



2023 Annual Report

Healthy watersheds for today and tomorrow



An Introduction to Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority

Central Lake Ontario Conservation (CLOCA) is a local, community-based, environmental organization and one of 36 Conservation Authorities responsible for managing watershed resources across Ontario. Established in 1958, CLOCA's jurisdiction is based on the watershed boundaries of four major watercourses and 24 minor watercourses draining an area of over 639 square kilometers. Our watershed stretches from the municipal boundaries of Ajax/Pickering to Clarington, and north, from Lake Ontario to the crest of the Oak Ridges Moraine.

We provide a wide variety of science-based watershed management programs and services, delivered in partnership with our municipal partners, local landowners, environmental agencies and all levels of government. Our municipal partners include the Region of Durham, Cities of Oshawa and Pickering, Towns of Ajax and Whitby, Municipality of Clarington and Townships of Scugog and Uxbridge.

The 2023 Annual Report is intended to provide a summary of accomplishments specific to the goals established in the [Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority Strategic Plan 2021-2025](#).





Goal 1: Conserve, restore and
enhance natural resources through
integrated watershed
management

Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority Watershed Report Card 2023

In an effort to raise awareness of the value of environmental monitoring and communicate the state of watershed health, CLOCA participates in Conservation Ontario's Watershed Report Card Program. In 2023 we completed a Watershed Report Card that provides a broader comparison of watershed health for stakeholders across Ontario and a snapshot of environmental conditions in our watershed. To date, we have published four Report Cards: 2023, 2018, 2013 and 2007. The Watershed Report Cards summarize a select suite of watershed health indicators by reporting on the current status of surface water quality, groundwater quality, and forest conditions in a consistent manner, making results comparable across Ontario.

Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority monitors watershed conditions throughout our jurisdiction, targeting specific environmental indicators. Quality and quantity of specific attributes associated with surface water, forest conditions and groundwater were assessed, providing a point of reference for current and future comparisons. Grades in the 2023 Watershed

Report Card indicate what many of Ontario's watersheds are showing, particularly those in southern, more urban areas, that our natural resources are stressed. This was also the finding in our previous Watershed Report Cards. The following highlights the findings of the 2023 Watershed Report Card for the indicators identified above.

Surface Water Quality

Surface water within CLOCA's jurisdiction received grades ranging from B-D with an overall average score of C. Generally, grades show an improvement from the 2018 results in all watersheds with the exception of Black and Harmony Creeks, where there was no change. This improvement is likely due to a larger, more complete dataset rather than on-the-ground changes, as well as CLOCA's restoration program that started in 2019. More efforts are needed to reduce bacterial and nutrient inputs through improvements to land management practices. This will improve water quality and support healthy aquatic ecosystems.

Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority Watershed Report Card 2023, cont.

Forest Conditions

Grades ranged from C–F with an average grade of D. Bowmanville and Soper Creek watershed continues to be the highest scoring watershed with a C grade. Grade increases seen in several watersheds in 2023 compared to 2018 are due to a change in the methodology used to calculate streamside cover and does not reflect an overall improvement in forest conditions.

Groundwater Quality

Groundwater quality scored a grade of A. Sampling indicated that nitrite concentrations did not exceed the prescribed limit set under the Ontario Drinking Water Standards (ODWS). Chloride concentrations on samples from two of the 13 monitoring stations exceeded the ODWS prescribed limit for this parameter.

These wells are situated in highly urbanized area where intensive winter salting is a common practice. Note that groundwater quality results only apply to specific location of monitoring wells and do not represent the condition for the entire watershed. Well water samples were only analyzed for chemical quality and no reports on bacteriological quality.

The CLOCA Watershed Report Cards can be found on CLOCA's [website](#). You can access CLOCA's Report Card and find more information about all 36 Watershed Report Cards at www.watershedcheckup.ca. As well, a Story Map has been developed to show more detailed information about conditions across the province and can be accessed [online](#).

Integrated Watershed Monitoring Program Update

As part of CLOCA's commitment to continued advancement in watershed science and knowledge, CLOCA staff launched CLOCA's Integrated Watershed Monitoring Program (IWMP) in 2017 and continues to monitor the health of three main ecosystems across the watershed—wetlands, forests, and streams.

Each of these ecosystems is impacted by the local climate and groundwater systems, making it critical to understand how seasonal and annual weather patterns relate to our results. Climate and groundwater data collected by CLOCA is an integral part of the IWMP, and this will only increase as climate change impacts become more severe and make weather patterns more extreme and less predictable.

Collaboration and partnerships are integral components of CLOCA's monitoring program. As such, CLOCA partners with

post-secondary institutions, other Conservation Authorities, local citizen scientist groups, and federal and provincial governments. Each of these partnerships contributes in different ways to the development and improvement of the program, including conducting additional fieldwork.

The information collected, evaluated, and analyzed contributes to all of CLOCA's programs and is used by watershed stakeholders, partner municipalities, environmental and stewardship groups, the development industry, academic organizations, and provincial and federal agencies. The information provides for informed decision making on watershed management, planning and actions. The IWMP connects directly with CLOCA's Watershed Plans, to contribute to our understanding of current conditions, set goals, and guide decisions. For more information on CLOCA's IWMP and for up-to-date results, please visit the [StoryMap tool](#).

Oak Ridges Moraine Groundwater Management Program

Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority continues to oversee and administer the Oak Ridges Moraine Groundwater Management Program (ORMGP), a multi-agency, collaborative program that oversees the collection, analyzing, and dissemination of water resource data and insights as a basis for effective decision making and stewardship of water resources across a broad swath of south-central Ontario. The Program continues to improve upon our understanding of groundwater resources on and around the Oak Ridges Moraine, a regional glacial feature and source of drinking water for over 200,000 people in the Greater Toronto Area.

A coalition of 15 government agencies, and 20 local consulting companies, are working collaboratively to better understand and manage water resources. With the Oak Ridges Moraine as a central landscape feature, the Program's database and interpretations stretch from the Hamilton area and Nottawasaga watersheds in the west to the Trent River in the east, and reach from the shores of Lake Ontario northwards to beyond Lake

Simcoe and the Kawartha Lakes.

With rigorous data management as a core foundation, the Program provides a multi-agency, collaborative approach to collecting, analyzing, and disseminating water resource knowledge as a basis for effective decision making and stewardship of water resources in this part of Ontario. Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority, like other agencies, look to the program to provide the regional geological and hydrogeological context for their ongoing technical studies and management initiatives.

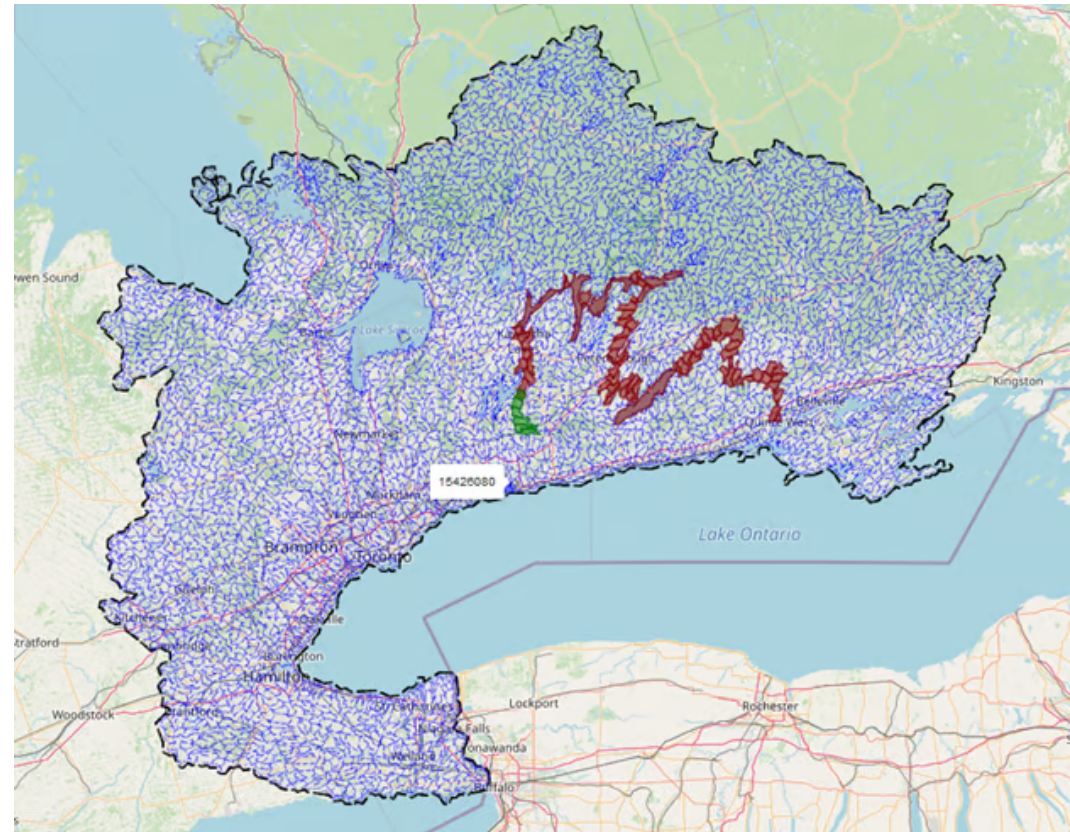
Throughout 2023, staff continued to work on the Program's [website](#), which is the prime vehicle for distributing much of the groundwater-based knowledge held within the ORMGP. In 2023 considerable advances were made in terms of adding metadata that summarizes many of the data sources and methodologies used in analyzing the Program's data.

