



Conservation  
**ONTARIO**  
*Natural Champions*

# Conservation Ontario 2006 Annual Report

Leading the Way to Healthy Watersheds

[www.conservation-ontario.on.ca](http://www.conservation-ontario.on.ca)  
The network of Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities

# Chair/General Manager's Message

## Conservation Ontario Goal

By 2010, Conservation Ontario will be Ontario's recognized leader in watershed management, working collaboratively with other partners to ensure healthy watersheds and healthy, sustainable communities.

## Conservation Ontario Core Purpose

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



Dick Hibma  
Chair

In 2006, Conservation Ontario completed its Strategic Plan, an important tool for keeping Conservation Authorities focused over the next several years in achieving our goal of being Ontario's recognized leader in watershed management, working collaboratively with other partners to ensure healthy watersheds and healthy, sustainable communities.

Conservation Authorities are on track toward fulfilling this goal, evidenced by recent outside survey results showing they are recognized, responsive and trusted resources for local landowners, who turn to us first for information on conservation services.

Conservation Authorities have prospered over the past few years and this is due to the strength of our visionary

model for integrated watershed management that has been a reality in Ontario for six decades.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank three Conservation Authorities for co-hosting a very enjoyable and educational 2006 Biennial Tour, titled Destination: Conservation – Stewardship, Science and Community Partnerships. The tour provided fellow Conservation Authority staff and members, as well as key partners, the opportunity to visit a number of unique sites in the watersheds of Ganaraska, Otonabee and Kawartha Conservation Authorities. This tour has a long and successful history with Conservation Authorities and we look forward to its continuation among Conservation Authorities for many more years.



Don Pearson  
General  
Manager

Conservation Ontario continued throughout 2006 to build on the momentum which has been developing over the past several years. In October of 2006, the *Clean Water Act* was finally passed, the culmination of years of effort by numerous organizations, agencies and individuals. Although not without its detractors, the *Act* will require that society take a longer term view of the management of this fundamental necessity of life. It is remarkable that there remains a point of view that our precious supply of potable water can somehow be maintained with a *laissez-faire* attitude from the past. Given the emerging reality of global warming, the stresses on our water and other natural resources will be profound and will require constant effort and ingenuity to be overcome. Conservation Authorities will play an increasingly important role in ensuring that all watershed management concerns are integrated in both planning and delivery.

An important initiative in watershed management has been the development of new tools for watershed reporting among Conservation Authorities. This is significant in meeting our needs for increased transparency

and accountability. Public dollars have many competing demands and it will become even more critical to demonstrate value for their expenditure. A number of Conservation Authorities produced their first watershed report cards in 2006, establishing a baseline of their watershed conditions while presenting the results in a form that will inform and engage their public and provide a call to action. More are working towards this goal in the next year or so.

As we look toward 2007, all of our efforts will have to consider the implications of global warming and climate change. Through our water conservation and effective land management programs, Conservation Authorities can play a role in helping watershed communities to adapt to climate change. By focusing on the health of our natural heritage systems, we can help to mitigate climate change while increasing the resilience of these systems and their ability to withstand increasing weather extremes.

Conservation Ontario looks forward to meeting the challenges and working with our many partners to ensure that the three pillars of sustainability — environment, economy and society are maintained in harmonious balance, not just for our benefit but for sake of the planet itself.

# Priorities

## Protecting Ontario's Municipal Water Sources — Clean Water Source Protection

Conservation Ontario continued to assist Conservation Authorities to coordinate the development of source water protection for municipal sources of drinking water under the *Clean Water Act* in partnership with the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Natural Resources.

