

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – December 14th, 2023

Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority Appoints Erik Downing as Acting General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer

ALL SAUGEEN WATERSHED MUNICIPALITIES – Municipality of Arran-Elderslie, Municipality of Brockton, Township of Chatsworth, Municipality of Grey Highlands, Town of Hanover, Township of Howick, Municipality of Morris-Turnberry, Municipality of South Bruce, Township of Huron-Kinloss, Municipality of Kincardine, Town of Minto, Township of Wellington-North, Town of Saugeen Shores, Township of Southgate, Municipality of West Grey.

Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority (SVCA) is pleased to formally announce Erik Downing as the Acting General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer (GM/S-T). Erik has accepted this role following the leave of absence of Jennifer Stephens. Erik brings with him a wealth of experience and dedication to environmental conservation.

With over 20 years of professional experience in Conservation Authorities, Erik has dedicated his life to the cause of environmental conservation. He holds a BES in Environmental Studies from York University and is designated as a Provincial Offences Officer with Saugeen Conservation. Erik has managed the Environmental Planning and Regulations (EPR) department at SVCA for the last 10 years. His career spans across various Conservation Authorities, including Ganaraska Regions Conservation Authority, Halton Conservation, and the Toronto Region Conservation Authority, equipping him with a broad skill set and deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing SVCA.

Erik's appointment to SVCA is not only a professional milestone but a personal one. As a husband and a father to two, his family shares his deep and active connection to the Saugeen Watershed. His role at SVCA resonates with his family's values of preserving and enjoying the natural beauty of their home region.

"I have a profound appreciation for rural Ontario, and an understanding of the delicate balance needed with urban-rural boundaries. Witnessing the transformation of vast farmlands and natural spaces into urban developments during my formative years, I was drawn to the complexities of sustainable land use. My upbringing amidst the rich, albeit unrefined, valleys and woodlands, where historic family farms often gave way to uniform subdivisions, fueled my desire to delve deeper into environmental conservation and responsible development.

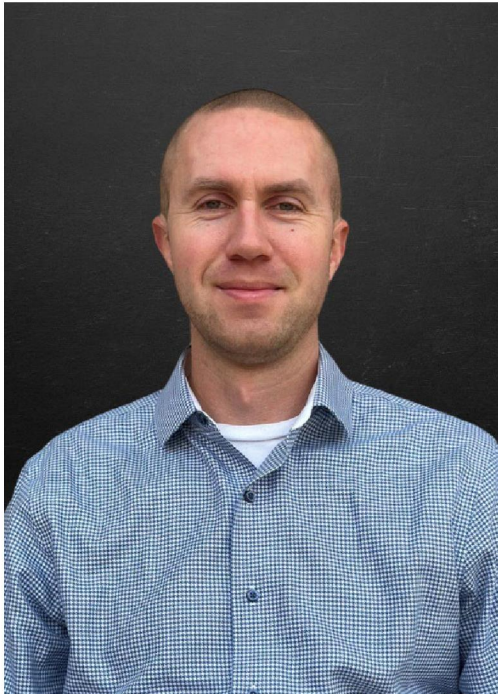
While provincial and municipal support may fluctuate, the impact of SVCA's collaboration with the residents within Saugeen Conservation's jurisdiction is unmistakably visible across the entire watershed. This cooperative effort consistently yields tangible, positive outcomes in our shared environment."

- Erik Downing, SVCA GM/S-T(A)

As he steps into his new role, Erik is committed to continuing the legacy of SVCA, which is approaching 75 successful years. Erik sees the SVCA's role as crucial in co-managing natural resources alongside

residents, businesses, farmers, and other stakeholders. One of Erik's key convictions is the effectiveness of Conservation Authorities' watershed boundary management model, which he sees as the gold standard internationally in environmental conservation. His belief in this model, combined with his understanding of Saugeen Conservation's unique geographical and socio-economic climate, positions him perfectly to lead the organization into its future endeavors.

Erik is enthusiastic about the opportunities and challenges ahead and is dedicated to improving the approach of Conservation Authorities in general, as well as the specific operations of SVCA. He looks forward to working closely with the Board of Directors and all stakeholders to ensure a sustainable and prosperous future for the Saugeen Watershed, a place he and his family are proud to call home.



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