

Annual Report



Conservation
ONTARIO

2024

CONSERVATION IMPACT
Valuing positive contribution
through conversation

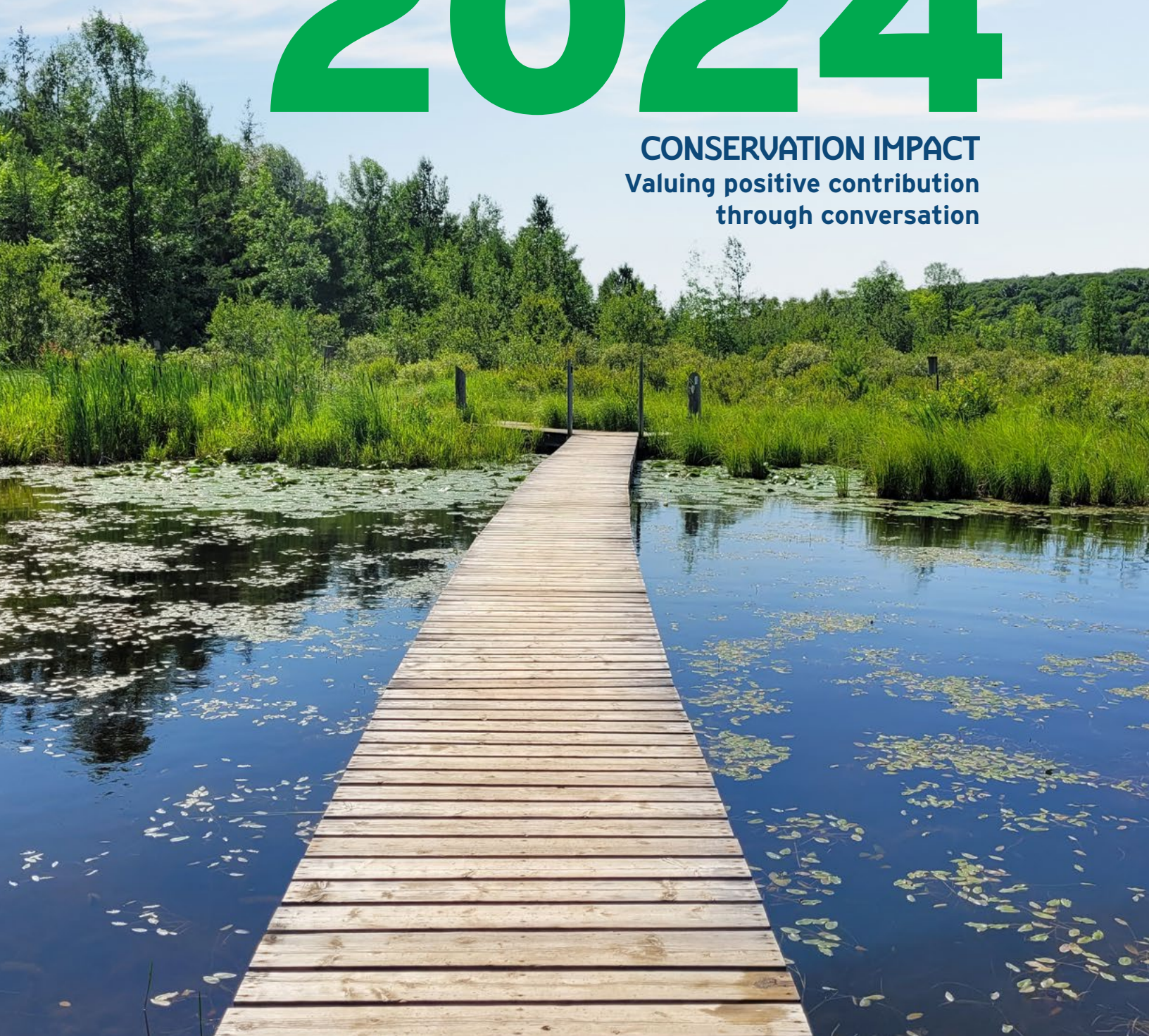




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Message from the

Chair and General Manager



Chair Chris White
Conservation Ontario
Board of Directors



Angela Coleman
General Manager,
Conservation Ontario

Storytelling connects, inspires, and bridges gaps between individuals, communities, and generations. Today, collaboration is vital, and the need to build bridges is greater than ever.

In 2024, Conservation Ontario (CO) reflected on Conservation Authorities (CAs) nearly 80-year history of leadership in watershed management in Ontario. For decades, municipalities and Ontarians have relied on CAs to safeguard communities and support sustainable growth. These partnerships, grounded in local watershed science, are essential in shaping decisions that protect the environment and enhance community well-being.

Ontario's watershed model fosters healthy, resilient communities. CAs were established in the 1940s to address deteriorating watershed conditions and rising flood risks. Over time, we have developed initiatives and hazard land acquisitions to protect water quality, reduce flooding, and improve watershed health. Our regulatory role in response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Hazel in 1954 is crucial in preventing development in hazardous flood-prone and erosion-sensitive areas.

The legacy of this work is a watershed-based approach to natural hazard management, avoiding billions of dollars in losses from disasters. We encourage you to engage and share this collective conservation story, as we did in 2024, bringing together partners to create meaningful impact.

The stories featured in this report highlight the incredible work of our staff, partners, and collaborators. We are proud of the partnerships cultivated and the progress made through our collective conservation efforts.



Panel moderated by Angela Coleman, general manager of Conservation Ontario, at the Climate Proof Canada National Climate Adaptation Summit in Ottawa.

COLLABORATION IN ACTION:

- 🌱 We participated in a joint opening panel session on Agricultural Water Management with the Land Improvement Contractors of Ontario and the Drainage Superintendents of Ontario. This session, titled *Common Problems, Collaborative Solutions*, brought together over 300 delegates from various sectors and levels of government to address complex issues in agriculture water management. At this event, we had dinner with the Minister of Agriculture, Lisa Thompson, and guests receiving special recognition.
- 🌱 At the Rural Ontario Municipal Association Conference, we partnered with the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Cities Initiative to launch a shared advocacy approach for funding Great Lakes shoreline priorities. The Minister of Natural Resources, Graydon Smith, attended our celebration alongside partner municipalities.
- 🌱 Board Chair Chris White and staff presented at the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Ontario Regional Meeting in Collingwood. At the Bi-National Conference in Montreal, we presented watershed governance in Ontario with government representatives from Canada and the United States.
- 🌱 We met Minister Graydon Smith at Queen's Park to discuss conservation priorities and opened the Provincial Flood Forecasting and Warning Workshop with provincial, federal, and CA partners.
- 🌱 We attended *Nature on the Hill* in Ottawa, engaging with partners and federal members of Parliament to emphasize the importance of protecting nature and biodiversity.
- 🌱 We hosted a federal media event at the Rogers Reservoir Conservation Area to celebrate our multi-million-dollar federal land conservation and acquisition program.

- 🌱 We hosted our first-ever social mixer at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario Conference in Ottawa.
- 🌱 Throughout the year, we participated in various local events, including stewardship funding announcements, trail expansions, land donations, and milestone celebrations with several CAs. These events showcased the success and commitment of conservation efforts at the community level.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Women Leaders in Conservation Panel at the Latornell Conservation Symposium: Moderating this panel, we had the privilege of facilitating an open and honest conversation with four leading conservation executives from Conservation Halton, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Forests Canada, and the Ontario Land Trust Alliance. Their personal stories of leadership left a lasting impact on all who attended.

