



SOUTH NATION
CONSERVATION
DE LA NATION SUD

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Communications Committee

Meeting Agenda

Date: Wednesday September 13th, 2023

Time: 10:00 am

Location: SNC Administration Office



Communications Committee

Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, September 13th, 2023 at 10:00 am

1. Chair's Remarks
2. Approval of Communications Committee Agenda
3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest
4. SNC Project Update – PowerPoint Presentation: Staff
5. Approval of Communications Committee Meeting Minutes:
 - a. June 7th, 2023 3-6
6. New Business:
 7. Request for Approval: Community Environmental Grants – Kelsey 7-12
 - a. Update: Social Media and Website – Arielle 13-16
 - b. Update: 2023 Youth Fish Camp Program– Kelsey 17-19
 - c. Approval: 2023 Friends of SNC Golf Tournament – Erin 20-21
 - d. Update: SNC Standing Committees - John 22-26
8. Supplemental Agenda
 - a. Approval: Website Design Tender – Erin
9. Roundtable Discussion
 - a. Community Engagement Activities
 - b. Recommendations for 'Friends of SNC'
10. Correspondence
11. Adjournment

John Mesman,
Managing Director, Property, Conservation Lands, and Community Outreach



COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, June 7th, 2023, 9:00 a.m. – Meeting 04/23

Present: Charles Armstrong, Public Citizen, Committee Chair
Tim Jackson, Public Citizen
Cindy Saucier, Past Councillor, Russell
Byron Vienneau, Public Citizen
Tom Van Dusen, Public Citizen, Public Citizen
Doug Thompson, Public Citizen, Public Citizen
Karen Switzer-Howse, Public Citizen
Murray Inch, Public Citizen

Regrets: George Darouze, Board of Directors, Past Chair, ex-officio
Steve Densham, Board of Directors, Vice Chair, ex-officio
Pierre Leroux, Board of Directors, Chair, ex-officio
Gerry Boyce, Public Citizen
Bill Smirle, SNC Board Member

Staff: John Mesman, SNC Managing Director of Conservation Lands
and Community Outreach
Erin Thorne, Communications Specialist
Kelsey Smith, Stewardship & Outreach Assistant
Arielle Noonan, Stewardship & Outreach Assistant
Carley Hutchinson, Stewardship & Outreach Assistant
Shannon McRae, Conservation Lands Student
Gabriel Giorgi, Conservation Lands Student



CHAIR'S REMARKS

Charles Armstrong, Committee Chair, called the June 7th, 2023, Communications Committee meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

APPROVAL OF COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MAIN AGENDA

RESOLUTION NO. CMN-020/23 Moved by: Doug Thompson
Seconded by: Karen Switzer-Howse

RESOLVED THAT: The Members approve the Communications Committee Agenda of June 7th, 2023 as submitted.

CARRIED

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT UPDATE: POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

Staff presented project and program updates.

The committee took a break at 11:05 a.m.

The committee reconvened at 11:20 a.m.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 23RD AND ELECTRONIC MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 9TH, 2023

RESOLUTION NO. CMN-021/23 Moved by: Doug Thompson
Seconded by: Karen Switzer-Howse

RESOLVED THAT: The Members approve the Communications Committee meeting minutes of March 23rd, 2023 and electronic meeting minutes of May 9th, 2023.

CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS

UPDATE: 2023 FREE TREE PICK UPS

RESOLUTION NO. CMN-022/23 Moved by: Murray Inch
Seconded by: Byron Vienneau

RESOLVED THAT: That the Communications Committee receive and file the update on the 2023 Municipal Tree Giveaway activities.

Further that the Committee recommend that the SNC Board of Directors continue to provide annual support for community free tree campaigns.

CARRIED



REQUEST FOR APPROVAL: 2023 FRIENDS OF SNC GOLF TOURNAMENT

RESOLUTION NO. CMN-023/23

Moved by: Karen Switzer-Howse

Seconded by: Byron Vienneau

RESOLVED THAT:

The Communications Committee receive and file the 2023 SNC Golf Tournament Report.

Further that the Communications Committee recommend that the SNC Board of Directors approve the tournament venue and date.