### **Clean Water Act**

The *Clean Water Act* passed third and final reading on October 19, 2006. Conservation Ontario worked with Conservation Authorities to provide input to the development of the *Clean Water Act* and regulations throughout 2006 including:

- **Source Protection Committees:** In the spring of 2006, Conservation Ontario developed a discussion paper around the roles and responsibilities of the committees as well as recommendations on committee member selection. In December MOE released a White Paper on Source Protection Committees which formed the basis of regulations under the *Clean Water Act*;
- **Provincial Standing Committee on Social Policy hearings:** Conservation Ontario and a number of Conservation Authorities made presentations to the various hearings held across the province in August;
- **Drinking Water Stewardship Fund:** In September 2006, the Province announced the establishment of the Drinking Water Stewardship Fund under the *Clean Water Act*. Funding of \$7 million was allocated for the 2007-08 fiscal year. Conservation Ontario provided two members to a provincial advisory committee established to provide advice on the long term operations of this fund. This recognized that funding for stewardship initiatives is a critical part of protecting sources of water.

### **Provincial Funding Provided**

- Conservation Ontario negotiated the third Memorandum of Agreement with the Province to provide funding to Conservation Authorities for Source Protection Planning under the *Clean Water Act*. The third MOA has a two year term and provided \$16.28 million in funding to Conservation Authorities in year one.

### **Technical Expertise Developed**

Conservation Authorities continued to provide technical support to the Province's source protection planning initiative underway in Ontario.

- Funding was provided by the Province for *municipal technical studies* around municipal wellheads, municipal surface water intake studies and to undertake threat inventories in these areas. Conservation Authorities formed partnerships with a number of municipalities to either assist in coordinating funding submissions or filing on behalf of municipalities. This information will be incorporated into the watershed-based source protection plans.
- By the end of the year a number of Conservation Authorities had completed *watershed characterization studies* that consolidated existing water information for each watershed. *Water budget studies* were also in progress across the province.
- Conservation Ontario continued to support the Conservation Authorities in accessing water data for source protection planning as well as coordinated the development of *data management systems*.





## Fostering Healthy Watersheds — Watershed Stewardship

Conservation Ontario continued to work towards the enhancement and promotion of Conservation Authority efforts in private land extension or conservation services under the Watershed Stewardship umbrella. Information collected from Conservation Authorities in 2006 indicate that between 2000–2005 CAs provided \$22.4 million in grant dollars to 7,004 landowners involved in 8,759 Water Quality Improvement projects. During that time an additional \$5.5 million in grant dollars was provided to almost 4,500 landowners to plant 1.7 million trees on over 5,000 hectares of land.

Partnerships with other local, provincial and national organizations who work with private landowners continue to be important opportunities for Conservation Ontario and Conservation Authorities to develop and maintain.

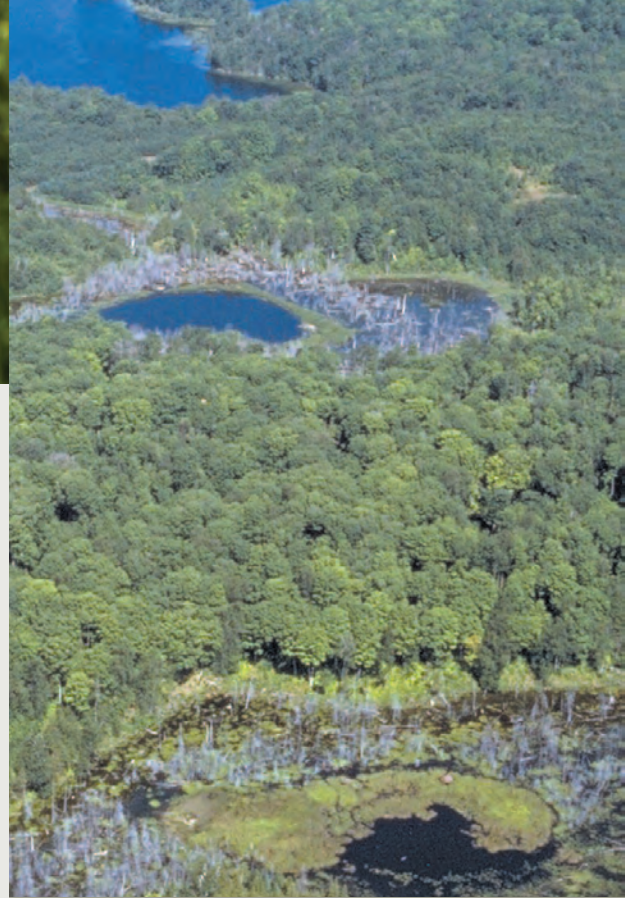
### Protecting Rural Water Quality — Greencover Canada Program