Fireside Chat at the Climate Proof Canada National Climate Adaptation Summit: A key moment was posing challenging questions about progress and measurables on the National Adaptation Strategy to The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, and engaging with Mayor Richard Ireland of Jasper during a sensitive discussion on the impact of the wildfires that devastated his home and community and deeply underscored the human element of our conservation work and its profound impact on real lives.

As we reflect on the achievements of 2024, we are reminded of the power of collaboration, shared purpose, and the lasting impact of collective action through conversation. Thank you for your ongoing support as we work collectively towards a sustainable and vibrant future for all.

Chair Chris White

Conservation Ontario Board of Directors

Angela Coleman

General Manager, Conservation Ontario



Conservation Authorities Act

Commitment to Positive Change

On February 16, 2024, Conservation Ontario (CO) and Conservation Authorities (CAs) learned of amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* (CA Act) and regulations, which came into effect on April 1, 2024. In response, CO and the CAs quickly adapted to meet new requirements to minimize service disruptions and maintain efficient service delivery. One change was the introduction of a new, single regulation to replace all previous CA “development, interference, and alterations” regulations.

With support from the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), CO developed and updated comprehensive guidance documents, including transition guidance, to assist with local implementation of the amended CA Act. These documents provided valuable resources and reference materials to ensure consistency as CAs updated their local development review policies and procedures. Additionally, CO delivered multiple training sessions to ensure staff were well-prepared to navigate changes.

Proactively, CO facilitated weekly meetings with CA general managers and senior staff to discuss implementation challenges, prioritize actions, and share new CO guidance. CO and the CAs also participated in a technical webinar hosted by MNR to deepen understanding of legislative and regulatory changes.

Collaboration Through Strong Partnerships

In 2024, Conservation Ontario (CO) and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) collaborated to share valuable information with Conservation Authorities (CAs) and municipal staff. On June 14, both organizations hosted the *Conservation Authorities and Municipalities Working Together* webinar, which focused on the vital role of CAs in land use planning and development, as well as opportunities for greater collaboration with municipalities. These key messages were further emphasized during the CO and AMO panel session, *Adapting to Changing Roles in Environmental Management*, at the 2024 AMO Conference.

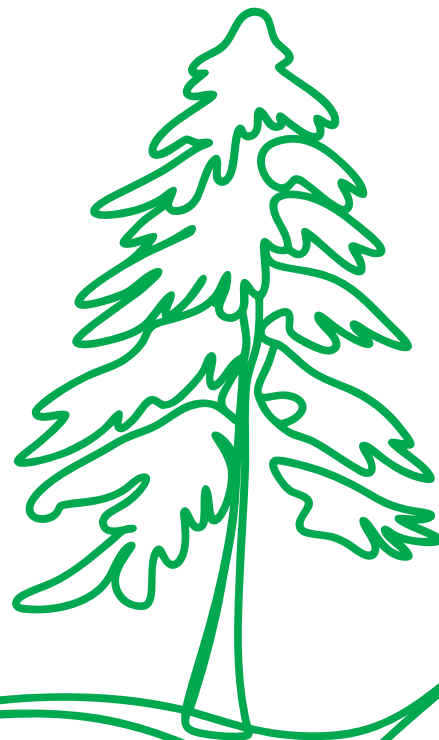
Governance, Accountability, and Transparency

Conservation Ontario (CO) and Conservation Authorities (CAs) continue to support the provincial government's commitment to governance, accountability, and transparency. In 2024, all 36 CAs adhered to the provisions of the *Conservation Authorities Act* concerning the chair and vice-chair roles, ensuring these positions are not held for more than two consecutive terms except further to a granted Minister's exception. All 36 CAs maintained updated governance webpages, supported by CO as needed, to provide access to governance materials in accordance with Ontario Regulation 400/22 (Information Requirements).

Successful Completion of Mandatory Deliverables

In 2024, Conservation Authorities (CAs) focused on meeting key provincial deliverables by the December 31, 2024, deadline. These included the Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy, Conservation Area Strategy, Conservation Land Inventory, and Natural Hazard Infrastructure Asset Management Plans. To support public consultation requirements for select deliverables, Conservation Ontario (CO) hosted a general managers and CA leads session in February 2024, where best practices and CA strategies for effective public engagement were shared.

By navigating regulatory changes and fostering collaboration, CO and CAs demonstrated an ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship, good governance, and continuous improvement in service delivery.



Provincial and Federal Consultations

Conserving Natural Resources and Protecting Public Health and Safety

Conservation Ontario (CO) plays a critical role coordinating Conservation Authority (CA) reviews of policy proposals and consultations, ensuring CA perspectives are shared for the development of provincial and federal policy and legislation.

In 2024, 15 CAs actively contributed to the creation of 11 CO submissions that addressed a broad range of policy proposals impacting mandatory CA programs and services. These submissions covered various areas, including provincial planning (e.g., the *Planning Act*, *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act*, *Environmental Assessment Act*, and the Provincial Planning Statement), flooding and emergency management (e.g., the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*), conservation areas (e.g., built environment standards under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*), and regulatory matters under the *Conservation Authorities Act* (e.g., Minister's Permit and Review powers).

In January 2024, CO submitted the annual report to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) detailing CO's Class Environmental Assessment for Remedial Flood and Erosion Control Projects. CO works closely with MECP to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Class Environmental Assessment process, ensuring that it remains responsive to the evolving needs of CAs and the communities they serve.





Client Service and Streamlining Initiative

Service Excellence: Improving customer service and streamlining to support safe and sustainable growth

Conservation Authorities (CAs) support safe and sustainable planning and development, ensuring that people, property, and infrastructure are protected from the impacts of natural hazards. Early 2024 amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act* (CA Act) and related regulations refined the role of CAs, emphasizing a more consistent regulatory approach. Conservation Ontario (CO) and CAs quickly adapted to these changes to maintain high levels of client service, identify opportunities to streamline local processes, and invest in tools to support more timely review and approvals.

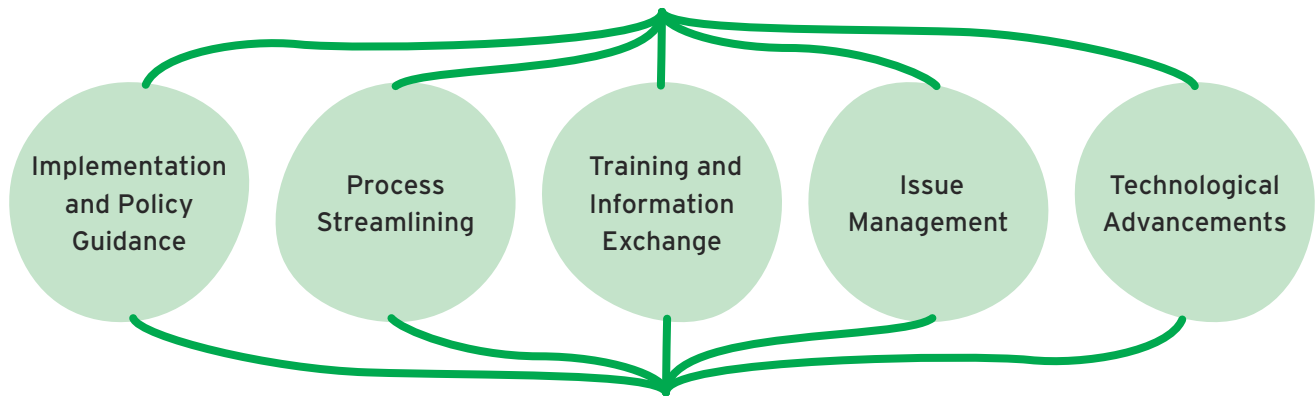
To promote consistent annual reporting for CA permit reviews, CO introduced a standardized template and framework to track review timelines. The established benchmarks set a standard of 30 days for minor permits and 90 days for major permits, ensuring comparable reporting across all CAs. In recent years, CAs made significant investments in new database software and other process improvements to continue providing exceptional development review services. This annual report includes data on permits received as of April 1, 2024, under the new legislative and regulatory framework.