Oak Ridges Moraine Groundwater Management Program, cont.

The Program assisted several partner agencies in 2023. Some of the projects completed include:

- Assisting Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority with hydrological modelling support of the Mad River.
- Incorporating additional streamflow analyses statistics into the ORMGP Source Water statistical package to assist Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority with eFlow characterization across their watershed.
- Completion of the 'Area of Concern' mapping for Uxbridge Township.
- Extending eastward, and south, to encapsulate most of the Lake Ontario shoreline, coverage of the ORMGP long-term climate estimates to support Environment and Climate Change Canada and Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority hydrological models.

A new interactive map product developed in 2023 in relation to the Environment and Climate Change Canada work is now available via the [ORMGP web portal](#). The map shows the ORMGP study area divided into small subwatersheds, approximately 10 km² in size. The map is topologically corrected such that the ground surface has no closed depressions and every subwatershed therefore drains into its adjacent downgradient subwatershed. Users can click on any subwatershed to see: i) the upgradient areas that flow into the selected subwatershed (in green); and ii) the downgradient pathway that water takes once it leaves the selected subwatershed (in red). For more information on the ORMGP, please visit the [website](#).





Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program (SNAP) – Town of Whitby Pilot Project

Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority will be leading the development and delivery of a Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program (SNAP) pilot project on behalf of the Town of Whitby.

The goal of SNAP is to accelerate the creation of sustainable neighbourhoods in older urban areas by taking an integrated approach at the neighbourhood scale.

How it works: The SNAP seeks to develop action plans to improve the local environment on the neighbourhood scale and build resiliency against climate change by greening local infrastructure and encouraging positive behaviour changes among residents. The SNAP model includes the following features and outcomes:

Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program (SNAP)

Town of Whitby Pilot Project, cont.

Neighbourhood scale – Focusing on place-based solutions

SNAPs coordinate private and public actions at a neighbourhood scale, contributing to a holistic systems strategy. They identify creative retrofit solutions based on the unique environmental and socio-economic context and local community interests.

Multi-objective – Seeking co-benefits

The SNAPs focus on making sustainable changes across five core theme areas: stormwater management, water use and conservation, energy, and natural heritage. The SNAPs also seek synergies with a number of complementary themes, including health and well-being, transportation, waste management, community identity and culture.

Science-based – Predicting measurable outcomes

The SNAPs use a science-based process for identifying and evaluating integrated solutions that have measurable impact, provide a business case for implementation, and achieve multiple objectives. Performance monitoring plans measure long-term change and tracking of sustainability targets against

local baseline data.

Demonstration – Showcasing innovation

Quick-start local demonstration projects such as naturalized landscaping, rain harvesting, and energy use modifications help to bring the plan to life for neighbourhood residents.

Local networks – Engaging public

The SNAPs emphasize collaboration and building partnerships with stakeholders throughout the process. Local residents, businesses, community groups and institutions are all engaged in the design of the SNAP and in efforts to build local capacity for implementation.

Social market research – Identifying local motivators

Through community-based social marketing research, social innovation approaches and extensive consultation with the local community, SNAPs identify and gain understanding of the barriers and motivations to behavioural change and develop strategies to overcome these barriers.

Environmental Restoration Project

Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority staff have extensive knowledge about the natural features, functions, and conditions of its watersheds, and works continuously to monitor, assess, and report on watershed conditions; this information informs other core CLOCA programs and is regularly shared with municipalities and the broader watershed community. This data and knowledge underpin much of CLOCA's watershed management programming, which is focused on protecting, preserving, and enhancing our watersheds for future generations.

In 2019, Durham Region approved support for the Environmental Restoration Project and committed funding for a new Restoration Coordinator position and project implementation. Implementation of this Environmental Restoration Project is now fulfilling several key strategic plan objectives, helping CLOCA advance goals and objectives established in our Watershed Plans, and will ultimately result in future improvements in watershed health.

