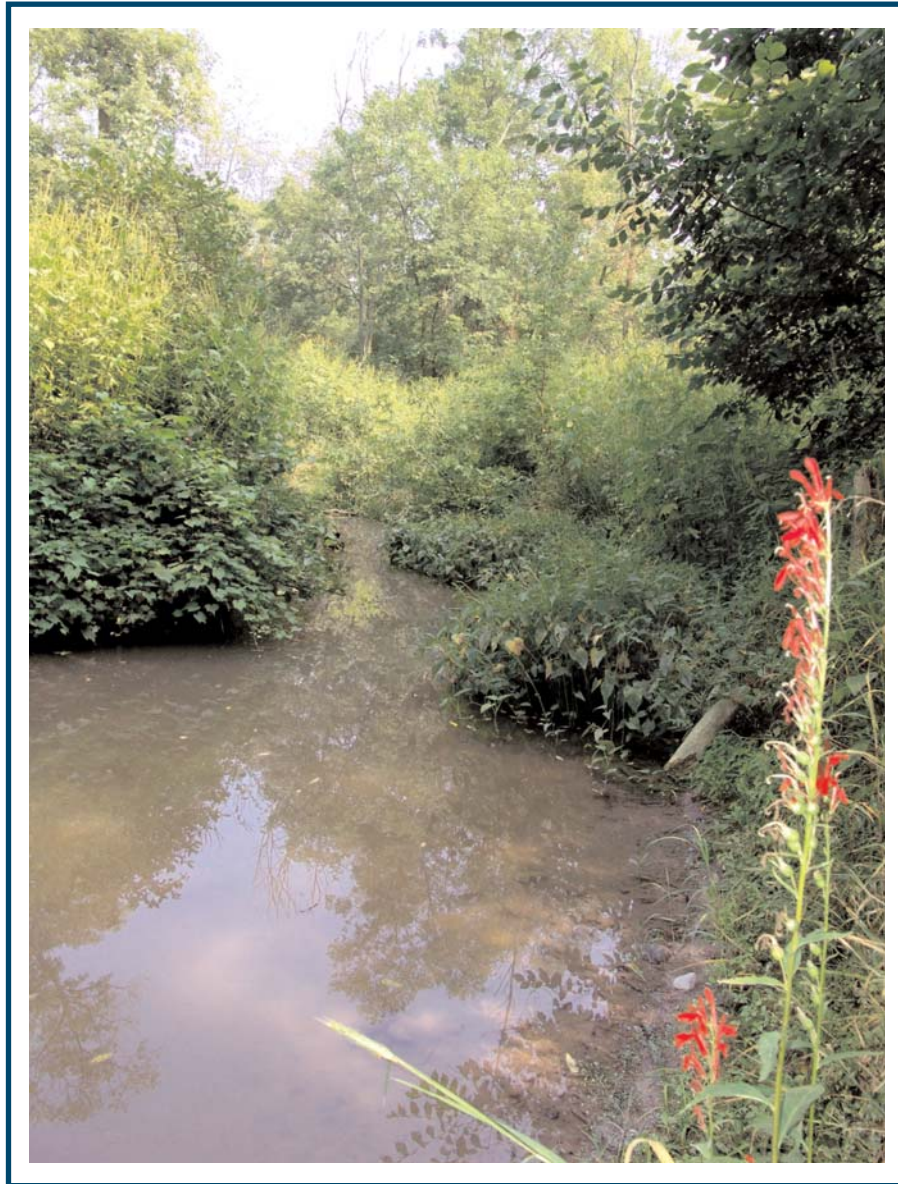


*towards
sustainability...*



2006 Business Plan

By the year 2020, to achieve a sustainable, balanced environment with healthy watersheds, highlighted by clean creeks and rivers, thriving natural areas, and productive agricultural lands.

*Essex Region Conservation Authority
Vision Statement*

Board of Directors (2005)

Our Mission - To provide locally based leadership in creating a sustainable environment for the residents of the Essex Region.