CARRIED

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL: COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL GRANTS

RESOLUTION NO. CMN-024/23

Moved by: Doug Thompson

Seconded by: Byron Vienneau

RESOLVED THAT:

The Communications Committee recommends the Board of Directors approval of the Community Environmental Grant in the amount of \$300 to:

- Avonmore Elementary School
- Spencerville Mill Foundation

Further that the Communications Committee recommend that the SNC Board of Directors deny the application made by:

- Camp Kagama

CARRIED

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

A. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

- Doug provided an update on the Greely Community Association's Annual Community Clean Up and tree giveaway supported by SNC in May with over 100 residents participating. Doug also attended the media event for the Ontario Trillium Foundation grant for the Ontario Woodlot Association's LiDAR products for sustainable forest management project.
- Murray provided an update on the Oak Valley Pioneer Park spring field day.
- Tim provided an update on geocache maintenance activities.
- Byron provided an update on experiences at the Ottawa River Natural Hazard Mapping Open House and shared feedback on free tree pick up activities in the Township of Alfred Plantagenet.
- Cindy provided an update on the Monarch butterfly release at the Metcalfe Coop Daycare, where she discussed the importance of pollinators. Updated were shared on the biodiversity tree planting in the W.E. Burton Conservation Area and the



pollinator garden planting by the Russell Weir and Reservoir sign on SNC property. She also let the Committee know that Eco East planted 1,000 trees throughout the United Counties of Prescott Russell this spring.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 'FRIENDS OF SNC'

The Committee had no recommendations for 'Friends of SNC' at this time.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

- Wednesday, September 6, 2023 at 9:30 a.m. at the SNC office.

ADJOURNMENT:

RESOLUTION NO. CMN-025/23

Moved by: Byron Vienneau

RESOLVED THAT:

The Communications Committee meeting of June 7, 2023 be adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

CARRIED

Charles Armstrong,
Committee Chair.

/ks

John Mesman,
SNC Managing Director of Conservation
Lands and Community Outreach.



To: Communications Committee
From: Kelsey Smith, Stewardship and Outreach Assistant
Date: September 5, 2023
Subject: Request for Approval: Community Environmental Grants

RECOMMENDATION:

The Communications Committee recommends the Board of Directors approval of the Community Environmental Grant in the amount of \$300 to:

- The Russell Library
- All About the River
- The Russell Historical Society

DISCUSSION:

In March 2020, the Communications Committee approved amendments to SNC's Community Environmental Grants Program to allow applications for tree and shrub planting and community garden development in response COVID-19 related event cancellations (CMN-036/20).

The attached application form has been used to support the following \$300 grant options:

- Community Environmental Outreach Grant
- Agri-Environmental Grant
- Heritage Grant
- Tree and Shrub Planting
- Community Garden

The following applications for the amended Community Environmental Grants Program have been received:

The Russell Library

The Russell Library is planning to plant two new trees this fall. The trees would be planted at the front of the building on either side of the volunteer's bench.

If successful, the funding from this grant would support the purchase of a tree.



All About the River

The 'All About the River' Event took place on July 15th at the Morrisburg Waterfront. Over 200 visitors came out to enjoy the exhibits, to fish off the dock, and learn more about the St. Lawrence River.

If successful, the funding from this grant would support road signs and a newspaper ad to promote the event.

The Russell Historical Society

The Russell Historical Society will be holding the annual Heritage Festival on Saturday, September 16th, highlighting the 125th anniversary of the incorporation of the Police Village of Russell.

If successful, the funding from this grant will support advertising, honorariums, activity supplies and hospitality.

Below is a summary of Community Environmental Grant Funding for 2023:

Community Environmental Grant Money Dispersed (2023)	Community Environmental Grant Money Under Review	Remaining Funds
\$6,300	\$900	\$3,700

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/ADHERENCE TO SNC POLICY:

Compliance with Budget: Funding for Community Environmental Grants is included in the 2023 SNC Budget under Communications and Outreach: Partnership Development on pages 90-91.

SNC Policy Adherence: Disbursement of Community Environmental Grants is compliant with the Purchasing Policy – Purchasing Limits/Authorized Buyers – Team Lead's approved limit of up to \$5,000.

Kelsey Smith

Kelsey Smith,
Stewardship and Outreach Assistant.

