



Conservation
ONTARIO
Natural Champions



Annual Report 2003



CAO/CHAIR MESSAGE 2003

"Conservation Authorities are tested, publicly respected and accepted organizations who already work in partnership with municipalities and other stakeholders to undertake natural resource protection programs."

*Justice Dennis O'Connor,
Walkerton Inquiry
Part II Report,
May 2002.*

In April 2003, the government's Advisory Committee on Watershed-based Source Protection Planning released its report with 55 recommendations for all watersheds in Ontario, consistent with the Walkerton Inquiry reports. It identified Conservation Authorities (CAs) as the organizations responsible for leading and coordinating the development of these plans. With a new Ontario Liberal government in place by the fall of 2003, Conservation Ontario was again asked to participate in the Source Protection Implementation and Technical Experts Committees.

Conservation Authorities bring science and knowledge to the table. Our technical expertise and scientific models provide the information required to make the right decisions in terms of current and future water resources.

Late in 2003 several CAs collaborated to initiate three watershed-based pilot projects designed to produce models and research results that can be used to improve the way we do our work, the way we plan for the future and the way we communicate with our stakeholders and partners. These pilot projects go to the heart of some of the most significant issues facing Conservation Authorities and the people of Ontario. They will enhance our understanding of water resources, watersheds and the environment.

All CAs will benefit from these efforts by learning new technologies and developing new skills. Conservation Ontario will continue to identify and promote future opportunities to work in partnerships with others on similar initiatives.

Conservation Authorities took a bold step in 2003 and approved a new dynamic brand: *Conservation Ontario: Natural Champions*. With the adoption of this new image, it will position us as a strong, interdependent network of watershed practitioners and the lead "voice for conservation" in Ontario. Improved branding will help communicate our collective messages more effectively, raise our profile as a network and increase our influence with key decision makers and stakeholders.

Conservation Authorities also celebrated the 10th anniversary of the A.D. Latournell Conservation Symposium with the best event yet. In addition to the 200 speakers highlighted throughout the three day program, the new Minister of the Environment, Leona Dombrowsky, joined us for a special "breakfast with the Minister." The 2003 theme, "Protecting the Source: From Upstream to Downstream" provided Conservation Authorities and other delegates an opportunity to explore new roles for all partners involved in protecting water resources in Ontario. This symposium links CAs with other practitioners in the conservation movement including representatives from government and various other organizations.

Now, more than ever before, it is most important that Conservation Authorities continue to work together with all stakeholders to effectively plan, monitor and manage all our natural resources, but with a particular focus on water. A healthy environment is the greatest legacy we can leave our children and it is critical to continued economic growth and prosperity in Ontario.

Peter Krause, Chair

Dick Hunter, General Manager

ADVOCACY

Source Protection

The release of the government's Report of the Advisory Committee on Watershed-based Source Protection Planning in April, 2003 was a significant step forward in the development of a source protection framework for the province. Conservation Authorities were active participants on the Committee and supporting technical group. The Advisory Committee supported the Walkerton Inquiry's recommendation that Conservation Authorities coordinate the source protection planning process and provided more detail on the proposed CA role.

Conservation Authorities continued to work throughout 2003 on building their collective capacity, technical competency and consistency in preparation for their anticipated role in source protection planning. Conservation Authorities supported the concept of grouping into planning areas and worked to refine the concept and develop some model partnership structures. This will require us to build innovative partnerships between ourselves in order to realize the potential enhancements to our collective capacity and technical competence.

CAs collaborated in partnership projects to strengthen their technical competency and expand the knowledge base including three watershed-based pilot projects and a number of other initiatives. As well, CAs, often in partnership with their member municipalities, continued to undertake technical projects and activities that will be building blocks for future source protection plans. This includes groundwater studies, identification of areas susceptible to contamination, delineation of wellhead protection areas, and rural water quality programs as well as ongoing data collection initiatives such as the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network.

Conservation Authorities, both locally and provincially through Conservation Ontario, worked to improve relationships with critical source protection stakeholders including municipalities, agricultural groups and environmental organizations. The ability of CAs to foster local partnerships with multiple stakeholders will be key to successful completion of source protection plans.

In December 2003, the new government signaled its continued commitment to watershed based source protection by striking a Technical Experts Committee and a Source Protection Implementation Committee to continue the development of the source protection framework. The appointment of Conservation Ontario representatives to both committees indicates that CAs will be in a good position to influence this process in 2004.

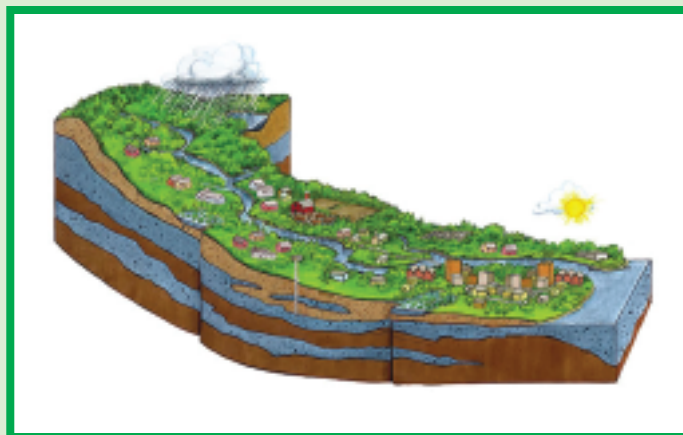
Watershed Stewardship

Recognizing the role that the agricultural and rural communities play in source protection planning and improving/maintaining water quality, Conservation Ontario continued to reach out to various agencies and groups throughout 2003 including the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA), Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA), The Rural Council of Ontario (TORC) and the Ontario Farm Environment Coalition (OFEC).

Conservation Ontario was part of a national coalition on watershed stewardship led by the Langley Environmental Partners Society (LEPS) to explore key actions that can be taken across the country to promote watershed stewardship. Two Conservation Authorities (ABCA and SNCA) hosted discussion workshops to develop input from Ontario. A final report, the *National Watershed Stewardship Report on Policy Recommendations and Actions for Implementation* was released at the end of 2003.

Conservation Ontario continues to work with Trees Ontario Foundation and the Ontario Forestry Association to promote an enhanced level of private land tree planting through the Forests 2020 program announced as part of the Federal Climate Change Initiatives. With 1.5 million trees planted in 2003, CAs are the major player in assisting rural landowners in their afforestation efforts.

Conservation Ontario continued to encourage both the federal and provincial governments to continue to fund incentive programs to assist rural landowners in the implementation of best management practices in order to promote improved water quality and healthy watershed ecosystems.



COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING



Branding

Conservation Ontario coordinated the CA network's new collective identity. The new brand gives voice and image to the characteristics that make Conservation Authorities unique and will serve as the face of the network of CAs. In addition to updating Conservation Ontario's logo and adopting a new tagline, *Natural Champions*, Conservation Authorities made the following commitments to:

- be a credible source of valued science-based information, integrity and insight;
- be a network of dependable, forward-thinking leaders in responsible watershed management;
- be facilitators that value and promote stakeholder involvement in decision making;
- balance human, environmental and economic needs;
- be trusted implementers of successful programs and initiatives that get things done in the field.

Our goal with the new brand is to position the network of Conservation Authorities as the "lead voice for conservation" in Ontario.

Watershed Stewardship & Source Protection

Conservation Ontario carried out a number of activities in 2003 to promote the importance of source protection for healthy watersheds. Included in the activities were the development of a media kit on source protection as well as display panels illustrating how watersheds work and the value of source protection. A new watershed cross section graphic and generic powerpoint on source protection were created and made available to Conservation Authorities and other stakeholders.