The following is a brief overview of the main accomplishments made throughout 2023:

- Planted 20,000 trees through Afforestation Program = 26 acres including restoration at Long Sault Conservation Area due to Dericho windstorm damage
- Treated Dog Strangling Vine (invasive) at Rogers Tract Conservation Area = 7 acres
- Treated Phragmites (invasive) at Heber Down Conservation Area = approx. 1 acre
- Treated Autumn Olive (invasive) at Bowmanville Westside Marshes Conservation Area = 16 acres
- Tended to trees at Lynde Shores Conservation Area = approx. 3,000 trees
- Treated Garlic Mustard (invasive) at Purple Woods Conservation Area = approx. 6 acres
- Boy Scouts' planting = 300 trees at Enniskillen Conservation Area
- Participated in Earth Day Festival at Bowmanville Westside Marshes Conservation Area tree-planting = 200 trees
- Participated in Durham Children's Watershed Festival
- Prepared four Managed Forest Plans = approx. 85 acres
- Maintained native meadow at Heber Down Conservation Area = approx. 1 acre

Stream Restoration

Stream restoration is a new stewardship project that began in 2023 to address impacts in stream health. The program consists of two activities: a watershed inventory and stream restoration. The watershed inventory is a streamside walking survey that is used to identify and prioritize areas that need restoration. The stream restoration focuses on both riparian and in-stream habitats. The primary stream restoration technique focuses on using locally sourced woody material and holiday trees to build in-stream structures that mimic natural woody material in these stream environments. These structures help reduce erosion rates and act as sediment traps to improve water quality while also providing important habitat for fish and other aquatic life.

The planting of native tree and shrub species is the second restoration technique used to restore riparian buffers. In the first year of this project, 19.5 kilometres of stream were surveyed throughout CLOCA's Conservation Areas with 900 square meters of stream being restored as a result of this inventory. Through this project, CLOCA has developed new partnerships with several organizations including Ontario Streams, the City of Oshawa, the Town of Whitby, and Miller Compost.





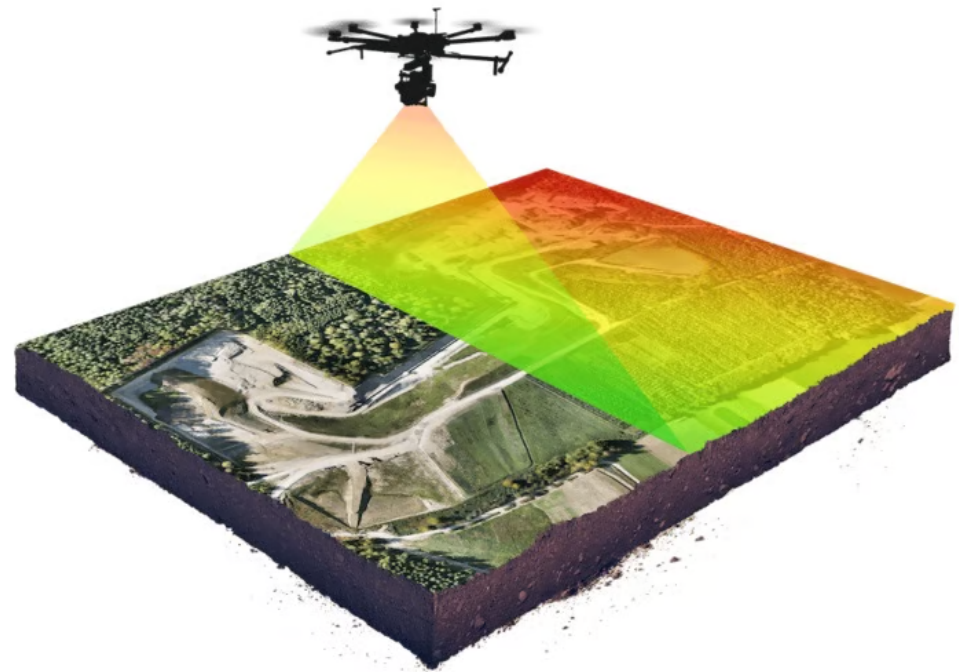
Goal 2: Support healthy communities and the protection of people and property from flooding and erosion.

Lynde Creek Floodplain Mapping

The Lynde Creek and its tributaries drain an area of approximately 131 square kilometres. It is entirely located within the Region of Durham and is found primarily within the Town of Whitby, with some areas falling within the Town of Ajax, the City of Pickering, and the Townships of Uxbridge and Scugog. The population of the watershed is estimated at 100,000 people and includes 16 flood damage centres as identified in the [CLOCA Watershed Flood Risk Assessment \(2017\)](#), including a high-risk flood damage centre with 218 residential structures at risk.

Floodplain mapping for the Lynde Creek is more than 15 years old and has been outdated by significant changes to the watershed including: 11 new watercourse crossings from the new Highway 407 and Highway 412 construction; new Highway 401 bridge and reconstructed highway profile and ramp crossings of the creek; new bridge and road profile for Victoria Street over the Lynde Creek; development associated with the West Whitby and Brooklin Secondary Plans, and intensification of urban land uses and road crossings. Proposed Official Plan urban expansion areas will also impact the Lynde Creek and will be considered in the floodplain mapping exercise.

This project uses updated LIDAR topographic mapping and survey-checked engineering plans for recent roadway crossings of the floodplain and provide accurate floodplain mapping to replace CLOCA's outdated information. The project is planned for completion by March 31, 2024.