Attachments: Community Environmental Grant - Application Letters



BIBLIOTHÈQUE PUBLIQUE DU CANTON DE RUSSELL
TOWNSHIP OF RUSSELL PUBLIC LIBRARY
1053 CONCESSION ST. P.O. BOX 280, RUSSELL ON K4R 1E1
TEL: 613-445-5331 FAX: 613-445-8014
mylibrary@russellbiblio.com www.russellbiblio.com

Dear Selection Committee of the South Nation Conservation,

The Township of Russell Public Library is applying for the Community Environmental Grant in the amount of **\$300** to have two new trees in front of the Library located at 1053 Concession Street in Russell.

The Library's Volunteer Bench of 2019 is located in front of the building and both trees would be planted each side of it.

The recommended tree kind would be a shallow rooted tree that can tolerate the high salt of the Winter.

Chayenne Brunet from South Nation Conservation de la Nation Sud, specified a Hackberry or a Maple Tree would fit best at our location.

The 300\$ would be used to purchase the tree and plant it in the Fall.

The event held for the plantation of the trees could be a nice ceremony in honour all the volunteers at the Library from this current year.

We thank you for this opportunity to apply and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

France Séguin-Couture
France Séguin-Couture
CEO

00009

Hello,

The 'All About the River' Event took place on July 15th at the Morrisburg Waterfront.

A total of 17 exhibitors attended the event including SNC, the River Institute, Watersheds Canada, Plenty Canada, OPG, and the Riverkeepers. Fresh 104.5 radio also attended, broadcasting 'live on location'.

SNC's logo was displayed on posters distributed throughout the region prior to the event and was on display during the event. SNC was recognized as a sponsor during the opening ceremony at the event and thanked as a sponsor in the newspaper (the Morrisburg Leader) following the event. Fresh Radio mentioned SNC to listeners during their live broadcast.

Over 200 visitors came out to enjoy the exhibits, to fish off the dock, and learn more about the St. Lawrence River.

The \$300 grant money was used towards road signs and a Newspaper Ad to promote the event.

Please see the attached photos from the event.

Thank you,

All About the River Organizers



Box 307, 1150 Concession St
Russell, ON K4r 1E1

To SNC:

The Russell and District Historical Society will be holding our annual Heritage Festival on Sept. 16, 2023 at 1150 Concession Street in Russell. This year we are highlighting the 125th anniversary of the incorporation of the Police Village of Russell. We are also launching a children's book called "Sillsby Saves the Day". It is the story of the steam pumper which on June 15, 1915 was sent on the NYC train from Ottawa to pump water from the Castor River to put out the fire which was raging through the town. Afterwards it served the town pumping water from the river for firefighting until the 1950s. The actual steam pumper, now owned by the Bytown Fire Brigade, will be on display at the Heritage Festival. Other activities will be unveiling of a mural, horse-drawn wagon rides, music, and children's activities.

We would like to apply for a Heritage Grant from SNC to support this event. It will be used for advertising, honorariums, activity supplies, and hospitality.

We will post the SNC logo on social media and posters and display the banner on the wagon rides. We will provide recycling bins. Afterwards, we will provide a written report and photos. Our festival also receives a grant from the Township of Russell and donations from the public.

Thank you for your support. I can be reached at 613-445-5690 if you have any questions.

Judy James
Russell Historical Society

00012



To: Communications Committee
From: Arielle Noonan, Stewardship and Outreach Assistant
Date: August, 25th, 2023
Subject: **Update: Social Media and Website**

RECOMMENDATION:

The Communications Committee receive and file the Social Media and Website Update.

DISCUSSION:

SNC has actively worked to increase its online presence across social media platforms since the inception of its first social media account 14 years ago, with some accounts established 7 years ago.

Staff continue to report increased use of SNC website and social media accounts in recent years, with the SNC website recording twice as many users and visits over the last few years, compared to the previous 5-year average. Some social media and website metrics are included in this report for comparison.

This report also provides an overview of scheduled social media campaigns.