Ontario's 36 CAs play key roles to protect growing housing and infrastructure from the potential impacts of natural hazards. CO facilitates excellence in CA development review programs through issue management, sharing of best practices, and ongoing guidance and training, while continuously identifying opportunities for process and policy improvements.

DID YOU KNOW?

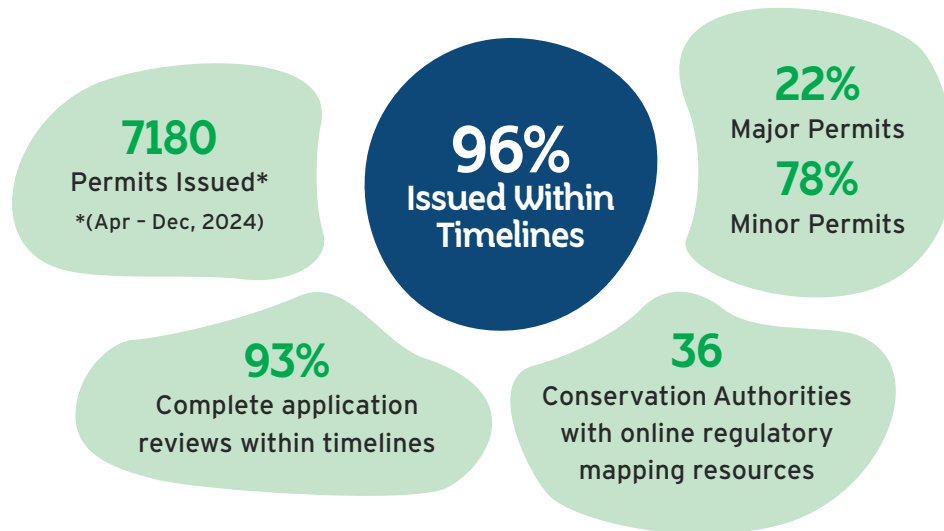
According to the Canadian Climate Institute's report, *Close to Home: How to Build More Housing in a Changing Climate*, Ontario's strong land use policies have reduced flood hazard risks to existing housing compared to other provinces. The report emphasizes the successful collaboration between Conservation Authorities, the province, and local governments in prohibiting development in high-flood risk areas, effectively minimizing flood risks to housing.

ELEMENTS OF SERVICE EXCELLENCE



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

April 1 - December 31, 2024



"The Conservation Authority Content Management System is innovating how we manage permitting processes. By centralizing timeline tracking, KPI monitoring, and plan review workflows, we're enabling Conservation Authorities to collaborate and operate more efficiently and effectively, ensuring better service delivery for our communities."

Rod Wilmot, Information Management and Technology Manager, Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority

"The adoption of the Conservation Authority Content Management System by eight Conservation Authorities is a testament to our impact on improving operational efficiency. This collaborative effort is streamlining permitting management and enhancing reporting, allowing Conservation Authorities to provide faster, more accurate service. The system is Conservation Halton's 'one-stop shop' for planning and permitting activities, providing us with valuable process insights for our board, partners, and staff."

Charles Priddle, Senior Manager, Regulations and Coastal Management Programs, Conservation Halton

Flooding

Reflecting on our legacy, focusing on our future

CLIMATE PROOF CANADA COALITION NATIONAL CLIMATE ADAPTATION SUMMIT

On October 22, 2024, Conservation Ontario (CO) staff, Conservation Authority (CA) leadership, and government and agency partners gathered to bring attention to the urgent need to advance disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation actions. Discussions focused on practical solutions to strengthen economic and climate resilience, including the development of resilient infrastructure and communities, as well as enhancing disaster resilience nationwide.

Angela Coleman, CO's general manager, moderated a panel discussion featuring Minister Steven Guilbeault (*Environment and Climate Change Canada*), Mayor Richard Ireland (*Jasper, Alberta*), Celyeste Power (*Insurance Bureau of Canada*), and Patricia Fuller (*International Institute for Sustainable Development*). Throughout the event, CO and CA staff shared valuable insights on collaborative efforts between CAs, all levels of government, and various partners. Together, these efforts are working to enhance watershed resilience, mitigate risks, and protect communities, properties, and infrastructure from natural hazards such as flooding.



Conservation Ontario and Conservation Authority representatives at the Climate Proof Canada National Climate Adaptation Summit in Ottawa.



Provincial Flood Forecasting and Warning Workshop (October 1-2)

Conservation Authority (CA) staff, along with provincial and national practitioners, gathered at the workshop to exchange best practices, explore new methodologies, and highlight technological innovations. The program marked the 70th anniversary of Hurricane Hazel, reflecting on seven decades of progress in flood forecasting and warning systems.

The workshop brought together over 170 professionals and featured presentations from a diverse range of experts, including staff from CAs, municipal, provincial, and federal governments. A key highlight was a presentation by Senior Climatologist David Phillips from Environment and Climate Change Canada, offering valuable insights into the evolving challenges and strategies in climate and disaster risk management.



DID YOU KNOW?

Following the National Climate Adaptation Summit, Climate Proof Canada issued key recommendations to build climate-resilient infrastructure and communities. The top recommendation emphasized the importance of avoiding new housing development in high-risk flood areas and ensuring public access to mapping that discloses these areas.

In Ontario, Conservation Authorities (CAs) are advancing this recommendation through their regulatory responsibilities, working to safeguard people, property, and infrastructure from the impacts of natural hazards. All 36 CAs maintain publicly accessible regulatory mapping that delineates natural hazard areas, supporting informed decision-making within the regulatory program and helping to protect communities from flood risks.

Provincial Flood Forecasting and Warning Workshop committee members, Jo-Anne Rzakki (Conservation Ontario) and Rhianydd Phillips (Toronto and Region Conservation Authority), alongside David Phillips (Environment and Climate Change Canada).

Great Lakes

Adapting to Coastal Hazards Across the Great Lakes

In 2024, Conservation Ontario's *Adapting to Coastal Hazards Across the Great Lakes Project* secured funding through Natural Resources Canada's Climate Resilient Coastal Communities Program. This funding supports three Conservation Authority-led pilot projects. The funding proposal was endorsed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, recognizing its alignment with the Ontario Flooding Strategy and the value of enhancing the capacity of Conservation Authorities (CAs) to manage coastal hazards and protect people, property, and infrastructure.

These four-year pilot projects will assist municipalities and local communities mitigate and adapt to the impacts of flooding, erosion and other coastal hazards to help prevent socio-economic and environmental losses that can impact communities in different ways. The projects will identify hazardous flood and erosion areas on the coast through technical studies, assessing the vulnerability and risk of private and public infrastructure, to develop regional coastal resilience plans. These action-based plans will equip municipalities and communities with needed tools developed through input from collaborators.

