

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

March 8, 2023

Here are the highlights from the Lanark County Council meeting held March 8, 2023.

County Takes Mayor's Monarch Pledge: Warden Peter McLaren has taken the Mayors' Monarch Pledge for Lanark County in 2023.

At the public works committee meeting last month, Climate Environmental Coordinator Elizabeth Gallant explained the pledge, through the National Wildlife Federation, gives municipalities in North America the opportunity to commit to creating habitat for the monarch butterfly and pollinators and to educate residents about how they can make a difference at home and in their community. The monarch butterfly's eastern populations have declined by 90 per cent in recent years.

Taking the pledge requires a commitment to at least three action items from a list of 30. "Lanark County has taken the Mayors' Monarch pledge annually since 2019," she said. "In 2020, 2021 and 2022 the county received special recognition for completing eight actions as a member of the Mayors' Monarch Pledge Leadership Circle. The actions complement the county's long-term goals for pollinators on roadsides as part of the Integrated Vegetation Management Plan."

For 2023, three new actions are planned:

- Raising awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat.
- Facilitating or supporting a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.
- Building awareness and creating habitat by engaging students, teachers and the community in planting native milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants.

The county is also incorporating weeding and mowing to allow for native prairie and plant habitats, uses native milkweed and nectar plants on county properties where appropriate, integrates monarch butterfly conservation into planning, and aims to use chemicals that are not harmful to pollinators. For more information, contact Elizabeth Gallant, Climate Environmental Coordinator, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 3114.

More Information Sought for Andrewsville Bridge Decision: Council passed a motion to refer a report on the Andrewsville Bridge back to public works staff to collect more information.

The motion followed a delegation at the public works committee of the whole meeting last month by representatives of Friends of Andrewsville Bridge, as well as a detailed report by Public Works Manager Sean Derouin. Council is considering the future of the bridge, which was constructed in 1904. The bridge spans the Rideau River and provides access to the Parks Canada swing bridge that crosses the Rideau Canal at Nicholson's Locks. It has had a 5-tonne load limit since 1952, and inspections have identified it has outlived its service life and continues to deteriorate. Since 2018 it has been closed to vehicles in the winter to reduce further damage by de-icing chemicals. It is estimated it will need to be permanently closed to passenger vehicles within five years. Jurisdiction of the bridge is

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shared between Lanark County and the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville (UCLG). Its average annual daily traffic count is approximately 200 vehicles.

Derouin indicated five options are being considered:

1. Rehabilitation of the existing bridge
2. Constructing a new single-lane bridge with reconstruction of the current approach
3. Complete removal of the existing bridge
4. Conversion to a pedestrian bridge
5. Do nothing and close the bridge to traffic

“An evaluation of options completed using a weighted scoring matrix resulted in option four as the preferred solution,” Derouin said. Public consultation took place between Nov. 1, 2022 and Feb. 24, 2023, with 32 responses received. The selection of the preferred option by Lanark and UCLG councils will determine how the environmental assessment study proceeds. UCLG is also currently considering the options.

Council has requested clarification related to applying development charges to the project, the application of a climate lens and further information related to growth pressures on the bridge, including potential changes to travel routes, and additional information about emergency services access. As well, more information related to UCLG’s decision and their growth impact was requested. For more information, contact Sean Derouin, Public Works Manager, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 3194.

Municipal Trails Overview Provided: As part of ongoing orientation, council accepted a report providing an overview of Lanark County trails as presented by CAO Kurt Greaves at the economic development committee meeting last month.

The trails include:

- Baird Trail, 3 km hiking (Heron Mills, Lanark Highlands)
- Tay River Pathway, 1 km accessible trail behind Lanark Lodge
- Conboy, 3 km hiking (Cameron Side Road, Tay Valley)
- Tay Havelock Trail, 25 km multi-use (Tay Valley)
- Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail (OVRT), 61 km multi-use (Montague to 417 Arnprior)

Greaves noted the Lanark Lodge Family Council raised \$80,000 and organized the construction of the Tay River Pathway, which is an accessible trail leading to a viewing platform on the Tay River.

He also outlined the history of the OVRT, from its inception as the Brockville and Ottawa Railway Company. It eventually extended across Renfrew County and linked to the transcontinental line. Canadian Pacific gave notice it was discontinuing the line in 2010. Lobbies to save the railway were unsuccessful, and Lanark, Renfrew and Papineau-Cameron began negotiating for the purchase of the line in 2011. Lanark County’s 61.2 km portion cost \$110,000 plus a \$14.9 million tax receipt. The whole property was appraised at more than \$77 million. The new trail opened in October 2018 following years of preparation, including bridge work, gravel, stone dust, fencing, signage, gates and guide rails/culverts. More than \$2 million has been invested in the trail.



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Greaves noted municipalities and other partners have contributed to enhancements to the OVRT, such as the “Carleton Junction” in Carleton Place, the Carleton Place Bridge in partnership with snowmobile clubs, and the Alameda Project in Almonte. In 2018, the OVRT won an award of excellence from the Economic Development Council of Ontario.

Greaves said an endeavour to complete a Lanark County Ring Trail is underway, including the K&P Trail from Renfrew to Kingston (Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority owns the Lanark County portion), the Tay Havelock Trail and the OVRT. There are 25 kms to fill in between Glen Tay and Smiths Falls.

For more information, contact Kurt Greaves, CAO, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1101.

Valley Heartland Services Outlined: Council accepted a report by Valley Heartland Community Futures Development Corporation outlining activities in partnership with the county.

The report was presented by Valley Heartland’s Tina Stevens, General Manager, and Amber Coville, Business Development and Program Officer, at the economic development committee meeting last month.

Valley Heartland is part of a network of community futures offices across Canada established in 1985 to support business development in rural and remote communities. Valley heartland covers all of Lanark County, Smiths Falls, and North Leeds. Federal funding through FedDev Ontario supports three pillars: business loans, business services and community development support.

Local boards of directors manage the community investment fund to stimulate economic development in rural communities. It provides repayable loans to small- and medium-sized enterprises. The loans are described as flexible, community focused and relationship based. Locally the loans are up to \$300,000. Currently \$7 million in loans are active in the community.

Valley Heartland staff support businesses through developing growth strategies, business plan writing and review, market and industry research and troubleshooting specific challenges. They respond to hundreds of enquiries, lead an average of 245 business advisory meetings per year and host workshops and training events. A new website will soon include interactive business calculators, new resources and on-demand learning.

As well, the Valley Heartland Innovation Centre is a facility for accessing services, including a training room, digital media lab and turnkey rental offices. Chair Rob Dyke says the impact of Valley Heartland is clear and compelling. “Through localized efforts we, like other Community Futures offices across the nation, support rural businesses like no other organization, with advisory, programming and flexible lending backed by a local volunteer board and staff.”

For more information, contact Jasmin Ralph, Clerk, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502.

Upcoming Meetings: County Council, Wednesday, March 22, 5 p.m.; Public Works, March 22 (following County Council); Economic Development, March 22 (following Public Works). **County**
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Council, Wednesday, April 5, 5 p.m.; Community Services, April 5 (following County Council); Corporate Services, April 5 (following Community Services). Watch for details about public access to meetings on agendas and through online notifications. For more information, contact 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502. Like "LanarkCounty1" on Facebook and follow "@LanarkCounty1" on Twitter!

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