Since the last update in March 2023, the following campaigns have been delivered:

- Conservation Ontario Watershed Report Cards Campaign
- Dam and River Safety
- Flood Forecasting and Low Water Response
- Free Tree Campaign – Forest Conservation Initiative
- Ash Tree Replacement Program
- SNC Tree Planting Program
- Woodlot Advisory Services
- Maple Syrup Education
- Ottawa Rural Clean Water Program
- Ontario Licence-Free Fishing
- Youth Fish Camp Registration
- Drinking Water Source Protection Water Wise Wednesdays
- Friends of SNC Golf Tournament
- Healthy Hikes (May, June, July, August)
- Nature Smart Climate Solutions – Federal Government Project Partnerships



Below are SNC's social media statistics to date, since the last report in March 2023:

Account	Total Followers	Increase	% Increase/Decrease
Facebook	6,323	234	+ 3.7%
Instagram	1,331	49	+ 3.7%
Twitter	1,365	2	0.1%

SNC monitors Facebook and Instagram activity using Insights to help understand the performance of SNC's page traffic over the last 28 days – July 29 – August 25.

Action Type	Total for 28 days	% Increase/Decrease
Facebook Likes	27	0%
Instagram Followers	15	-6.3%
Facebook Reach	21,375	-32.2%
Instagram Reach	9,241	+3.4%
Facebook Visits	971	-20.9%
Instagram Visits	90	-12.6%

SNC monitors website activity using Google Analytics to provide insight on web traffic.

Period	Sessions	New & Returning Users	Page Views	Bounce Rate	Pages per Session	Average Session Duration
March 2023	9,872	7,429	19,690	69.18%	1.99	1:31 min
April 2023	14,330	11,533	27,607	70.93%	1.93	1:20 min
May 2023	10,401	8,097	20,671	69.50%	1.99	1:29 min
June 2023	9,119	7,330	18,054	72.09%	1.98	1:22 min
* July 1 st - July 15 th , 2023	938	840	1,678	76.44%	1.79	1:03 min



*July 16 th – July 31 st , 2023	3,947	3,029	14,730	68.03%	3.73	N/A
*August – 1 st August 25 th , 2023	5,567	4,322	21,480	66.82%	3.86	N/A

Bounce Rate: Page visits where the user left the landing page without interacting with the website.

*Universal Analytics stopped collecting data on July 15th, 2023. The complete set-up of the new property “Google Analytics 4 (GA4)” is ongoing.

The most visited pages from March 14th, 2023 to *July 15th, 2023 were:

- Homepage: 9,954 – page views
- Fr/Leau/Rapports/Liste-des-especes-de-possons: 6,416 – page views
- Development/Find Form: 1,915 – page views
- Contact/Staff Listing: 1,418 – page views
- Recreation/About Recreation: 1,199 – page views
- Contact: 1,192 – page views
- Land/Forestry Services/Tree Planting Services – 1,179 page views
- Water/Watershed Conditions/Flood Forecasting Warning/Current Watershed Conditions – 1,175 page views
- Resources/Maps: 1,169 – page views
- About/Job Opportunities and Tenders: 1,108 – page views

The most visited pages since *July 16th, 2023 were:

- Homepage: 4,118 – page views
- Fr/Leau/Rapports/Liste-des-especes-de-possons: 1,484 – page views
- Development/Find Form: 898 – page views
- Recreation/About Recreation: 860 – page views
- Contact/Staff Listing: 729 – page views
- Recreation/Boat Launching/Jessup’s Falls Conservation Area: 725 – page views
- Contact: 624 – page views
- Resources/Maps: 669 – page views
- Development/Septic Program/Septic Application Forms: 545 – page views
- About/Job Opportunities and Tenders: 515 – page views



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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/ADHERENCE TO SNC POLICY:

Compliance with Budget: Expenses associated with SNC's website and social media are included in the 2023 SNC Budget under Communications and Outreach: Media and Communications Products, on page 84 and 85.

SNC Policy Adherence: All expenditures will adhere to SNC's Purchasing Policy. For purchases of \$200 up to \$5,000 competitive quotes will be obtained where practical.

Arielle Noonan

Arielle Noonan
Stewardship and Outreach Assistant.



To: Communications Committee
From: Kelsey Smith, Stewardship and Outreach Assistant
Date: August 28, 2023
Subject: Update: 2023 Youth Fish Camp Program

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Communications Committee receive and file the 2023 Youth Fish Camp report.

Further that, the Communications Committee approve the staff recommendation for program updates related to the number of program participants and instructors, use of fundraised revenue and support for securing a new name sponsor for the Summer Youth Fish Camp Program.

Further, the Communications Committee recommend that the Board of Directors approve a fee of \$95 per participant for a 2-day Youth Fish Camp in 2024.