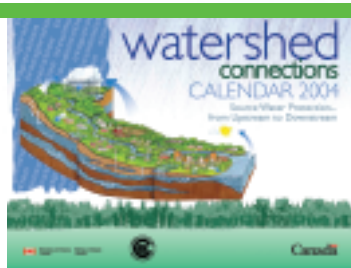
With the assistance of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), Conservation Ontario published a calendar entitled: *Watershed Connections — Source Protection from Upstream to Downstream*. This popular calendar was provided to Conservation Authorities for local distribution as well as circulated among other key provincial stakeholders and decision-makers.

A.D. Latornell Conservation Symposium

The focus on source protection was carried over to the annual A.D. Latornell Conservation Symposium in the theme: *Protecting the Source — From Upstream to Downstream*. This year marked the 10th anniversary of the symposium and a record number of speakers and delegates participated in the event. The newly elected Ontario Minister of the Environment, the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, was a special guest at the symposium.

Each year, a number of people are recognized for their life time contributions to the conservation movement with the presentation of the Pioneer Awards. This year's recipients included: Ron Scott, Jack MacPherson, the late Arthur Hebert Richardson, Greta McGillivray and Bill McLean. The Soil and Water Conservation Society also presented an Award of Merit to student, Melissa Prout.

New funding partners for the symposium this year included the Ontario Ministries of the Environment and Agriculture & Food. Returning partners included: Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the Nottawasaga Inn & Conference Centre, Telus, Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Planning & Engineering Initiatives Ltd. (PEIL).



PARTNERSHIPS

MOE/MNR/CO Watershed-based Demonstration Projects

On behalf of the Conservation Authorities, Conservation Ontario entered into a partnership agreement with MOE and

MNR to develop demonstration projects

illustrating new and innovative approaches to watershed stewardship.

These projects wrapped up in 2003 with the release of a set of fact sheets and final reports. The information has



been circulated extensively and is also available on CO's website. Topics addressed included:

- Watershed Reporting
- Web-based Communications
- Water Allocation
- Phosphorous Trading
- Best Practices in Watershed Management
- Enhancing Water Storage

Watershed-based Pilot Project Phase 2 focused on source protection and planning tools and was initiated in 2003 with the approval of three proposals announced in February 2003. The three projects are ongoing into 2004 and include:

- "Source Protection Planning in Ontario: How Much Data Is Available? How Much is Enough?" (*Partners: Lower Trent CA, Ganaraska Region CA, Crowe Valley CA*)
- "Providing Access to Source Protection Information for the Rural Community" (*Partners: Maitland Valley CA, Saugeen Valley Conservation, Water Action Team, SVCA Low Water Response Team*)
- "Development of a Water Quality Model for Nutrient Management" (*Partners: Lake Simcoe Region CA, Nottawasaga Valley CA, Kawartha Conservation, Environment Canada, Trent University, Greenland International Inc.*)

Conservation Ontario will be responsible for the technology transfer through a series of final written reports, fact sheets and website material.

Permit To Take Water (PTTW) Pilot Projects

On behalf of the Conservation Authorities, Conservation Ontario entered into a Partnership Agreement with MOE for "Instream Flow Requirements Pilot Projects." Three pilot projects were conducted with Cataraqui Region, Grand River and Long Point Region Conservation Authorities. The purpose of the projects was to characterize the instream flow requirements within different watersheds so that adverse ecological impacts can be avoided while trying to accommodate water users. The results will be available in 2004.

Conservation Ontario also entered into a partnership agreement with the MOE to examine the implications of daily monitoring and electronic reporting of water takings across sectors, as well as, consideration of training and education requirements. Quinte Conservation led this pilot project with water takers in their watershed and with agricultural water takers in Long Point Region CA.

