



Cataraqui
conservation

2023 Annual Report

Supporting Healthy & Resilient Communities



Cataraqui Conservation

About

Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (Cataraqui Conservation) is a community based environmental protection and advisory agency, established in 1964 by the Province of Ontario at the request of municipalities within the Cataraqui watershed, to provide expertise and resources to aid in the protection of life and property from the growing risk of flooding and erosion of shorelines and waterways.

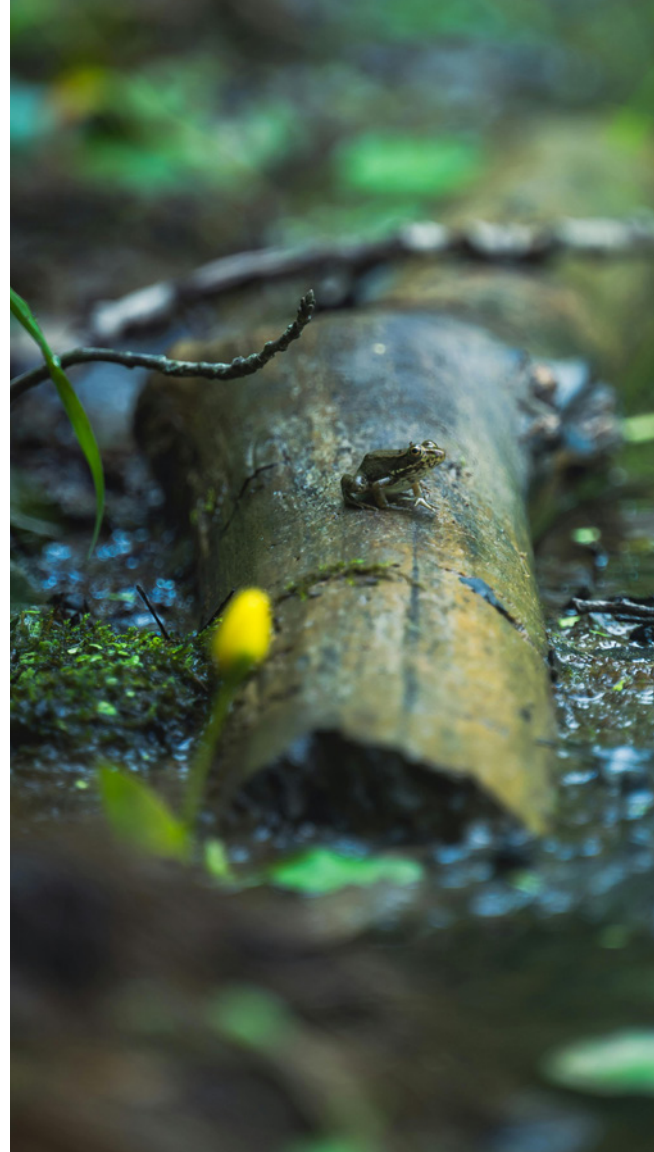
Our jurisdiction is over 3,800 sq km of land from the Town of Greater Napanee in the west to the City of Brockville in the east, encompassing 11 watersheds. Municipalities represented include the Cities of Kingston and Brockville, the Towns of Gananoque and Greater Napanee, and the Townships of Rideau Lakes, Leeds & the Thousand Islands, Athens, Loyalist, South Frontenac, Front of Yonge, and Elizabethtown-Kitley. When acting as the Cataraqui Source Protection Authority, Frontenac Islands Township is included in the membership.

Cataraqui Conservation's mandated role is to provide programs and services with partner municipalities to further the conservation, restoration, development, and management of natural resources in the Cataraqui Region watershed. Along with these programs and services we strive to promote sustainable living in our communities and work with our partners to ensure development actions upstream do not have detrimental impacts downstream.

Cataraqui Conservation also provides opportunities for nature appreciation and recreation for residents at our eight Conservation Areas and the Cataraqui Trail. Staff work towards the goal of supporting healthy local watersheds, protecting public health, reducing the impact of natural hazards, and ensuring resilient communities.

Our Vision

That the natural environment of our watersheds be conserved, that degraded natural resources be restored, that our regional diversity will be valued by watershed residents, and that the public will understand the role everyone plays in resource management and enjoyment.