DISCUSSION:

In 2023, SNC hosted six separate Youth Fish Camps at four locations: High Falls in Casselman, Jessup's Falls in Plantagenet, Cass Bridge in Winchester and new this year, the Legion Park in Cardinal. Each 2-day camp ran from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm and included 15-20 participants per camp.

The camps were instructed exclusively by SNC staff, with the Ottawa Flyfisher's Society attending each camp.

Participants were asked to bring their own lunches and SNC provided additional drinks and snacks throughout the day, resulting in cost-savings compared to previous years.

Youth were only provided with a fishing rod if they did not have their own or if it was their first-time fishing. This resulted in additional cost savings.

Youth Fish Camps Program Summary:

Number of Participants (6 Camps)	85 youth
Approximate SNC Staff Time for Camp Delivery (4 staff/12 camp days)	295.25 hours
Total Revenue Participant fees (\$75/youth)	\$6,371.52
Total Expenses (Fishing rods, tackle, supplies, snacks)	\$1,302.06



Net Proceeds (not including staff time)	\$5,069.46
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The following table demonstrates the staffing costs for camp delivery to help better understand program delivery costs. The SNC Fee Schedule rates consider travel costs, use of equipment, and program administration support while actual staff rates only include the salary of participating employees. Mileage, vehicles, equipment use, program administration and support are not captured in program expenses.

	Staffing Costs
Staffing Costs (SNC Fee Schedule, \$70/hour – Assistant Rate)	\$20,277.50
Staff Costs (Actual Staff Rates)	\$11,101.42

The 2023 participant fee of \$75 helped to offset some of the costs of the camps and assisted in deterring last-minute cancellations, however, it was not sufficient to achieve cost-recovery on staffing costs.

SNC provided opportunities for reduced rates for participants to address any financial barriers for low-income families. However, in 2023, no applications were received.

Considering the demand for these camps, along with the requirement for education programs to be cost recovered, staff recommend increasing the number of camp participants to 30 per camp, decreasing the number of staff support from 4 to 3, preferentially relying on two summer students and one experienced staff member per camp, and increasing the participant fee to \$95 per camp in 2024.

Maintaining one highly skilled employee with support from summer students would be sufficient to ensure continued program delivery and positive participant experiences, especially when partner organizations are able to provide volunteer support. The Ontario Camp Association guidelines recommend 1 staff per 10 campers ages six and over.

These updates would still likely represent a shortfall of approximately \$2,000 for the entire program so staff recommend using fundraised revenue to offset program delivery while SNC works to secure a program sponsor able to commit over \$1,000 annually for the Youth Fish Camp Program.

SNC has received multiple requests for program expansion to new areas, however, unless new funding is secured, staff recommend maintaining 6 summer camps in 2024.



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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/ADHERENCE TO SNC POLICY:

Compliance with Budget: Youth Fish Camps are included in the 2023 SNC Budget under Communications and Outreach – Education and Events on page 80.

Plans for the 2024 Youth Fish Camps will be included in the Draft 2024 Budget.

SNC Policy Adherence: All SNC expenses related to Youth Fish Camps adhered to SNC's Purchasing Policy for purchases of \$200 up to \$5,000.

Kelsey Smith

Kelsey Smith

Stewardship and Outreach Assistant.



To: Communications Committee
From: Erin Thorne, Communications Specialist
Date: August 23, 2023
Subject: Approval: 2023 Friends of SNC Golf Tournament

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Communications Committee receive and file the final report for the 2023 Friends of SNC Golf Tournament.

Further that the Communications Committee approves directing funds towards SNC's Forest Conservation Initiative to support the Annual Free Tree Pickups within member municipalities.

DISCUSSION:

The Friends of SNC Golf Tournament was held on Friday, August 11th, 2023 at the Casselview Golf and Country Club in Casselman (CMN-016/23, CMN-023/23). A financial summary is included below:

Friends of SNC Golf Tournament Financial Summary	
Participants – 18 Teams	71 golfers
Total Revenue	\$12,548.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Registration and Breakfast• Sponsorships / Donations• Games on Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none">\$8,570.00\$3,000.00\$978.00
Total Expenses (Golf course, signage and supplies)	\$6,566.83
Net Proceeds	\$5,981.17

SNC's net proceeds of \$5,981.17 will be allocated to the Forest Conservation Initiative and the annual free tree pickups within each member municipality in 2024.