Planning and Regulation

Central Lake Ontario Conservation's Authority's Planning and Regulation responsibilities focus on protecting people and property from natural hazards of flooding and erosion. This department directs new development away from natural hazards.

In 2023, staff provided environmental planning advice on numerous remote pre-application consultation meetings with landowners, developers, and municipal planning department staff.

218

permits issued for various development activities, under Ontario Regulation 42/06.

561

different technical submissions from municipalities, consultants and landowners were reviewed.

8,180

documents were entered into CLOCA's electronic records management system for efficient retrieval and archiving.

163

pre-application consultation meetings were held with development proponents to help them understand requirements and submit future applications.

The image features a blurred natural landscape in the background, showing what appears to be a body of water and some vegetation. In the foreground, a rustic wooden fence made of dark, weathered logs is visible, with one log running horizontally across the middle and another vertical log supporting it. The overall tone is muted and naturalistic.

Goal 3: Protection, management,
and safety of Conservation Areas.

CLOCA Conservation Areas Meet Pan-Canadian Standards for Protected Areas

Included in the Canadian Protected and Conserved Areas Database (CPCAD)

The federal government has adopted a '30 by 30' goal—conserving 30 per cent of Canada's land and water by 2030. In December 2022, Canada and Ontario reported 13.6 per cent and 10.9 per cent of their total land base as 'Protected and Other Conserved Areas'. Ontario Parks (Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks) is responsible for overseeing and submitting Protected Areas' assessments in Ontario.

Ontario tracks changes in the protected areas' system as a measure of Ontario's contribution to national and international biodiversity targets. Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority's Conservation Areas are important contributors to not only local watershed health, but to the maintenance of provincial, national, and international ecosystem biodiversity, as such CLOCA worked closely with Ontario Nature through 2022 to assemble the data and documentation required by the assessment standards. Except for leased agricultural lands, decommissioned landfill areas, and smaller disconnected valleyland parcels that didn't meet the criteria, 2,458.2 hectares, or 90 per cent of CLOCA's 2,743 hectares of Conservation Area

landholdings were assessed as eligible Protected Areas and added to the national Canadian Protected and Conserved Areas Database (CPCAD).

Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority works hard to acquire, manage and restore Conservation Areas as one way to protect high-value ecosystem features and services across its jurisdiction, and also provides important opportunities for the public to interact with these spaces. This land management work is particularly important in the Greater Toronto Area, where watershed and ecosystem health are under tremendous pressure from land use changes and the effects of climate change, and where public access to high-quality greenspace is at a premium. The designation of most CLOCA Conservation Area landholdings as Protected Areas under the federal Canadian Protected Areas program reinforces the fact that CLOCA's Conservation Areas are not only critical regional assets that protect and maintain local watershed and community health, but that they also play an important role in the maintenance of provincial, national, and international ecosystem biodiversity.

Conservation Areas' Update

Two nature schools operated day camps within CLOCA's Conservation Areas in the summer of 2023. A YWCA summer camp operated out of the Russ Powell Nature Centre in Enniskillen Conservation Area, and the Eunoia Nature School operated out of the Heber Down Conservation Area. The camps provide weekday activities for children in a nature setting.

In July, an Ontario Trillium Foundation recognition event was held after completion of Conservation Area parking lot improvements. The event also recognized the renaming of the education centre at Enniskillen Conservation Area as the Russ Powell Nature Centre. The honourable Todd McCarthy, MPP Durham and CLOCA's Chair of the Board, Mayor Elizabeth Roy, toured the Conservation Area, as well as the new Nature Nook—a free-play area in a contained portion of cedar forest.



Conservation Areas' Improvements



- A new roof was installed on the Heber Down southerly picnic shelter.
- New public washroom facilities were completed in the late fall at Long Sault Conservation Area and Enniskillen Conservation Area.
- Kiosk signage, trailhead and trail markers are being revitalized throughout CLOCA's Conservation Areas. New signs are in place at Lynde Shores Conservation Area and Enniskillen Conservation Area and are in progress for Heber Down Conservation Area. The new signs have been designed to meet requirements for recreational trails under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Replacements will continue for all CLOCA's Conservation Areas.
- 'Recycled' a bridge from Heber Down Conservation Area (previously removed as part of a past Ministry of Transportation of Ontario project). The bridge was floated to Enniskillen Conservation Area and repurposed to serve as route access across the creek.
- At Purple Woods Conservation Area, staff reinstated a sap pipeline that was lost during the extensive forest damage of the 2022 Derecho wind event with a goal to have sufficient pipelines in place to support approximately 1,000 taps for the spring 2024 maple syrup season.