Through an agreement with Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA), Conservation Authorities provided technical advice, design services and assistance for eligible producers to implement Greencover Canada projects such as buffer strips, livestock fencing along watercourses, erosion control and shelterbelt plantings. In addition to providing technical advice, six Conservation Authorities led or entered into partnerships with other organizations to deliver *Greencover Demonstration Projects* in Ontario. The Conservation Ontario agreement with OSCIA facilitated the implementation of Greencover Canada Information Sessions for producers and landowners around the province in partnership with Ontario Stewardship and Ducks Unlimited Canada. Greencover Canada is administered by OSCIA on behalf of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs.

### Conservation Authorities Aquatics Group

The Conservation Authorities Aquatic Group (CAAG) was formed in 2006 for Conservation Authority staff responsible for the monitoring of Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Agreements and fisheries/aquatics reviews under both the *Fisheries Act* and *Conservation Authorities Act*. The objectives of the group are to:

- Provide an open forum for discussion concerning Federal, Provincial and Municipal aquatics initiatives;
- Discuss individual Conservation Authority aquatics programs and provide advice and expertise that may standardize, streamline and increase the efficiency of aquatic programs and plan review efficiency in a consistent and defensible manner;
- Provide a strong and united voice;
- Provide a forum for an exchange of information including training needs, research, monitoring, regulations, plan review, and aquatic habitat protection/ rehabilitation as they pertain to Conservation Authorities and their mandate.



## Mapping Conservation Lands

In conjunction with the Ministry of Natural Resources, Conservation Ontario and nine Conservation Authorities developed a common internet mapping application that provides a Geographic Information System (GIS) Web Mapping Site. This pilot web site provides access to a variety of data on conservation lands and regulated lands under the *Ontario Regulation 97/04 (Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses)*.

The objective of the initiative is to develop an internet mapping portal that will increase local mapping capabilities of Conservation Authorities and access to Conservation Authority data through a shared infrastructure.

Corporate partners in this project include DPRA (Burlington, ON) and Solutions in Context (Tottenham, ON). In addition to the mapping application, a business plan for Conservation Authorities will be developed in order to provide this service to other clients. The initial funding for this program runs until March 2008.

[www.camap.ca](http://www.camap.ca)



# Policy & Planning

## **Watershed Connections —**

### **Healthy Watersheds Ensure Healthy Great Lakes**

Through their many watershed management programs and services, Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities protect and manage natural resources in watersheds within the Great Lakes basin where over 90 percent of Ontario's residents live.

- In November 2006, Conservation Authority representatives met to discuss and agree on a vision for the sustainability of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Basin. These discussions formed the basis for input to the review of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement and the Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem.
- In December 2006, Conservation Ontario also met at a Great Lakes Municipalities Workshop with key municipal Great Lakes leaders and provincial staff who are largely responsible for re-negotiation of the Canada-Ontario Agreement (COA).
- Conservation Ontario and various Conservation Authorities were part of roundtable discussions and public meetings on the Future of the Great Lakes which took place in November and December 2006.
- Conservation Ontario continued to be a member of the Great Lakes Charter Annex Advisory panel formed by the Province to provide advice on how Ontario will meet its commitments. This panel looks at water diversions, withdrawals, consumptive uses, water conservation objectives, information and science needs as well as public information and involvement.

Throughout 2006, Conservation Ontario continued to promote the importance of watershed-based, partnered actions by Conservation Authorities required to ensure that Great Lakes watersheds and ultimately, the Great Lakes themselves, are healthy and sustainable.