Town of Amherstburg

Anthony Leardi
Leonard Mailloux

Municipality of Leamington

Bill Derbyshire
Don Nicholson

Town of Essex

Morley Bowman
Richard Meloche

Township of Pelee

Darlene Wiper

Town of Kingsville

Nelson Santos
Tamara Stomp

Town of Tecumseh

Joe Bachetti
Joie Jobin

Town of Lakeshore

Tom Bain
Len Janisse

City of Windsor

David Brister
David Cassivi
Ron Jones
Tom Wilson, Chair

Town of LaSalle

Sue Hamdon
Ray Renaud, Vice Chair

**General Manager/
Secretary-Treasurer**
Ken Schmidt



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Essex Region Conservation Authority
360 Fairview Avenue West, Suite 311
Essex, Ontario
Canada N8M 1Y6
Tel: 519-776-5209
Fax: 519-776-8688
email: admin@erca.org

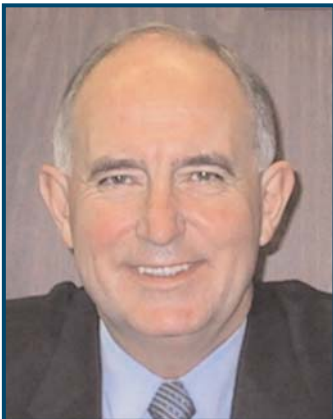
For more information about the Essex Region Conservation Authority,
visit our website at www.erca.org

message from the Chair & General Manager



Tom Wilson

Tom Wilson
(2005) Chair



Ken Schmidt

Ken Schmidt
General Manager/
Secretary-Treasurer

The year 2006 lies ahead of us and provides continued opportunities and challenges towards creating a future of sustainability for the Essex Region. Our community has set a target of 12% natural areas coverage by the year 2020. This is also the minimum target deemed necessary by the United Nations, but currently, only 7.5% of our land base remains in its natural state. There is a great deal of work to be done to reach this important goal.

Our Strategic Plan: Accelerating the Pace Towards a Sustainable Community, has been developed with input from the regional community, and identifies numerous actions and programs that must be implemented to achieve a state of sustainability. The 2006 Business Plan and related budget estimates have been prepared using our strategic plan as our guide. We recognize the financial challenges faced by our municipal partners, and by continuing to implement zero-based budgeting, have prepared this plan in the most fiscally responsible manner possible, while still ensuring that the significant environmental priorities of this region are addressed.

Source Water Protection Planning will continue to be a focus in 2006. Conservation Authorities across Ontario are in the first phase of coordinating Source Water Protection Plans for Ontario's watersheds. Protecting water at its source is the first step in a multi-barrier approach to ensuring healthy

drinking water for all Ontarians. The final phase-in of the Clean Water ~ Green Spaces initiative is planned for 2006. Protecting the significant natural resources that remain in the region is critical to achieving a state of sustainability for our future. Protecting our few existing natural areas is the first step that will allow us to move forward with restoration opportunities.

Watershed planning is an integrated, comprehensive approach to ecosystem management. We are all connected by the land and water within the watershed. Partnerships are key to the success of watershed management, as any decisions regarding the management of our most precious natural resource should be done in a socially, environmentally and economically sustainable manner, and take into account the relationships amongst other resources such as agriculture, forestry, fish and wildlife, waterfowl, and human interests, working locally with stakeholders, partnering municipalities, and the Federal and Provincial governments.

There is a unquestionable link between healthy watersheds and healthy communities. We must properly manage our watersheds in order to ensure a legacy of a cleaner and healthier environment for our next generation. We must make a concerted effort to protect and restore our natural resources. The time has come to make conservation the 'norm' within our society.

the business of watershed management

The Essex Region Conservation Authority is in the business of managing watersheds. A watershed is an area of land that is drained by a river or creek. We are all connected by watersheds, and it is important to remember that someone lives downstream from each of us. Actions taken - either positive or negative, can impact the health of the entire watershed.

Watershed management has been identified as the best framework for ensuring the protection of our most precious natural resource - water.

Watershed management:

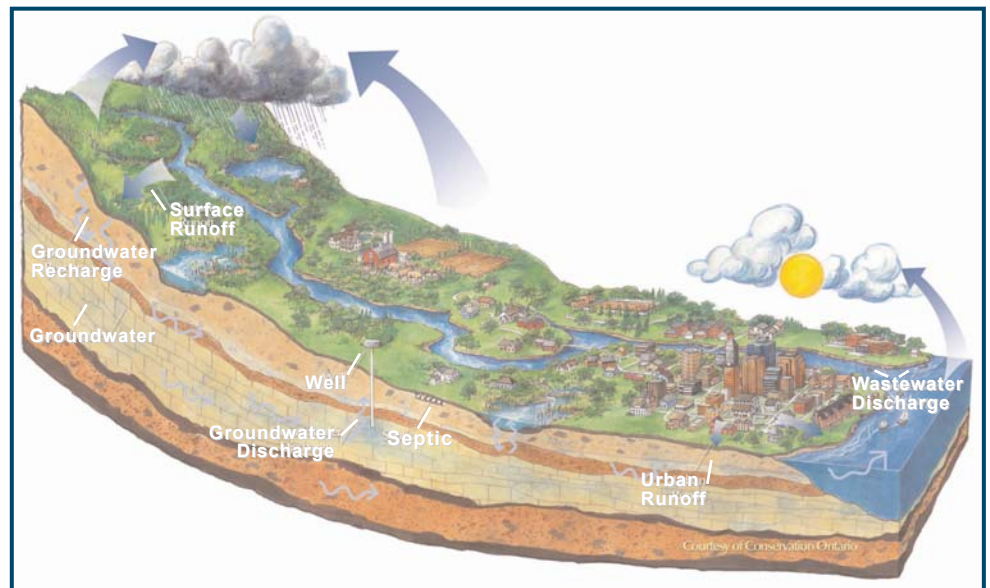
- is the process of managing human activities and natural resources in an area defined by watershed boundaries;
- aims to protect and manage natural resources (including their functions and linkages) for this and future generations;
- uses an integrated, interdisciplinary approach;
- considers the environment, the economy and communities;

- uses a partnership approach to plan and manage;
- uses adaptive environmental management approaches that aim for continuous improvement.

The partnership process and public involvement are also fundamental elements of watershed management. All stakeholders and all levels of government must be involved in the process, and public involvement has been identified as key to the success of watershed planning and management.

Source: Watershed Management in Ontario:
LESSONS LEARNED and Best Practices

A watershed is an area of land that is drained by a river, creek or other body of water. We're all connected by watersheds, and it is important to remember someone lives downstream from each of us.



protect & improve water quality

A clean and healthy water source is paramount to a healthy community. Water is our most precious natural resource, but unfortunately, one that is too easily taken for granted. It is only by properly managing the human impacts on our land that we will ever be able to ensure a clean and healthy water source: for now, and for future generations. ERCA's top strategic priority is the protection and restoration of our water resources.

Source Water Protection Planning will continue, including the completion of "Watershed Characterization Studies" to help identify potential vulnerable areas, threats, and other issues, and analysis of water quantity relationships and needs ("water budgets"). As is the case with Conservation Authorities throughout the Province, these studies are part of a multi-year process leading to comprehensive plans in 2008 to ensure the protection of the sources of water supplies. *Partners: Ontario Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Natural Resources, Municipalities, numerous other stakeholders.*

Cost
\$602,000



Rural/Agricultural Best Management Practices Grant Program, through Clean Water~Green Spaces and other funding sources, will provide grants to landowners for projects that improve water quality, reduce soil erosion and increase natural areas cover. Eligible projects include buffer strips, tree plantings, rock chutes, and septic system upgrades. Approximately 100 projects will be completed in 2006 throughout the region. *Partners: Environment Canada, Province of Ontario, Landowners*

\$835,000

Surface Water Quality Monitoring will continue at 45 stations across the region. Water quality data will be analyzed for trends, used to focus remediation actions, and will be integral to the preparation of Source Water Protection Plans. It is also anticipated that our second Water Quality Report Card will be prepared.

Partners: Environment Canada, Ministry of the Environment

\$34,500

Groundwater Monitoring will continue at 10 monitoring stations operated by ERCA. These are part of the Province-wide groundwater monitoring network, and technical information regarding water level trends and water quality will be used for the preparation of Source Water Protection Plans. *Partners: Ministry of the Environment*

\$8,500

Geographic Information Systems Precision Farming partnership will continue to assist with environmentally sound, cost

\$7,600



effective farming practices, on a fee for service basis.

*Partners:
Settlington Fertilizers*

ERCA is currently analyzing the technical information required to develop Source Water Protection Plans. Protecting drinking water at its source is the first step in a multi-barrier approach to ensuring a safe supply of drinking water for Ontario.

protect natural areas & enhance biodiversity

Land uses and land management activities exert the single biggest influence over water quality and quantity. Habitat in the Essex Region, while among the most unique in all of Canada, has become fragmented and degraded over the past two centuries. The United Nations has stated that for any region to be healthy and sustainable, it must consist of 12% natural areas coverage. In the Essex Region, merely 7.5% of our land base remains in a natural state. We must protect the natural areas that remain, and restore habitat in a strategic and focused manner in order to achieve a state of sustainability for the future of this region.



Natural Areas Protection continues to be critical towards achieving a state of sustainability. In 2006, through our Clean Water~Green Spaces initiative and with funding assistance from several organizations and individuals, fundraising for acquisition of the Spring Garden Complex and other significant natural areas deemed priorities will continue.

Partners: Essex Region Conservation Foundation, Land donations, Private landowners, Province of Ontario, Government of Canada, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Member municipalities and other agencies.

Cost
\$1,656,375



Habitat Restoration projects will be completed at several large (>4 hectare (10 acre)) sites through our Clean Water~Green Spaces Program on several private and public properties. A target of 150 acres throughout the region has been established for 2006. Different habitat types will be restored, focusing primarily on forest habitat (using both row plantings and pit and mound techniques). Prairie and wetland habitats will

be pursued as opportunities arise. Projects will utilize a diversity of native Carolinian trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants.

Partners: Environment Canada, Province of Ontario, Municipalities, Landowners

\$1,001,000



Tree Planting activities at over one hundred privately owned sites will be completed through our spring and fall tree planting program. Approximately 190,000 seedling and large stock trees will be distributed or planted throughout the region to increase local forest cover. Landowner assistance will also be provided through the Emerald Ash Borer Natural Areas Restoration Response Program.

Partners: Landowners, Province of Ontario

\$436,000

Restoration of natural areas through tree planting and other restoration methods is critical to our future. In 2006, ERCA will plant and distribute more than 190,000 seedlings and large stock trees.

Plan Review will continue to involve substantial input into new Official Plans, Environmental Assessment Studies, all Planning Applications, drainage and development proposals, including 'one window permits' for construction in or near Wetlands and Waterways to ensure protection of significant natural areas and habitats. <i>Partners: Member Municipalities, Department of Fisheries & Oceans, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, landowners</i>	\$176,500
Friends of Watersheds will continue with six established groups around the region. Up to two additional groups will be established or reactivated. A diversity of project types will be implemented including tree plantings, stream cleanups, and storm drain marking programs. A particular emphasis will be placed on engaging school aged children in partnership with one or more of the school boards. Both students and adults will be involved in implementation activities. <i>Partners: Environment Canada, Corporate sponsors, Landowners and many others</i>	\$217,000
An Aquatic Species At Risk Recovery Strategy will be finalized which documents the rare species in our watercourse and shoreline areas, raises awareness throughout the community of these species and the actions that can be taken to enhance them, and implements habitat restoration projects that benefit species at risk. <i>Partners: Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Environment Canada, Point Pelee National Park, Ministry of Natural Resources, University of Windsor, Landowners, and others</i>	\$45,000
Wetland Management Plans will be initiated, subject to funding, for high priority wetland complexes e.g., Big Creek wetland. The plans will ultimately guide land and water management activities to maximize both wetland functions and human uses. <i>Partners: Government of Canada, Province of Ontario, Landowners</i>	\$40,000



Clean Water - Green Spaces

Sharing the Responsibility of a cleaner, healthier environment

Clean Water ~ Green Spaces is a three-pronged approach to achieving a future of sustainability for the Essex Region. Currently, our surface water quality is rated poor to very poor, and we have merely 7.5% natural areas coverage to offset the effects of our highly urbanized environment. The United Nations deems that a minimum of 12% of any region must be in its natural state for it to be healthy and sustainable. There is much work to do here in the Essex Region to achieve a future of a sustainability.

Clean Water ~ Green Spaces identifies the elements required to create a sustainable future for our region, and provides incentive funding for projects that achieve the following goals:

- 1. PROTECTION:** We must ensure the protection of existing natural areas.
- 2. RESTORATION:** Restore natural areas in partnership with public and private landowners in order to achieve the minimum requirement of 12% natural areas coverage.
- 3. WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT:** Implement water quality improvement projects such as vegetating buffer strips, creating rock chutes, and other best management practices.

protect homes & people from flood and erosion

In early 2005, our global community witnessed the devastating impacts of natural hazards perhaps more vividly than ever before. Ensuring that homes and people are protected from the threats of flooding and erosion is one of the most important activities undertaken by ERCA and all Conservation Authorities. Plans for new homes and developments are carefully reviewed and criteria set to ensure people, property, and natural features are properly protected from the potentially life-threatening impacts of these natural hazards.

