

June 8, 2012



[Summary](#)

[Full Report](#)

Prepared by the

[Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction](#)

for the

[Insurance Bureau of Canada](#)

Conservation Authorities are on the Frontlines of Flooding

Conservation Authorities are responsible for monitoring and predicting flood flows and water levels within their watersheds, operating flood control structures such as dams and disseminating flood messages to local municipalities and agencies.

Programs and services to prevent and control flooding offered by



Thunder Bay area (May 2012)

Insurance Bureau of Canada New Report (2012)

Telling the Weather Story Decisions Have to Be Made...Now

Conservation Authorities are concerned about the findings in a new report released June 4, 2012 by the Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC) which says that severe weather is projected to increase over the next 40 years and that this will have significant social and economic impacts on individuals, governments, and businesses.

This confirms what Conservation Authorities are tracking as well in Ontario's watersheds: increased threats to water quality and supply, rising temperatures and changing precipitation patterns which create more drought conditions and more frequent severe weather, more extreme rainfall which leads increased flood and erosion problems, lowered river flows, and warmed surface waters.

The IBC report says that Canada has become wetter during the past half century with precipitation increasing by about 12%. On the average, we now experience 20 more days of rain compared with the 1950s. And this precipitation is often the form of severe weather creating damaging runoff, poor water quality in streams and lakes, and overwhelmed aging infrastructure such as roads, bridges and sewer systems. Specifically, the report points out that:

- Ontario is getting warmer; precipitation is higher with more rain and freezing rain in the winter and less snow; there are more extreme heat days and intense rainfalls
- Extreme weather events in 2011 cost roughly \$1.6 billion and almost \$1 billion in each of the two previous years. Ten of the most expensive events in Ontario in the last 30 years have all

Conservation Authorities include

- monitoring conditions;
- computer modeling and forecasting flooding;
- issuing of flood messages;
- regulation of development in flood prone areas;
- providing planning support and advice to municipalities to minimize the impact of flooding;
- land acquisition;
- protecting significant ecosystems such as wetlands and forests that help to control flooding; and
- educating the public.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

been as a result of severe weather (wind & water).

- There is an increase in claims resulting from smaller weather events that have resulted in significant property damage.
- Water claims have surpassed fire as the number one cause of home insurance claims in many parts of the country.
- Severe weather is projected to increase over the next 40 years.
- We need to adapt our infrastructure now in order to minimize the impacts which affect us socially and economically.
- This report provides information to help government, communities, and individual home and businesses about how to manage the growing risks associated with storms.

Conservation Authorities manage \$2.7 billion dollars worth of flood control and prevention infrastructure including 900 dams, dykes, channels and erosion control structures.

In 2009, it was estimated that flood management programs delivered by Conservation Authorities prevent an average of well over \$100 million a year in flood damages.

In 2009, Conservation Ontario estimated that investments are needed immediately in:

- Infrastructure maintenance, repair and replacement
- Flood plain mapping, rainfall and stream flow monitoring systems, and computer models
- Ongoing flood management programs, including monitoring, regulation and facility operations, as well as studies to plan for climate change and other emerging threats

Source: [Protecting People & Property: A Business Case for Investing in Flood Prevention and Control](#) (Conservation Ontario 2009)

www.conservationontario.ca

This e-bulletin is produced by [Conservation Ontario](#), the organization that represents Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities.