



Conservation  
**ONTARIO**  
*Natural Champions*

# Conservation Ontario Annual Report

# 2005

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

# Chair/General Manager's Message



**Peter Krause**  
Chair

Conservation Ontario is pleased to recognize and celebrate the significant achievements of Richard D. Hunter who retired as General Manager of the organization in mid-2005. During his six year term, Dick Hunter positioned the network that comprises Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities under one collective brand "*Natural Champions*," and he built strong working relationships with important partners such as the province, municipal and agricultural sectors, environmental agencies, stewardship groups and many others.

Mr. Hunter was very effective in providing tools and forums for Conservation Authorities so that they could come together and discuss their concerns and issues around important key priorities for their business. And he brought many new partners to those tables. As a result, Conservation Authorities enjoy an enhanced profile within the conservation community and are in a good position to quickly respond to opportunities and issues as they arise.

Conservation Ontario's new General Manager is Don Pearson, former CAO of Perth County and prior to that, General Manager of the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority for 22 years. Mr. Pearson's leadership of the Conservation Ontario team comes at an important time as Conservation Authorities embark on their significant role in source water protection planning. His personal commitment to facilitating a watershed approach by all stakeholders will ensure that we continue to make important progress in Ontario's watersheds.



**Don Pearson**  
General Manager

I am very happy to be joining the Conservation Ontario team as General Manager and I look forward to again working with all the Conservation Authorities (CAs).

Throughout 2005, Conservation Ontario's priorities revolved around watershed stewardship, generic regulations and source water protection. Conservation Ontario continued to work with CA staff to promote and enhance the CAs' long standing, very successful stewardship programs delivered throughout watersheds in Ontario. As well, the Stewardship Network of Ontario (SNO) finalized and adopted the Stewardship Strategy for Ontario which promotes collaboration among the various stewardship organizations in order to deliver streamlined programs to landowners. Conservation Ontario continued to play an important role in SNO.

Conservation Ontario also assisted the Conservation Authorities to develop and work towards finalizing *Ontario Regulation 97/04* – a regulation for the *Development, Interference with Wetlands & Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses*. Changes were made by the Ontario government to the legislation that governs activities around hazardous areas and important natural features in order to protect people and property from flooding and erosion.

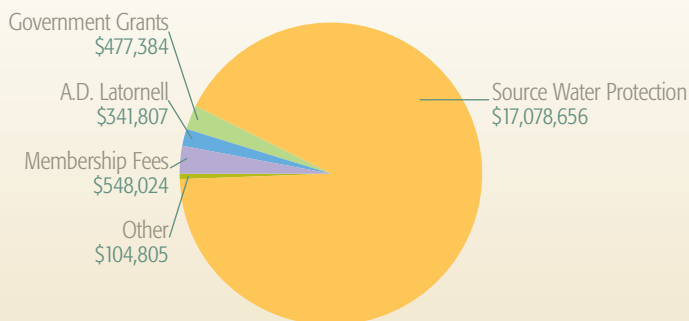
As well, the province's source water protection initiative continued to have a significant impact on all Conservation Authorities' business. Like the CAs, Conservation Ontario has had to build up its expertise in order to support this important initiative and has hired full time technical and communications staff.

Working with the province, CO and the CAs have provided input to technical guidelines that will govern SWP planning. 2005 was an important year as well, because the province introduced the new proposed *Clean Water Act* – legislation that will provide the framework for source water protection planning and help to establish Ontario as a leader in the delivery of safe drinking water.

As we move into 2006, the role of the Conservation Authorities will be to continue to assist the province in building the science for effective source water protection and to help gather together the local partners who will be involved in mapping out each watershed's source water protection plan. People in communities across Ontario's watersheds will need to work together to develop and implement plans to protect their drinking water sources ensuring a safe and plentiful supply now and in the future.