The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is partnering on this project to increase municipal awareness through the championing of Mayors. This strengthens Ontario's community buy-in to act and adapt.

Additionally, 2024 saw the formation of the Conservation Authorities Coastal Network, which brings together all CAs responsible for the Great Lakes coastline. This network fosters collaboration among staff from diverse program areas, including planning, regulations, engineering, restoration, stewardship, and watershed resource management. In November, 24 of the 26 coastal CAs participated in a workshop to share information, discuss challenges, exchange lessons learned, and explore shared services, such as the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority's in-house Content Management System for tracking permit timelines. The workshop aimed to support the development of best practices and enhance the overall capacity of the network.





"Since signing our Memorandum of Collaboration with Conservation Ontario in January 2024 to support our Mayors Commission on Coastal Resilience, we have had several positive collaborations. These include the current Adapting to Coastal Hazards project, additional funding proposals to enhance water quality and climate resilience in the Great Lakes, and Conservation Ontario's active participation in the Cities Initiative's Waterfront Transformation Working Group."

Phil Murphy-Rhéaume,
Chief Development Officer,
Great Lakes St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

"The South Lake Huron Pilot Project is a local collaboration to mitigate the impacts of coastal erosion where three-quarters of a billion dollars in public and private assets are assessed within known hazardous areas; an additional \$1.25 billion is estimated. Collaborating with the other pilot projects and sharing knowledge within the Conservation Authority Coastal Network reinforces the need for and importance of this work across the Great Lakes region."

Patrick Huber-Kidby,
Planning and Regulations Supervisor,
Flood and Erosion Safety Services,
Maitland Valley Conservation Authority





Conservation Authority Source Water Protection staff attend a project managers' meeting in Peterborough.

Drinking Water Source Protection



Protecting Our Drinking Water: A Commitment to our Present and Future

The Drinking Water Source Protection Program, established under the *Clean Water Act*, 2006, is designed to safeguard current and future sources of municipal drinking water on a watershed basis. Conservation Ontario (CO) provides coordination and support services to Conservation Authorities (CAs), enabling them to fulfill their legislative responsibilities and excel in program delivery through strong partnerships with the province, municipalities, and other collaborators.

The success of these programs relies on ongoing collaboration between CAs, provincial and municipal staff, elected officials, residents, and industry partners. By fostering and valuing these conversations, CO has empowered CAs to uphold and enhance robust protections for our drinking water sources.

Partnerships

- CO organizes quarterly meetings with CA project managers and the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to strengthen relationships and facilitate the exchange of information, ensuring the effective operation of the program.
- CO hosts monthly office hours to encourage the sharing of best practices among CA project managers.
- In collaboration with the province, CO has facilitated more in-person meetings to improve communication, including a two-day session in June and a one-day session in December.
- CO also organizes the Source Water Seminar Series for risk management officials, inspectors, and CA project managers, bringing together professionals from municipalities, consulting fields, and provincial and CA staff to exchange knowledge and expertise.



Conservation Authority and the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks staff discuss key topics to support the Drinking Water Source Protection program.

Creating Awareness

Conservation Ontario is actively raising awareness about the importance of protecting our drinking water sources through targeted social media campaigns. These messages are further amplified through partnerships, with collaborators sharing these campaigns to reach broader audiences and engage communities in the critical conversation around source water protection.

“Conservation impact means creating lasting change for our environment and communities. It’s about protecting natural resources today and ensuring they’re sustainable for our future. The Drinking Water Wise webinars highlight how critical clean drinking water is for our health and ecosystems through discussions with experts across Ontario. Conservation Authorities play a valuable role in educating communities to make informed choices and to protect our most valuable resources. By supporting Conservation Authorities and engaging with programs like these webinars, we empower communities to take action, safeguard drinking water sources, and build a healthier, more resilient future for generations to come.”

Natasha Mathieu,
Source Water Protection Technical Assistant, Quinte Conservation Authority and **Marika Livingston,** Project Manager, Mississippi-Rideau Source Protection Region

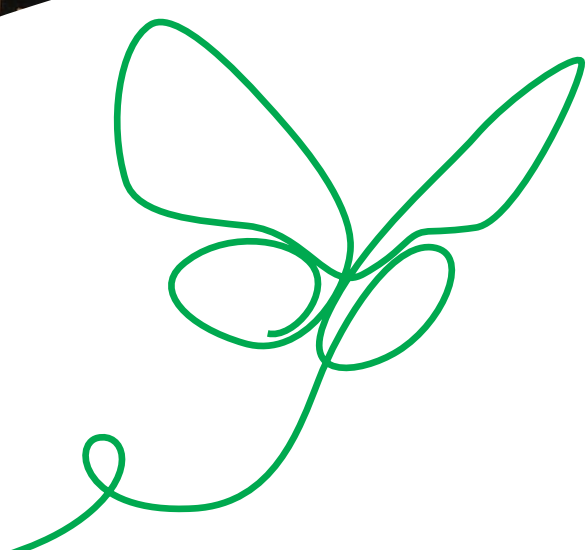
Partnerships

Protecting Nature: Canada's Ecological Gifts Program and its Lasting Legacy

In collaboration with Environment and Climate Change Canada, Conservation Ontario hosted three regional in-person workshops to provide training and education on the federal Ecological Gifts Program. Designed for property stewards and land managers from Ontario's Conservation Authorities and land trusts, these workshops aimed to maximize the program's benefits while clarifying compliance responsibilities.



Laura Kucey from Environment and Climate Change Canada shares insights on the federal Ecological Gifts Program at the Tiffin Centre for Conservation in Utopia.



Nature-Based Climate Solutions

Since 2021, Conservation Ontario (CO) and 26 Conservation Authorities (CAs) have partnered with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) through the Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund and the Canada Nature Fund to implement projects that protect and restore wetlands, grasslands, riparian areas, and other ecosystems aimed at reducing GHG emissions and sequestering carbon.

These efforts have resulted in leveraging \$35.2 million from municipal, local, regional, and watershed partners, alongside \$23.6 million in federal funding. As a result, over 2,400 hectares of environmentally sensitive land have been protected, and more than 22,500 hectares of critical habitat for at-risk species in Ontario have been restored.

These newly protected and restored areas contribute to Canada's goal of conserving 30 per cent of our land and water by 2030 and offer a range of co-benefits, including enhanced flood risk reduction, improved drinking water quality, and strengthened climate, economic, and watershed resilience for Ontario residents.

