



## The Corporation of the Township of Huron-Kinloss

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### Staff Report

**Report Title:** Black Creek Municipal Drain Maintenance Update April 2026

**Date:** Apr. 13, 2026

**Report Number:** DRA-2026-06

**Department:** Drainage

**File Number:** C11 DRA 26

**Prepared By:** Jennifer White, Manager of Legislative Services/Clerk & Ben Gowing, Drainage Superintendent appointed for the Black Creek Municipal Drain

**Attachments:** none

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#### **Recommendation:**

THAT the Township of Huron-Kinloss Council receive for information Report DRA-2026-06 as prepared by Jennifer White, Manager of Legislative Services/Clerk & Ben Gowing, Drainage Superintendent appointed for the Black Creek Municipal Drain.

#### **Background:**

As reported in DRA-2025-08, one aspect of the report for the Black Creek Municipal Drain is the consolidation of multiple reports, across several municipalities, into a single report to clarify maintenance responsibilities across the watershed. During the report preparation, coordinated maintenance activities across the three impacted municipalities was planned to provide immediate relief to landowners experiencing negative impacts.

This report provides information on the work done within the Township of Huron-Kinloss as part of those maintenance activities.

#### **Discussion/Analysis/Overview:**

Maintenance was performed in some sections of the Black Creek watershed including the "z" Branch and the Southwest section. The work was required to provide immediate relief while the Engineer's report was being prepared. During the course of the work, permits were extended to include additional areas impacted by beaver dams to establish an outlet to address water levels upstream.

Works were completed under two different permits relating to the "Z" Branch (interlake) and the Southwest Branch of the Black Creek Municipal Drain. The maintenance work was conducted to provide relief to upstream lands experiencing considerable areas of flooding. The obstruction removal was in the form of removal of debris jams, and beaver dams. Having undertaken some works, the Drainage Superintendent determined that to provide sufficient outlet, an additional area would need to be included in maintenance works where the drain exited Clam Lake. Permits were extended to include the partial removal of this obstruction, as a full removal at this time could negatively impact downstream landowners.

Appropriate permits were received for the work from the required agencies, including the relevant Conservation Authority, and the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries. The work was carried out in accordance with the approved permits, current legislation and accepted industry standards.

Work was required to be completed downstream (in other municipalities) prior to work being completed in Huron-Kinloss to avoid negatively impacting the downstream landowners. Additionally, blockages were required to be removed in the municipalities of South Bruce and Brockton to allow water levels to drop before work couldn't be conducted in the interlake areas.

#### Black Creek Southwest Branch

Staff sought emergency relief prior to a drainage report being produced, due to rising water levels, and impacts to municipal infrastructure. Water levels were within 6" of Guest Ave pavement, and the roadway had started to show signs of deterioration, which could pose a danger to motorists using the road.

The location of the start of the maintenance works was in Block A, Range 3 SDR, Kinloss Ward. The scope of work was to lower the water levels within the defined channel and remove beaver dam and log obstructions. The water levels were over 1 foot above the road culverts suggesting water levels should be at least 2 to 2.5 feet lower than that condition.

Work completed within this section successfully lowered the water level by approximately 2 to 2.5 feet within the channel as well as considerably lowering the water level on the property south of Guest Ave.

The length of the maintenance work required was approximately 2,500 meters of obstruction removal to have the drain function and provide flooding relief as it was originally designed. No brushing was necessary.

#### Branch "Z" Interlake

Work was authorized to remove debris, jams and beaver dams, but did not include sediment removal, additional works or bottom cleanout. The approximate area of the completed work was between clam and silver lakes, Lots 24-2, Con 2 SDR (see attached map).

#### Additions

While completing works on the Southwest Branch it was determined that additional work needed to be completed to address a beaver dam located at the commencement of the Black Creek Drain out of Clam Lake. Although inadvisable to remove the dam completely at this time, work was authorized to perform some works that would provide a degree of relief to upstream areas that were under considerable flooding.

#### Contractor Engagement

The Black Creek Watershed includes areas within a significant wetland, making access to many parts of the drain difficult at any time of the year. To minimize

impacts, agency guidelines required entry and exit of the work area to be made using the same work paths if possible.

Agency requirements indicated that work must be done by an aquatic excavator and that beaver dam removal should be done gradually, so as to allow the slow release of water, preventing sediments from moving downstream. Work was not to be completed during or after extended periods of rain or high flow situations.

These conditions limited the number of contractors who had the capability to perform the work. Of those who had the qualification and equipment to perform the work, only one was available during the limited working window set by agencies.

Work was completed in all authorized areas over the course of approximately 30 days, at a cost of approximately \$206,000. As previously noted, the unique watershed conditions create some challenges for maintenance works, which include specialized equipment requirements, strict timing windows for work, challenges in accessing the site.

Challenges regarding the limited and geographically challenging access to the site for maintenance include the need for additional or specialized equipment such as ATV or boat only access to some areas, mobilization and demobilization daily, restrictions for access from landowners, additional traction requirements – hydro poles/posts, etc. It is anticipated that restrictions to access will continue to be an issue moving forward based on correspondence received from landowners.

Maintenance costs will be assessed to landowners in accordance with the Engineer's report and in accordance with the Drainage Act requirements.

Given the extremely high watershed conditions within the Township this spring, the Drainage Superintendent is confident that the work performed last fall significantly lowered water levels which helped to mitigate much more serious flooding conditions this spring.

**Financial Impacts:**

The cost of constructing, maintaining and/or repairing municipal drains is assessed to all landowners within the drain watershed depicted in the last engineer's report as outlined in the *Drainage Act, 1990*. The Township is responsible for any Assessments to municipal lands and roads as determined by the Engineer.

**Performance Measurement:** n/a

**Strategic Area:**

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|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Embrace a thriving rural lifestyle | <input type="checkbox"/> Enhance Municipal Service Delivery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for Inclusive Growth                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure Financial Stability         |

**Strategic Goal: Manage assets and infrastructure**

**Respectfully Submitted By:** Jennifer White, Manager of Legislative Services/Clerk  
**Report Approved By:** Jodi MacArthur, Chief Administrative Officer