



# Conservation Ontario 2018 Annual Report



# 2018



# Supporting Conservation Authorities' Frontline Work By Developing Standards and Efficiencies

Creating efficiencies and streamlining approaches helps to meet the needs of clients partners and others in a cost effective and timely manner. It's just part of doing business in Ontario today.

Conservation Authorities (CAs) made this commitment and in 2018 took an important step towards this by developing and adopting a common CA Best Management Practices and Administrative By-law, a requirement under the new *Conservation Authorities Act*. To assist members, Conservation Ontario (CO) provided training to all 36 CAs in May and early June.

As well, CO supported the corporate development of conservation authority members through the delivery of another successful Conservation Authority University (CAU) program targeted to senior CA staff. The purpose of this training is to build corporate resilience by sharing information and best practices around Conservation Authority business needs. It is delivered by senior leaders and discipline experts through the CA network.

Another significant achievement for Conservation Ontario and the Conservation Authorities was the publishing of 33 CA 2018 Watershed Report Cards. The report cards are important tools that Conservation Authorities use to provide a snapshot of the state of Ontario's water and land natural resources. This information is used by municipalities and other levels of government to help make science-based decisions. Working with the CAs, Conservation Ontario provided updated guidelines, report card template and other materials.

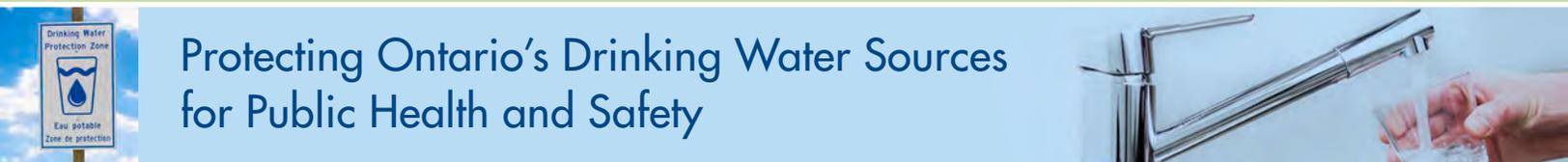
Now, more than ever, the efforts of Conservation Authorities and their partners (including government, other agencies, residents and industry) need to continue. These activities support the health and safety of all of us who live and work in Ontario.



**Kim Gavine**  
GENERAL MANAGER



**Don MacIver**  
CHAIR - Board of Directors



## Protecting Ontario's Drinking Water Sources for Public Health and Safety

 Provincial funding of \$7.2 million for Conservation Ontario and the Conservation Authorities was confirmed in March.

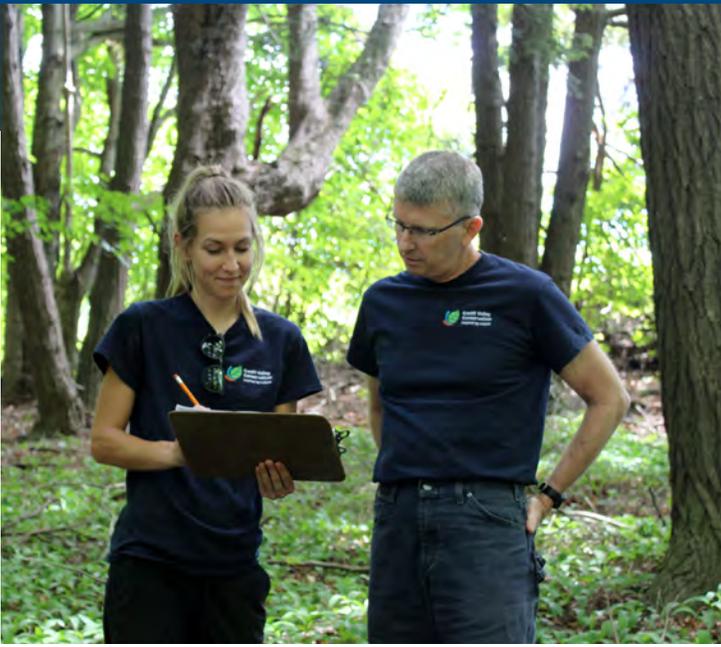
 Road salt presents a serious threat to drinking water quality sources. CO co-chaired a Road Salt Working Group with the Ontario Good Roads Association (OGRA).