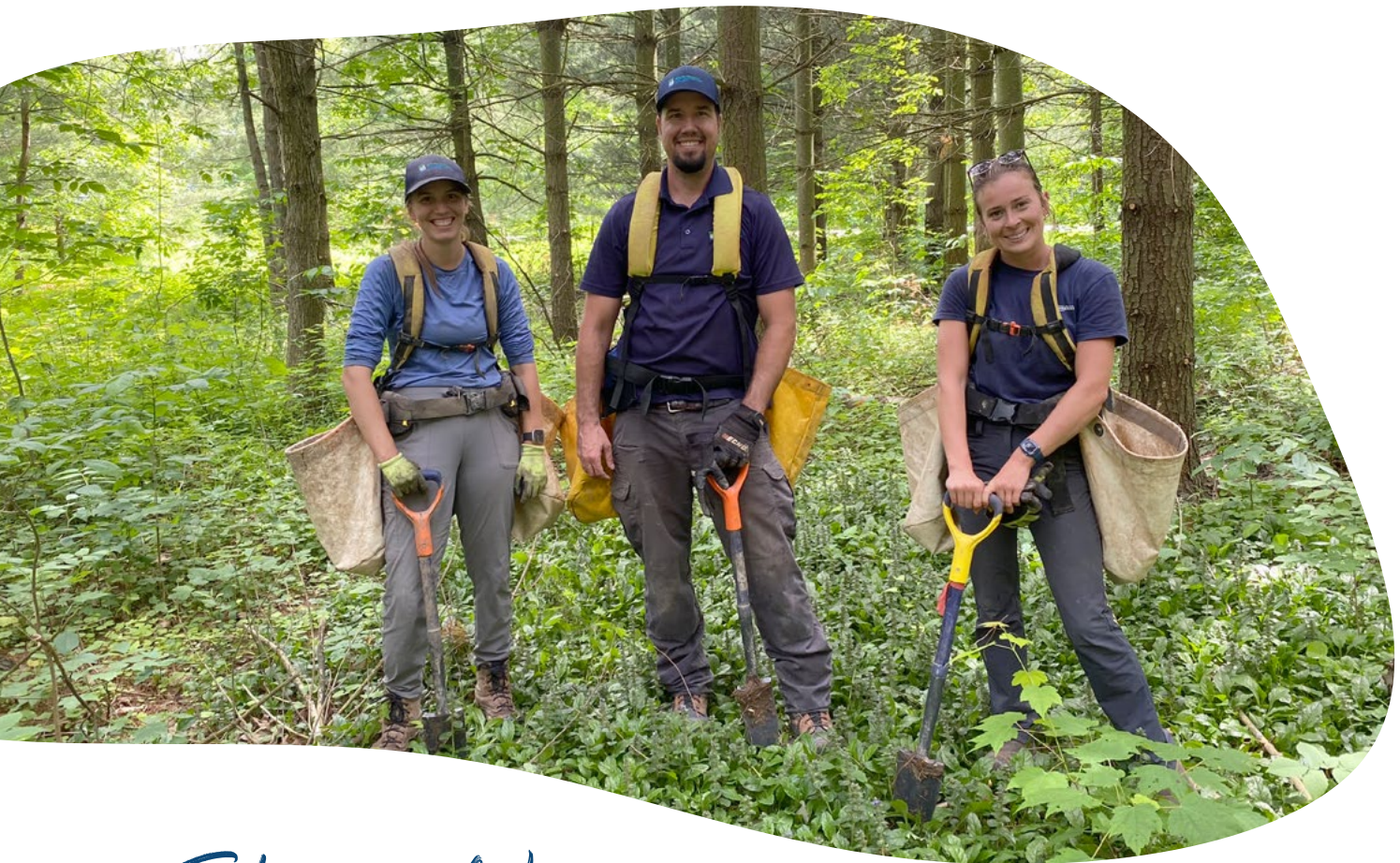
In 2024, CO celebrated these achievements at two events alongside ECCC and local representatives. Moving forward, CO staff will continue to cultivate and strengthen partnerships to advance nature-based climate solutions, supporting the capacity of CAs and their many watershed partners in delivering impactful, on-the-ground projects.



Canada Nature Fund announcement at Rogers Reservoir in Newmarket.



Nature Smart Climate Solutions, Ecosystem Protection and Climate Mitigation Fund announcement in Peterborough.



Stewardship

Supporting Natural Asset Management

A dedicated team of Conservation Ontario and Conservation Authority (CA) staff are leading discussions and initiatives focused on enhancing CA capacity in natural asset management. The team includes staff from the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, Conservation Halton, Credit Valley Conservation, Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority, and South Nation Conservation.

This working group is actively identifying and implementing actions to strengthen CA capacity in the following areas:

- 🌱 Integrating natural asset management into CA corporate asset management practices;
- 🌱 Supporting municipalities in complying with Ontario Regulation 588/17; and
- 🌱 Promoting a watershed-based approach to natural asset management to foster regional collaboration.



Conservation Authorities plant over 2,000,000 trees throughout Ontario with support from incredible partners

Conservation Authorities (CAs) are instrumental in Ontario's tree planting efforts, working collaboratively with a wide range of organizations and municipalities to plant trees across the province. With the support of key partners, CAs have planted over two million trees each year, contributing to the 20 million trees planted over the past decade.

These initiatives support various environmental goals, such as afforestation, reforestation, riparian and wetland plantings, windbreaks, and understory plantings. These efforts are crucial for enhancing species diversity, reducing soil erosion, and promoting the well-being of local communities.

The importance of collaboration is at the heart of these tree planting efforts. Conservation Ontario (CO) continues to strengthen partnerships with organizations such as Forests Canada, Tree Canada, Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS), Maple Leaves Forever, and the Ontario Woodlot Association. By working together, we address challenges and find innovative solutions to improve tree planting and forest management across the province. These partnerships are essential for tackling the complexities of large-scale reforestation and ensuring the success of Ontario's long-term environmental goals.

In 2024, a partnership between CO, Tree Canada, and 10 CAs planted over 103,000 trees and shrubs across 49 sites, spanning 70 hectares of both public and private land. The diverse plantings included 80 different species, such as Eastern Hemlock, White Cedar, Hackberry, and Tamarack. The collective effort will continue through 2025 and 2026.

Collaborative tree planting initiatives help restore ecosystems and contribute to the success of the federal government's 2 Billion Trees Program. This ambitious program aims to plant two billion trees by 2030, supporting Ontario's efforts to combat climate change, enhance biodiversity, and improve air and water quality. By working together with partners, CAs and collaborators are playing a crucial role in achieving this goal and ensuring a greener, more sustainable future for the province and their watersheds.



Bulk Purchase

Enhancing Efficiency and Savings through Partnerships

Conservation Ontario (CO) delivered significant cost savings and operational efficiencies for its members by facilitating bulk purchases and providing access to shared tools and services. Notably, CO advanced the third year of a three-year Enterprise Agreement with Esri Canada, ensuring Conservation Authorities (CAs) received discounted access to cutting-edge Geographic Information System technologies, comprehensive training, and valuable services.

In addition, the organization maintained bulk purchasing arrangements with key partners, including Teranet for single sign-on access to the Geowarehouse, OnBoard for meeting and board management software, and KnowBe4 for discounted cyber risk management solutions tailored to CAs. Further bulk purchase agreements were also established for group benefits, insurance, and communication tools, reinforcing Conservation Ontario's commitment to optimizing resources and enhancing the operational capacity of its members.

"Since 2011, Lakehead Region Conservation Authority has participated in the CAMaps program through Conservation Ontario. This collaborative service provides us with access to advanced web mapping technology at a significantly reduced cost compared to self-hosting. It allows us to securely offer information services to our municipal members and the public via a web browser."

Tammy Cook, Chief Administrative Officer,
Lakehead Region Conservation Authority

"Conservation Ontario manages a multi-year Enterprise GIS software maintenance program in collaboration with Esri Canada. Through this bulk purchasing initiative, Credit Valley Conservation, along with the other 35 Conservation Authorities, gains access to the latest GIS technology, ongoing support, and training—resulting in significant cost savings."

Kamal Paudel, Manager,
Information Management,
Credit Valley Conservation

Information Management

Flood Hazard Identification and Mapping Program Enhancing the Flood Mapping Metadata Application

Conservation Ontario has successfully digitized floodplain mapping metadata records collected from Conservation Authorities (CAs) and consolidated them into a new online application. This platform enables CA staff to easily edit and update the status of their flood mapping as new flood studies are completed. Additionally, a public-facing application was developed, allowing authorized CA staff to manage the visibility of flood study records for public access.

