



**Conservation
ONTARIO**
Natural Champions

ANNUAL REPORT 2004

www.conservation-ontario.on.ca

Representing Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities

Photograph by Lou Wise

CHAIR/GENERAL MANAGER MESSAGE

BUILDING THE BRIDGE AS WE WALK ON IT



Peter Krause, Chair



*Dick Hunter,
General Manager*

“(CAs) are required to increase the delivery of services while at the same time develop their organizational capacity - a bit like building the bridge as they walk across it.”

In 2004, the provincial government made an important commitment to the people of Ontario that will have a significant impact on Conservation Authorities (CAs). To ensure there is enough safe, clean water for all our uses, the government has stated that every watershed in our province should have a source water protection plan.

A key factor to ensure this happens will be the participation and input of local communities in formulating the action plans. Source water protection plans will affect landowners, industry, community groups, local government and political leaders. As a result these stakeholders need to be the decision-makers and, ultimately, the owners of the source water protection plans. It is the job of Conservation Authorities to ensure that stakeholders are brought together and have the tools they need to get the job done.

As the year 2004 wrapped up, it was clear that a looming challenge facing Conservation Authorities will be explaining exactly what source water protection is and why it is important. We need to do this in a way that resonates with our communities and makes them want to take action.

This will be a challenge for all Conservation Authorities, but it has to be done, because the people of Ontario should not settle for any less.

Conservation Ontario (CO) was also very active, on behalf of CAs, in promoting a more coordinated approach amongst the various agencies delivering stewardship programs to landowners in Ontario. An innovative idea took shape in 2004 and as a result, the Stewardship Network of Ontario was established. This group, made up of different stewardship agencies, is now looking at specific actions to prevent duplication, fill gaps and thus, promote more efficient delivery of watershed stewardship services to landowners.

“Watershed Partners” was the theme for a very comprehensive fall tour of more than a dozen watercourses in Thunder Bay and its member municipalities. The 2004 Biennial Tour was hosted by the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) and attracted over 100 participants from Conservation Authorities, government, the community and the environmental sector. These tours are a valuable opportunity for members and staff to network and share experiences while observing various initiatives in the field.

The pace at which opportunities unfolded for CAs in 2004 presents an ongoing challenge. Conservation Authorities are required to increase the delivery of services while at the same time develop their organizational capacity - which is a bit like building the bridge as they walk across it. While this may not be an easy task we are confident that with the right support, Conservation Authorities will adapt and adjust their programs and activities to meet these challenges head on. Conservation Authorities have a track record of 'delivering the goods'. This past year has positioned us well to do do just that in 2005 and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Krause'.

Peter Krause, Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dick Hunter'.

Dick Hunter, General Manager

ADVOCACY

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

In June 2004 the province released their draft *Drinking Water Source Protection Act* for public comment. Conservation Ontario reviewed the draft legislation and provided coordinated comments on behalf of the CAs.

On November 17, 2004, at this year's A.D. Latornell Conservation Symposium the Ministers of Environment and Natural Resources announced \$12.5 million in funding to CAs and municipalities to initiate source water protection planning in the province. This initial funding was to begin capacity building and undertake some preliminary technical studies.

The provincial Source Protection Implementation Committee (SPIC), and the Technical Experts Committee (TEC) final reports were released December 14, 2004 for public review. Conservation Ontario was represented on both of these committees as well as the Technical Working Group. Gayle Wood, CAO of the Lake Simcoe Region CA was Co-Chair of the TEC.

WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP

Conservation Ontario developed a Conservation Authority Watershed Stewardship annual report which was released at the 2004 A.D. Latornell Conservation Symposium. The newsletter highlights CA activities and accomplishments in watershed stewardship from 2000 - 2003.

- In the area of Water Quality Improvement programs, a total of \$15.1 million was spent in grants on 5,900 projects in partnership with 5,000 landowners.
- Under Forestry programs, a total of just over \$3 million was provided in grants to plant 6.6 million trees with 7,800 landowners.

As well, Conservation Ontario provided leadership in the development of a draft Stewardship Strategy for Ontario designed to strengthen the collective efforts of the province's various stewardship organizations.