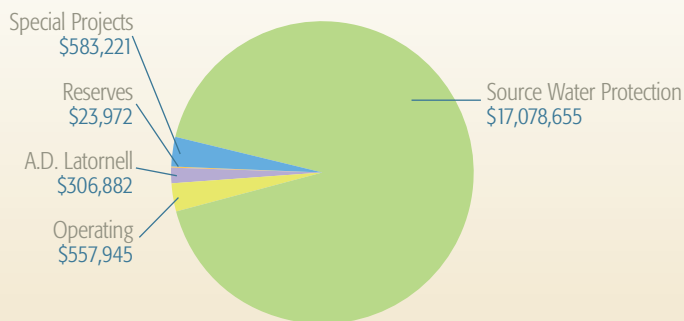
## 2005 Financial Information

### Revenues



Total Revenue/Reserves \$18,550,676

### Expenditures



Total Expenditures \$18,550,676



# Priorities



## Source Water Protection Planning

In 2005, Conservation Ontario focused on source water protection program development work. Accomplishments include:

- Negotiation of two funding agreements totaling \$27M
- CO hired additional technical and communications staff to provide expertise and support CAs in source water protection planning
- Formation of CA SWP core teams
- Development of CA information management systems
- CO hosted 11 SWP training workshops for CA staff
- Development of SWP communication and technical guidance documents

As well, Conservation Ontario and CA staff participated on numerous provincial committees and working groups in the development of the technical guidance documents and continued to advocate for sustainable funding for source water protection planning.

At the end of 2005, the provincial government introduced the *Clean Water Act* which addresses how we can best protect the sources of our drinking water in Ontario.

In conjunction with the CAs, Conservation Ontario provided comments on the proposed legislation.

## Watershed Stewardship

Conservation Ontario has been working towards enhancing and promoting Conservation Authority efforts in private land extension or conservation services under the umbrella of watershed stewardship. Watershed stewardship services will be a very important component of source water protection implementation.



## 2005 Annual Report on Conservation Authorities

### Watershed Stewardship Services

Conservation Ontario's second annual *CA Watershed Stewardship Services* report was released at the 2005 A.D. Latomell Symposium. This report provides an outline of watershed stewardship services and programs currently offered by Conservation Authorities across the province in 2004 and 2005. Statistics are provided on programs focused on improving water quality, forestry, rehabilitation and restoration as well as Conservation Authority partnerships with individuals and agencies.

### Watershed Stewardship Partnerships

Conservation Ontario was involved in a number of partnerships on behalf of Conservation Authorities with agencies such as the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, Trees Ontario Foundation and the Canadian Pork Council.

### Stewardship Network of Ontario (Stewardship Strategy for Ontario)

The stewardship field in Ontario has become more crowded as additional agencies and organizations provide some type of watershed stewardship service to farmers as well as other rural and urban landowners. As a result there are gaps and overlays among the different programs and services being offered. To strengthen the collective efforts of these various stewardship initiatives, Conservation Ontario continued to work with a number of agencies on the finalization of the Stewardship Strategy for Ontario.

The agencies involved in the initial development of this strategy included: Conservation Ontario, Ontario Stewardship, Wildlife Habitat Canada, Wetland Habitat Fund, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

This network also worked on protocols for establishing membership, structure and governance and operational considerations. A Steering Group was established to begin developing a *Rural Non-farm Landowner's Planning Tool*, modeled after the Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition's *Environmental Farm Plan*.





# Partnerships



## Partnering with the Rural and Municipal Sector

Managing Ontario's resources is best accomplished in partnership with local landowners, municipalities and other stakeholders. Conservation Ontario continued to support this effort at the provincial level by strengthening provincial relationships with municipal, rural and agricultural organizations and agencies. Conservation Ontario continued to participate as a member with several important rural, agricultural and municipal associations. In 2005, CO joined the Agricultural Adaptation Council as a new member.

## Greencover Program

The Greencover Canada program supports projects that enhance biodiversity, prevent wind and water erosion of farmland and improve the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater. Through an agreement with the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA), Conservation Authorities were designated as the primary delivery agents to provide 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

OSCIA has budgeted up to \$1 million dollars for approximately 2,000 opportunities to deliver these services and be compensated by OSCIA.

## Biodiversity Strategy

The intent of the provincial government's Biodiversity Strategy is to conserve Ontario's biodiversity and encourage sustainable use of the province's biological resources. Along with a number of Conservation Authority representatives, Conservation Ontario participated in the development of the strategy which was launched in 2005. Conservation Ontario participates as a member of the Ontario Biodiversity Council.

## Natural Spaces

The purpose of the Natural Spaces program is to identify an ecologically sustainable natural heritage system for Southern Ontario in order to focus on strategic opportunities for restoration, critical areas securement and biodiversity conservation. This program will also provide advice and information for land use planning and resource management decision-making in order to ensure sustainable development.

Conservation Ontario is a member of the Natural Spaces Leadership Alliance and their goal is to advise the Minister of Natural Resources, participate in the development of management frameworks, promote the program, share information and monitor progress. This mandate will run for two years.

