

# PROTECTING WATER FOR ONTARIO



Conservation  
**ONTARIO**  
*Natural Champions*

*"...a comprehensive approach for managing all aspects of watersheds is needed and should be adopted by the province. Source protection plans should a subset of the broader watershed management plans."*

Justice Dennis O'Connor,  
Commissioner of the Walkerton  
Inquiry 2002

Safe and plentiful water resources are critical to all aspects of our lives. As a result of Ontario's growing demand for water, watershed managers face increasing challenges in maintaining a balance between human, economic and environmental interests.

SOURCE WATER  
**PROTECTION**



## Key to Healthy Watersheds – Integrated Watershed Management

Rather than focusing piecemeal on individual problems, an integrated watershed approach takes a holistic view, acknowledging the impact that human activities can have on the quality and supply of our drinking water.

Conservation Authorities currently deliver a variety of watershed management programs to improve water quality, reduce flood and erosion damages, provide an adequate water supply, protect natural areas and biodiversity, and provide environmental education to watershed residents. Because they are structured on a watershed basis, Conservation Authorities are able to co-ordinate and streamline local delivery of water management and source protection activities.

Conservation Authorities work with all levels of government, landowners and other stakeholders to find effective solutions that minimize negative environmental impacts.

## Role of Stewardship in Protecting Water

Experience has shown that regulations are not suited to all situations when protecting the quality or quantity of water resources. Conservation Authorities also use education and incentive-based watershed stewardship programs as an effective means of working with landowners, community groups and municipalities to protect water.

### Types of watershed stewardship programs and services offered by Conservation Authorities include:

- Beneficial Management Practices
- Reforestation, Tree & Shrub Planting
- Rehabilitation, Restoration and Enhancement projects
- Woodlot Management

Under these programs, Conservation Authorities may offer expert technical advice, design services and financial incentives to landowners.

## Protecting Ontario's Drinking Water Requires Long Term, Innovative Funding

Local agencies and landowners in many regions of the province have little capacity to take on additional responsibility without access to resources for source water protection implementation.

Many landowners simply do not have the resources to participate in watershed stewardship programs. In addition, landowners may be reluctant to voluntarily financially participate in programs where the benefits may take several years to realize or they occur elsewhere in the downstream area. Compensation is needed for landowners to either provide land, materials or labour for conservation work, or for time lost in production.

**What we do on our land is reflected in the supply and quality of drinking water sources available to us.**



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*Conservation Ontario is a non-governmental organization that represents the common interests of Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities.*

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