

Watershed Moments



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Grand Opening of the Parrott Trail at Potter's Creek



Local dignitaries, Quinte Conservation board members, staff, and members of public joined in July for the official grand opening of the Parrott Trail at Potter's Creek

The accessible Parrott Trail at Potter's Creek officially opened on July 24, 2015. The trail started as a dream in 2011 when Quinte Conservation began a series of fundraisers to raise the necessary funds for the construction of an accessible trail. In May 2014 the Parrott Foundation donated \$250,000 to the project. Quinte Conservation had already raised \$25,000 through events such as Wines of the Watershed and Family Fun Day. Over 50 local businesses and community organizations have also supported the project.

The trail is located on the south side of Highway 2 across from the Quinte Conservation Administration Office in Belleville at the Potter's Creek Conservation Area. The parking lot has a paved section which meets a paved trail that winds along both the shores of Potter's Creek and the Bay of Quinte. Further trails

of crushed gravel take people through a wooded area and the Nortel Arboretum. Features of the Conservation Area include turtle habitat ponds, a trail along the Bay of Quinte shoreline, accessible picnic tables and scent gardens. Another popular past time is feeding the friendly birds at the many bird feeders scattered along the trail. Some of the birds are even brave enough to take seeds from visitors when offered by hand! There are plenty of wildlife viewing opportunities from benches adjacent to the paved trail.

Usage of the trail and the south end of the Potter's Creek Conservation Area have increased greatly since the grand opening. The area is regularly filled with families, seniors, anglers and other community members who are taking advantage of the sights and sounds along the Bay of Quinte.



Many families now enjoy a relaxing time along the water at Potter's Creek Conservation Area.



The Parrott Trail at Potter's Creek has become a popular destination for senior's groups and others.

Groundwater Monitoring Goes Space Age at QC



Inside one of Quinte Conservation's groundwater monitoring stations.

Groundwater monitoring at Quinte Conservation is changing with the times. With the development of new technology and increasing use of satellites, the way Quinte Conservation is collecting groundwater data is evolving. In partnership with the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, Quinte Conservation operates a network of 30 wells to monitor

groundwater conditions throughout the Quinte watershed region.

These wells have been monitored since 2002 and provide information about groundwater levels and water quality to assist in the interpretation of changing watershed conditions. This information is used in delivery of the low water response program, watershed report cards, and assessment of climate change.

Traditionally, these wells have been operated through the use of cell phone technology or manual downloading of data by driving to the wells. This past year the majority of wells were outfitted with new equipment that enables the transmission of data via satellites directly to Quinte Conservation computers. This technology has greatly enhanced our ability to keep on top of changing watershed conditions as well as improved efficiency in cost and time spent.

Taking things a step further a Masters student at the University of Guelph is using data collected from our wells to evaluate the use of satellites in measuring the level of groundwater in our region.

This technology is being used at a large scale throughout the world and is being tested to assess applicability in Ontario. The research is ongoing and the results are to be published in scientific journals. Stay tuned for changes in technology and science.

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*“The **WISKI Hub** has experienced greater sharing of knowledge, work procedures and communication. The framework assists in our flood forecasting efforts. Task groups develop specific solutions that increase our efficiency in implementing programs, reduces overall cost and creates consistent products to clients across eastern Ontario and hopefully in time, across the entire province.”*

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Protecting Municipal Drinking Water Sources



The first of Ontario's new Drinking Water Protection Zone road signs was installed in the Town of Greater Napanee on November 16, 2015.

Quinte Conservation worked with local municipalities and residents during 2015 to implement policies in the Quinte Region Source Protection Plan. The Plan that sets out how our municipal drinking water sources will be protected became effective on January 1, 2015. Implementation actions included: working with people engaged in significant threat activities to establish risk management plans; updating municipal planning documents and emergency response plans; and providing education and outreach.

Risk Management Services

Quinte Conservation provides the risk management services for municipalities with significant drinking water threats and/or drinking water systems in the Quinte Region. Prior to being accepted, applications under the Planning Act or for the construction or the change of use of a building within the vulnerable areas surrounding a municipal drinking water source are screened to check for compliance with the Source Protection Plan.

