

Leading Through Change



Conservation
ONTARIO
Natural Champions

Conservation Ontario
Annual Report 2016

2016

Leading Through Change

Leading through change is helped by three key attributes - a steady hand guided by experience, an adaptable corporate culture and the ability to leverage agencies and funding toward a shared vision. The ecological changes we're experiencing in Ontario are being driven by a changing climate which in turn, affects our economy and even our own well-being. Conservation Authorities are enthusiastically being pursued for their data, outreach resources, and expertise accumulated by years of working in Ontario's local watersheds.

Keeping pace with change requires us to constantly re-assess our relationships, roles and responsibilities around Ontario's environment. Throughout 2016, Conservation Ontario and its members participated in a review of the *Conservation Authorities Act (CAA)*. This legislative review provided us with a chance to take a breath and think about where we need to go in order to address the escalating and converging ecological, economic and social issues, and interests.

And, of course, a key question has arisen - how does Ontario support this important work?



Dick Hibma
CHAIR



Kim Gavine
GENERAL MANAGER

Conservation Authorities are unique agencies - independent, yet tied closely to local governments and often delegated to represent the interests of the Province, particularly with regard to natural hazards. This creates a complex web of expectations which unfortunately aren't always matched with the proper resources.

These challenges and many others were discussed throughout the review in 2016 and we thank everyone who participated and provided their thoughtful insights and support for change. This work continues into 2017 and we look forward to reinforcing existing beneficial relationships and building new ones.



CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES UNIVERSITY

Conservation Ontario worked with Conservation Authorities to deliver the Conservation Authorities University (CAU) 2015/2016 training program for Conservation Authority CAO/GMs and senior staff.

Recognizing the need for succession planning, the program is focused on building corporate resilience by sharing information and best practices around Conservation Authority (CA) business needs as well as collaborating to develop solutions for shared business challenges. It is delivered by senior leaders and discipline experts throughout the Conservation Ontario network.

2015/2016 Inaugural Program

72% participated
(26 Conservation Authorities)

51 speakers
(40 from 20 Conservation Authorities, 11 from external partners)

4 Modules

- Governance
- Public Administration I & II
- Conservation Authority Business Areas



Source Water Protection:

A Public Health Program Benefitting Our Watersheds, Groundwater, Great Lakes and Addressing Climate Change Impacts

Conservation Authorities played a vital role supporting the implementation of local approved Source Protection Plans (SPPs) through 2016. Drinking water systems of three First Nations - Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point, Rama First Nation and Six Nations of the Grand - have been included in the source protection planning process. Implementation is well underway by various organizations including municipalities, Conservation Authorities and the Province. This is a new phase in the Drinking Water Source Protection (DWSP) Program. The SPPs contain policies that protect our sources of municipal drinking water, enhancing the health of our watersheds, Great Lakes, and groundwater, and helping address climate change impacts.

Throughout 2016, Conservation Authorities provided several benefits including:

- Risk management services
- Water budget technical studies
- Engaging First Nations
- Implementation resource sharing and problem solving
- Local education and outreach materials
- Annual progress reporting

Conservation Ontario (CO) strongly supports the DWSP program at Conservation Authorities across Ontario, liaising with multiple stakeholders. CO is a member of the Joint Advisory Committee which discusses DWSP workplans and provides long-term strategic recommendations for the program.

Addressing Climate Change & Protecting the Great Lakes

Throughout 2016, Conservation Ontario and the Conservation Authorities worked closely with different government and nongovernmental agencies, pooling resources and information to address climate change impacts and protect the Great Lakes.

- Worked with the insurance industry, universities, provincial and federal governments to share information and participate in studies in order to continue to address gaps in conservation authority flood programs (e.g. floodplain mapping)
- Partnered with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry on the Ontario Floodplain Mapping Technical Working Group to host the first annual Tech-Transfer Workshop in Peterborough, ON
- Promoted value of Low Impact Development (LID) and Green Infrastructure at federal and provincial consultations, including work on development of a provincial LID Guide
- Member of the Great Lakes Guardians Council under the *Great Lakes Protection Act*
- Member of the binational Great Lakes Executive Committee and a number of Great Lake Water Quality Agreement Annex Sub-Committees
- Supported the establishment of the 40% Phosphorus Reduction Target for Lake Erie and contributed to development of the draft Canada-Ontario Action Plan so the target can be achieved
- Supported the completion of a *Great Lakes Nearshore Framework* (2016) and have representation on the Advisory Panel for pilot testing



Great Lakes Nearshore Monitoring Protocol

The nearshore is an area between the lake and the beginning of land where people and nature intersect regularly. There is growing recognition of the ecological and socio-economic importance of this area.

With support from the federal Lake Simcoe South East Georgian Bay Clean-up Fund, Conservation Ontario worked with Conservation Authorities to develop a **Great Lakes Nearshore Monitoring Protocol**. It provides a decision-making framework that guides users through selecting what variables to monitor and how to collect data using standard methods. The protocol enables shoreline managers to understand the state of their lake nearshore environment and its relationship to contributing watersheds so that sound management decisions can be made in response to the conditions in the lake nearshore.

Supporting Regulatory Responsibilities of Conservation Authorities

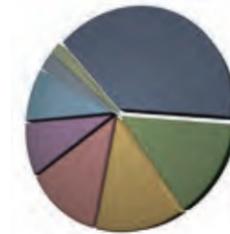
Conservation Authority Offences Officers ensure compliance with Conservation Area Regulations and/or Section 28 Regulations. Training enables these officers to perform their duties professionally.

