



News **Byte**



Protecting the Great Lakes Integrated Watershed Management Approach

Protecting the Great Lakes Through Actions in Watersheds

Our activities on the land impact the health and sustainability of the Great Lakes which we depend on, daily, for our drinking water, livelihoods and social well-being. Given the premise that healthy watersheds contribute to healthy Great Lakes, a more integrated approach that recognizes the connections between the Great Lakes and their watersheds can be used to identify threats and actions that can be taken to ensure current and future sustainability of this important resource.

Integrated watershed management enables a host of interconnected issues to be addressed collectively, offering a number of benefits such as science-based decision-making, improved collaboration, and leveraging existing local environmental and natural resource investments ultimately resulting in more

Integrated watershed management (IWM) focuses on water and related resources, including aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystems, addressing the inter-relationships between them and the broader socio-economic systems which they support.

sustainable outcomes.

An IWM approach supports:

- improved water quality and erosion management,
- more resilient biodiversity and habitats,
- more sustainable economic and recreation opportunities,
- improved quality of life and neighbourhood desirability, and
- greater ability for Ontario's watersheds to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

How to achieve greater Great Lakes sustainability:

1. Set measurable targets for nearshore areas to achieve Great Lakes objectives;
2. Ensure coordinated actions by various watershed stakeholders (including agencies and municipalities) takes place through integrated watershed management;
3. Enhance existing tools and programs (e.g. urban and rural stormwater management) to implement local actions for broader Great Lakes benefits and to engage Ontarians' support for their Great Lakes;
4. Support actions with adequate science, research and monitoring;
5. Build upon existing models for efficiency (both watershed and bi-national) and without the creation of additional prescriptive processes requiring excessive provincial oversight.

For more Information

Conservation Ontario FACT SHEET

POSITION PAPER: "An Integrated Approach to Great Lakes Protection: Conservation Ontario Recommendations for a Great Lakes Protection Act" (March 2012)

Additional Support for a *Great Lakes Protection Act*:

Environmentalists Call on All Parties to Help Clean Up the Great Lakes: Six groups jointly urge that three key elements are included in Great Lakes Protection Act as promised in Throne Speech (March 2012)



This newsletter is produced and circulated by Conservation Ontario , the organization that represents Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities.

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