

Fact Sheet

Conservation Authorities Contribute Significantly to Healthy Great Lakes

Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities are community-based, watershed management agencies that deliver services and programs in their watersheds to protect, manage and conserve water and other natural resources in partnership with governments, landowners and other organizations.

- Of the 36 Conservation Authorities, 35 drain into the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basins (one drains into Hudson Bay) and 26 of these Conservation Authorities include Great Lakes and/or St. Lawrence River Shoreline as part of their jurisdiction.
- 90% of Ontario's population lives within a Conservation Authority watershed
- Conservation Authorities:
 - Provide watershed management support and advice; local scientific information and expertise for the development of policies, strategies and programs
 - Serve as an operational, local watershed-based delivery agents with a history of broad stakeholder engagement, monitoring, and research partnerships

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin is a significant freshwater resource on a national and global scale. We rely on this important resource as a drinking water source for 80% of Ontarians, and for economic, agricultural, health and recreational uses.

Watershed Management Programs Build Resiliency to Address Climate Change Impacts

Conservation Authorities implement a number of targeted activities for improved biodiversity and resiliency in both watersheds and nearshore areas of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River

Activity / Program Examples	Impact
Rural and Urban Stormwater Management (Green Infrastructure, Low Impact Development)	Reduces impacts of runoff on watercourses and lakes
Agricultural Best Management Practices	Reduces phosphorus and other runoff, improves water quality, protects water quantity
Monitoring (Provincial Ground Water Monitoring Network, Provincial Surface Water Quality Monitoring Network, etc.)	Tracks local conditions and identifies water quality and other issues

Watershed Stewardship - Habitat Enhancement and restoration projects	Promotes greater biodiversity, improved water quality, protects wetlands and promotes shoreline naturalization
Source Protection	Promotes water budgets, improves water quality, drinking water risk management
Watershed Planning	Balances needs of environment, economy and people, promotes sustainability, helps us to adapt to climate change, supports healthy agriculture
Development and Regulations	Maintains important ecosystem functions and features, protects species at risk

Ontario's 36 Conservation Authority Watersheds



Learn About the Great Lakes by using a new Interactive Online Tool <http://www.conservationontario.ca/what-we-do/great-lakes/learn-about-the-great-lakes>