

# Fact Sheet

## CONSERVATION ONTARIO

Conservation Ontario is a nonprofit organization that represents the network of 36 Conservation Authorities, natural resource management agencies that are organized and operate on the basis of local watersheds across Ontario. Approximately 90 per cent of Ontario residents live in watersheds managed by Conservation Authorities.

## CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES:

- Protect Ontarians and their property from flooding and erosion hazards
- Protect natural areas and open space (largest landowner next to the Province)
- Restore and protect water and land resources and habitats
- Provide recreational and educational opportunities to local residents, encouraging them to get outdoors to enjoy and learn about nature
- Conservation Authorities deliver programs and services totaling approximately \$340 million annually through more than 3,600 full time and seasonal, contract, and part time staff.
- Conservation Authorities partner with municipal, provincial and federal governments, as well as landowners and many other groups and agencies, to deliver community-based natural resource programs

## Conservation Authorities Rely on Science-based Integrated Watershed Management

An integrated watershed management approach manages human activities and natural resources, together, on a watershed basis taking into consideration environmental, economic and human needs and interests.

## Flood Management – Key Responsibility of Conservation Authorities

- Conservation Authorities manage \$2.7 billion dollars of flood control and prevention infrastructure including 900 dams, dykes, channels and erosion control structures
- Flood management programs delivered by Conservation Authorities *prevent* an average of well over \$100 million a year in flood damages and loss of life
- Programs and services to prevent and control flooding offered by Conservation Authorities include:
  - monitor conditions year round
  - model and forecast flood conditions
  - issuing flood warnings
  - regulate development in flood prone areas
  - provide support and advice to municipalities to minimize the impacts of flooding

- purchase vulnerable lands
- protect significant ecosystems such as wetlands and forests that help to control flooding
- educate the public about flooding hazards

### **Source Water Protection**

- In partnership with the Province, Conservation Authorities support Source Protection Committees (SPC) in 19 regions

### **Work with Ontarians to deliver rural and urban stewardship programs**

- Each year, Conservation Authorities planted almost 3 million trees with 3,000 landowners
- Provide landowners with financial and technical assistance to carry out water quality improvements including projects such as erosion control, clean water diversion, agricultural best management practices, well decommissioning and septic system improvements
- Provide landowners with financial and technical assistance to carry out rehabilitation/restoration projects with wetlands, habitats, shorelines and stream & fish habitat. Many projects are targeted to at invasive species and species at risk

### **Partner with the Province to monitor health of water and land resources**

- Conservation Authorities operate 374 monitoring sites within the **provincial groundwater quality monitoring network** and 407 sites in the **provincial surface water quality monitoring network**. Conservation Authorities also have 584 surface water quality monitoring sites and 35 groundwater monitoring sites in addition to the provincial partnerships.

### **Step Into Nature – Helping Canadians to stay healthy**

- Over 500 Conservation Areas are managed and owned by Conservation Authorities. Approximately 250 of these are open to the public
- Over 6.9 million people visited Conservation Areas in 2012 either as day visitors or campers
- 8,400 campsites and almost 2,500 km of trails are located within Conservation Areas
- Conservation Authorities deliver many outdoor educational programs and events in partnership with schools, friends' groups and other agencies

### **Environmental Education -**

- Conservation Authority outdoor education programs are aligned with Ontario's curriculum Programs and in 2012, delivered programs approximately 400,000 Ontario students at more than 3,000 schools.

#### **For more information:**

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