It developed guidance for salt vulnerable areas and was presented to OGRA's members in October 2018.

 Conservation Ontario also facilitated regular meetings with SWP Project Managers and the Joint Advisory Committee. As well, Conservation Authorities and Conservation Ontario provided input to an online Community of Practice for First Nations communities created by the Province to provide First Nations communities with access to best management practices, streamlined approaches, current documents and resources, guidance and templates on source protection planning

 **Communication Support.** Working together with CA staff, Conservation Ontario also produced a number of products for use by Conservation Authorities and municipalities including a Municipal Councillor Primer, Municipal Planning Staff Primer, Real Estate Primer and Fact Sheet, five social media posts, three infographics (water, rural / urban issues) and an Aggregate Industry Fact Sheet. A Drinking Water Source Protection video was also produced along with 19 print ads around different source water protection issues.





## Supporting Effective and Efficient Delivery of Conservation Authority Hazard Programs and Services

## Sharing Information and Best Practices Around Flood Management

Throughout 2018, work was ongoing with the CO Section 28 Regulations Committee with a view to streamlining the hazard regulations while still ensuring the intent of the regulation with regard to protection of life and property.

With a focus on consistency, professionalism, and good customer service, Conservation Ontario has provided technical support to the front-line staff in our watersheds who are responsible for regulatory compliance. CA Provincial Offices Officers ensure compliance with Section 28 Regulations and/or Conservation Area Regulations, and training enables them to perform their duties professionally.

- A five day Level 1 course was held in March 2018, with funding support from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, and the course was full with 31 CA staff registrants from 20 CAs.
- As well, additional training opportunities benefiting over 200 regulatory compliance staff included such topics as: conflict management, wetlands, search warrants, report writing and notes, and, investigations and case management.

Included in the work undertaken by Conservation Ontario and the Conservation Authorities (CAs) around flood management in 2018, two workshops were hosted by CO, the Grand River Conservation Authority, Toronto & Region Conservation, the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority and other partners.

**Ontario Floodplain Mapping Knowledge Transfer Workshop (March 2018):** The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Natural Resources Canada and the Canadian Water Resources Association were key supporters of this workshop which explored new technologies, best practices, adaptation solutions and case studies from Ontario and across Canada.

**Ontario Flood Risk Management Workshop (September 2018):** Focused on flood risk prevention and mitigation showcasing a wide variety of municipal and agency projects, and works in Ontario. They also explored specific work and experiences from emergency management professionals. Participants included Conservation Authorities, municipal and other government representatives and the private sector.

### Webinars

Two webinars on Ontario Flood Management Services, Programs and Infrastructure were delivered by Conservation Ontario and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. One was in collaboration with the Insurance Bureau of Canada and another for the Federal Flood Mapping Working Group which is overseeing development of national floodplain mapping guidelines.





## Continuing to Build Capacity to Tackle Climate Change Impacts

In addition to hazard management and low water response activities, Conservation Ontario and the CA network continue to implement services, programs and provide input to strategies that help the adaptation and mitigation of climate change impacts.

- CO, the Ontario Climate Consortium and various Conservation Authorities collaborated with The Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) to develop a “Water Quality Climate Change Risk Assessment Guidance Document for Source Water Protection”, including a first-of-its-kind assessment tool that details an analysis and assessment process for how source protection authorities, municipalities, and others can incorporate climate change in the water quality risk assessment.
- CO and CAs also shared their experiences, insights and views regarding climate change impacts and adaptation during a series of sessions led by the Ontario Centre for Climate Impacts and Adaptation Resources (OCCIAR) towards the development of the Ontario Regional Perspectives chapter, as well as the Water Resource and Ecosystem Services National Issues chapters of National Resources Canada’s upcoming National Assessment of Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation.
- CO was also represented on Environment and Climate Change Canada’s Expert Panel on Climate Adaptation and Resilience Results and along with CAs provided input on the Standards Council of Canada and Intact Centre for Climate Adaptation Report Developing Canadian Standards for Flood Resilience in Existing Residential Communities.



