

annualreport.cvc.ca

2020 – CVC Annual Report

16–21 minutes



2020 Annual Report

Adaptation



who we are

Credit Valley Conservation protects, restores and manages the water, land and natural habitats of the Credit Valley Watershed. A watershed is the area of land that drains (sheds) rain or snow melt into a river; in our case, the almost 90-km long Credit River. A healthy watershed is vitally important. It protects water quality, supports biodiversity in wildlife and counteracts the effects of climate change, like erosion and flooding. And it connects people to nature, something the pandemic showed we all need more than ever.

A message from the Chair



Karen Ras

Chair, Credit Valley Conservation

The work of conservation authorities has never been more important than it is today.

The pandemic highlighted the public's need for greater access to nature, especially when other forms of recreation weren't available. In 2020, residents had good reason to seek the health benefits of nature.

If the pandemic taught us anything, it's that we can work differently and quickly adapt to change. Although we had to change how we operate, we were able to continue our important work on behalf of

the communities we serve, including environmental monitoring and restoration, landowner and community engagement, flood forecasting, planning and permitting, and operating our conservation areas.

The challenge of adapting to the pandemic underscores the need for investment in parks and trails. Green space is critical to our communities. As our watershed communities grow, the time is right to build more trails, install more green infrastructure and give residents more chances to enjoy a healthy environment.

In 2020, we showed our ability to adapt to change. We're ready for whatever changes the future has in store.

From the CAO



Deborah Martin-Downs

CAO, Credit Valley Conservation

Our world, like yours, was turned upside down by COVID-19 in 2020. While this meant business was anything but usual, our vision remained the same: A thriving environment that protects, connects and sustains us.

The pandemic made it even more obvious that our work is vitally important to the communities in the Credit River Watershed. I'm so proud of our parks, Warwick and head office staff for rising to the

challenge. You helped us change how we operate to adapt to changing restrictions, continue our work and safely welcome visitors to our parks when we could.

Ours is a passionate and dedicated team with a driving commitment to the local environment. I'm proud and grateful that your work helped CVC receive recognition as one of Greater Toronto's Top Employers and one of Canada's Greenest Employers. The latter recognizes our many green initiatives, including a green procurement policy that ensures suppliers reflect CVC's commitment to the environment.

I'm also grateful to our funding partners for rallying behind our work during these uncertain times. You joined us in continuing to protect, restore and enhance the natural resources in the Credit River Watershed.

Business may not have been as usual in 2020, but it reinforced our critical role in planning for an environmentally sustainable future. Change? Bring it on. We know how to adapt.





Adapting to a changing world

CVC joined the world in acting swiftly when the pandemic hit. By remarkable coincidence and perfect timing, we had completed a digital transformation in 2019 that outfitted all 202 staff members with laptops. When we closed our offices March 24 to comply with the mandatory closure of non-essential workplaces, this allowed our staff to continue to serve our watershed communities from home.

Changes at our parks

On March 24, we made the decision to close our conservation areas to keep our visitors and staff safe. We appreciated the support from Public Health officials in guiding our actions and helping us interpret the rules. The result was that most parks were only closed from 50 to 67 days, depending on the park.





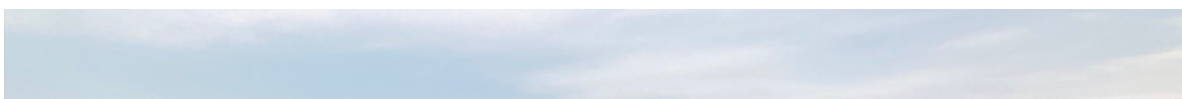
Engaging residents in new ways

During the shutdown, we continued environmental education, multicultural outreach and landowner outreach with programs delivered online rather than in person. Our education staff developed curriculum-connected digital resources for teachers and students from kindergarten to grade 12, including video and outdoor education activity packages. Eleven virtual events reached 650 residents.

To further connect with and support families at home, we provided online training to help residents safely carry out a citizen science “butterfly blitz” in their own backyards. This was both a great distraction and produced useful data on butterflies in the Credit River Watershed.

Continuing to plant for the future

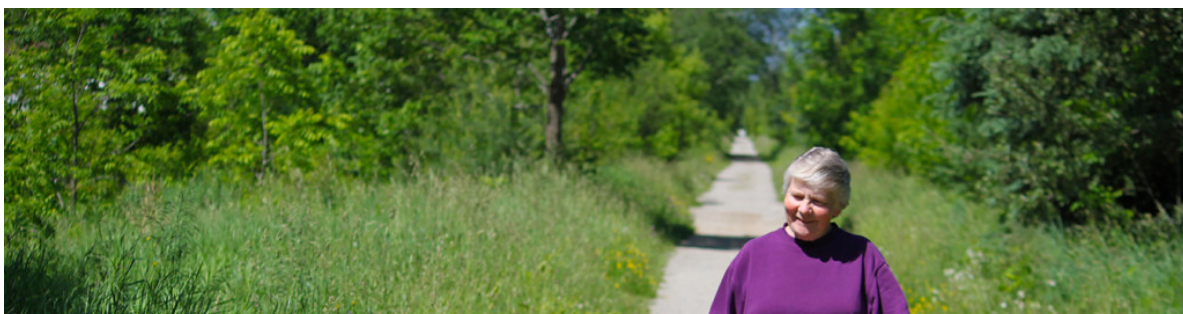
With new safety protocols in place, staff at our Warwick Nursery were able to safely and effectively prepare native trees and shrubs for planting. Over two and a half weeks in May, they potted about 40,000 trees and shrubs, which are critical to environmental restoration efforts throughout the watershed. Our Direct Sale Day was a success. This year sold over 1,000 plants to 22 landowners across the watershed.