	Cost
Regulations & Development Reviews will continue to provide substantial input into land use planning and development applications, including one window permitting services for proposed works along shorelines, water-ways and flood plains, to ensure protection against flooding and erosion, to prevent adverse impacts such as increased downstream flows, interference with natural coastal processes, and others. This will also assist with the protection of natural areas and habitat as described previously. As well, Ontario Regulation 97/04 Development, Interference with Wetlands & Alteration to Shorelines & Watercourses (ie - Generic Regulation) will be finalized, following the 2005 initiation of mapping, public consultation and peer review on this province-wide, standardized regulation. <i>Partners: Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Federal Department of Fisheries & Oceans, Member Municipalities, landowners</i>	\$392,000
Comprehensive Flood/Erosion Control Program including operation of Flood Forecasting and Warning Systems; ice management (if necessary); and inspection and maintenance of major Flood/Erosion Control Projects (Maintenance works in 2006 will include Turkey Creek Flood Control, Little River Dykes/East Riverside, and others) <i>Partners: Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Member Municipalities</i>	\$181,000
Upper Little River Watershed Stormwater Management Plans will be completed for multi-purpose facilities to address flood control and drainage for the City of Windsor Annexed Lands and portions of the Town of Tecumseh while improving water quality and habitat, and providing recreational features such as trails. <i>Partners: City of Windsor, Town of Tecumseh, Ontario Ministry of Environment</i>	\$33,000
The South East Leamington Study to evaluate coastal processes, shoreline hazards, ecological and socio-economic issues in order to determine plans for sustainable protection, management and land uses will be completed. <i>Partners: Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment Canada, Municipality of Leamington, property owners, Parks Canada</i>	\$210,000
East Riverside Flood Control - The Little River Dykes Flood Control Project was initiated in 2005 and includes substantial improvements to major flood control works to provide enhanced protection for over 2000 homes and the sewage treatment plant. It will be completed in 2006. <i>Partners: City of Windsor, Province of Ontario, major developers</i>	\$140,000

Special Projects will continue to assist municipalities and others with plans, approvals and funding applications for special projects. For 2006 these will include continued assistance with shoreline protection and other enhancements for City of Windsor Waterfront Parks west of Dieppe Park. ERCA's involvement helps to ensure that in addition to flood/ erosion protection, such projects provide habitat enhancements in conjunction with improved recreation features.
Partners: Numerous Government agencies, member municipalities, landowners, and others

\$114,000

Geographic Information Systems will continue to be enhanced including further development of "web based" services and the development of additional GIS "layers" and databases. Partnerships and funding sources will continue to be pursued to further interaction with municipalities' systems.
Partners: County of Essex, other municipalities, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

\$75,600



Shoreline Erosion at East Beach (Leamington, Ontario). Protecting property and people from natural hazards is a key function served by all Conservation Authorities. Using the 100 year floodline mapping, ERCA calculates setbacks and floodproofing elevations for new development to ensure construction projects are protected from the dangers of flooding and erosion.

expanding conservation education & communication

Effective communication can potentially have the greatest impact on improving our local environment. By helping people to learn more about local conservation issues, and engaging their participation in the restoration of our natural environment, significant improvements can be made. Creating a clean, healthy, and sustainable future for our region is the responsibility of our entire community, and we all have the opportunity to get involved in creating a legacy of sustainability for our next generations.

Public Education and Outreach includes annual reporting, media strategies, print communications, mobilizing community groups, education campaigns, video productions and many other initiatives to help communicate with regional residents about environmental issues, and their impact on the human health of our residents.

Partners: Municipalities, Province of Ontario, Corporations and Businesses

Cost
\$81,000

Conservation Education and Heritage Field Studies are curriculum based, hands-on learning opportunities. More than 10,000 students annually learn about the importance of protecting our environment and preserving our heritage. This year, we will redesign our programming in order to make it more user-friendly for the hundreds of teachers that access our programs annually. *Partners: Family Tradition Foods Incorporated, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Greater Essex County District School Board, Windsor-Essex Catholic School Board, CAW, others*

\$58,000

Special Events are held at Conservation Areas and other venues across the region to engage residents in natural experiences. Events like Sunoco Earth Day, a regional tour, our Conservation Challenge and others provide important opportunities for residents to learn more about the environmental issues in our region, and to take action towards achieving a sustainable future.