Land Acquisition – addition to Long Sault Conservation Area

In 2023, CLOCA acquired an ecologically important 29-hectare parcel of land as an additional land holding to the Long Sault Conservation Area. Long Sault Conservation Area, located in the northern portion of Clarington in the heart of the Oak Ridges Moraine, includes mature forest, plantation, wetland, and meadow and has more than 18 kilometres of marked trails that wind throughout the property. This area is considered an important core wildlife area because of the diversity and size of the habitats it contains.

These natural areas help to regulate groundwater and surface water resources, reduce summer temperatures, offer carbon sequestration, support biodiversity and pollinators and help to reduce downstream erosion and flooding.

The acquisition of this parcel protects a significant environmental area and will increase the overall size of the Conservation Area and ultimately make it more sustainable for public access.



A close-up photograph of a person's open palm holding a small, bright green frog. The person is wearing a teal-colored long-sleeved shirt. The background is dark and out of focus. The text 'Goal 4: Create a more knowledgeable and connected watershed community through engagement and education.' is overlaid in white at the bottom left of the image.

Goal 4: Create a more
knowledgeable and connected
watershed community through
engagement and education.

Community Outreach and Education

Conservation Areas Trail Stewardship (CATS) Program

This volunteer program, that began in January 2020, involves members of the community who regularly visit CLOCA's Conservation Areas to help keep Conservation Areas clean by picking up garbage, and safe by reporting any fallen trees/branches. These CATS volunteers also provide a presence in CLOCA's Conservation Areas and communicate valuable messages to visitors. There are now a total of 76 volunteers, with 2023 seeing 49 new intakes. CATS volunteers collected over 200 garbage bags of garbage from the Conservation Areas and engaged with over 2,200 visitors.

Earth Day Event: Bowmanville Westside Marshes

Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority has been working on the development of a Conservation and Restoration Plan for Bowmanville Marsh as a logical next step in the delivery of the CLOCA Durham Region Coastal Wetland Monitoring Program (DRCWMP). This is a collaborative plan that includes the knowledge and input of community members such as local residents and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers. To initiate community engagement, CLOCA hosted an open house event at the Bowmanville and Westside Marshes Conservation Area (BWMCA). Earth Day was chosen as a suitable day to create an inclusive event with many activities. Various partners from across Durham Region and beyond came together to support the event that began with an Indigenous-led opening, followed by children's activities,

tree planting, natural heritage learning stations, information booths, and a garbage clean-up. Community partners supporting this event included Ontario Power Generation, Municipality of Clarington, Clarington Public Library, Durham Region Waste, Aviva Canada volunteers and CLOCA's Conservation Area Trail Steward (CATS) program volunteers.

SMART Watersheds

The community science project, SMART Watersheds, is designed to create a technology ecosystem, enhancing our environmental monitoring activities with more frequent data collection, analysis, and advanced data management. In addition to the technology, SMART Watersheds engages community volunteers, the public, elementary, high school, and post-secondary students in using this new technology in their local watershed. The Weather Watch component of this project is complete and live data from our weather stations, set-up in CLOCA's watershed, is viewable on our [website](#). The Water Watch component is nearing completion. Signage has been installed at the monitoring locations and branded backpacks containing water and soil monitoring equipment, and instructions on use and safety have been delivered to all participating Oshawa, Whitby and Clarington library locations. Videos on equipment use and safety have been created and are active on CLOCA's website. The libraries are currently in the process of setting up a process for signing out the backpacks for use by the local watershed community. Data collected will be displayed on CLOCA's website.

Annual Purple Woods Maple Syrup Festival – return to in-person programming

After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, CLOCA's annual Purple Woods Maple Syrup Festival returned to its original format, welcoming approximately 9,500 people of all ages to this annual traditional event.

This year, staff collected 24,000 litres of sap and made 400 litres of maple syrup. In the Purple Woods sugarbush, it takes 40–45 litres of sap to make one litre of maple syrup and staff typically collect about one litre of sap per spile for the season. The season finished with 600 litres of maple syrup.

Festival guests included TRACKS Youth Program, the Oshawa Museum, the Scugog Shores Museum, Oshawa Public Library, Soper Creek Wildlife Rescue and All Our Relations Métis Drum Circle, and high school and community volunteers logged over 800 volunteer hours.



Nature Nook, Enniskillen Conservation Area

This 'play space' at Enniskillen Conservation Area provides children with the opportunity to create their own play in a forest area equipped with natural play materials (e.g., rails, sticks, stones, logs, tree cookies). The play space is contained within cedar rail fencing and in a forested area with little vegetation on the ground, to minimize off-trail impacts. The Nature Nook was created with the knowledge that child-directed play helps with the development of the whole child — cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills. The intentionally irregular boundaries formed by the snaking cedar rail fence and internal fenced islands were designed to give students a sense of freedom and a desire to explore while containing them within a safe space with defined limits. Construction on this play space was completed in the spring of 2023 and was promptly reserved for use by visiting classes in the short period of time that it had been available and is also enjoyed by members of the local community visiting Enniskillen Conservation Area.