In 2005, the Alliance worked on stakeholder engagement, provided technical staff assistance and promoted the natural heritage system framework. Conservation Ontario worked with other Alliance partners to develop criteria for identification of targets for the program.

## Trees Ontario Foundation

Through an agreement with Trees Ontario Foundation, many Conservation Authorities were local program delivery agencies for the Forest 2020 Plantation Demonstration and Assessment Initiative. Forest 2020 provided funds for tree planting, site preparation, tree tending, plantation assessment and reporting. Conservation Authorities worked with private and public landowners on 123 sites in 2005 to plant a total of 1,416 acres of trees.

## Canadian Pork Council

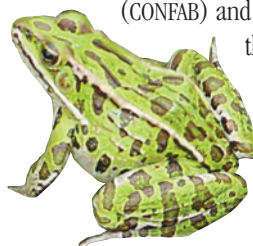
Conservation Ontario, the Grand River Conservation Authority, and the Canadian Pork Council are working in partnership to deliver a two-year project demonstrating the benefits of establishing tree shelterbelts by the Ontario pork producers.

## Aquatic Resource Management Advisory Committee (ARMAC)

Conservation Ontario participates on this committee which replaces the Fish Habitat Advisory Committee (FHAG). The Aquatic Resource Management Advisory Committee (ARMAC) is a forum for various levels of government that is designed to enhance federal/provincial cooperation and to facilitate a multi-agency approach on fish habitat and related aquatic resource management issues. Members provide advice and recommendations to the Canada-Ontario Fisheries Advisory Group (CONFAB) and other management bodies. CONFAB administers

the Canada/Ontario Fisheries Agreement (COFA).

Conservation Ontario participates in ARMAC's Regulatory Process Management, Watershed Management and Stewardship working groups.



# Policy and Planning



## 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 on April 14, 2004. In 2005, the Guidelines Documents (CO and MNR, 2005) were signed by the Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and the Chair of Conservation Ontario. These documents included: *Guidelines for Developing Schedules of Regulated Areas, Approvals Process Document, and Hearings Guidelines*. Delegates at the A.D. Latonnell Conservation Symposium were able to review a case study and discuss challenges and questions about the process in a special session designed about the *Ontario Regulation 97/04*.

Throughout 2005, Conservation Authorities carried out mapping and held stakeholder consultations. Conservation Ontario was able to assist by providing an internal website with all the information and products easily available to Conservation Authority staff.

At the end of 2005, 15 Conservation Authorities received endorsement for *Ontario Regulation 97/04* from Conservation Ontario's Peer Review Committee. Additional presentations were scheduled to go forward in 2006. The date for completion is April 2006.

## Annual Effectiveness Monitoring Report — Class EA

Each year, Conservation Ontario submits to the Ontario Ministry of the Environment an *Annual Effectiveness Monitoring Report for the Class Environmental Assessment for Remedial Flood and Erosion Control Projects*. The annual report fulfills requirements to monitor the effectiveness of the Class EA process and to ensure sound environmental planning. Conservation Ontario's 2005 annual report addresses those projects initiated, planned and/or implemented as of December 2005. Five new projects were initiated in 2005.

## Research

### Permit to Take Water Pilot Projects

Through a partnership with Conservation Ontario, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, three pilot projects were carried out by the Cataraqui Region, Grand River and Long Point Region Conservation Authorities. These were completed in 2005 and results were shared with stakeholders. The pilots were designed to improve the ability of water managers to assess the potential impacts of water takings on our water resources. The three Conservation Authorities were selected because they represent a range of watershed conditions and types of water taking permits across southern Ontario.

Each of the studies examined a number of diagnostic tools, field data collection methods, and a range of methods to assess water taking effects and to define instream flow thresholds. They concluded that the establishment of instream flows should begin with a thorough understanding of the management objectives for the watershed, including fish and wildlife, water quality and quantity, channel morphology, sediment regime, aesthetics and groundwater.

A *Synthesis Report* of the results from all the pilots was prepared and is available on Conservation Ontario's website: [www.conservation-ontario.on.ca](http://www.conservation-ontario.on.ca).

### Innovations in Water Management

Four pilot projects were completed in 2005 as phase 2 of a series of Watershed-based Pilot Projects, a partnership with Conservation Ontario, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. The projects looked for "on the ground" results and focused on the implementation and technical issues that practitioners may face when implementing drinking water source protection. Eight Conservation Authorities participated in these projects.