Partners: Municipalities, Province of Ontario, Suncor Energy Foundation, Businesses

\$58,000

Detroit River - A Canadian Heritage River - 2006 will mark the five year anniversary of the Detroit River's designation as the first river in North America to hold status as both a Canadian and American Heritage River. A celebration will be planned that reflects the human heritage, natural heritage and recreational values of the River, and updates stakeholders on River progress since the time of designation.

\$5,000

The Essex County Demonstration Farm will be maintained to highlight current agricultural techniques, tools and products that enhance the linkage between farming and the environment.

Partners: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Local Farmers

\$25,400



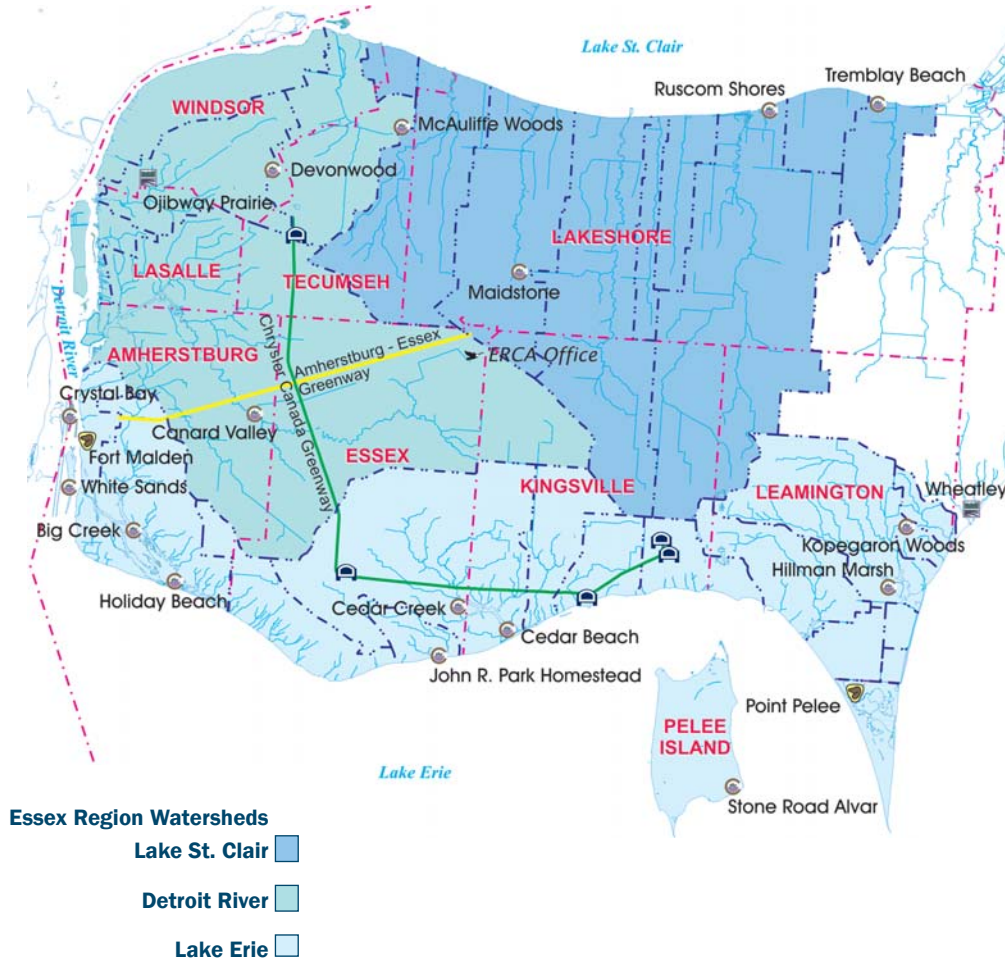
The students of today are the environmental stewards of tomorrow. Curriculum based education programs ensure that our future generations understand the critical relationship between our environment and our human health.

provide nature based recreational opportunities

ERCA owns and manages nearly 4000 acres of natural lands to ensure their protection, and where feasible, provide nature based recreational opportunities to residents and tourists. ERCA provides nearly 100 kilometres of trails that permit residents to live more healthy and active lifestyles. Our 19 Conservation Areas feature rare and unique species that attract tourists from around the world. Our conservation areas reside within the 'migration highway', providing viewing opportunities unlike anywhere else in the world. Ecotourism is defined as tourism that contributes actively to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage. It continues to be among the fastest growing segment of the tourism sector, so Conservation Areas, while enhancing the quality of life for local residents, also provide an important economic return to our region.

