

Fact Sheet

CONSERVATION ONTARIO

Conservation Ontario is a nonprofit organization that represents the network of 36 Conservation Authorities, natural resource management agencies that are organized and operate on the basis of local watersheds across Ontario. Approximately 95 per cent of Ontario residents live in watersheds managed by Conservation Authorities.

CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES:

- Protect Ontarians and their property from flooding and erosion hazards
- Restore and protect water and land resources and habitats (largest landowner next to the Province)
- Provide recreational and educational opportunities to local residents, encouraging them to be active and connect with nature
- Deliver programs and services totaling approximately \$350 million annually through 1,900 full time staff and 2,089 seasonal and contract staff
- Provide local technical expertise to all levels of government
- Partner closely with municipal, provincial and federal governments, as well as landowners and many other groups and agencies, to deliver community-based programs that ensure healthy watersheds and provide opportunities for Ontarians to connect with nature.
- Most Conservation Authorities are funded primarily through municipal support and self-generated funding with some support from the Province for provincially mandated programs such as natural hazards and drinking water source protection. In 2017, Conservation Authorities received a total of \$375 million in revenues. The breakdown: Municipalities (53%), self-generated (35%), Province (8%) and Federal government (4%)

Conservation Authorities Rely on Science-based Integrated Watershed Management

An integrated watershed management approach manages human activities and natural resources, together, on a watershed basis taking into consideration environmental, economic and human needs and interests.

Protecting People and Property from Flooding

- In partnership with the Province and municipalities, Conservation Authorities monitor the potential for flooding, issue warnings to municipalities and others and manage \$3.8 billion dollars (2019) of flood control and prevention infrastructure including 900 dams, dykes, channels and erosion control structures
- Programs and services to prevent and control flooding offered by Conservation Authorities include:

- o monitoring conditions year round
- o modeling and forecasting flood conditions
- o issuing flood warnings
- o regulating development in flood prone areas
- o providing support and advice to municipalities to minimize the impacts of flooding
- o purchasing flood-prone lands
- o protecting significant ecosystems such as wetlands and forests that help to control flooding
- o educating the public about flooding hazards

Safe Drinking Water with Source Water Protection

- In partnership with the Province, Conservation Authorities support Drinking Water Source Protection Committees (SPC) in 19 regions

Urban and Rural Stewardship for Clean and Sustainable Water Resources

- Each year, Conservation Authorities plant approximately two million trees
- Provide landowners with financial and technical assistance to carry out water quality improvements including projects such as erosion control, clean water diversion, agricultural best management practices, well decommissioning and septic system improvements
- Provide landowners with financial and technical assistance to carry out rehabilitation/restoration projects with wetlands, habitats, shorelines and stream & fish habitat. Many projects are targeted to at invasive species and species at risk
- Identify and target areas for stormwater management and green infrastructure projects

Monitor and Report on the Health of Ontario's Water and Land Resources

- Conservation Authorities operate 451 monitoring sites within the **provincial groundwater quality monitoring network** and 398 sites in the **provincial surface water quality monitoring network**. Conservation Authorities also have 735 surface water quality monitoring sites and 195 groundwater monitoring sites in addition to the provincial partnerships
- Over 30 Conservation Authorities issue watershed report cards every five years

Connecting People with Nature and Helping to Keep Ontarians Healthy

- Approximately 270 conservation areas are open to the public and offer a wide variety of outdoor activities.
- Over 7.8 million people visit Conservation Areas each year either as day visitors or campers
- 8,088 campsites and over 3,500 km of trails are located within easily accessible conservation areas

Environmental Education

- Conservation Authority outdoor education programs are aligned with Ontario's curriculum Programs and delivered to over 321,000 Ontario students at almost 3,500 schools each year

For more information:

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