The Stewardship Network for Ontario (SNO) currently encompasses four non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and three federal departments and provincial ministries.

The vision of the draft Strategy is to promote collaboration among stewardship organizations so that stewardship programs are delivered in a simple and streamlined manner to landowners in Ontario.

PROVINCIAL TRANSFER PAYMENT

Since their inception 50 years ago, Conservation Authorities have been delivering flood and erosion control programs across Ontario. With changes to our climate patterns in recent years, there is a renewed concern about the possibility of an increase in weather-related disaster events. Re-investment in flood and erosion control programs is necessary to ensure that we are prepared and avoid the costs (both loss of life and damages) when the next major storm hits us in Ontario.

At the current funding levels within Conservation Authorities, our collective ability to protect lives and property from natural hazards is eroding. Conservation Ontario submitted a report to the Minister of Natural Resources in July 2004 that examined the amount and type of funding shortfall. This report was titled *Reinvestment in Ontario's Conservation Authorities - Now and in the Future (July 2004)*.

In order to address the funding shortfall, the provincial transfer payments need to be increased for mandated programs of provincial interest from \$7.6 Million to \$21.4 Million. As of December 2004, all CAs and 70 per cent of municipalities passed resolutions in support of this reinvestment strategy.



PARTNERSHIPS

PILOT PROJECTS

Conservation Ontario entered into a partnership with MOE and MNR to explore place-based environmental management approaches. These will provide some of the building blocks for watershed-based source water protection planning in Ontario. The four pilot projects focus on technical and stakeholder outreach issues that practitioners may face when planning and implementing source water protection.

The projects included:

1. "Source Protection Planning in Rural Ontario: How Much data is available? How much is Enough?" (Partners: Lower Trent Region CA, Ganaraska Region CA, Crowe Valley CA)
2. "Providing Access to Source Protection Information for the Rural Community" (Partners: Maitland Valley CA, Saugeen Valley CA)
3. "Development of a Water Quality Model for Nutrient Management" (Partners: Lake Simcoe Region CA, Nottawasga Valley CA, Kawartha Conservation, Environment Canada, Trent University, Greenland International Inc.)
4. "Rapid Assessment of Potential Surface Water Conditions Using Landscape and Base Flow Indices" (Partners: Watershed Science Centre, University of Trent)

In 2005, Conservation Ontario will be designing a series of final reports and communication products.

PERMIT TO TAKE WATER (PTTW) PILOT PROJECTS - INSTREAM FLOW REQUIREMENTS

This partnership with the Ministry of the Environment, including participation from Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), recognizes that understanding our watersheds and their resource limitations is critical for a successful Permit To Take Water program. Through pilot projects with the Cataraqui Region, Grand River and Long Point Region Conservation Authorities this partnership increased our understanding of the relationship between water flow and aquatic ecosystems. This will improve the ability of water managers to assess the potential impacts of water takings on our precious water resources. Final outcomes of these pilot projects will be available in 2005.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

As of the end of 2004, 30 Conservation Authorities were members of the Ontario Geospatial Data Exchange (OGDE). As Conservation Authorities undertake source water protection planning, the ODGE partnership arrangement will become a critical tool for accessing, sharing and storing watershed data.

The fourth phase (WRIP IV) of the Water Resource Information Project was completed in 2004. This important partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources will be reconstituted as part of the Source Water Protection Program in 2005.

FORESTRY INITIATIVES

Conservation Ontario partnered with the Trees Ontario Foundation for the delivery of the tree planting portion of the Forest 2020 Plantation Demonstration and Assessment initiative. An Agreement was signed which identifies Conservation Authorities as the local program delivery agents in their watershed(s) for tree planting. Approximately 50 hectares were planted in the Spring of 2004, with the majority of plantings to occur in 2005 under this program.