Board Members



Matt Smith
Township of Athens

Jeff Earle
City of Brockville

Katherine Hobbs
City of Brockville

Cam Kennedy (Jan-May)
Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley

Al Barton (Jan-Oct)
Township of Front of Yonge

Margaret Fancy (Nov-Dec)
Township of Front of Yonge

Matt Harper
Town of Gananoque

Angela Hicks
Town of Greater Napanee

Don Amos
City of Kingston

Gary Oosterhof - Chair
City of Kingston

Lisa Osanic
City of Kingston

Wendy Stephen
City of Kingston

Gordon Ohlke (Jan)
Leeds & the Thousand Islands

Brock Gorrell (Aug-Dec)
Leeds & the Thousand Islands

Paul Proderick - Vice Chair
Loyalist Township

Paul McAuley (Jan-March)
Loyalist Township

Jake Ennis (April-Dec)
Loyalist Township

Joan Delaney
Township of Rideau Lakes

Ron Sleeth
Township of South Frontenac

Scott Trueman
Township of South Frontenac



Message from Our Board Chair

"We cannot direct the wind ... but we can adjust our sails."

It has been my privilege to serve Cataraqui Conservation as Chair of the Full Authority Board for the past year and I am appreciative of everyone's support and encouragement. 2023 has seen us once again manage a changing regulatory landscape. I was constantly impressed by our General Manager, Katrina Furlanetto, and her skillful management of our mandate, our staff, and our assets as well as the shifting provincial priorities as the months went by.

In particular, I would like to highlight some of the achievements of our dedicated staff team over the past 12 months. These include the creation of in-field, online collection forms to enable staff to more efficiently perform their tasks onsite; the creation of a new Health and Safety program, as well as updated cybersecurity training for all staff. Administratively, staff incorporated a new, web-based phone system, migrated to new timesheets and absence management software. Due to increased public demand to access our various conservation areas as well as the Cataraqui Trail, alongside our partner Friends groups, Operations staff were able to improve trails and road access to Lemoine Point Conservation Area, Mac Johnson Wildlife Area and the Cat Trail. One of the highlights of the year, Maple Madness, saw more than 10,000 visitors come to Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area to help mark the 40th anniversary of the popular annual event. I want to congratulate all staff for going above and beyond during this very busy time of the year to make the visitor experience so efficient and so much fun.

As well, enhanced partnerships with lake associations within the Cataraqui Region led to greater understanding and mitigation of issues such as blue-green algae blooms and invasive species. Five of our municipalities also came together to partner with Cataraqui Conservation on a large-scale flood mapping project, while working closely with the City of Kingston our planning and permitting team developed new resources for development review services to help refine the process and increase public awareness of the program's aims.

Staff and the Full Authority Board also began to develop a new Strategic Plan in 2023, with the assistance of the Institute on Governance, with a draft plan expected to be brought forward in the New Year. The challenges of managing our budgetary responsibilities continue on a year-by-year basis and I am pleased to see that we have made progress and once again are able to put together a solid and responsible budget for 2024 to present to all our Municipal partners. I also want to acknowledge our amazing staff in our many roles of Planning and Permitting and Enforcement and watershed management in such a large watershed area with many challenges. As well our volunteers and Friends groups continue to make a positive and meaningful impact throughout our region. We have accomplished so much over this past year, thanks to the efforts and dedication of everyone.

We are very excited to be moving into our new Administrative Facility in February and anticipate many positive results from this new collective journey we are on. We certainly will have many fond memories of our Perth Road location and can be relieved that we always can go back to Little Cat and enjoy the Outdoor Centre and its trails. Looking to the new year, we have all come to accept that our General Manager, Katrina Furlanetto, is leaving and know she will be very much missed. Thank you, Katrina, for all you have done and even more for being an amazing person and friend to us all on the Board and staff. We do wish you all the best on your new adventure as you grow your career and life.

I want to thank Tom Beaubiah for taking on the interim General Manager role. Also, I look forward to working with the Hiring Committee as we seek a new General Manager and working with the Board and staff in 2024 and again thank everyone for the opportunity to serve with you.

Together we will accomplish much.

Gary Oosterhof
Board Chair
City of Kingston





Tom Beaubiah
Acting, General
Manager



Message From Our General Manager

Since 2020, Cataraqui Conservation has been working to comply with Provincial legislative amendments that have affected Conservation Authorities in Ontario. In accordance with the amendments, Cataraqui Conservation met all Provincial requirements for 2023 including entering into service level agreements with all member municipalities and finalizing the programs and services inventory.