#DYK

We worked with 1,000 dedicated volunteers who planted more than 3,000 trees, shrubs and wildflowers, helped with community clean-ups and removed invasive species.





Adapting to a changing need for nature

By May 13, we were able to reopen many of our conservation areas. Visits to our conservation areas had already increased 200% over the past decade. With more people working from home due to the pandemic and seeking the restorative effects of nature, visits from May to December increased 70% over the same period the previous year. That's even without events like the Maple Syrup Festival, which we unfortunately had to cancel.

Our parks staff came back to work wanting to provide opportunities for our residents to have somewhere to go to recreate safely and locally. They worked hard all summer and even extending our season into mid-November to provide more opportunities. They've been our front-line workers, making sure watershed residents had somewhere to safely recreate and connect with nature.

To ensure visitor and staff safety, we introduced park capacity limits and installed fencing and signs marking one-way trails and encouraging physical distancing. We were able to reopen Belfountain and the Cheltenham Badlands in time for viewing the fall colours, with a new reservation system and timed visits to control crowds. Both areas were closed for the winter, and

Belfountain remains closed in 2021 while we safely complete Phase 1 of our restoration projects.

The need for nature

people visited our conservation areas between May and December 2019

people visited between May and December 2020

in visitors compared to the same period in 2019

in visitors from 2010 to 2020

New green space: Jim Tovey Lakeview Conservation Area

Having places to spend time in nature is more important now than ever.

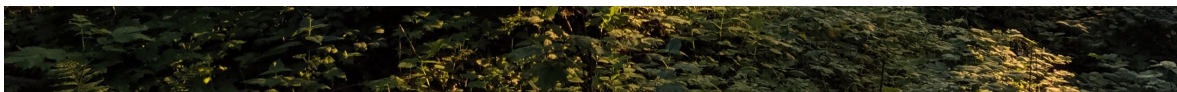
In 2020, we made great progress toward our vision of a beautiful 26 hectares waterfront conservation area in the heart of Mississauga. Our staff planted 9,600+ trees and shrubs, naturalizing nine hectares of new land. We continue to shape and refine the landform, design public amenities and create new habitats. The conservation area will transform a once industrialized shoreline, increase wildlife habitat and access to green space. When complete, it will also add a missing piece of the Waterfront Trail. Learn more at jimtoveylakeview.ca.

Natural Playground at Island Lake

We also opened a new natural playground at Island Lake Conservation Area. This playground lets kids lose themselves in unstructured play that encourages discovery and new

experiences. The playground offers outdoor musical instruments, climbing trees, a play structure and 300-meter accessible trail that is flooded for skating during the winter.





Adapting to a changing climate

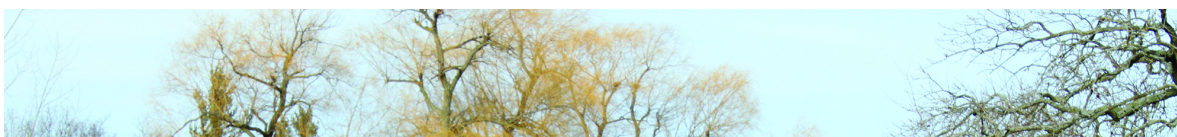
The pandemic cut back some of our usual watershed monitoring activities, so our staff turned their attention to analyzing over 25 years' worth of data. Collecting this data allows us to look at trends and assess the health of the watershed, and ensures data drives our decisions.

Data relating to our forests tells a troubling story of damage due to climate change, disease and invasive species. Trends point to continued droughts, intense storms and warmer winters, all of which will damage our existing forests. Over time, these changing conditions will affect which species can grow and may prevent forests from replenishing.

Knowing the importance of our forests to managing water and dealing with climate change, we completed a Sustainable Forest Management Plan in 2020. This will guide us in protecting the ecology of forested properties. We also updated our Invasive Species Strategy, which was approved by the Board in December.

Invasive species are a problem

documented invasive species in the Credit watershed
yearly cost to Ontario municipalities to address invasive species
of our forests are dominated by trees vulnerable to forest pests
ash trees removed to manage the emerald ash borer infestation





Keeping communities safe

In 2020, we received 899 development permit applications, planning applications, property inquiries, and environmental assessments for review. This critical function protects wetlands and watercourses, and helps ensure watershed residents are protected from natural hazards.