2015 actions include:

- 48 site visits were conducted to assess if a risk management plan is required to safely manage activities that can pose a significant threat to drinking water sources.
- Risk management plans were completed for:
 - residences with home heating oil in the most vulnerable zone around municipal wells (100 metre radius),
 - businesses that store waste oil and
 - some agricultural operations.
- Risk management staff visited residents with home heating oil tanks located in the second vulnerable zone surrounding municipal wells. They provided them with printed information, emergency number stickers for oil tanks and fill pipes, and a reminder about the regulations that require an annual oil

heating system inspection. This zone is the wellhead protection area 'B' and is the area in which a spilled contaminant could reach the well within two years.

- Site visits to some properties revealed that existing activities did not require risk management plans and so exemption letters were issued.
- Relevant fact sheets were provided to landowners during site visits.

Education and Outreach

Quinte Conservation and local municipalities collaborated to deliver education and outreach. Products and initiatives include publications and fact sheets, e-newsletters, presentations, slide shows, and informative letters to property owners in the most vulnerable areas. The project website QuinteSourceWater.ca was updated and the number of unique visitors rose significantly in 2015.

More Implementation Actions

- Municipalities moved forward with septic system inspections required under the Ontario Building Code in areas where the operation of a septic system is identified as a significant threat to the municipal water source.
- Municipalities began to update Official Plans and Zoning By-laws to reflect requirements in the Quinte Region Source Protection Plan.
- Municipalities worked to update their Emergency Response Plans to include maps of the drinking water protection zones

Drinking Water Protection Zone Road Signs

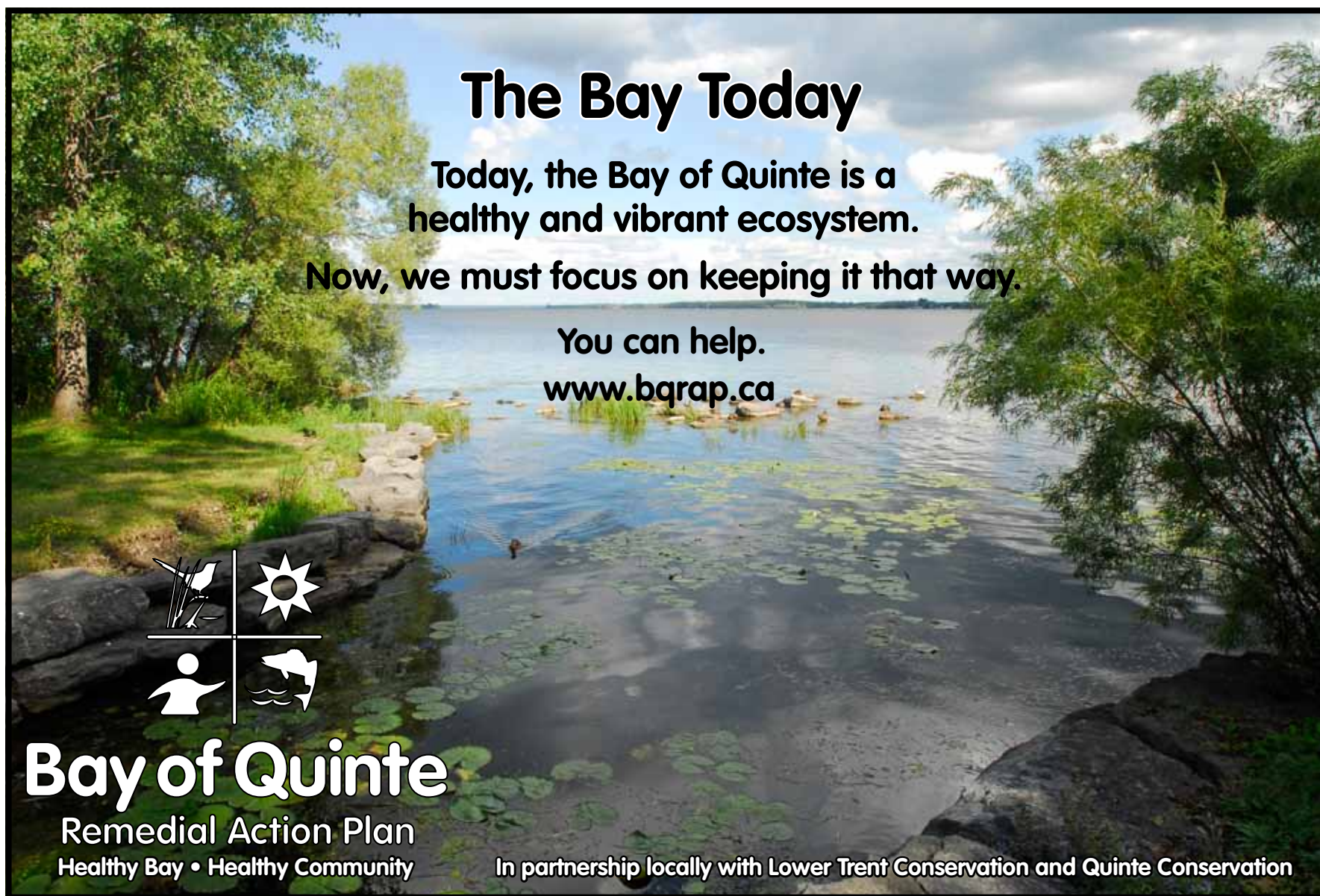
On November 16, 2015, the first of Ontario's new Drinking Water Protection Zone road signs was installed in the Town of Greater Napanee. The signs will mark locations where well-used roads cross into zones where municipal drinking water sources are the most vulnerable to contamination.

The signs alert emergency responders to the drinking water protection zones so that prompt steps may be taken to protect the public water supply in the event of an accidental spill. The new signs will also help to raise public awareness of the need to protect our drinking water supplies.

Thirty-three signs will be erected in the Quinte Region; 24 on municipal roads and nine on provincial highways. Almost 800 will be installed across the province.

More Information

- QuinteSourceWater.ca
- Contact the Project Manager, Keith Taylor, at Quinte Conservation.
- email: ktaylor@quinteconservation.ca, phone: 613-968-3434 or 613-354-3312, extension 114.



The Bay of Quinte Today

Today, the Bay of Quinte is a healthy and vibrant ecosystem. Now, we must focus on keeping it that way. Everyone has a role to play in keeping the Bay healthy. Your actions, no matter how small, impact the water quality of the Bay.

In 1985, the International Joint Commission (a Canadian – American Great Lakes watchdog), under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, identified the Bay of Quinte as one of 43 Great Lakes Areas of Concern (AOC). An AOC is an area where environmental quality has been significantly degraded by human activities. In each AOC, a Remedial Action Plan (RAP) must be developed and implemented.

The Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan identified and implements actions to rehabilitate 11 impaired environmental challenges. Each challenge has a series of scientific criteria it must meet before it can be declared unimpaired.

Today, two of the challenges: fish tumours and other deformities and restrictions on dredging activities, have just completed the public comments process. Now, the final reports will be sent to the governments of Canada and Ontario for formal concurrence that the established criteria have been met and these challenges can be declared unimpaired. In the coming year, three more challenges: Degradation of fish and wildlife populations, degradation of benthos, loss of fish and wildlife habitat, will

undergo the public comments process.

Of the remaining six challenges, these three: restrictions on drinking water or taste and odour problems, beach closures, and degradation of aesthetics, have met the scientific criteria necessary to start the process of having final reports compiled. The final three challenges are: restriction on fish consumption, eutrophication or undesirable algae, and degradation of phytoplankton and zooplankton populations. Within the next year or so, the criteria for fish consumption should be met. The criteria for eutrophication or undesirable algae is undergoing some additional research and modelling, along with the development of a phosphorus management strategy. Degradation of phytoplankton and zooplankton populations is undergoing additional research and analysis at this time.

Since the implementation of the Remedial Action Plan there have been vast improvements to the water quality in the Bay of Quinte. A significant amount of federal and provincial money has been spent on scientific research to understand the dynamic of the Bay's ecosystem and how best to rehabilitate it. Also, municipalities, industries, agriculture and private landowners have invested time and money in implementing a variety of projects to improve water quality.

Today, the Bay is considered a jewel in Lake Ontario. As the RAP starts to wind down, we must start the process of ensuring the environmental quality, so many people have worked so hard to

achieve, does not backslide.

Everyone has a role to play in maintaining the water quality in the Bay. Whether it's restoring your own shoreline, using non-phosphorus fertilizer, installing permeable pavers on your walkway or driveway, being aware of what goes down the storm sewer because it does go into the nearest body of water untreated, or talking to your local politicians and municipalities about actions to keep the Bay a healthy and vibrant ecosystem. Maintaining water quality in the Bay is everyone's responsibility.

Another way you can become involved is to participate in the next public comments process. You can "Have your Say about the Bay" by sharing your opinion about whether or not the next series of environmental challenges should be declared unimpaired.

Sign up for the BQRAP monthly newsletter, so you won't miss the next public comments period.