In the first half of the year, Bill 23 – More Homes Built Faster Act was enacted which changed the service delivery for how Cataraqui Conservation supports municipalities in natural heritage review. Staff shared their knowledge and experience with our partners to assist in the transition. Throughout 2023, staff continued to adapt their daily workflows and worked to streamline processes and adopt new software to support efficiency and team collaboration. It was another strong year for development review planning and permitting files, capital project implementation, municipal partnership initiatives, as well as users of the Outdoor Centre and conservation area properties.

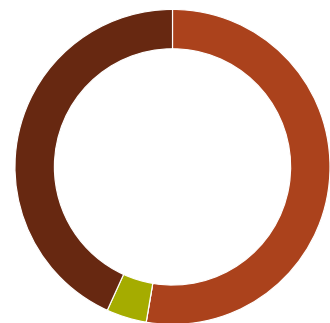
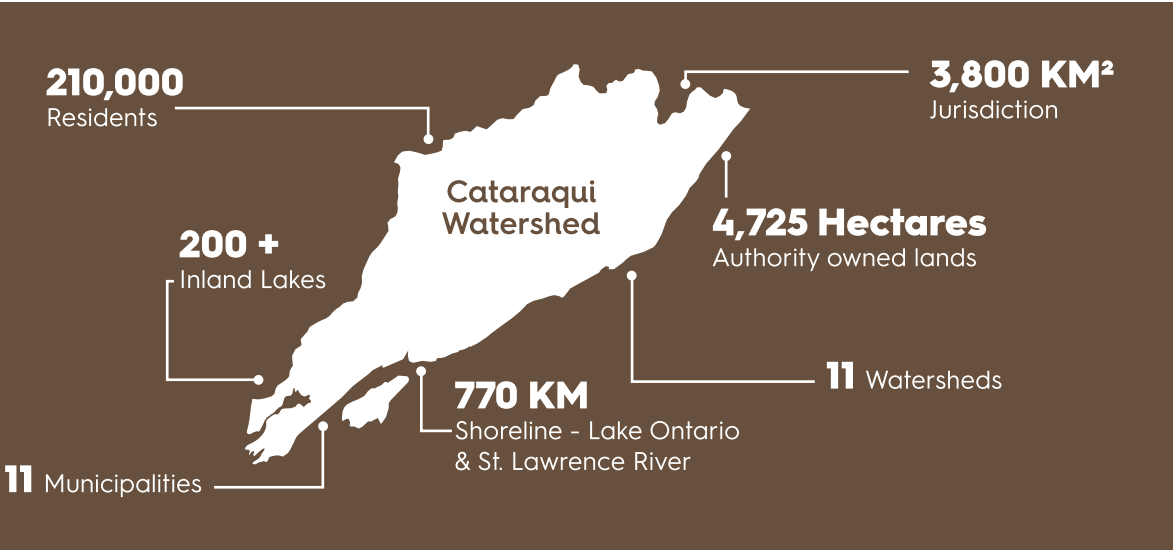
Moving into 2024, there will be focused efforts towards launching a Corporate Strategic Plan, advancement of Cataraqui Conservation’s asset management program, public engagement on floodplain mapping, source protection policy updates, Watershed-based Resources Management and Conservation Lands Strategy, compilation of a comprehensive lands inventory, along with the transition to the new Administration Facility, and celebrating 60 years of Conservation.

Cataraqui Conservation Staff

Devan Anderson	Administration Clerk
Jim Barber	Coordinator, Communications
Tom Beaubiah	Manger, Conservation Lands / Acting General Manager
Donna Campbell	Assistant to Chair & General Manager
Michael Dakin	Supervisor, Development Review
Laura Dietrich	Financial Analyst
Dianne Doyle	Coordinator, Little Cataraqui Creek
Hailey Esdon	Development Officer
Holly Evans	Coordinator, Watershed Planning
Shawn Fairbank	Technologist, Water Resources
Krista Fazackerley	Supervisor, Communications & Education
Katinra Furlanetto	General Manager
Eric Gallaway	Development Officer
Kelsey Guerette	Coordinator, Source Protection
Rick Knapton	Coordinator, Forestry
Steve Knapton	Coordintaor, Operations Planning
Tessa Latchmore	Assistant, Source Protection
Stana Luxford Oddie	Senior Conservation Educator
Kelly McGann	Conservation Educator
Cheryl Rider	Supervisor, Finance
Rhonda Roantree	Resource Planning Clerk
Andrew Schmidt	Manager, Watershed Planning & Engineering
Emily Su	Resource Planner
Brock Sheen	Lead Hand, Conservation Operations
Cole Spence	Conservation Operations
Joey Stephenson	Conservation Operations
Janelle Treash	Resource Planner
Kristen Wozniak	Resource Planner

Conservation By the Numbers

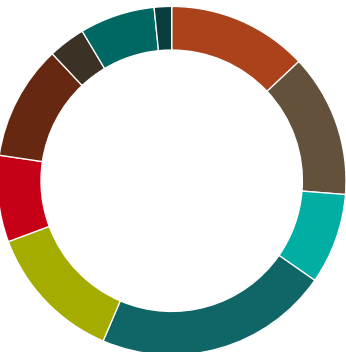
Cataraqui Conservation was formed at the request of watershed municipalities and we rely on our partners to successfully implement our programs and services in the community. The foundation of Cataraqui Conservation’s budget is a levy on partner municipalities. Staff strive each year to reduce costs, drive operational efficiencies and maximize other sources of revenue to supplement levy dollars and provide comprehensive and robust services to municipalities and watershed residents. Other sources that contribute to Cataraqui Conservation’s budget include: Authority generated fees for education programs, rentals, conservation areas, permits, and planning applications; fundraising through the Cataraqui Conservation Foundation; special levies to specific municipalities for project and services; grant dollars for students, projects, and infrastructure; and partnering with other Conservation Authorities on joint programming and grant opportunities for projects.



2023 Budget - Revenues

- 50% Municipal Levy
- 0% Federal Government
- 4% Provincial Government
- 46% Authority Generated

			Actuals
		\$2,910,139	\$2,910,139
		\$0	\$0
		\$241,701	\$268,614
		\$2,718,870	\$3,125,024
	Total	\$5,870,710	\$6,303,777



2023 Budget - Expenditures

- 13% Administration
- 13% Corporate Services
- 8% Education & Public Programs
- 22% Conservation Lands & Operations
- 13% Development Review
- 8% Stewardship
- 11% Watershed Science & Engineering
- 3% Drinking Water Source Protection
- 7% Facilities & Fleet
- 2% Water Control Structures

			Actuals
		\$763,800	\$823,847
		\$777,950	\$1,107,784
		\$494,230	\$489,630
		\$1,277,200	\$1,247,490
		\$756,495	\$735,578
		\$470,760	\$508,877
		\$624,955	\$614,141
		\$201,600	\$195,160
		\$409,100	\$482,668
		\$94,620	\$98,601
	Total	\$5,870,710	\$6,303,777



Corporate Services & Administration

Dedicated to governance accountability, transparency & customer service

Corporate Services and Administration is an inter-departmental team within Cataraqui Conservation that supports the business, financial, communication, information management and internal operational infrastructure of the organization. This includes, but is not limited to, finance and accounting (budgets, payroll, accounts payable/receivable), human resources, internal and external communications and marketing, information management and GIS (Geographical Information Systems) mapping support, as well as acting as a resource for the General Manager and Full Authority Board.

Staff are also responsible for document management, establishing and publishing corporate policies and regulations, customer service, and ensuring the overall sustainability of Cataraqui Conservation as a corporate entity. They also coordinate and provide administrative support for the Full Authority Board and its various Committees.

