

Fact Sheet

Conservation Authority Programs Help to Meet the Goals of Provincial Plans

Greenbelt Plan * Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan * Niagara Escarpment Plan *
Growth Plan for Greater Golden Horseshoe

Conservation Authority programs help municipal and provincial partners to reach their goals around four key provincial plans: the Greenbelt Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, Niagara Escarpment Plan, and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Types of Conservation Authority Programs and Services

Land Use Planning	Watershed Monitoring & Reporting	Flood and Erosion Control and Prevention
Water Quality & Quantity	Development, Interference & Alteration Regulation	Natural Heritage Protection
Watershed Stewardship	Technical Support and Land Use Management	Recreation & Education

Building Resilient Natural Systems

Watershed Management Identifies Issues & Targets Solutions

- As a result of Ontario's growing demand for water, watershed managers face increasing challenges in maintaining a balance between human, economic and environmental interests.
- Watershed plans identify issues and target solutions, managing the impacts of our activities on natural resources.
- Watershed planning is a cyclical process and is often triggered by issues such as climate change, flooding, low water or poor water quality. It requires the development of a plan to address the issues, implementation of the plan, and then monitoring, evaluation and updating of the plan, based on changing conditions or new information.



- Watershed planning requires collaboration and Conservation Authorities work with a wide variety of others to develop source protection plans, watershed plans, natural heritage strategies, flood management plans, shoreline management plans, fisheries plans, and others.

Monitoring conditions in Ontario's Watersheds

- Ontario's Conservation Authorities use a variety of means to monitor water and land conditions often working in partnership with all levels of government, other agencies, and landowners.
- Watershed monitoring programs provide the data needed to target actions and to assess the effectiveness of the solutions being used to address issues and conditions.
- Many Conservation Authorities produce watershed report cards.
- As well, nine Conservation Authorities that comprise the Conservation Authority Moraine Coalition (CAMC) specifically monitor and report on conditions for the Oak Ridges Moraine and have produced separate report cards for the general public, municipal partners and others.

Protecting Drinking Water Sources

- Through Ontario's Drinking Water Source Protection Program, Conservation Authorities collect local watershed data which enables them to map natural features and functions, identify land uses that impact them, and target municipal drinking water sources.
- Conservation Authorities develop water budgets with local municipalities and others in order to determine how much water is available in the watershed, how it is currently being used, and how much will be needed in the future.
- Source protection plans help to prevent or reduce the impact of our activities and protect important sources of drinking water.

Stormwater Management Protects Water Quality

- Conservation Authorities' programs reduce runoff through the development of stormwater management strategies, support for Low Impact Development (LID), and implementation of local and broader-based green infrastructure initiatives.
- All of these activities help protect the natural water balance, improve water quality, and prevent flooding.

Supporting Farming Viability

- Conservation Authorities collaborate with local municipalities and other agencies to deliver rural and clean water programs, often offering cost-sharing grants for beneficial management practices.
- Types of activities that are supported include manure management, erosion control, fragile land retirement, conservation cropping practices, naturalization or planting to increase streamside habitat, fertilizer management, and septic and well support.
- These activities protect water quality and quantity and promote healthy soils.

Protecting the Important Benefits of Ecosystems

Land Acquisition

- Conservation Authorities purchase lands to protect ecosystems such as wetlands, floodplains, creek valleys, designated federal/provincial environmentally significant areas, groundwater recharge and discharge areas, significant Great Lakes properties and corridors connecting important conservation lands.

Watershed Stewardship Activities Protect Water and Land

- Conservation Authorities offer technical expertise and tools, and provide incentive grants to and improve water quality, keep soils healthy and ensure healthy biodiversity and sustainable water supplies.
- Activities such as tree planting, wetlands restoration, well decommissioning, erosion control and habitat rehabilitation engage landowners, communities, and businesses to build local watershed resiliency.
- These activities help to reduce nutrient loading, improve stream flow, protect important plant and animal species, and restore natural habitats.

Adapting to Climate Change

- Climate change affects all aspects of Ontario's water resources and the complexity and scope of this issue requires a more 'integrated approach' taking into consideration ecological, economic, and social interests and impacts.
- Integrated watershed management enables us to use a wide variety of activities such as watershed stewardship, monitoring, planning, regulation, and flood management to address a many issues, together.
- Conservation Authorities bring together different stakeholders to assess issues, pool resources, and develop solutions based on local science developed through watershed management programs and activities.
- Conservation Authority flood management programs significantly prevent or reduce damages caused by flooding from extreme weather events.

Balancing Development

Watershed Planning and Policies

- In order to assess development based on the capacity of the watershed, Conservation Authorities rely on subwatershed plans to establish resource-based targets that protect farmland, ecosystems and greenspaces, promote climate change adaptation, and improve water quality.

For More Information
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