Visit the BQRAP website www.bqrap.ca to find more information and view the videos on the environmental challenges.

Colebrook and Harry Smith Dams Get Upgrades



Colebrook Dam during construction

In a cooperative effort between the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Stone Mills Township, and Quinte Conservation the Colebrook Dam underwent repair during the summer and early fall of 2015. The project repaired cracks in the concrete, added new piers, all to ensure the Colebrook Dam now meets Dam Safety Guidelines.

The Colebrook Dam is on the Napanee River in the Hamlet of Colebrook, in Stone Mills Township. It can be accessed via County Road 1, north from the Hamlet of Yarker to Colebrook. It was originally constructed in 1836 to provide water power for a saw and grist mill. It now serves as a local recreational attraction providing boating and limited fishing opportunities.

The project was a large undertaking, involving the drawing down of water above the dam so that the work could be done. The draw down started at the end of July and it took almost two weeks for the water levels to come down to a point where work could begin. The work was done by a local contractor and came in on time and under budget.

Extensive work was also done at the Harry Smith Dam including the reshaping of the embankment and the addition of new outlets. Built over 100 years ago, this dam is located at the Harry Smith Conservation Area in the Village of Ameliasburgh. The primary purpose of this dam is recreational and low flow augmentation.



Harry Smith Dam during construction



Completed work at Harry Smith Dam

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Miller Wetland Ecology Boardwalk at The Frink

The Wetland Ecology Boardwalk, a 500 metre boardwalk originally build in 1995-1997 by the Friends of the Frink Centre is due for replacement over the next few years. Fundraising started in 2015 in order to replace sections of the boardwalk. In November we were delighted to receive a substantial donation to the Frink Centre allowing us to move forward with a replacement of a large section of boardwalk. In September of 2015 we were able to replace 30 sections of boardwalk and added an octagonal viewing deck. This new section, now called the Miller Wetland Ecology Boardwalk and Viewing Deck, was made possible due to a significant donation made to the Frink Centre from the late Peter Miller in memory of his late wife and brother.

Fundraising continues to replace the connecting sections of boardwalk. If you are interested in contributing through a donation or sponsorship of a section of boardwalk please contact Maya Navrot at Quinte Conservation, mnavrot@quinteconservation.ca or call 613-968-3434 ext 131.



New viewing deck at the Miller Wetland Ecology Boardwalk

Trail Improvements at Sheffield and Little Bluff CAs



Sheffield Conservation Area

Quinte Conservation field staff were kept busy in 2015 working on the trail systems at local conservation areas. Over 40km of trails are routinely inspected and checked for safety and hazards. Major improvements were made at Sheffield and Little Bluff Conservation Areas. The trail at Sheffield was changed to eliminate a hazardous water crossing and to provide better views of the impressive scenery and a greater chance to experience the rock barrens. The trails there provide a challenge for experienced hikers. Mapping of the new trails will be finished in 2016.

Regular visitors to Little Bluff will be familiar with the steep trail that leads down to the pebble beach. This trail has been improved. While it is still steep, the hazardous cross slope has been eliminated and water bars have been installed to eliminate erosion.

When visiting a conservation area remember to stay on the marked and maintained trails and keep all pets leashed.



Little Bluff Conservation Area

2015 Education Programs Reach Over 4,000 People

Quinte Conservation reached over 4,000 children and their family members through education programs in 2015. Children's education programs included the Stream of Dreams Watershed Science to Art program in schools, Frink Centre Outreach Programs, and the Summer Education Programs including Conservation Camp and six Family Nature Day events. In addition, QC staff attended eight community events in the summer of 2015. These included six Lake Association Annual General Meetings and two community festivals (Skootamatta Lake Festival and

Verona Cattail Festival). Staff were delighted to be once again involved in the annual woodlot conference with local stewardship councils, partnered with Friends of Salmon River on the first Living Watersheds forum, and 2015 brought a new two year partnership towards the development of a lake stewardship plan for Stoco Lake, in partnership with The Municipality of Tweed and Friends of Stoco Lake. For 2016 programs check the events calendar on the website, QuinteConservation.ca.

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Quinte Conservation: Climate Change Strategy

This past year was observed globally to be the warmest on record since record keeping began. In the Quinte area high temperature records were also established with December being one of the warmest in recent memory prompting some local golf courses to remain open for an extended period of time and a late season game of golf becoming a new holiday tradition for some. Review of average annual temperatures in the Quinte region has shown a definite increasing trend and projections are for this trend to continue as emission gases emissions continues around the world.