## Addressing Aging Infrastructure Through the Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) Program

Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) database was managed for the 2018-2019 WECI funding application review process. The Committee reviewed 129 funding applications for 2018/19 with total project costs just under \$20 million; almost double the total funding available which is \$10 million (50% provincial / 50% municipal). Overall, the 2018 -19 WECI program funded 19 Conservation Authorities to undertake a total of 66 infrastructure repair and study projects.

# CLIMATE CHANGE



# Working With Our Conservation Authority Members



## Training Support for Management Leadership

In 2018, Conservation Ontario worked with CAs to deliver the Conservation Authorities University (CAU) 2018 training program for CA CAO/GMs and senior staff.

The program is focused on building corporate resilience by sharing information and best practices around Conservation Authority 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.

A total of 39 senior CA leaders enrolled from 19 Conservation Authorities. There were 49 speakers (35 from 16 CAs, 14 from external partners). The four modules covered in the program included: Governance, Public Administration I & II, and Conservation Authority Business Areas.



Conservation Ontario's sixth annual Healthy Hikes campaign ran from May 7 - October 31, 2018 with support from the 36 Conservation Authorities and 18 partner organizations. The campaign focused on illustrating the benefits of nature on physical, mental and emotional health.



## Providing Advice to Conserve Natural Resources and Protect Public Health and Safety

Conservation Ontario coordinates Conservation Authority review of Provincial and Federal policy proposals where there is potential impact to their business of conserving natural resources and protecting public health and safety. Twenty-two of 36 CAs actively participated in the development of 16 CO submissions. Submissions focused on a Made-in-Ontario Climate Change Plan and other climate change related proposals, Extending the Moratorium on Water Bottling Permits, Excess Soil Management, the *Environmental Assessment Act*, *Federal Fisheries Act*, *Watershed Planning Guidelines*, *Protecting Water / Growing the Greenbelt* and new regulations under the *Clean Water Act*, the *Safe Drinking Water Act*, the *Planning Act* and the *Federal Fisheries Act*.

## Continuing Improvement to Governance

### Best Management Practices and Administrative By-Law

Within Conservation Ontario, there is a shared commitment to improve information sharing and networking among Conservation Authorities in order to increase transparency and accountability of activities affecting client groups, and to develop templates and guidelines for greater consistency.

With funding support from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) in 2017-2018, Conservation Ontario developed a guidance document, Conservation Authority Best Management Practices (BMP) and Administrative By-Law Model including Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest policies. The updating of CA Administrative By-laws within one year of royal assent was a requirement under the new *Conservation Authorities Act* and the guidance document and training was provided to all 36 CAs to assist in achieving the December 2018 deadline.

All 36 CAs approved their new Administrative By-laws to be compliant with Section 19.1 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* before the legislative deadline.

Five new videos promoting conservation areas were developed with CAs and can be viewed on Conservation Ontario's YouTube channel. Throughout the campaign hundreds of visitors shared their Conservation Area visits on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with the hashtags #HealthyHikes and #StepIntoNature.

## Watershed Report Cards

A total of 33 Conservation Authority 2018 Watershed Report Cards have been published. Conservation Ontario worked with the CA Watershed Report Card Working Group to update the Guide to Developing Conservation Authority Watershed Report Cards and a report card template.

A social media campaign was used to promote the report cards during Canada Water Week March 18 - 23. It showcased the work that CAs do around monitoring, source protection, watershed stewardship and ecohealth.

Conservation Ontario's website, **WatershedCheckup** [www.watershedcheckup.ca](http://www.watershedcheckup.ca) provides background information on the resource categories and indicators and explains how Conservation Authorities monitor conditions and what types of actions they do to protect natural resources.

Specific watershed grades and more detailed information can be found on a new online application called **State of Ontario's Watersheds** [www.stateofontariowatersheds.ca](http://www.stateofontariowatersheds.ca).



