

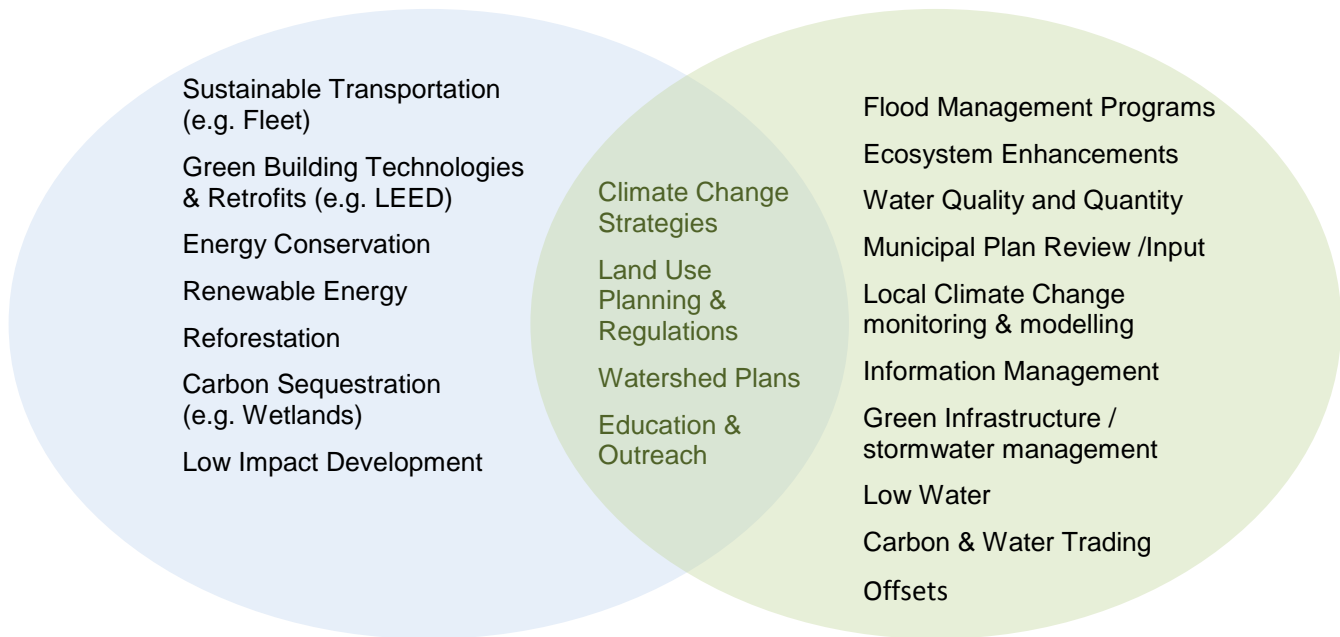


Ontario's Conservation Authorities Addressing Climate Change Impacts in Ontario Background Information

Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities are local natural resource management agencies which are on the watershed frontlines, reducing greenhouse gases and helping Ontario communities to adapt to local climate change impacts. Conservation Authorities feel that mitigation and adaptation are critical, complementary initiatives which should be pursued together in order to work towards implementing a greener, low carbon economy supported by sustainable nature capital.

Mitigation

Adaptation



Role of Conservation Authorities

Mitigation: Conservation Authorities contribute to greenhouse gas mitigation through their operations through increasing use of sustainable transportation within their fleet operations, identifying and applying energy conservation technologies and practices, and incorporating or implementing renewable energy systems (e.g. water power). Where possible, green building technologies, low impact development, and retrofits are also being implemented or promoted.

Additional Conservation Authority program areas that mitigate greenhouse gases include reforestation, carbon sequestration (e.g. wetlands), low impact development, and the use of offsets (reforestation, habitat enhancement, carbon sequestration).

Adaptation: Conservation Authority watershed management programs address the impacts of climate change as well as protect the ecosystem benefits we regularly rely on such as for drinking water, food, and support for manufacturing and other industries.

Conservation Authorities monitor, track, and report on local conditions in Ontario’s watersheds which can be used for climate change modelling and monitoring.

Watershed programs build local natural resource resiliency by protecting and improving water quality, ensuring sustainable water supplies, restoring and protecting biodiversity, and addressing low water issues.

Conservation Authorities also protect people and property from increased flooding and other natural hazards, as well as work with agencies, businesses and residents to implement a wide variety of green infrastructure and stormwater management strategies and practices.

Conservation Authorities Support Development of Ontario’s Low Carbon, Green Economy

Conservation Authorities are transitioning to a greener economy by supporting more renewable sources of energy, practicing water conservation, reducing emissions, planning & implementing climate change adaptation and building increased resiliency in watersheds through watershed programs.

This approach slows down our consumption of resources, reduces our waste and emissions, and is more cost efficient. In this way, we can adapt to continually unpredictable conditions and live within the means of natural world.

Opportunities for Moving Forward

Conservation Authorities are ready to work with the Province and others to develop and implement solutions to address climate change issues through both mitigation and adaptation.

<p>Mitigation & Market-Based Instruments Further development of renewable energy options; Carbon Sequestration – enhanced afforestation and support for protection of natural heritage systems (e.g. wetlands act as carbon sinks); support for creation of additional carbon sequestration opportunities Carbon Offsetting – Conservation Authorities could provide forest carbon offsets through afforestation and reforestation projects on Conservation Authority lands</p>
<p>Adaptation – support for enhanced stormwater management, green infrastructure, monitoring, flood management,</p>
<p>Integration of Provincial Priorities – enhanced implementation support to address climate change through the Provincial Policy Statement; amendments to provincial plans (e.g. Greenbelt Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, Niagara Escarpment Plan, Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan); enhancements to the Local Food Act</p>
<p>Agriculture – enhanced efforts to support agricultural best management practices to reduce emissions (e.g. biofuel, manure management)</p>
<p>Research and Science – assist communities to build local resilience, invest in development & implementation of climate change strategies, flood risk assessment, modelling and management, low impact development, assisted migration of plant species (e.g. forest) and rural stormwater management</p>