## **Ontario Regulation 97/04**

Ontario Regulation 97/04 (Development, Interference with Wetlands & Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses) was signed and approved by the province's Lt. Governor in 2004 thus triggering a legislated two year timeframe for all Conservation Authorities to have developed new regulations under it. As required, by May 2006 all Conservation Authorities' individual regulations were approved with the assistance of Conservation Ontario's Peer Review Committee and the Ministry of Natural Resources. Key to the timely approval was consistency in the wording of the regulation which underwent extensive review by MNR Legal Services and Legislative Counsel.

In June 2006, Conservation Ontario Council established a new Peer Review and Implementation Committee to facilitate a consistent approach to implementation of the Section 28 Regulations. Two administrative-type protocols have been shared across Conservation Authorities in 2006 and the Committee continues to develop support materials.

## **Outdoor Education**

Twenty seven of Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities currently provide hands-on, curriculum-related outdoor education programming to more than 400,000 school children annually. At present, these programs are funded by the school boards/school classes through user fees, Conservation Authorities through municipal levy, and private donations. The Conservation Ontario Outdoor Education Task Force identified, through a 2005/2006 survey of Conservation Authorities, that program fees and funding were key barriers to Conservation Authority outdoor education program enhancement and school board participation. A proposal to the provincial government was drafted in 2006 for funding to flow through school boards to support outdoor education.

## Class Environmental Assessment

Every five years, as part of monitoring and reporting conditions for approval of the Class Environmental Assessment for Remedial Flood and Erosion Control Projects (Class EA), Conservation Ontario submits a review report to the Ontario Ministry of the Environment. The report looks at the effectiveness of the Class EA process and whether the Class EA is still considered current and relevant. Through the evaluation process, amendments to the Class EA were identified by Conservation Authority and Conservation Ontario staff and submitted to the Government for their consideration. A total of 29 Class EA projects were initiated, planned, or implemented between June 2002 and November 2006. Of the 29 reported projects, 21 projects were initiated under the 2002 Class EA.



# Partnerships

## **Natural Spaces**

Appointed in August 2005, the Natural Spaces Leadership Alliance — which is chaired by Conservation Ontario's General Manager — was given a two year mandate to work with the Ministry of Natural Resources to develop components for a voluntary tools and incentive based Natural Spaces Program for Southern Ontario.

Throughout 2006, the Alliance continued to develop and supported a number of initiatives including land acquisition and stewardship, new tree planting initiatives, research on the value of natural heritage, communication and education tools as well as natural heritage system modelling and database development. The final report of the Alliance will be presented early in 2007.

## **Trees Ontario Foundation (TOF)**

Through an agreement made in 2006 with Trees Ontario Foundation (TOF), a number of Conservation Authorities are local program delivery agencies for Spring 2007 tree planting. Conservation Ontario's General Manager is a member of the TOF Board of Directors on behalf of the Conservation Authorities.

## **Stewardship Network of Ontario (SNO)**

A steering committee of ten Stewardship Network of Ontario (SNO) members was established to identify opportunities for stewardship groups to collaborate and secure funding for a secretariat. SNO was also asked to identify, lead and implement stewardship action plans for the Province's Ontario Biodiversity Strategy. Conservation Ontario continues to be a member of SNO.

## **Ontario Biodiversity Council**

The Ontario Biodiversity Council was appointed by the Minister of Natural Resources in 2005 to guide the implementation of the Province's Ontario Biodiversity Strategy by fostering partnerships to address actions identified in the Strategy. Conservation Ontario is a member of the Council. In 2006 the Council adopted a revised terms of reference.

## **Ontario Trails Coordinating Committee**

As landowners, the Conservation Authorities are responsible for the development and maintenance of 138,000 hectares of open space lands with more than 200 separate parcels of single and multi-use trails. In 2006, Conservation Ontario supported the involvement of Conservation Authorities in the implementation of the Ontario Trails Strategy through representation on the Ontario Trails Coordinating Committee.

## **Ontario Education for Sustainable Development Working Group**

As part of the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Education Development (2005–2014), Canada established a national coalition called the National ESD Expert Council. A working group of this council was established for Ontario — the Ontario Education for Sustainable Development (OESD) working group. Conservation Ontario provided two members to this working group in 2006.