# Working with Conservation Authorities to Protect the Great Lakes

Canada and Ontario released the Lake Erie Action Plan to reduce algal blooms and phosphorus loads. The Action Plan identifies over 120 actions by Canada, Ontario, and their partners, including Conservation Authorities, to meet binational 40 per cent phosphorus load reduction targets that apply to the Canadian side of Lake Erie.

The Great Lake Water Quality Agreement Bi-National Subcommittee for Nutrients (Annex 4) continues to engage following release of the Action Plan. They are focusing on developing an adaptive management approach to implementation which will include evaluation monitoring and reporting of progress.

Conservation Ontario continued to participate at binational tables under the Canada-U.S. Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement including Nutrients, Climate Change, Science, Groundwater, and Lakewide Area Management Plans to assist in meeting the commitments under that Agreement.

## Great Lakes St. Lawrence Collaborative Strategy

The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Collaborative Strategy was launched on October 26, 2018 with the intention to enhanced protection efforts and better alignment of government science, programs and investments. It is focused on improving Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River water quality. An expert panel was established to develop recommendations. Conservation Ontario and a number of Conservation Authority representatives are working on expert issues tables with the panel. The first phase runs from October 2018 to June 2019.



**LATORNELL**  
CONSERVATION SYMPOSIUM

## Creating A 'Community of Conservation' at the Latornell Conservation Symposium

The 2018 Latornell Conservation Symposium focused on two efforts – promoting women in Conservation and encouraging more participation of Indigenous communities.

Stronger collaborations between Indigenous communities and traditional environmental organizations, such as Conservation Authorities, will enhance our local watershed efforts to protect, conserve and enhance conservation in Ontario. Indigenous keynote speakers at the 2018 Symposium included Dr. Dan Longboat (Trent University) and Dr. Robin Kimmerer (University of New York).

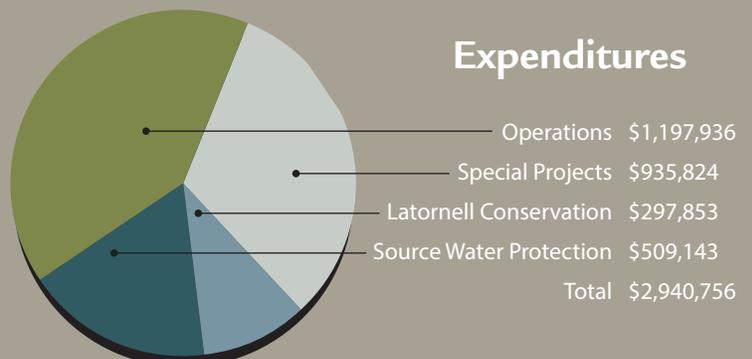
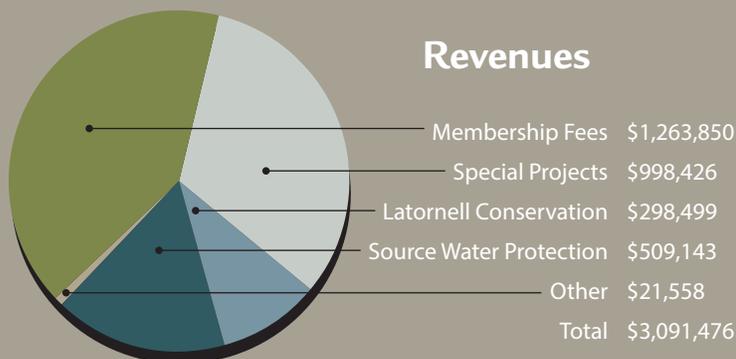
As well, a special social media campaign (#IAMCONSERVATION) developed by Conservation Ontario, the Conservation Authorities and Ontario Nature featured women working in conservation across the province.



Other keynote speakers included The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Governor General of Ontario and David Ullrich, Senior Advisor to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative.

The 2018 Latornell Leadership Award Recipients included Nels Conroy (Sudbury), Shelley Macpherson (Manotick), Brian Denney (Collingwood) and Terry Murphy (Belleville).

## 2018 Financial Information



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