	Cost
Essex to Amherstburg Trail Subject to funding, a fully accessible paved trail system will be initiated in 2006 in conjunction with the Town of Essex. This project will combine both ERCA and Town of Essex land holdings into a multi-use trail system with a parking lot and boardwalk. <i>Partners: HRSDC, Town of Essex, Town of Amherstburg</i>	\$367,070
Heritage River Lookout - Conceptual plans and trail preparation will be completed on the sections of property along the Detroit River. Subject to funding, trail construction will be initiated. <i>Partners: HRSDC & Town of Amherstburg</i>	\$64,040
Landfill Site #2 - Subject to funding, partnership arrangements and permit approvals, proposed developments for 2006 include the extension the Chrysler Canada Greenway east through Landfill site #2 and up to County Rd #31. <i>Partners: Essex Windsor Solid Waste Authority, Ridge Construction, Municipality of Leamington, HRSDC</i>	\$198,613
Petite Côte Conservation Area Development - Conceptual plans, trail preparation and a wetland board walk with a viewing tower are proposed for this newly named Conservation Area that will look over the Detroit River. <i>Partners - HRSDC and Town of LaSalle</i>	\$109,686
Tremblay Beach Conservation Area Wetland Development - ERCA will work with its partners to enhance the variety of plants and animals of this wetland and test methods of controlling the invasive <i>Phragmites</i> plant which diminishes wetland productivity. <i>Partners - Ducks Unlimited and Town of Lakeshore</i>	\$37,498
Heritage Forests - will continue to be expanded at Big Creek Conservation Area and at the Fred Cada Heritage Forest at Hillman Marsh Conservation Area. This program reforests selected tracts of land while memorializing loved ones. A new aspect of this project is the Living Legacy Forest which commemorates and celebrates life events such as births and marriages. <i>Partners: Reid, Janisse, Marcotte, Melady, Sutton and Morris Sutton Funeral Homes</i>	\$29,4860
Conservation Areas Operation - Updating, enhancing and maintaining services in our expanding number of Conservation Areas will be a major focus for 2006. ERCA continually provides high quality recreational venues for the region to enjoy. A GIS based database will be further developed in order to help us better manage our lands and provide for a more enjoyable experience to the more than 80,000 visitors who annually use our Conservation Areas. <i>Partners - Municipalities, Province of Ontario</i>	\$754,532

a watershed approach



A watershed is an area of land that is drained by a river, creek, or other body of water. We are all connected by watersheds, and it is important to remember that someone lives downstream from each of us. In the Essex Region, we have three major watersheds - the Detroit River, Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair watersheds.

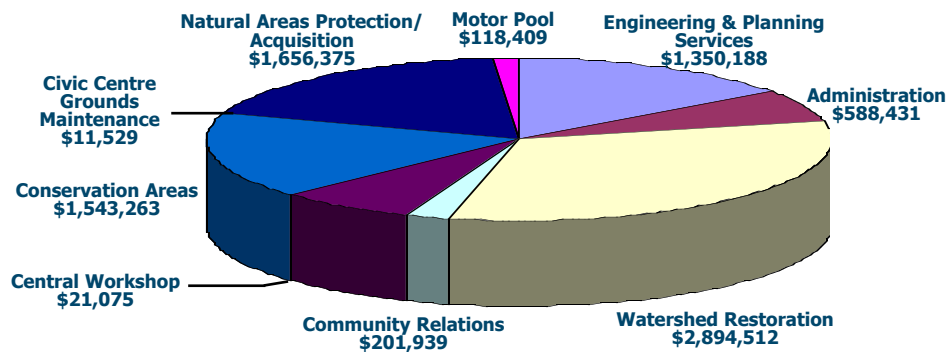
Watershed management is an integrated, ecosystem approach to managing natural resources. Projects and programs have multiple benefits in improving our local environment, and many initiatives can positively impact the entire region. There are a number of reasons why structuring environmental policy, planning, management and implementation on a watershed basis makes good sense. Watersheds are easily understood ecosystem units that demonstrate the overall effects of environmental stresses, as the health of rivers and streams is influenced by and an indicator of the health of the lands through which they flow. As well, quality of life is directly related to watersheds health.