10 Full Authority Board Meetings with **102** staff reports

15 Committee Meetings with **28** staff reports

4 Source Protection Authority Meetings with **10** staff reports

54 Press releases & news posts

85,037 Website visitors

4,856 Facebook followers

3,796 Twitter followers

1,620 Instagram followers

2023 Projects & Initiatives

- Initiated Cataraqui Conservation's new strategic plan by hosting engagement sessions with municipalities, watershed partners, staff, and the public.
- Completed an organizational health and safety audit and introduced a new Cataraqui Conservation Health & Safety Manual.
- Worked with municipalities to successfully implement Conservation Authority Act deliverables.
- Successfully implemented new timesheet and HR platform.
- Completed an external fee review to support budget development processes and financial transparency.
- Worked with Audit Team to scope new accounting standard, Asset Retirement Obligation (ARO).
- Continued to transition Administration Office to new location with move in early 2024.
- Built in succession planning and capacity to the Education Program by hiring a part-time Conservation Educator.
- Created field collection apps for Development Review staff to streamline data collection and automatically link into our Enterprise database mapping system.
- Coordinated with Frontenac Municipal Information Systems (FMIS) to complete roll-out of our new server infrastructure.
- Completed the Eastern Ontario LiDAR Acquisition Project to acquire higher accuracy LiDAR across Eastern Ontario. The project was a collaboration with six Conservation Authorities, seven upper-tier municipalities, 42 lower-tier municipalities, Ontario Power Generation, and Natural Resources Canada.
- Continued roll out of new Conservation Area signage.
- Streamlined corporate website to enhance customer service and back-end applications for staff efficiency.

Conservation Lands & Operations

Protecting lands and enhancing the ecosystem for generations to come

Cataraqui Conservation Lands and Operations staff play an integral part in the management and maintenance of all Cataraqui Conservation properties, including both public spaces and environmentally significant/sensitive lands through all four seasons. The Operations Team maintain Conservation Areas, operate water control structures, and assist other departments in achieving their objectives. Staff have been focused on providing a positive user experience and supporting the needs of our neighbours, partners, friends groups, and visitors.



10 Conservation Areas and the 104 km **Cataraqui Trail**

6 Forest Protection Areas and **6** Environmental & Water Management Areas

8 Boat Ramps and **9** Water Access Points

3 Active Friends groups with **2** Native Tree/Plant Nurseries

40 Conservation Area use booking permits issues to groups

2023 Projects & Initiatives

- Completed Ontario Structural Inspection Manual (OSIM) inspections on ten bridges and eight major culverts on the Cataraqui Trail.
- Celebrated the Friends of Lemoine Point 25th Anniversary.
- Marble Rock Conservation Areas was added to the Canadian Protected and Conserved Areas Database.
- Completed maintenance and upgrades to the laneways at Lemoine Point Conservation Area, Outlet Boat Ramp parking lot, Outdoor Centre parking lot, and resurfaced portions of the service road at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area.
- Continued to install new signage at boat ramps, water access points and Conservation Areas.
- Conducted a functional assessment study of the Outdoor Centre and replaced the roof.
- Continued partnership programs at Marble Rock Conservation Area with Ducks Unlimited refurbishing their project site and replacing a section of boardwalk with the Rideau Trail Association.
- Transitioned from the Administration Facility on Perth Road to the new location in Battersea.
- Fulfilled Provincial requirements related to the Conservation Authorities Act and related regulations.
- Conducted trail improvements on the Cataraqui Trail with support from the Trans Canada Trail.
- Partnered with a local business and the Friends of Mac Johnson for a work bee day at Mac Johnson Wildlife Area.



Education & Public Programs

Cultivating a culture of conservation for today and tomorrow



Cataraqui Conservation's Education and Public Programs strive to connect learners of all ages to the environment through their head, heart, and hands. Instilling a sense of awe and respect for the natural world with watershed residents helps them become stewards for the environment in their own communities today, tomorrow and in the future. Our staff offer a wide range of quality outdoor and environmental education programs for all ages from pre-school to seniors. The curated conservation focused program offerings take place around the Cataraqui Region watershed: in-person at conservation areas, special events, local greenspaces, school yards, and online to serve watershed residents wherever they reside.

2023 Projects & Initiatives

- Celebrated 40 years of the Maple Madness program flipping 18,306 pancakes and welcoming 13,210 visitors to Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area.
- Education Program mentored five Teacher Candidates from Queen's University.
- Public Program staff provided support to other departments by assisting with document management, policy and standard operating procedure development, permits, and providing administration support for Education bookings.
- Continued to grow partnerships in the eastern part of our jurisdiction to further education programs at Mac Johnson Wildlife Area.
- Worked with Conservation Lands staff to complete a functional assessment of the Outdoor Centre at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area.
- Through our Health and Safety Program staff completed an updated Fire Plan for the Outdoor Centre and strengthened our workplace inspection process as location health and safety representatives.
- Partnered with True North Aid to host a Truth and Reconciliation walk at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area.