Durham Children's Watershed Festival

Launched as part of CLOCA's 40th anniversary theme of water quality in 1998, the goal of the Durham Children's Watershed Festival (DCWF) is to increase Grade 4 student awareness concerning water issues and motivating them to become water stewards in their home, classroom and community. The Festival included 34 hands-on interactive activity centres with messages

relevant to everyday life around the concepts of water conservation and protection. Through the activity centres, students discovered the importance of water, and how their actions impact the watershed in which they live.

The 24th annual Durham Children's Watershed Festival was held in 2023, with over 2,000 Grade 4 students attending. Since the first Festival in 1998, over 86,000 students, 9,000 high school student volunteers, and 11,000 teachers and parent volunteers have participated from across the Region of Durham. With financial and in-kind contributions from sponsors, CLOCA continues to subsidize costs for students to make the experience affordable. The Camp Samac site continues to provide a safe and central location for participants to experience a fun and immersive learning opportunity. A tributary of Oshawa Creek travels through the property, providing participants with an opportunity to view the annual migration and life cycle of Coho and Chinook salmon. Special presentations were provided by Soper Creek Wildlife Rescue, Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre (OTCC), Wild Ontario and Royal Canadian Falconry.

Several local and regional corporate sponsors contribute financial and in-kind resources to the Festival, ensuring activity centres are updated, volunteers receive lunch and refreshments, and bussing costs are subsidized. This year's sponsors included: Cargill Foundation, Charities Aid Foundation of America, Region of Durham, Municipality of Clarington, Ontario Power Generation, and Trans Canada Pipelines Ltd.



Goal 5: Demonstrate business excellence through effective customer service, engaged employees and innovation.

GIS, Information Technology and Data Management

Technology continues to inspire CLOCA to create mapping products and web applications for internal and external use, as well as dashboards for the public to access data and actively participate in programs like SMART Watersheds. In 2023, CLOCA staff collaborated across departments to enhance various dashboards and mobile apps to be leveraged by staff for data collection and decision-making. In addition to dashboards and mobile apps, the team developed interactive websites for Walking Tours of Cranberry and Lynde Marshes and the Land Management of Lynde Shores Conservation Area.

In 2023 CLOCA staff continued work on updating the Conservation Area trail maps. To date, five of the eight Conservation Areas have been completed (Long Sault, Lynde Shores, Purple Woods, Enniskillen and Bowmanville Westside Marshes Conservation Areas). In addition to the kiosk maps, a version of the maps was completed for the [Avenza](#) app. The Avenza application helps users stay on the trail using offline mobile maps and GPS on their smartphones. The maps were also featured on the Avenza website.

Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority continues to provide technical assistance to the content management system (CACMS) used by several Conservation Authorities that CLOCA services. This year saw the addition of another partner, Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority, which required importing a legacy database and implementing reporting capabilities. In addition,

CLOCA staff worked with Conservation Halton to improve dashboards and reporting that will be leveraged by other partner Conservation Authorities. These shared services foster collaboration and lead to efficiencies in workflows and reporting across agencies.

The Community Services Recovery Fund helped to fund further integration of our CACMS with Microsoft Office 365, Microsoft Teams and SharePoint. This will enable staff to leverage the collaborative tools of the Microsoft platform while at the same time ensuring data governance over our corporate records. In addition to Microsoft integration, the Community Services Recovery Fund provided the resources for CLOCA to digitize all of its historical board reports and agendas.

As part of ongoing support and maintenance for the Oak Ridges Moraine Groundwater Program (ORMGP) partners' website, CLOCA staff have made great progress on a new tool for importing files from their well water dataloggers into their database with a soft launch of the tool in December 2023.

Work continued on the migration of CLOCA's telemetry data into the Water Information Systems platform. The migration led to the revamp of CLOCA's open data portal and real-time gauging site to leverage the Water Information System for data downloads and visualization.

AODA-compliant website

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) is intended to reduce and remove barriers for people with disabilities so that Ontario can become more accessible and inclusive for everyone. In 2022, CLOCA began the process to update its existing website to conform with the AODA compliance requirements. The website is comprised of over 100 pages (excluding the Library content), so this undertaking took over a year to complete. The updated/new website was launched in October 2023.

As an additional means of digital accessibility for visitors to the CLOCA website, the [UserWay web accessibility widget](#) was added to the website—an AI-powered solution that automates

website code's remediation, adapting to website visitor usage by providing instant accommodations for common disability profiles from vision impairments to dyslexia and more. The widget improves the website's user experience, constantly monitoring and fixing violations behind-the-scenes. UserWay does not collect or store any user data and maintains the strictest compliance levels with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. The widget improves the website's user experience, constantly monitoring and fixing violations behind-the-scenes and provides visitors flexibility and customization with user-triggered features. The UserWay widget is noted in the lower right corner of the CLOCA website.