the business of sustainability

	2006 Budget Estimate	2005 Budget Estimate
<u>EXPENSES (ESTIMATED)</u>		
ADMINISTRATION/CORPORATE SERVICES	\$588,431	\$588,425
ENGINEERING AND PLANNING SERVICES		
Program Operations	\$29,265	\$28,900
Programs and Projects	\$823,923	\$1,038,026
Remedial Projects	<u>\$497,000</u>	<u>\$1,055,000</u>
TOTAL ENGINEERING AND PLANNING	\$1,350,188	\$2,121,926
WATERSHED PLANNING		
Program Operations	\$6,211	\$0
Source Water Protection Plans	\$602,000	\$616,748
Surface Water Quality Monitoring	\$34,500	\$34,000
Ground Water Monitoring Network	<u>\$8,500</u>	<u>\$6,956</u>
TOTAL WATERSHED PLANNING	\$651,211	\$657,704
WATERSHED RESTORATION		
Program Operations	\$126,533	\$101,240
Water Quality Improvements & Habitat Restoration	\$2,263,731	\$2,376,127
Forestry	\$504,248	\$430,346
TOTAL WATERSHED RESTORATION	\$2,894,512	\$2,907,713
TOTAL NATURAL AREAS PROTECTION/ACQUISITION	\$1,656,375	\$1,294,270
CONSERVATION AREAS		
Program Operations	\$130,353	\$107,004
Conservation Areas	\$274,859	\$258,461
Conservation Areas Development	\$776,904	\$833,929
Holiday Beach	\$199,800	\$181,200
John R. Park Homestead	<u>\$161,347</u>	<u>\$146,053</u>
TOTAL CONSERVATION AREAS	\$1,543,263	\$1,526,647
COMMUNITY RELATIONS		
Program Operations	\$80,585	\$76,184
Public Awareness Program	\$63,016	\$65,502
Student Education Program	<u>\$58,338</u>	<u>\$57,500</u>
TOTAL COMMUNITY RELATIONS	\$201,939	\$199,186
CENTRAL WORKSHOP	\$21,075	\$14,476
CIVIC CENTRE GROUNDS	\$11,529	\$11,000
MOTOR POOL	\$118,409	\$132,650
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$9,036,935	\$9,453,997
<u>REVENUES (ESTIMATED)</u>		
Provincial Grants	(\$1,460,714)	(\$1,834,312)
Federal Grants	(\$1,071,533)	(\$1,060,038)
General Levy	(\$1,232,914)	(\$1,180,584)
Clean Water ~ Green Spaces	(\$1,050,000)	(\$780,000)
Municipal Funding – Special Projects	(\$267,535)	(\$542,400)
Essex Region Conservation Foundation	(\$154,486)	(\$490,003)
Other Revenues	<u>(\$3,799,753)</u>	<u>(\$3,566,660)</u>
TOTAL REVENUES	(\$9,036,935)	(\$9,453,997)
NET DEFICIT/(SURPLUS)	0	0

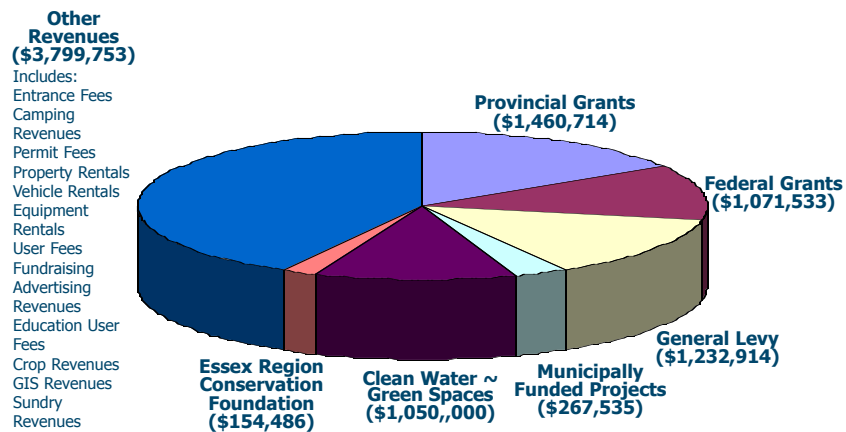
2006 financial information

Expenses (Estimated)



Total: \$9,036,935

Revenues (Estimated)



Total: (\$9,036,935)

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A member of



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Essex Region Conservation Authority

360 Fairview Ave. West, Suite 311, Essex, Ontario N8M 1Y6 Phone: (519) 776-5209 Fax: (519) 776-8688 Web Address: www.erca.org