The tournament provides an excellent opportunity for SNC staff and Board members to network with partners and clients in a fun, informal setting.

Charitable tax receipts will be provided to registrants based on the net cost of the tournament and price per golfer.



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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/ADHERENCE TO SNC POLICY:

Compliance with Budget: The Golf Tournament Fundraiser is included in the 2023 Budget, under Communications and Outreach - Partnership Development on pages 82-83.

The 2023 Friends of SNC Golf Tournament will be included in the 2024 Draft Budget for the Board of Director's consideration.

SNC Policy Adherence: All expenditures will adhere to SNC's Purchasing Policy. For purchases of \$5,000 up to \$8,000 competitive quotes will be obtained where practical.

Erin Thorne,
Communications Specialist



To: SNC Standing Committees
From: Ronda Boutz, Secretary-Treasurer
John Mesman, Managing Director, Property, Conservation Lands, and
Community Outreach
Date: August 29th, 2023
Subject: Update: SNC Standing Committees

RECOMMENDATION:

The SNC Standing Committees receive and file the update on the South Nation Conservation Standing Committees.

BACKGROUND:

The Board of Directors approved a work plan to review the South Nation Conservation (SNC) Standing Committees at the August 2022 Board meeting (BD-127/22). The work plan included a review of current Standing Committees, recommendations for Committees moving forward, and drafting updates for the Committees Terms of Reference.

Staff undertook a review of the Standing Committees for the past 5 years (2018-2022); the following provides a summary of the review findings provided to the Board of Directors at their August 2023 meeting.

Staff will provide additional information on the review at each Standing Committee's September 2023 meeting.

SUMMARY OF STANDING COMMITTEES REVIEW:**Membership**

As per the current Terms of Reference, Committees can have up to 15 members with additional membership at the discretion of the Board. Membership does not include the Board Executive who are ex-officio members of all Standing Committees.

The following table summarizes Committee membership between 2018-2022. These numbers include Board members that are not ex-officio.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Clean Water*	22	23	21	17	16
Communications	14	15	15	14	13
Fish and Wildlife	15	17	17	17	14
Forestry	17	19	17	17	15

* The Clean Water Committee and Eastern Ontario Water Resources Committee merged in 2015 and accounts for the higher number of members.



Attendance

A review of Committee attendance for the past five years (2018-2022) offers insight into pre, during, and post the COVID-19 pandemic conditions, noting that most of the meetings during 2020-2021 occurred through a virtual platform.

Generally, meeting attendance was around 75% for all Committees, except Forestry which was slightly lower at 63%. Individual member attendance varied, with some at 100% attendance and others as low as 20% attendance.

During this period, only one meeting (Fish and Wildlife Committee) was cancelled when quorum could not be achieved. However, there were several occurrences, with various Committees, that required repeated contact from Staff or Committee Chairs to confirm member attendance to establish quorum.

Community Engagement

A primary function of each Committee is to promote SNC programs and services to member's communities and affiliated organizations. Community engagement is a standing agenda item for all Committees; members are asked to report any engagement or partnership opportunities that they have been involved with since the previous meeting.

A review of the number of Committee members compared to the number of members that provided community engagement reports was used to determine an approximate rate of return on member community engagement.

Communications had the highest membership engagement at 25% rate of return, Forestry and Fish and Wildlife had 13% and 12% respectively, with Clean Water with the lowest rate of return at 6%. These community engagements include updates from Board members, which account for approximately 16% the engagement over the 5-year period.

Agendas and Committee Business

The Clean Water Committee agendas primarily focus on review and approval of grant applications for the Clean Water Program, Ottawa Rural Clean Water Program, and Eastern Ontario Water Resources Program. The Communications Committee agendas focus on review and approval of communication products, education and outreach, and community environmental grants. Generally, agendas for these Committees do not overlap with the other Standing Committees.

The Fish and Wildlife and Forestry Committees generally receive updates on programs and projects and provide input on annual work plans. Most agenda items are 'receive and file', with a few 'requests for approval'. Agendas for these two Committees had significant overlap between 2018-2022 and fourteen reports went to both Committees in the same meeting month. Several attempts were made in the past to merge these two Committees, through joint meetings, without success.

Updates related to the Act and Committee membership were brought to all Standing Committees; this accounts for six separate reports between 2018-2022.