## Protecting Lives And Property In Ontario

### **Water & Erosion Control Infrastructure Program (WECI)**

Following Hurricane Hazel in 1954, public infrastructure was built to prevent flooding and erosion and flood plain regulations were established. Conservation Authorities were key agencies in implementing these public safety initiatives of senior Governments.

Today, significantly aging Conservation Authority infrastructure needs maintenance to continue to protect lives and property. This includes more than 800 structures such as dams, channels, dykes, erosion control works, with an estimated replacement value of well over \$800 million.

In recognition of this need, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources invested \$5 million towards the funding of capital maintenance of Conservation Authority Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure. In 2006, Conservation Authorities ensured that this was matched with an equal share of local funding; 16 Conservation Authorities undertook 41 studies for a total cost of \$1.5 million and 26 Conservation Authorities undertook 148 repair jobs with a total cost of \$8.5 million. Overall, this important partnership represented a \$10 million investment in public safety infrastructure.

# Reaching Out to Our Public and Partners

## Source Water Protection — Clean Water Initiative

Conservation Ontario continued to distribute information about source water protection planning.

As well, Conservation Ontario developed materials to promote key concepts around source water protection that are important to Conservation Authorities such as: protection of non-municipal sources of water, use of watershed stewardship practices to complement regulatory approaches to protect drinking water and the need for long term sustainable funding for implementing source water protection.

## Engaging Landowners and Communities

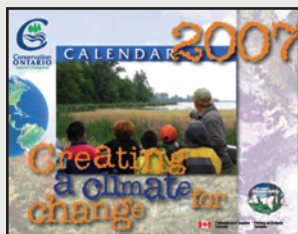
In conjunction with Conservation Authorities, Conservation Ontario highlighted partnerships that Conservation Authorities develop in order to bring watershed stewardship programs to landowners and other stakeholders in their watersheds. Conservation Authorities provide technical advice, design and site planning, and programs with a variety of best management practices for rural landowners. As well, they partner with other agencies and organizations to provide financial incentives to protect water quality and quantity in Ontario watersheds.

## Wetlands are Important — [www.downatthepond.ca](http://www.downatthepond.ca)

Conservation Ontario partnered with Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Ministry of Natural Resources to encourage the general public to get to know more about the importance of Ontario's wetlands. Wetlands help keep our drinking water clean, are home to multiple species of wildlife and birds, and help to store water during extreme rainfalls. Forty different sites, located throughout the province, are highlighted in a special brochure and website produced to encourage people to visit them. Many of these sites are located on Conservation Authority lands.

## Education — Everything is Connected in Watersheds

Conservation Ontario developed a number of publications and products that brought the message to the public that everything is connected in a watershed and what we do on the land is reflected in the conditions of our environment.



### Creating a Climate for Change

In order to coincide with the theme of the 2006 AD Latonell Conservation Symposium, Conservation Ontario partnered with Ontario Stewardship (MNR) and Fisheries and Oceans Canada to produce the 2006 calendar titled: *Creating A Climate For Change*. The

calendar explored how our world is warming and what impact that has on different aspects of our lives such as our climate and natural resources, particularly water. The calendar also provided some quick things people can do to adapt to climate change and reduce the detrimental impact some of their activities may have on the environment.





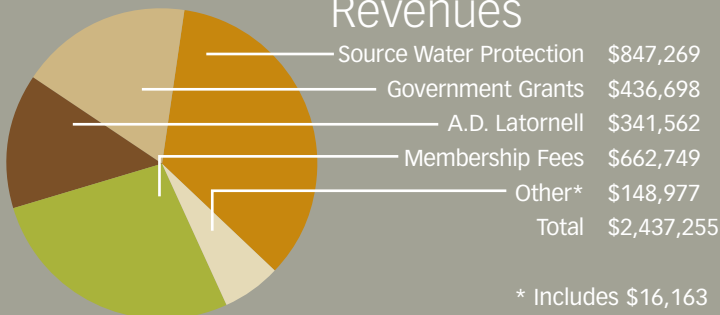
## A.D. Latornell Conservation Symposium

The theme of the 2006 AD Latornell Conservation Symposium was *Creating A Climate For Change* and addressed the important issue of climate change over a variety of topics such as watershed management, water, natural heritage, sustainable planning, community stewardship, natural resource management, information technology, parks and environmental education.