Conservation Ontario is a signatory to the third Canada Forest Accord in support of the National Forestry Strategy (NFS) 2003-2008. In 2004, Conservation Ontario provided input to the National Forestry Strategy Coalition's Accomplishments Report highlighting the contribution of Conservation Authorities in moving forward the NFS. The CAs' promotion of a watershed approach, afforestation and the maintenance of forest ecosystems, carbon sequestration, and public engagement in forestry were highlighted.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA

At the close of 2004, 35 of the 36 Conservation Authorities had formal agreements with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). Under the *Federal Fisheries Act* Habitat Provisions, six CAs are delivering Level 3, 25 are delivering Level 2, and four CAs are delivering Level 1.

A new Governance Model for fisheries management in Canada was proposed in 2004 in order to promote better inter-agency networking and collaboration opportunities and, at the same time, more effectively integrate Conservation Authorities into provincial/federal fisheries management. The new model will have greater representation from a wider variety of sectors providing input on fisheries issues.

WORKING WITH ONTARIO'S RURAL LANDOWNERS

Recognizing the important role that rural landowners and farmers play as stewards of our land, Conservation Ontario continued to promote these important partnerships. Conservation Ontario shared ideas, participated in partner events and presented opportunities for representatives from this sector to voice their concerns to Conservation Authorities.

Conservation Ontario continued to participate as a member with various rural and agricultural organizations and, in 2004, also joined the Ontario Farm Council (OFAC). As well, CO participated on the Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition Water Quality Working Group.

PROGRAM & POLICY

GENERIC REGULATIONS (SECTION 28)

The Generic Regulation for Section 28 (development, interference with wetlands and alterations to shorelines and watercourses) was signed and approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council in April 2004.

Prior to this, three Guidance documents, completed by CO's Generic Regulations working group, were submitted for MNR's approval including:

1. Guidelines for Developing Schedules of Regulated Areas
2. Approvals Process Document
3. Hearing Guidelines

Regional workshops were held throughout the province for CAs in July and August outlining the Generic Regulation, where and what can be regulated, examples of appropriate mapping were provided, and key issues were discussed. Regional groups continue to meet on a regular basis to discuss issues/concerns in preparation for community information meetings.

CONSERVATION LAND TAX INCENTIVE

In December 2004, the Ministers of Natural Resources and Finance announced support for conservation through property tax relief. The Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program (CLTIP) regulation for "community conservation lands" was approved after extensive negotiations with Conservation Ontario and numerous other conservation organizations.

The expansion to the Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program will make it easier for Conservation Authorities to protect lands of natural and environmental significance. This program will be even more important as Conservation Authorities, provincial and municipal governments and other partners address issues such as source water protection planning and growth management.



AGING INFRASTRUCTURE

As part of the 2004 Provincial Budget, the Province allocated a further \$5 Million to CAs for Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) in 2004/2005. Matching dollars from member municipalities were required for repair or replacement projects and studies.

Conservation Ontario's WECI database was updated to aid in the identification of candidate projects and Round One Approvals were announced in November. More than 240 projects are being funded through this program which is in its second year.

GREAT LAKES WATERSHEDS

Conservation Ontario continued to advocate for integrated watershed management and healthy Great Lakes through healthy watersheds as part of ongoing discussions with Environment Canada and the Ministries of the Environment and Natural Resources.

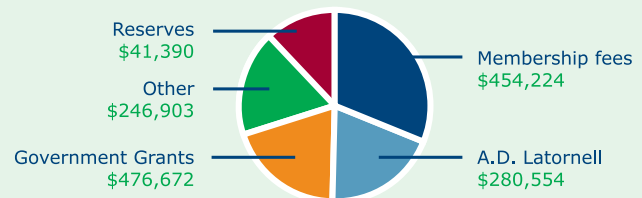
While the spring 2004 federal budget identified some funding for continued efforts with Areas of Concern on the Great Lakes, broader support for watershed stewardship was not forthcoming.

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. In 2004, four projects were initiated under the Class EA.

