



**TO:** Chair and Members of the Board

**FROM:** Janette Loveys Smith, CAO/Secretary-Treasurer

**MEETING DATE:** September 25, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Proposed 2026 Fee Policy and Schedule

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**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to obtain Board approval for the 2026 Fee Policy and Schedule to be circulated to member municipalities and posted on the Otonabee Conservation Authority's website for public comment.

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:**

- 1) *Resolved*, That Report Number 2025-058 titled "Proposed 2026 Fee Policy and Schedule" be received; and
- 2) *Resolved*, That "Campsite Reservation, Cancellation, Modification and Refund Policy" approved by Board Resolution 023/20 be rescinded; and
- 3) *Resolved*, That notice of the proposed 2026 Fee Policy and Schedule be provided to member municipalities and posted on Otonabee Region Conservation Authority's website for public comment; and
- 4) *Resolved*, That staff report back at the November 20, 2025 Board meeting; and
- 5) *Resolved*, That staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to these resolutions.

**BACKGROUND:**

Effective January 1, 2023, the *Conservation Authorities Act* was amended to repeal subsection 21(1)(m.1), which previously allowed conservation authorities to charge fees for services approved by the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. In its place, a new section—21.2 "Fees for Programs and Services"—was enacted.

Under subsection 21.2(1), the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks is now responsible for determining which classes of programs and services conservation authorities may charge fees for. Subsection 21.2(2) requires the Minister to publish these approved classes in a policy document known as the Minister's List. Conservation authorities may only charge fees for programs or services that are explicitly included in this list.

Additionally, section 21.2 mandates that each conservation authority must develop and adopt:

- A written fee policy, and
- Detailed fee schedules outlining the fees charged for each approved program or service.

These documents must be made publicly available and updated regularly to ensure transparency and accountability.

## DISCUSSION:

Appendix A contains the draft 2026 Fee Policy and Schedule for the Board's consideration.

To maintain alignment with inflation and avoid future fee spikes, staff recommend an average of 2% increase to the current campground and conservation area fee structure. This recommendation is informed by the monthly average change in the Ontario Consumer Price Index, which was 2.7% ending in July.

During the preparation of the draft Fee Policy, the former board policy "Campsite Reservation, Cancellation, Modification and Refund Policy" approved by Board Resolution 023/20 was identified and still remains in the corporate files. As this policy is no longer applicable, the CAO recommends that the Board formally rescind it.

No changes have been made to the Plan Review and Permitting Fees in the proposed 2026 Fee Policy and Schedule, as it is anticipated that the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks will implement a fee freeze for 2026. As a result, the fees currently listed reflect the 2023 fee structure.

Should the Minister lift the freeze, the CAO will present an updated 2026 fee structure to the Board for consideration.

Staff further recommend that the proposed 2026 Fee Policy and Schedule be approved for public circulation and posting on the Authority's website for a period of 30 days. Following this consultation period, the final version will be presented to the Board for approval at the November 20, 2025 meeting.

## ANALYSIS:

### Assessment of Potential Risk: (Required for all matters requiring Board decision/approval)

Risks that would impact the successful achievement of the proposal & actions to mitigate the risk	Likelihood High/Medium/Low	Impact High/Medium/Low
Shortfall in user fees revenues (plan review and permitting fees and day use and camping fees).	Low	Medium

### Contributes to the Advancement of the following Strategic Goals:

- ☒ Safeguard people and property from flooding and other natural hazards
- ☐ Contribute to the maintenance of a healthy and resilient natural environment
- ☒ Provide recreational opportunities in the natural environment
- ☐ Build awareness and understanding of the value of the natural environment

☒ Supports organizational excellence

**Budget and Financial Implications:**

- ☐ Can be implemented within the approved budget
- ☒ Dependent on receipt of external sources of funding
- ☐ Will require an adjustment to the approved budget

**Attachments:**

Appendix A Proposed 2026 Fee Policy and Schedule