don't remember them but I did know where they lived and knew quite a bit about them. They were real to me. And that's four generations.

And, on the other side, we normally know our children and hopefully their children, our grandchildren.

And, you are indeed blessed if you get to meet your great-grandchildren. That makes for seven generations.

So you know where you came from. You know your history. And you know the people directly involved in the future.

And that informs the indigenous decision making. Every decision is filtered through the understanding that it is affected by the people in our past and will affect the people in our future. People we are intimately connected to.

And it makes for better decisions.

May we learn from our indigenous brethren to remember the past and consider the future on a larger and longer scale.

2026 is our 75th Anniversary. Let's celebrate this year. Let's celebrate our connectedness, our past, and our future.

6. Staff Service Awards

Chair McGugan presented staff service awards to the following staff:

- a) Sarah Gunneweik, Water Resources Engineer-5 years
- b) Alaina Lennox, Administrative Assistant-5 years

7. Election of Officers: Maitland Conservation & Maitland Source Protection Authority

a) Appointment of Presiding Officer and Scrutineers

Chair McGugan called for an appointment of a Presiding Officer for the election of Chair.

Motion FA #12-2026

Moved by: Alison Lobb

Seconded by: Sharen Zinn

THAT Jamie Heffer act as the Presiding Officer for the election of Chair for the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority (MVCA) and the Maitland Source Protection Authority (MSPA).

(carried)

b) Election of Chair for 2026

Presiding Officer, Heffer, called for the appointment of two scrutineers for the election of officers.

Motion FA #13-26

Moved by: Alvin McLellan

Seconded by: Andrew Fournier

THAT Walter McKenize and Deb Shewfelt be scrutineers for the elections of officers;
AND THAT the scrutineers be responsible for destroying ballots after an election, if needed.

(carried)

The Presiding Officer called for nominations for the position of Chair for the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority and the Maitland Source Protection Authority for 2026.

Motion FA #14-26

Moved by: Anita Van Hittersum

THAT Ed McGugan be nominated for Chair of the MVCA and the MSPA for 2026.

(carried)

The Presiding Officer called for nominations for the Chair position two more times. There were no further nominations and the Presiding Officer called for a motion to close nominations.

Motion FA #15-26

Moved by: Sharen Zinn

Seconded by: Alvin McLellan

THAT nominations for the position of Chair of the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority and Maitland Source Protection Authority for 2026 be closed.
(carried)

Ed McGugan agreed to stand for the position of Chair in 2026.

Presiding Officer, Heffer declared Ed McGugan as the Chair of the MVCA and MSPA for 2026.

c) Election of Vice-Chair for 2026

Ed McGugan, Chair called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority and Maitland Source Protection Authority for 2026.

Motion FA #16-26

Moved by: Alvin McLellan

THAT Matt Duncan be nominated for Vice-Chair of the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority and Maitland Source Protection Authority for 2026.
(carried)

The Chair called for further nominations for Vice-Chair two more times and no others were made so then called for a motion to close nominations.

Motion FA #17-26

Moved by: Anita Van Hittersum **Seconded by:** Alison Lobb

THAT nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority and Maitland Source Protection Authority for 2026 be closed.
(carried)

Matt Duncan accepted the Vice-Chair position.

The Chair declared Matt Duncan Vice-Chair of the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority and Maitland Source Protection Authority for 2026.

d) Election of 2nd Vice-Chair for 2026

The Chair called for nominations for the position of 2nd Vice-Chair of the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority and Maitland Source Protection Authority for 2026.

Motion FA #18-26

Moved by: Alvin McLellan

THAT Evan Hickey be nominated for 2nd Vice-Chair of the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority and Maitland Source Protection Authority for 2026.
(carried)

The Chair called for further nominations for 2nd Vice-Chair two more times and no others were made so then called for a motion to close nominations.

Motion FA #19-26

Moved by: Andrew Fornier

Seconded by: Matt Duncan

THAT nominations for the position of 2nd Vice-Chair of the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority and Maitland Source Protection Authority for 2026 be closed.

(carried)

Chair McGugan declared Evan Hickey as 2nd Vice-Chair of the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority and Maitland Source Protection Authority for 2026.

8. Celebrating Partnerships”: Introductions-Chair & Vice Chair

- a) Maitland Conservation Foundation: Jordan Nairn, MCF Chair
- b) Ecosystem Approaches to Health: Dr. Jane Parmley, Associate Professor, Ontario Veterinary College
- c) Building Relationships: Chris Akiwenzie, Lead - Aki-Guardian, & Dylan White, Biologist, Bagida'waad Alliance
- d) Lake Huron Forever Pledge – Working towards a healthier Lake Huron Ecosystem: John Thompson, Town of Goderich

Chair, McGugan thanked each of the presenters.

9. Closing Remarks: Chair, MVCA

Chair, McGugan thanked everyone for attending the MVCA's 75th Annual Meeting. The Chair added that he is looking forward to working with the Members and staff in 2026 as we celebrate MVCA's 75th Anniversary.

10. Adjournment:

Next meeting: March 18, 2026, at 7:00pm at MVCA's Administration Centre located in Wroxeter.

Motion FA #20-26

Moved by: Matt Duncan

Seconded by: Alison Lobb

THAT the Members Meeting be adjourned at 3:45pm.

(carried)



Ed McGugan
Chair

Phil Beard
General Manager / Secretary-Treasurer