A 5-Day Level 1 course was held in March 2016 and the course was full to capacity with 30 CA staff registrants from 19 CAs. As well, two 1-Day workshops on Conflict Management were provided to a total of 62 CA staff.



LATORNELL CONSERVATION SYMPOSIUM

Green Infrastructure:
Collaborating with Nature
2016



Who Attends

- Conservation Authorities
- Provincial
- Private Sector
- Academic
- NonProfit
- Municipal
- Federal
- Other

792 Participants	12 Young Professional Program Graduates
59 Sessions	Planted 6,000+ trees on behalf of speakers
10 Streams	Top 3 Streams: Watershed Management, Natural Heritage, Stormwater
156 Presentations	
194 Presenters	78 % of delegates share lessons back in the office
5 Keynotes	
19 Delegate Grants	89% of delegates said they felt it was "excellent" or "good"
46 Exhibit Booths	
19 Student posters	
20 Sponsors	



Critical Infrastructure: Protecting People and Property from Natural Hazards

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) funding program (50% provincial/50% local) is designed to ensure that major maintenance projects are undertaken on aging infrastructure. This infrastructure was built to protect lives and property from natural hazards such as flooding, erosion and unstable slopes and is managed by Ontario's Conservation Authorities.

The need is greater than available funding:
131 funding applications / Value of \$15.7 million / 23 Conservation Authorities
87 projects funded / \$10 million available / 18 Conservation Authorities

2016 Engaging Agencies & People

23,000+ followers on all our social media platforms who are interested in Conservation Authorities and their issues.

23 Submissions to provincial and federal consultations. In addition to the Conservation Authorities Act Review (1), the Consolidated Provincial Plan Review (1) and the Ontario Wetland Strategy (1), subjects included: land use planning and regulatory approvals (7), climate change (4), Great Lakes (4), source water protection/water taking (3), infrastructure management (1) and agriculture (1).

Tree Planting

Conservation Authorities plant close to **3 million trees** annually (50% in partnership with Forests Ontario)



Connecting People to Nature Ecohealth



2016 Healthy Hikes Campaign

Focusing on social media, Conservation Ontario and the Conservation Authorities delivered the fifth annual Healthy Hikes campaign. Running from May 1 to October 31st, people are encouraged to get outside and get active by visiting a conservation area. A series of infographics were developed and shared with Conservation Ontario's 23,000+ twitter and facebook followers.

Other partners for this campaign include: Canadian Mental Health Association – Ontario, Ducks Unlimited Canada, EcoHealth Ontario, Forest Ontario, Hike Ontario, Ontario Headwaters, Ontario Trails Council, Traversing.ca and York Region.



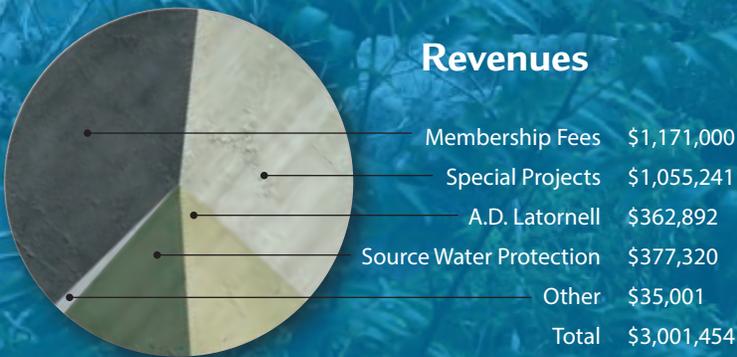
Conservation Ontario participated in EcoHealth Ontario, a collaborative whose goal is to help agencies and people to understand the important connections between the environment and our own wellbeing. Check out EcoHealth Ontario's infographic on how green spaces help our mental and physical health: www.ecohealth-ontario.ca

Mood Walks

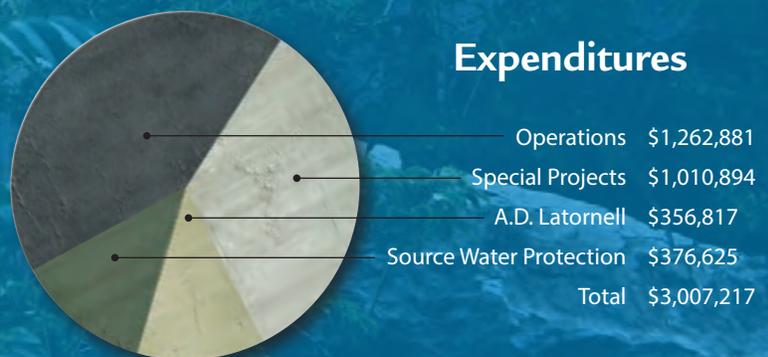
Conservation Ontario and Conservation Authorities partnered with the Canadian Mental Health Association for the 2016 Mood Walks campaign which was targeted to youth in transition. This event encourages people to walk or hike in nature to benefit their mental health. The 2016 campaign was recognized by Sophie Grégoire-Trudeau, wife of Canada's Prime Minister.

2016 Financial Information

Revenues



Expenditures



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Ontario's Conservation Areas



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