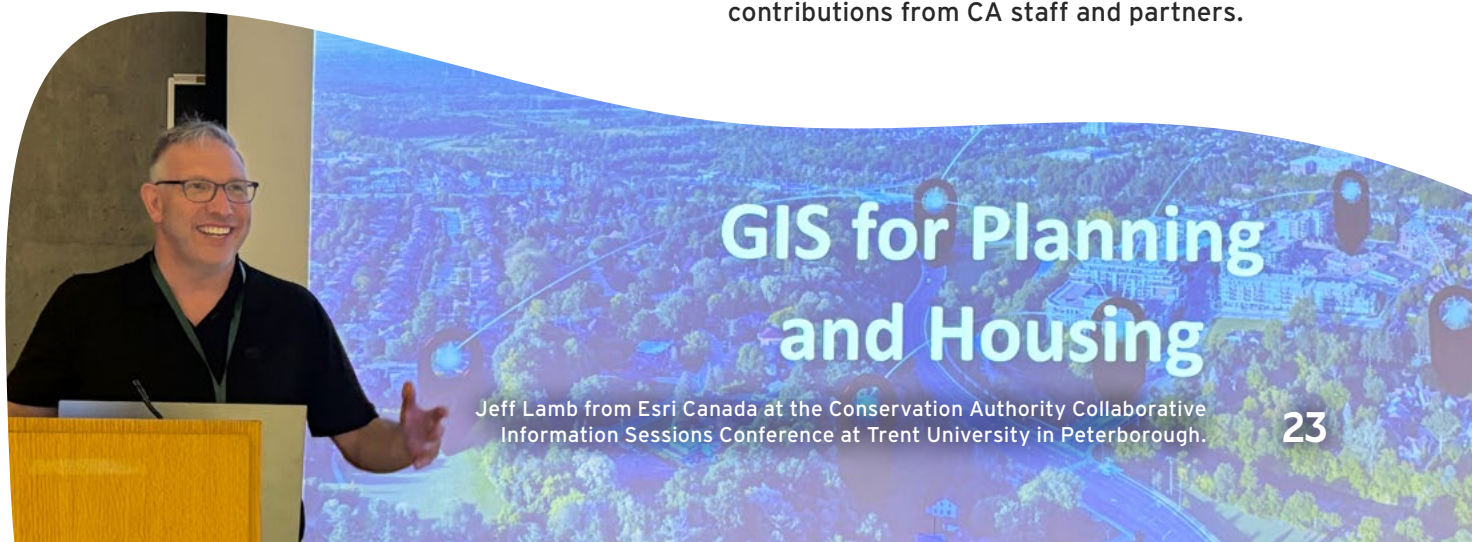
The project also included the creation of a comprehensive user guide and over 75 CA staff participated in training that equipped them with the skills to effectively use the new system. As a result, more than 175 individual flood studies have been added to the database, enhancing the visibility of floodplain mapping across Ontario.

Conservation Authority Collaborative Information Sessions Conference (June 18-19)

The 16th annual Conservation Authority Collaborative Information Sessions (CACIS) Conference was hosted at Trent University.

Over 90 participants attended the two-day event, which featured two concurrent streams and more than 30 presentations from a range of speakers and organizations, including Conservation Authorities (CAs), Conservation Ontario, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness, Natural Resources Canada, vendors and sponsors, and partner organizations.

The conference kicked off with a welcome address by Angela Coleman, general manager of Conservation Ontario, and a keynote presentation by Chris North, senior strategist and GIS advocate with 43 North GIS Consulting Inc. The conference showcased a variety of innovative topics, including digital transformation, flood mapping advancements, cyber risk management, AI feature extraction, and data asset management, with valuable contributions from CA staff and partners.



Jeff Lamb from Esri Canada at the Conservation Authority Collaborative Information Sessions Conference at Trent University in Peterborough.



LATURNELL
CONSERVATION SYMPOSIUM



UNIVERSITY
of GUELPH

The Women Leaders in Conservation panel featured Alison Howson (*Executive Director, Ontario Land Trust Alliance*), Jessica Kaknevičius (*CEO, Forests Canada*), Marie-Paule Godin (*Manager of Provincial Operations - Ontario, Ducks Unlimited Canada*), and Chandra Sharma (*President and CEO, Conservation Halton*), with Angela Coleman (*General Manager, Conservation Ontario*) moderating.

Events

Laturnell Conservation Symposium (October 8-9)

The 2024 Laturnell Conservation Symposium was a highly engaging and impactful event that brought together over 500 delegates. Hosted by Conservation Ontario and the University of Guelph, the symposium offered a rich program of thought-provoking sessions, inspiring speakers, and valuable networking opportunities, energizing the conservation community.

The theme, *Collaboration: The Future of Conservation is Collaborative*, was brought to life through an impressive lineup of sessions. Highlights included an impactful Indigenous opening by Gimaa Stacey Laforme and a keynote address by Julius Lindsay, director of sustainable communities at the David Suzuki Foundation. The symposium hosted its first-ever Women Leaders in Conservation panel, moderated by Angela Coleman, general manager of Conservation Ontario.

Delegates had the opportunity to participate in three focused streams—People, Land, and Water—along with interactive workshops and a student poster competition that highlighted fresh ideas and innovation. The symposium was a resounding success, generating excitement and momentum for the future of conservation in Ontario.



The opening ceremony was led by Gimaa Stacey Laforme of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.



The keynote address was delivered by Julius Lindsay, director of sustainable communities at the David Suzuki Foundation.



Step Into Nature at the Outdoor Adventure Show (February 23-25)

As a first-time exhibitor at the Outdoor Adventure Show, Conservation Ontario (CO) had the opportunity to connect with thousands of outdoor enthusiasts from across Ontario, including campers, hikers, canoeists, and cyclists. Over the course of the three-day event, staff engaged with hundreds of visitors, offering valuable insights into the wide range of activities, attractions, and amenities available at Ontario's more than 300 Conservation Areas.

With enthusiasm and expertise, the team showcased these natural treasures through the Conservation Areas website and printed guide, helping attendees discover new ways to connect with nature in their local watersheds.



Conservation Ontario's exhibit booth at the 2024 Outdoor Adventure Show.

Healthy Hikes and Mood Walks

PROMOTING MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH THROUGH PARTNERSHIP WITH CMHA-ONTARIO

The Step Into Nature Healthy Hikes campaign encouraged Ontarians to explore Conservation Areas and experience the physical and mental health benefits of nature.

The "Nature Everywhere" theme was introduced during Mental Health Week, with Conservation Ontario sharing nature-focused graphics that highlighted how spending time in nature can reduce stress, improve mood, enhance cognitive function, increase physical activity, and foster connection and mindfulness.

Conservation Ontario participated in the relaunch of Mood Walks.

Mood Walks is led by the Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario, in collaboration with Hike Ontario and Conservation Ontario. The program is designed to encourage and support the mental and physical health of participants by exposing them to the healing effects of nature, being physically active, and engaging with community.