Water Resources Information Project (WRIP)

Conservation Ontario's WRIP III report was distributed among CAs in 2003. This report focused on implementing the CA *Information Management Strategy* developed in WRIP II. Accomplishments included completion of a *Water Quality Monitoring Discussion Paper* and a comprehensive list of actions to further improve water resources information management within Conservation Authorities (e.g. 26 CAs joined the Ontario Geospatial Data Exchange). The WRIP IV agreement was signed in 2003 and is focusing on source protection planning while implementing the actions from WRIP III.

Provincial Water Monitoring

By the end of 2003, approximately 380 wells had been instrumented under the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network and all CAs are either collecting information, selecting monitoring sites or negotiating their role in the network. With regard to the Provincial Surface Water Quality Monitoring Network, there are over 350 monitoring sites under CA jurisdiction. Work continues with various agencies on improvements to provincial surface water quality and quantity monitoring networks.

Aging Infrastructure

In 2003, the province allocated \$5 million for Conservation Authority water and erosion control infrastructure identified through updates to a Conservation Ontario database. A CO team worked with MNR to identify priority projects and with their member municipalities, CAs came through with the matching dollars to protect life and property. The case continues to be made for a multi-year funding program for CA infrastructure that allows for proper project planning, design and approval.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Fish Habitat

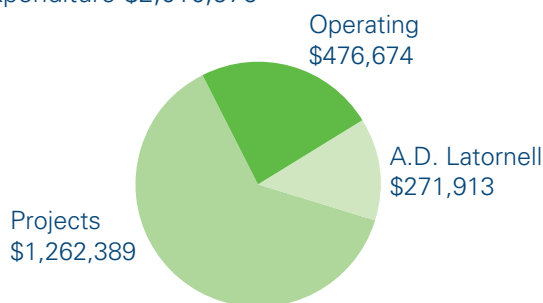
By the end of 2003, 35 Conservation Authority were under formal agreements with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) for the delivery of Federal *Fisheries Act* habitat provisions. This delivery relationship continues to benefit from ongoing dialogue between DFO, MNR and CO.

CLASS EA

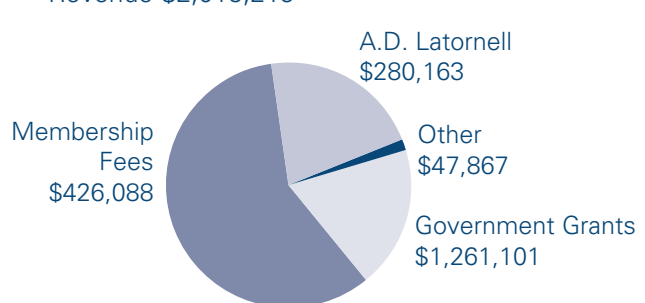
On April 30, 2003 Conservation Ontario submitted to the Ministry of the Environment its *2002 Annual Effectiveness Monitoring Report for the Class Environmental Assessment for Remedial Flood and Erosion Control Projects (Class EA)*. There were seven projects initiated under the Class EA in 2002. The Annual Report fulfills requirements to monitor the effectiveness of the Class EA process to ensure sound environmental planning and to ensure that the Class EA remains current and relevant.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Expenditure \$2,010,976



Revenue \$2,015,219



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Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities

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|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| • Ausable Bayfield | • Grand River | • Lower Trent | • Quinte |
| • Cataraqui Region | • Grey Sauble | • Maitland Valley | • Raisin Region |
| • Catfish Creek | • Hamilton | • Mattagami Region | • Rideau Valley |
| • Central Lake Ontario | • Kawartha | • Mississippi Valley | • Saugeen |
| • Conservation Halton | • Kettle Creek | • Niagara Peninsula | • Sault Ste. Marie Region |
| • Credit Valley | • Lakehead Region | • Nickel District | • South Nation |
| • Crowe Valley | • Lake Simcoe Region | • North Bay-Mattawa | • St. Clair Region |
| • Essex Region | • Long Point Region | • Nottawasaga Valley | • Toronto and Region |
| • Ganaraska Region | • Lower Thames Valley | • Otonabee | • Upper Thames River |