Each year, Symposium delegates recognize a number of individuals who have achieved lifetime recognition for their volunteer and/or professional work in the field of conservation. Recipients of the 2006 *Conservation Pioneer Awards* included: Sally Beaton (Ottawa), Robert Bowles (Orillia), Ron Reid (Washago) and George S. Stormont (Waterloo).

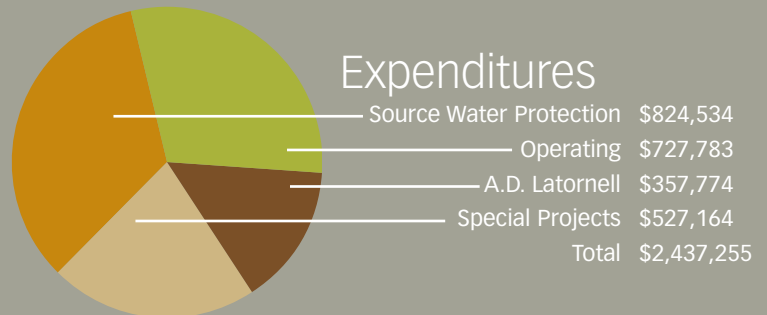
# 2006 Financial Information

### Revenues

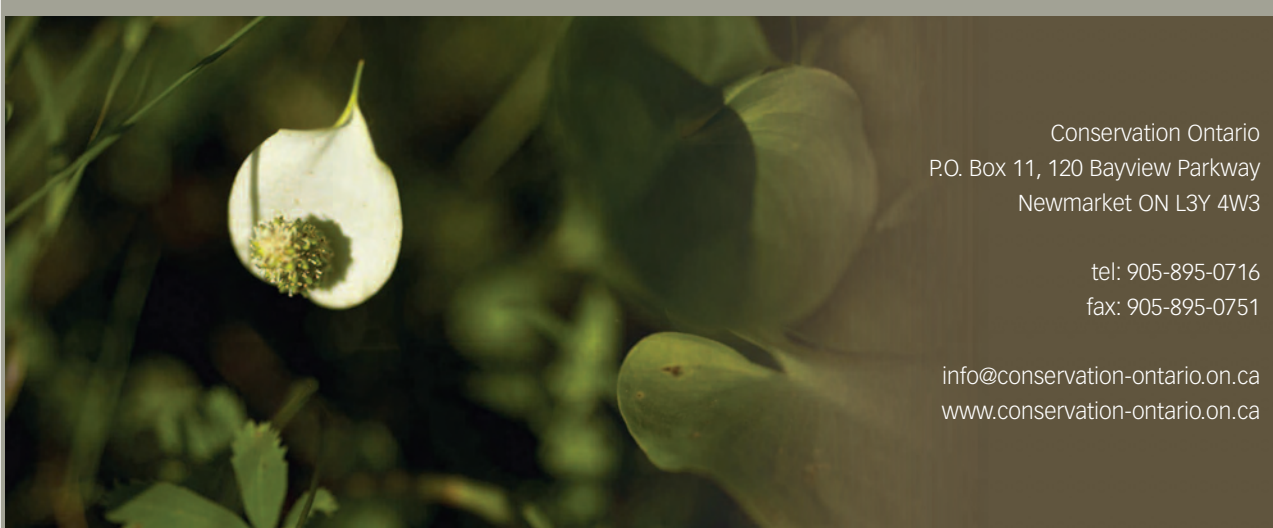


\* Includes \$16,163 appropriation from reserves

### Expenditures



These figures do not include the \$13,944,405 transferred to the CAs for Source Water Protection



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