Step Into Nature App

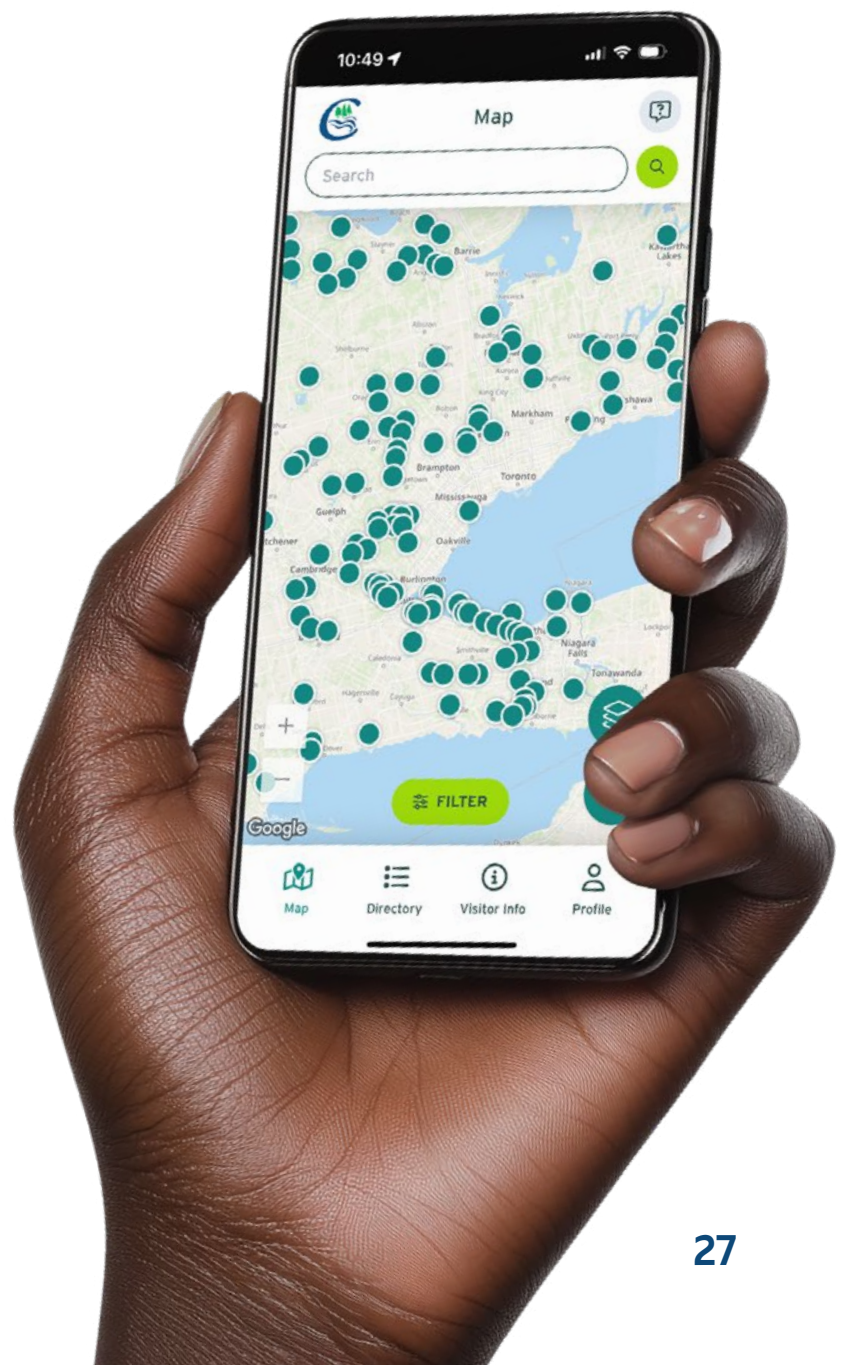
NEW STEP INTO NATURE APP LAUNCHED ON IOS AND ANDROID

Conservation Ontario (CO) has always been passionate about connecting people with nature, and its social media presence is key in reaching new audiences. Through engaging posts, stunning imagery, and informative content, CO has built a vibrant online community of outdoor enthusiasts, nature lovers, and environmental advocates. CO's social media platforms offer tips on conservation, highlights of Ontario's 300+ Conservation Areas, and stories that inspire others to explore and protect the environment.

CO took a bold step forward in enhancing its digital engagement with the launch of the Step Into Nature App. Designed to help users discover and explore Ontario's Conservation Areas, the app also provides interactive maps and recommendations based on interests and location. This innovation allows outdoor adventurers to access detailed information right at their fingertips, making it easier to plan visits and discover hidden gems across the province.

The app's launch was met with excitement across CO's social media channels during a two-month campaign. With the Step Into Nature App, CO is making it easier for people to immerse themselves in nature, fostering a deeper connection with the outdoors at Conservation Areas in their watershed and beyond.

Download the Step Into Nature App on iOS and Android today!



Education and Training

2024 WORKSHOPS

DWSP Project Managers Meeting

📅 January 29
🌱 21 CA staff; 19 CAs represented

RMO/RMI Source Water Seminar Series

📅 February 13
🌱 32 CA staff; 21 CAs represented

Conservation Authorities Act 101 & Associated Regulations

📅 February 21
🌱 12 CA staff; 12 CAs represented

Flood Mapping Metadata Application Training Workshop

📅 February 23, 27-29
🌱 49 CA staff; 36 CAs represented

Co-Developing Private Water Well Best Management Practice Awareness and Education Materials

📅 March 4
🌱 20 CA staff; 17 CAs represented

Ontario Ombudsman GM session

📅 March 18
🌱 44 CA staff; 29 CAs represented

Level 1 Provincial Offences Officer Training

📅 April 2-15
🌱 25 CA staff; 16 CAs represented

CAU: Module 3 - Public Administration II

📅 April 16-17
🌱 36 CA staff; 25 CAs represented

Canada Water Resources Association - Flooding Workshop: Knowledge Transfer, Innovation, Collaboration and Communication

📅 April 24-25
🌱 62 CA staff; 21 CAs represented

CA Planning Leads Meeting - Proposed PPS & Bill 185

📅 April 26
🌱 70 CA staff; 35 CAs represented

WECI Application Information Session

📅 May 17
🌱 47 CA staff; 32 CAs represented

Conservation Authority staff participated in the Planning and Regulations Pre-Latornell Conservation Symposium Workshop.





DWSP Project Managers Meeting

📅 June 3-4

🌱 21 CA staff; 18 CAs represented

CAU: Module 4 - Conservation Authority Business Areas

📅 June 20-21

🌱 36 CA staff; 25 CAs represented

DWSP Project Managers Meeting

📅 September 25

🌱 21 CA staff; 19 CAs represented

Provincial Flood Forecasting and Warning Workshop

📅 October 1-2

🌱 108 CA staff; 34 CAs represented

Planning and Regulations Pre-Latornell Workshop

📅 October 7

🌱 90 CA staff; 31 CAs represented

Natural Asset Management Workshop - Collaborating to support CA and partners' knowledge and capacity

📅 October 8

🌱 23 CA staff; 17 CAs represented

RMO/RMI Source Water Seminar Series

📅 October 29

🌱 37 CA staff; 20 CAs represented

Ecological Gifts Program Workshops

📅 November 5, 21; December 5

🌱 55 attendees; 17 CAs represented

Conservation Authorities Annual Communications Meeting

📅 November 14

🌱 50 CA staff; 28 CAs represented

Coastal Conservation Authorities Network Workshop

📅 November 18

🌱 60 CA staff; 24 Coastal CAs represented

DWSP Project Managers Meeting

📅 December 4

🌱 18 CA staff; 16 CAs represented



Attendees at the general managers' retreat in King City.

