



Mr. Matthew King,  
Deputy Minister  
Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)  
Deputy Minister's Office  
200 Kent Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E6

**Via Fax: 613-993-2194 (Please treat as original)**

May 15, 2013

**Re: Conservation Authority Engagement to Support Conservation of Fish Habitat**

Dear Mr. King,

As you are aware, Conservation Authorities (CAs) have had a long standing "partnership agreement" in place with DFO whereby projects or activities impacting fish and/or fish habitat have been "screened" by the CAs as a part of their administration of regulations under the *Conservation Authorities Act*. As watershed managers, CAs are involved also in a variety of fisheries management activities including habitat restoration, monitoring, and fisheries management plan development. As a result of their involvement in these activities, CA staff have valuable knowledge that should be leveraged in the development of future policies and programs to conserve fish habitat.

As part of the 2013 Economic Action Plan, the federal government recently proposed to provide 10 million dollars over two years to support partnerships with local groups to implement a variety of projects that would improve the conservation of fisheries habitat. CAs have developed local watershed and fisheries management plans for the watersheds in their jurisdiction that identify areas that need priority attention. In many areas they are already conducting projects that could be leveraged by DFO to allow for efficient program delivery. In 2011, CAs worked with 503 private landowners to implement 602 fish and wildlife habitat restoration projects. These projects included 357 hectares and 111 km of streams being restored or rehabilitated, as well as the planting of 3 million trees with over 1600 landowners on 2200 hectares of land. Landowners received \$9.5 million in grants for implementation of these projects.

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Conservation Ontario (CO) represents the network of Ontario's 36 CAs and is requesting representation in program design and in the selection process for allocating funds to support conservation of fish habitat. At a minimum, eligible Ontario projects should be identified in a fisheries management plan and/or watershed plan. This would ensure that funds would be used in the most effective way possible to fund projects that benefit a particular fishery. Please contact me at the number below if you require any clarification or further information regarding this request.

Sincerely,



Kim Gavine  
General Manager

cc. Dale Nicholson, Regional Director, Ecosystems Management Central and Arctic Region  
CAOs, All Conservation Authorities