675	Annual Passes sold for Little Cataraqui Creek CA
4,680	Students participated in our conservation education programs
48	Forest School sessions taught at Little Cataraqui Creek CA
69	Participants in eight Forest Therapy sessions for the public
234	Sets of skis (poles, boots & skis) rented during Jan. and Feb.*
13	Pairs of snowshoes rented during Jan. and Feb.*
122	Days of room rental bookings at the Outdoor Centre at Little Cataraqui Creek CA

* Four days of rentals were offered out of a possible 16 due to lack of snow and icy trails.



Stewardship

Demonstrated leadership in tree planting, rural forestry management and shoreline protection

Cataraqui Conservation works with landowners and various forestry management partners to encourage stewardship of land and water. Staff provide information about tree planting, shoreline naturalization and invasive species. The program's main focus is on afforestation (new forests) and contributing to the overall forest cover in the Cataraqui Region to provide wind and water erosion protection, make poor land more productive and create/enhance wildlife habitat.

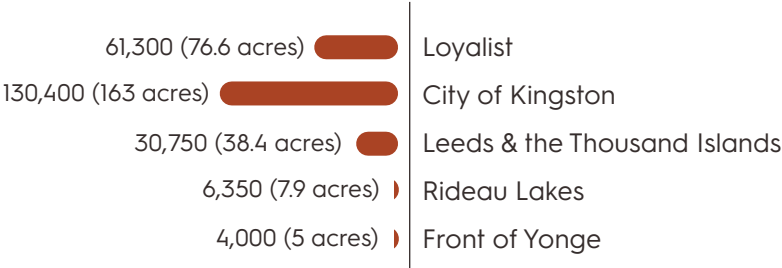
2023 Projects & Initiatives

- **128,800 trees planted** in the Cataraqui Conservation watershed as part of Forest Ontario's 50 Million Tree Program.
- **104,000 trees planted** as part of Tree Canada's National Greening Program.
- **4,900 seedlings sold** over the counter to landowners.
- **Survival assessments completed on 427,900 trees** on 48 properties. This includes assessments for 2023 (1st year), 2022 (2nd year), and 2019 (5th year).

Planting Highlights

- Two properties planted for the City of Kingston for forest management: Butternut Creek site planted 21,850 trees on 18.2 acres and the Kingston East Landfill Site planted 20,200 trees on 16.8 acres.
- Novelis property in the City of Kingston planted 33,500 trees on 41.0 acres.
- Alstrom (Bombardier) property in Loyalist Township planted 29,400 trees on 36.8 acres, building on the 43,700 trees they planted during the 2022 planting season.

Number of Trees Planted by Municipality



Total: 232,800 trees (291 acres)



Development Review

Protecting people and property from natural hazards

Following the mandate outlined in Provincial legislation and in accordance with service agreements with each of our member municipalities, Cataraqui Conservation's planning and permitting duties (collectively called Development Review) are focused on avoidance of natural hazards (e.g. flooding and erosion), protection of the hydrological functions of wetlands, protection of drinking water sources, and protection of overall watershed integrity. Development Review responsibilities include providing comments on policy documents (Official Plans and Zoning By-laws) and applications submitted under the Planning Act. In addition, Cataraqui Conservation is mandated to implement Ontario Regulation 148/06: Development Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses.

2023 Projects & Initiatives

- Supported member municipalities through Bill 23 transition which removed non-hazard related planning matters from Conservation Authority scope of review and left these to municipal staff and/or external consultants.
- Building on the 2022 research project with Queen's University School of Urban and Regional Planning, staff developed draft Ecological Offsetting policies update to the Guidelines for Implementing Ontario Regulation 148/06.
- Continued with the five year updated to the Guidelines for Implementing Ontario Regulation 148/06.
- Navigated a record number of enforcement files, including positive settlement outcomes for two cases in the Thousand Islands and successful prosecution of a third, ensuring development occurs in a safe and responsible manner.
- **Responded to a high volume of formal and informal development inquiries, totaling 731.**



2023 Plan Review and Permitting Activity

Number of Plan Review Files:

Athens	07
Brockville	22
Elizabethtown-Kitley	28
Front of Yonge	10
Gananoque	09
Greater Napanee	20
Kingston	24
Leeds & the Thousand Islands	86
Loyalist	33
Rideau Lakes	42
South Frontenac	45
Frontenac Islands	10

Total of 336 applications

Number of Permit Application Files:

Athens	05
Brockville	11
Elizabethtown-Kitley	11
Front of Yonge	11
Gananoque	02
Greater Napanee	40
Kingston	69
Leeds & the Thousand Islands	153
Loyalist	31
Rideau Lakes	31
South Frontenac	71
Frontenac Islands	N/A

Total of 435 applications

809

Planning & Permit
applications reviewed

90.2%

of applications met
municipal review targets

96.8%

of applications met
Conservation Ontario
service targets

Watershed Science & Engineering

Maintaining the viability and sustainability of our most precious resources

Monitoring the health of our watersheds allows Conservation Authorities and their partners to better target programs and measure environmental change for the overall health and sustainability of our communities and their inhabitants. This includes an understanding of local flood, drought, and erosion hazards, conditions of local lakes and streams, forest and wetland cover, groundwater, and the health of fish and aquatic communities.

Cataraqui Conservation owns and/or operates 10 water control structures and uses data gathered from stream gauges, weather stations, snow survey sites, meteorologic forecasts, and computer models to forecast potential floods and drought conditions. As part of our responsibility to make the public aware of water levels, flood warning and drought condition messages are issued regularly to local municipalities, partner agencies, and the public.

2023 Projects & Initiatives

- Hosted a Water Day workshop to connect Water Survey of Canada with Eastern Ontario Conservation Authority Staff to discuss the network and current/future needs.
- Led seven spring freshet meetings with area Water Managers to discuss watershed conditions, water levels, dam safety, operations, and informing flood messaging.
- Completed water control structure work through the Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure Program (WECI) on Wilton Road Dam, Highgate Creek Channelization, Fred Grant Dam, and Buell's Creek Detention Basin.
- Initiated the St. Lawrence River Flood Hazard Mapping Project.
- Piloted invasive phragmites control project that included coordinated removal work days and funding to host two workshops for regional collaboration.
- Collected eDNA samples from the Gananaque River to track Water Soldier and established a partnership with the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters to monitor the species.
- Assisted lake and watershed associations with technical advice and information.
- Staff continued to support the planning and delivery of the annual Lake Links Workshop and sat on the biodiversity panel for Sustainable Kingston's Climate Change Forum.
- Produced the 2023 Cataraqui Conservation Watershed Report Card in conjunction with all Conservation Authorities and Conservation Ontario.



10

Annual inspections conducted on managed water control structures.

12

Watershed statements/flood messages issued.

16

Surface water monitoring sites (Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network).

7

Groundwater monitoring sites (Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network).

13

Benthic Macroinvertebrate monitoring sites (aquatic insect indicators).





Drinking Water Source Protection

Dedicated to the quality of our municipal drinking water at its source

Clean, sustainable and abundant drinking water is important to us all. Under the Drinking Water Source Protection Program, Cataraqui Conservation staff work with local municipalities and stakeholders to implement the Cataraqui Source Protection Plan to ensure clean, safe and sustainable municipal drinking water sources (rivers, lakes, aquifers) are protected.

The Cataraqui Source Protection Plan is a locally developed plan of action to keep municipal sources of drinking water clean and plentiful. Implementation of the Plan is being carried out cooperatively amongst implementing bodies, through the Source Protection Committee, including municipalities, local health units, provincial ministries, Cataraqui Conservation, and others.



2023 Projects & Initiatives

- Co-hosted “Water Wise Webinars” series with Quinte, Lower Trent, and Rideau Valley Conservation Authorities.
- Hosted three Cataraqui Source Protection Committee meetings with 12 staff reports and presented 10 staff reports at four Cataraqui Source Protection Authority meetings.
- Issued two municipal newsletters highlighting Source Protection efforts and information.
- Hosted working group meetings with Risk Management Officials and Municipalities to assist in the ongoing amendment to the Cataraqui Source Protection Plan and the Best Practices for Source Water Protection documents.
- Developed a well water sampling poster and information in collaboration with Public Health Units to promote well water sampling.

In 2023, staff completed draft updates to the Cataraqui Source Protection Plan and Assessment Report to include new provincial technical rules. The Plan and Assessment Report are undergoing a multi-year update process required under the Clean Water Act to refine policies, provide clarity, and include new data where applicable



80 Per cent of watershed residents rely on municipal drinking water systems

68 Policies addressing drinking water threats in the Cataraqui Region

4 Risk management offices in the Cataraqui Source Protection Area

9 Intake Protection Zones

3 Wellhead Protection Areas



Cataraqui
conservation

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