2024 WEBINARS

CA Communications Meetings

📅 February 1, March 6, April 3, May 1, June 5, September 11, December 4

🌿 60 CA staff; 36 CAs represented

Legislative Changes and Next Steps (Reg 41/24)

📅 February 20

🌿 131 CA staff; 35 CAs represented

GM and CA Leads Meeting: Public Consultation for the 2024 Mandatory Deliverables

📅 February 26

🌿 170 CA staff; 36 CAs represented

CA Briefing Webinar on Recent Changes to the CO Class Environmental Assessment

📅 June 6

🌿 59 CA staff; 28 CAs represented

Conservation Authorities and Municipalities Working Together (CO-AMO Webinar)

📅 June 14

🌿 200+ CA staff

Proposed Administrative Review Guidance

📅 August 27

🌿 88 CA staff; 35 CAs represented

Tree Canada - Conservation Ontario Partnership

📅 November 6

🌿 44 CA staff; 22 CAs represented

Standard Operating Procedures and Stop Orders

📅 December 3

🌿 125 CA staff; 36 CAs represented

Annual Permit Timelines Reporting (CO Guidance and Template)

📅 December 10

🌿 116 CA staff; 36 CAs represented







📍 Laurier Woods
(North Bay-Mattawa CA)

What We Do

Conservation Ontario represents Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities (CAs) on issues of common interest to positively influence policy decisions that affect the environment.

CAs are community-based watershed management agencies that implement programs focused on watershed management to safeguard people and property from flooding and other natural hazards. Additionally, they work towards conserving natural resources to promote economic, social, and environmental benefits. CAs operate under the legislative framework of the *Conservation Authorities Act*, 1946.

Conservation Ontario's Business Functions

- 🌿 Policy and Program Development
- 🌿 Government Relations
- 🌿 Business Development and Partnerships
- 🌿 Education and Training
- 🌿 Communications
- 🌿 Corporate Services
- 🌿 Information Management and Research





How We Work

Reunion of past Conservation Authority general managers and chief administrative officers at Conservation Halton.

Vision

Conservation Ontario will engage Conservation Authorities in matters of common interest and to shape effective policies relating to Conservation Authorities.

Mission

To promote and continually strengthen a watershed-based conservation coalition in Ontario.

"As stewards of Ontario's land and water, we recognize that the impact of our conservation efforts extends far beyond the preservation of our landscapes. It shapes the resilience of our ecosystems, the well-being of our communities, and the future of our province. Conservation is not just a responsibility but an investment in the health of the environment, the economy, and future generations. Conservation Ontario and Conservation Authorities have made significant progress in ensuring our efforts leave a lasting, positive impact for all Ontarians."

Chris White

Chair, Conservation Ontario Board of Directors

Board of Directors

Chair, Chris White
Grand River
Conservation Authority

Vice Chair, Jonathan Scott
Nottawasaga Valley
Conservation Authority

Vice Chair, Pat Warren
Kawartha Conservation

Director, Rob Baldwin
Lake Simcoe Region
Conservation Authority

Director, Brad McNevin
Quinte Conservation

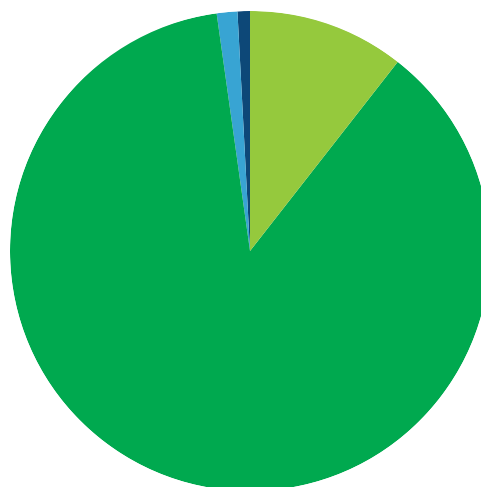
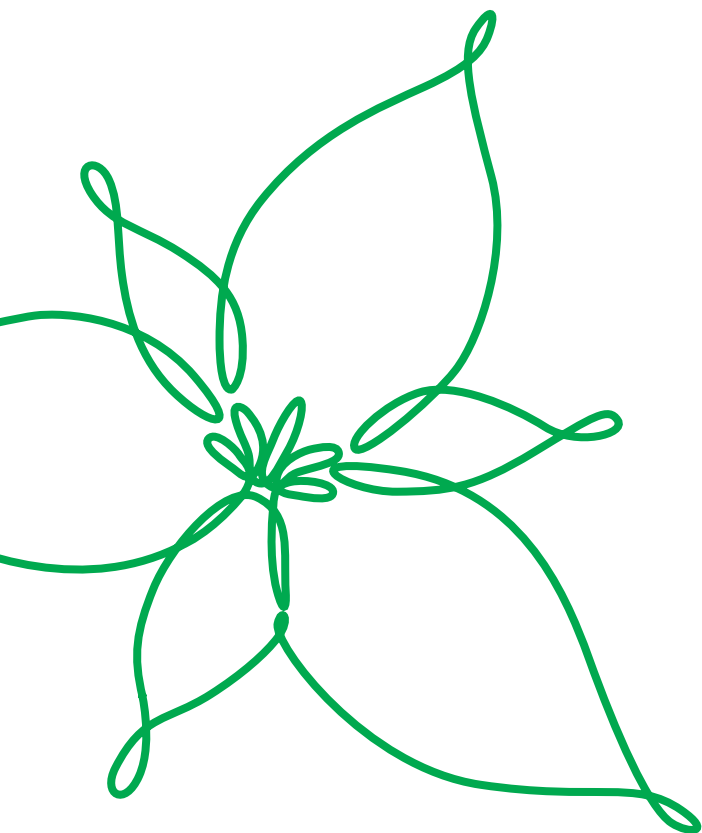
Director, Chandra Sharma
Conservation Halton

Financials

Conservation Ontario 2024 Financial Summary

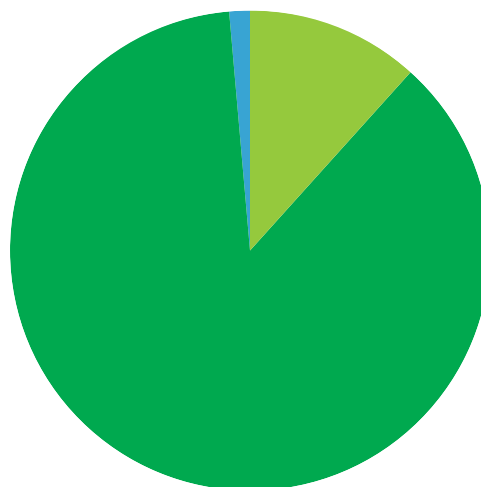
In 2024, Conservation Ontario generated total revenues of \$13,437,044, with income derived from membership fees and special projects funded by federal and provincial governments, and non-governmental agencies.

After a comprehensive review of all expenses, Conservation Ontario achieved a revenue surplus of \$165,399, reflecting prudent financial management and a commitment to operational efficiency.



REVENUES

Membership Fees	\$1,420,000
Special Projects	\$11,742,439
Source Water Protection	\$179,385
Other	\$95,220



EXPENDITURES

Operations	\$1,536,714
Special Projects	\$11,555,606
Source Water Protection	\$179,325

Surplus of revenue over expenditures \$165,399





Conservation ONTARIO

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📘 Ontario's Conservation Areas / Conservation Ontario
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