This trend of warming temperature and increased frequency of extreme weather has scientists concerned about what the future may hold. Quinte Conservation has been active this past year through continued monitoring at our climate change stations and also through the development of a strategy to outline how the Conservation Authority will address a changing climate. The main goal of the strategy will be to help the watershed community understand the impacts of climate change and promote actions that both mitigate and adapt to these impacts.

Global leaders expressed their concern about climate change at a summit held in Paris this past year to discuss how to hold the line on greenhouse gas emissions to prevent global temperatures from warming by more than 1.5 degrees Celsius. The summit was deemed to be a success with global leaders committing to control the emission of greenhouse gases. Quinte Conservation, in partnership with United Nations Quinte Branch, held a local summit, at the same time as the Paris meeting, at the Belleville library. The event was well attended and participants were given



Quinte Conservation's Hydrogeologist, Mark Boone, and Source Water Protection Manager, Keith Taylor, presenting at the Quinte UN Branch Climate Change event in December 2015

the task of predicting what the future may look like in the Quinte region in the year 2050. Each group enthusiastically presented their vision showing that Quinte area residents are ready to embrace climate change and adapt with whatever the future climate conditions may be.

Wildwood Academy Preschool Program



Children and parents playing in the snow at Wildwood Academy

In September of 2015, Quinte Conservation partnered with Family Space Quinte to offer a new and unique early years program called Wildwood Academy with a focus on promoting creative play in the outdoors. Early Childhood Educators meet families every Friday at Potter's Creek Conservation Area from 9:30-11:30am. The program is geared for children under six and their caregivers.

Family Space Quinte Early Childhood Educators along with our Quinte Conservation Education Coordinator facilitate the program and guide families through a number of outdoor free-play nature stations. The program begins with an adventure on the trail through the woods, children feed the birds and explore along the trail looking for pine cones, items shaped like triangles, or whatever other challenge may speak to them or opportunity nature presents. A walk on this trail may have them exploring a rotting log for life, finding mosses of different colors and textures, and balancing on some fallen trees. This brings children to the shoreline of the Bay of Quinte and the stony beaches where children engage in water and rock play, building towers, rock shelters, stone soups, or whatever strikes their imaginations. There are no rules, only guidance when needed. On cold winter days children collect dry stick of various sizes, sort them and help program leaders create a small fire to warm up around and roast some apple slices while enjoying a cup of hot cocoa.

Staff are there to help parents and children feel confident and safe in their natural environment, to help assess risks, and problem solve, while providing them with information to improve their level of comfort in the outdoors.

About Quinte Conservation

Quinte Conservation is one of Ontario's 36 conservation authorities. We are a community based environmental protection agency. Located in eastern Ontario, Quinte Conservation provides cost-effective environmental expertise and leadership that develops and delivers programs to ensure the healthy coexistence between the community, environment, and economy.

Our 6,000 square kilometre area includes the drainage basins of the Moira, Napanee and Salmon Rivers and all of Prince Edward County and is home to over 117,000 people living in 18 municipalities. Quinte Conservation owns over 30,000 acres of land ranging from small parcels at some of our 39 water control structures, to large tracts of over 1,000 acres, many with significant natural features.

Our mission is to create a sustainable ecosystem where people and nature live in harmony. Our vision is to be the premier ecologically sustainable watershed. Our success is based on: local initiative, watershed jurisdiction and partnerships in resource management. We are a member of Conservation Ontario.



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in the
Quinte Watersheds
through the
TREES ONTARIO
50 Million Trees
Program



2015 Financial Report

2015 was a very productive year for Quinte Conservation. Staff have worked hard on many successful projects. We continued our efforts on our core programs and also added some new projects in our local municipalities.

Operations Budget - \$3,546,537

Where do our revenues come from?

Authority Generated Revenue	37 %
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources	9 %
Municipal Levies	33 %
Special Municipal Levies	4 %
Other Government Grants	17 %

Where do our expenditures go?

Watershed Science and Monitoring	65 %
Planning Advisory and Regulations	8 %
Conservation Land Management	9 %
Stewardship Services	3 %
Corporate Services	15 %

Capital Budget - \$2,001,949

Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan	8 %
Quinte Conservation Capital Projects	46 %
Partnering Projects	45 %
Projects through Fundraising	1 %

Unaudited summary of 2015 revenues and expenditures at Quinte Conservation.

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