Accounting and Administration

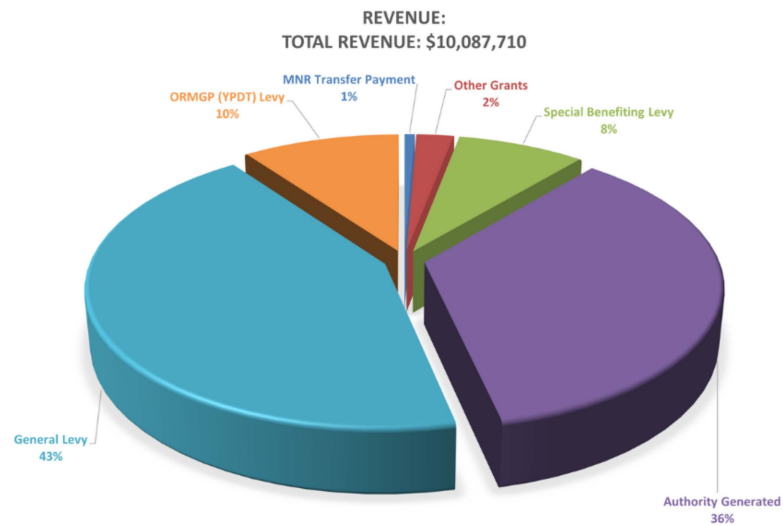
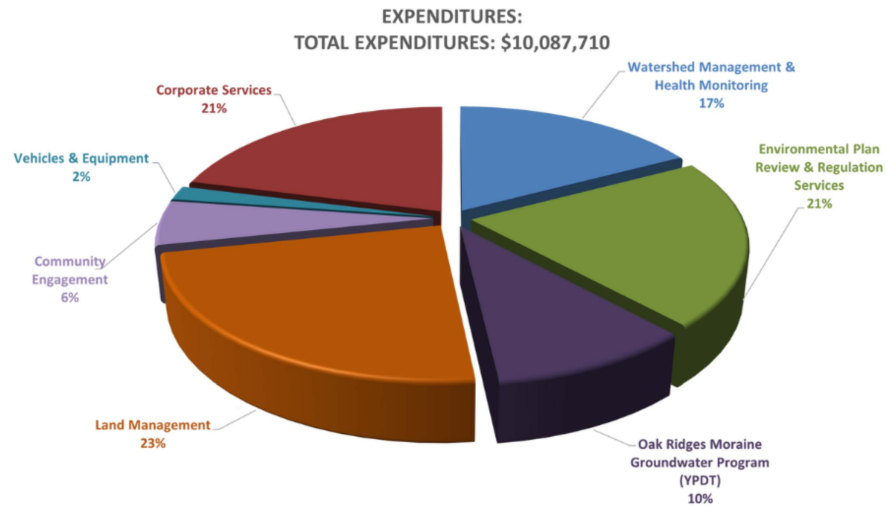
Throughout 2023, CLOCA continued to implement continuous administrative improvement measures to ensure effective and efficient operations. New accounting software was introduced, work continued on the migration to a new accounting and budget format consistent with [Conservation Authorities Act](#) requirements, and the purchase of cost-effective office equipment.

The year 2023 also saw the continued implementation of *Conservation Authorities Act* requirements such as finalization of an inventory of programs and services and the formulation of memorandum of understanding with CLOCA's municipal partners for the delivery of services.



2023 Budget

The approved 2023 budget reflects an allocation of resources to support CLOCA's planned programs and services. This budget allowed CLOCA to continue its efforts in support of our mission to advance watershed health through engagement, science and conservation.



2023 Board of Directors

Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority is governed by members who make up our Board of Directors. Board Members are appointed for a four-year term, following municipal elections, with representation based on municipal populations in our watershed. Our Board Members authorize CLOCA's programs and policies, which are then implemented by staff.

Town of Whitby

- Councillor C. Leahy
- Councillor R. Mulcahy
- Mayor E. Roy (Chair)
- Councillor M. Shahid

Township of Uxbridge

- Councillor B. Garrod

Township of Scugog

- Councillor I. McDougall

Town of Ajax

- Councillor M. Crawford

City of Pickering

- Councillor D. Pickles

City of Oshawa

- Councillor J. Neal
- Councillor T. Marimpietri
- Councillor R. Kerr
- Councillor B. Chapman (Vice Chair)

Municipality of

Clarington

- Councillor C. Traill
- Councillor S. Elhajjeh
- R. Hooper (local citizen representative)