Joint Standing Committees Meeting

In 2014, the Board updated the Standing Committees Terms of Reference to include an annual joint meeting of all Standing Committees. The purpose was to provide an opportunity for cross discussions and networking between Committees. The meeting is typically held in March of each year.

Attendance at the annual joint meeting has been declining throughout 2018-2022. The 2021 joint meeting was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The table below summarizes the attendance to the Joint Standing Committee meeting by Committee and Board members between 2018-2022.

	2018 (in-person)	2019 (in-person)	2020 (in-person)	2022 (virtual)	
Committee	% Attendance	% Attendance	% Attendance	% Attendance	Avg % Attendance
Board of Directors	8.3%	33.3%	25.0%	25.0%	22.9%
Clean Water	60.6%	20.2%	25.3%	20.2%	31.6%
Communications	83.3%	60.6%	60.6%	22.7%	56.8%
Fish and Wildlife	62.5%	50.0%	68.8%	12.5%	48.4%
Forestry	47.1%	35.3%	29.4%	17.6%	32.4%

Note: 2021 meeting cancelled because of the pandemic.

Annual Committee Costs

SNC provides volunteer Committee members with per diem, mileage, and a light lunch at each meeting. Annual cost for each Committee averaged \$7,300 pre pandemic (2018-2019) with the annual cost decreasing to \$3,100 during the pandemic (2020-2022) due to virtual and hybrid meetings. These costs do not include staff time.

DISCUSSION:

Recent amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* require SNC to develop prescribed plans, policies, and strategies by December 31st, 2024. Two of the strategies – the Conservation Area Strategy and Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy – require public stakeholder engagement during development and for future updates. SNC has relied on Standing Committees to provide stakeholder input on these types of documents and has continued to secure meaningful participation, interest, feedback, and implementation support on SNC strategies and plans.



While the Standing Committees serve a valuable role to SNC, the current structure and makeup of Committees does not fully align with SNC's future needs. The review's findings suggest there are opportunities for efficiencies through restructuring the Committees.

Staff recommend that the four Standing Committees be dissolved, and a new Watershed Advisory Committee be established for 2024 and beyond. One Committee with additional and diverse stakeholder membership will be more effective and will eliminate redundancies, streamline input, reduce staff time, and manage budget expectations.

Updates to the Standing Committee structure will help reduce the staffing and administrative resources required to manage over 16 committee meetings per year. Staff time is currently required to preparing meeting agendas, staff reports, meeting facilitation, committee member engagement, and meeting minutes.

Proposed Watershed Advisory Committee

The proposed Watershed Advisory Committee membership would reflect the diversity of the existing Committees, with some members appointed from identified sector/partner organizations, and others selected through a public application process. The Committee would meet four times per year, once each quarter.

A sub-committee of the Watershed Advisory Committee could be appointed to review grant applications and recommend grant approvals to the Board for the Clean Water Program, Ottawa Rural Clean Water Program, and Eastern Ontario Water Resources Program. This sub-committee would meet 2-3 times per year as required for funding allocation.

The Community Environmental Grants (up to \$300 each), currently approved by the Communications Committee, can be administered and approved at the staff level. Staff would provide a summary of approved grants to the Watershed Advisory Committee at their quarterly meeting. This would streamline the process and eliminate the need for electronic voting between Committee meetings for time-sensitive requests for project and event support.

Next Steps

The Board of Directors supported the recommendation to move to one Standing Committee. Staff will bring a Watershed Advisory Committee Terms of Reference to the Board for approval at their September 2023 meeting. The updated Terms of Reference will replace the current SNC Standing Committee Terms of Reference; effective January 1st, 2024. Watershed Advisory Committee membership recruitment would be completed in Fall 2023.



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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/ADHERENCE TO SNC POLICY:

Compliance with Budget: No impact to the 2023 Budget, the 2024 draft Budget will reflect the revised Standing Committees structure.

SNC Policy Adherence: Subsection 18 (2) of the *Conservation Authorities Act* allows SNC to establish advisory boards as it considers appropriate. Standing Committees are governed in accordance with SNC's Administrative By-laws and the SNC Standing Committees Terms of Reference.

Programs and Services Category: General Operating: Governance

Ronda Boutz,
Secretary-Treasurer.

John Mesman,
Managing Director, Property,
Conservation Lands, and Community Outreach.