The projects included:

- **An Assessment of Data Requirements and Availability for Source Water Protection** — A guide was developed to assist practitioners identify and locate suitable data required for source water protection planning as well as to recognize data gaps. It also identifies other data management issues that affect data availability and accessibility which practitioners should be aware and prepared to address through collaborations.
- **Nutrient Management Summary Report and CANWET User's Guide** — This project presented a leading edge computer modeling tool to assist resource managers to predict changes in water quality associated with human activities and altered landscapes as well as to evaluate the implementation of agricultural and urban pollution reduction practices. The model is updated on an ongoing basis and is provided to practitioners who register for these updates.
- **Improving Access to Water Resource Information in Agricultural Watersheds** — The project presented the results of a study that explored different ways to deliver water related information to a rural audience. It evaluates each method's effectiveness, cost/benefits and considerations for implementation. A prototype website was developed to test web effectiveness.
- **Surface Water Quality Threat Assessment Method Using Landscape-based Indexing** — The Watershed Science Centre at the University of Trent conducted this pilot project and focused on the development of methods, data layers, models and tools to predict baseflow characteristics and potential nutrient loading at ungauged sites.

The full results from the four pilot projects are featured on Conservation Ontario's website and were profiled at the 2005 A.D. Latonnell Conservation Symposium. Conservation Ontario continues to transfer the results of the projects to the larger community.



# Communications



Throughout 2005, Conservation Ontario designed and implemented its corporate communications strategy around the main priorities of source water protection and watershed stewardship.

## Healthy Watersheds Through Education

Conservation Ontario developed a variety of communication tools to demystify some of the more technical concepts and terms around source water protection.

Understanding how our watersheds work and how Conservation Authorities help to manage influences on our water sources is key to understanding the importance of source water protection and being able to take actions to protect our water resources.

Rural landowners, municipalities, Conservation Authorities and other local stakeholders will play a key role in mapping out the best approach to protecting water in Ontario. Conservation Ontario's communication products are designed to assist people to understand the science so that they can make good decisions.

### ■ **Healthy Waters – Healthy Communities 2006 Calendar** –

Conservation Ontario produced a 2006 calendar in partnership with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Ontario Stewardship (Ministry of Natural Resources). It provides information around topics such as water, watershed stewardship, watersheds, climate change, wetlands, healthy fish habitat, and the Great Lakes.

- **SWP Workshop in a Box Toolkit** – is a toolkit that provides materials and resources needed to learn or deliver a workshop about the basics of water and source water protection. Additional modules are constantly being added as information is available. Conservation Ontario also offers a variety of brochures, watershed illustrations, fact sheets and brochures, all available on the website.



## Launch of New Conservation Ontario Website

Conservation Ontario launched its updated website – [www.conservation-ontario.on.ca](http://www.conservation-ontario.on.ca) in 2005. The new site offers:

- Important information on key issues such as source water protection, watershed stewardship and regulating activities which affect our watersheds
- Communication toolkits, brochures and maps
- History, information and links to all of Ontario's Conservation Authorities



### ■ News, Features and Special Projects

Conservation Ontario's website is a great source of information about Conservation Authorities and the issues that are important to managing Ontario's watersheds.

## Healthy Waters – Healthy Communities – Watershed Practitioners Network at the A.D. Latonell Conservation Symposium

Conservation Ontario co-hosted the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Arthur D. Latonell Conservation Symposium with the University of Guelph. This popular event provides a forum for practitioners, students, academics, politicians, and non-government organizations to network and discuss challenges and opportunities in the conservation field in Ontario as well as learn about new tools, techniques and strategies for natural resources management. The theme for the 2005 event, Healthy Waters – Healthy Communities, explored the important links between water and health across different sectors. This year also marked the fifth anniversary of the Walkerton drinking water tragedy.

Guest speakers included the new Minister of the Environment, Laurel Broten, Ontario's Environmental Commissioner Gord Miller, President of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Ron Bonnett and 14-year-old Ryan Hreljac, founder of Ryan's Wells, a non profit organization that brings clean drinking water to African communities.



### Pioneer Award Winners

Each year, the Symposium recognizes five people who have made significant contributions to conservation in Ontario. For 2005, they included: Don Lobb, Dr. Gray Merriam, David Pearson, Anthony Smith and Ben Vanderbrug.



### Conservation Ontario

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