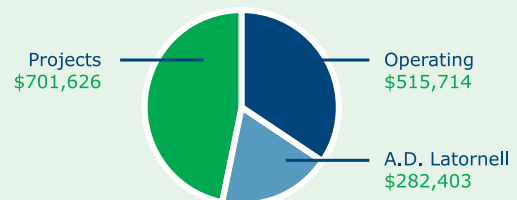
2004 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

REVENUE/RESERVES



TOTAL REVENUE/RESERVES \$1,499,743

EXPENDITURES



TOTAL EXPENDITURES \$1,499,743

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

HURRICANE HAZEL - COMMEMORATION OF ANNIVERSARY

In 2004, Conservation Authorities marked the 50th Anniversary of Hurricane Hazel, called the storm of the century. Hurricane Hazel hit the Greater Toronto area on October 15th and 16th in 1954. Eighty-one people were killed by the hurricane's flooding and more than 4000 families were left homeless.

www.hurricanehazel.ca

To commemorate this important event in Conservation Authorities' history, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) produced a number of communication products on behalf of CAs. Special funding was provided to Conservation Ontario and TRCA by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources for this project.

LEARNING ABOUT WATERSHEDS AND SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

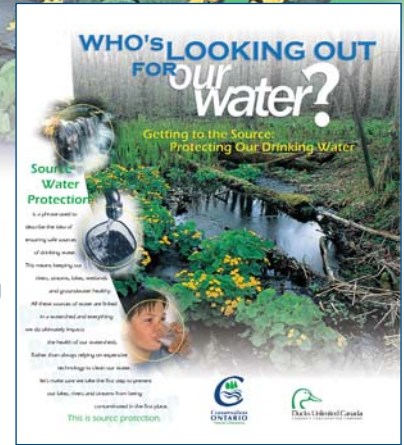
Conservation Ontario produced a number of products to build awareness about the importance of watersheds and protecting our water resources through source water protection. These included graphics, a Watershed Connections poster and a Source Water Protection display.



Quinte Conservation Manager Terry Murphy with Bonnie Fox (Conservation Ontario) and Leona Dombrowsky, Minister of the Environment.

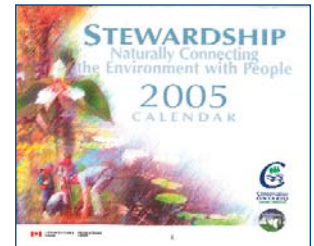
DRINKING WATER MEDIA INSERT

One million copies of a tabloid insert promoting watersheds and source water protection messaging was distributed through major daily newspapers across Ontario in March 2004. In addition to Conservation Ontario, government and corporate partners for this project included Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Lotowater GeoScience Consultants Ltd., Ontario Water Works Association and the Water Environmental Association of Ontario. Additional copies were distributed to Conservation Authorities for their local watershed residents.



WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP CALENDAR

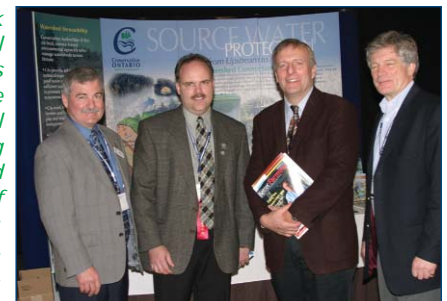
In partnership with the Ontario Stewardship Council and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Conservation Ontario produced a 2005 calendar that promotes messaging about watershed stewardship issues and the role that Conservation Authorities and others have in working with local landowners. The calendar was launched at the 2004 A.D. Latornell Conservation Symposium. Conservation Authorities distributed the calendars to local stakeholders in their watersheds as well.



A.D. LATORNELL CONSERVATION SYMPOSIUM

Stewardship: From Strategies to Actions was the theme of the 11th Annual A.D. Latornell Conservation Symposium held November 17, 18, & 19, 2004. Over 800 delegates attended the event hosted by Conservation Ontario and the University of Guelph, Centre for Land and Water Stewardship. In addition to offering 49 sessions exploring key issues in natural resource management, the Symposium also recognized five special Conservation Pioneers for their lifetime achievements in conservation. As well, in keeping with Arthur D. Latornell's love of mentoring young conservationists, 20 university and college students presented original research projects for delegates to review.

Pictured here is Dick Hunter, General Manager, CO; Chris Hachey, Chair of the A.D. Latornell Symposium Steering Committee; David Ramsay, Minister of Natural Resources; and Peter Krause, Chair of CO.



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