Intense storms and heavy rains can cause rivers to overflow. In July, we introduced a flood warning tool called Alertable to communicate directly with residents in flood vulnerable areas throughout the watershed. More than 2,600 residents had subscribed to this free public emergency alert system by November 2020.

Flood Status

Rivers & Streams





[View the flood outlook statement →](#)

#DYK

In 2020, we issued 23 watershed safety, flood outlook, flood watch and warning statements alerting municipal emergency managers and the public of dangerous ice and flood conditions.

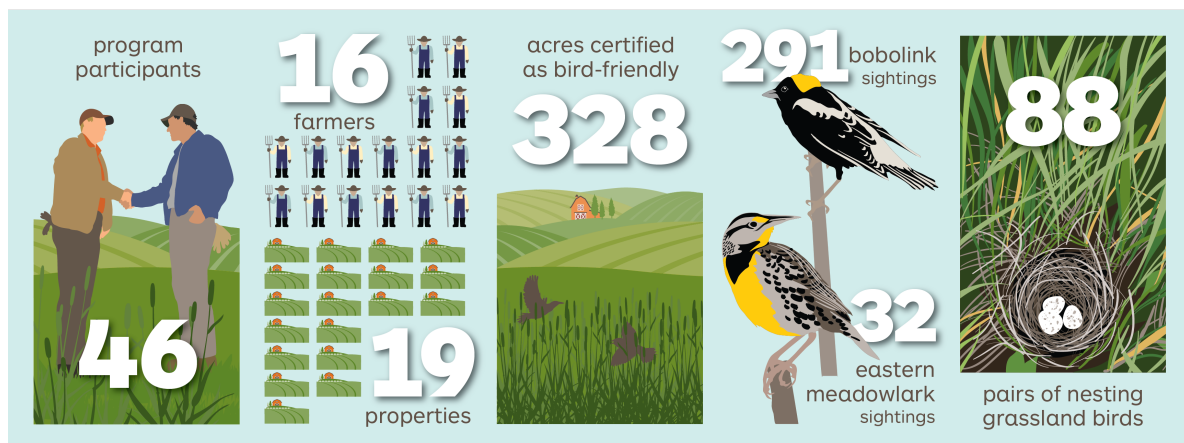


Working with watershed residents to address climate change

In 2020, work continued on our Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plans (SNAP). The SNAP model targets outreach and restoration in a priority areas to address local environmental concerns. We're proud to work with the Town of Halton Hills on the Hungry Hollow SNAP and the City of Brampton on the Fletchers Creek SNAP.

We work with partners and neighbours to help our environment adapt to climate change. Our Landowner Action Fund supports naturalization, reforestation and habitat enhancement projects that help rural landowners protect water sources and improve habitat for fish and wildlife. In 2020, we supported five of these projects in Peel Region and approved funding for 11 new projects.

Working with farmers to protect threatened grassland birds



We work closely with watershed farmers to protect threatened grassland birds with our Bird Friendly Certified Hay program. This connects hay producers with consumers looking for a sustainably farmed product that doesn't affect the grassland birds that nest in hay fields. The program proves that agriculture and wildlife can coexist and even thrive with a slight shift in farm practices. Using agricultural best management practices also reduces drinking water threats, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, improves water quality and soil health.

Greening Corporate Grounds

Our Greening Corporate Grounds helps companies protect our water supply and build climate resilience by changing how they landscape their properties. In 2020, the Town of Erin joined the

program, introducing sustainable landscaping for the municipal office grounds. Three other landscaping projects are underway at the Headwaters Health Care Centre. We are proud to work with CRH Canada in partnership with Environment and Climate Change Canada to develop a large-scale migratory bird habitat restoration project in Mississauga. Together, we are adapting to the changing world we live in.

[Want to become a member of Greening Corporate Grounds?](#)

Connect with us to learn more.



Adapting to a changing future

With the wrap-up of a five-year strategic plan at the end of 2019, we're set to continue our focus on the future with an ambitious new plan for 2020–2022. Our target is to complete or make significant progress on the numerous projects and activities started under the previous plan.



Our Future Taking Shape

Strategic Plan 2020-2022

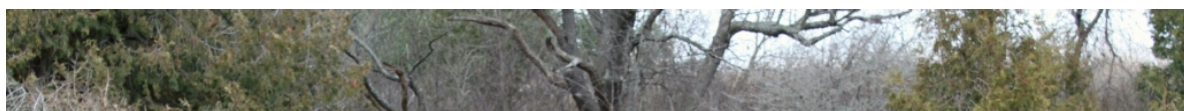


Engaging donors

During a challenging time for the philanthropic sector, CVC Foundation adapted by shifting from its much-loved Conservation Gala to an online auction and holiday giving campaign sponsored by Canon Canada and Imperial. They closed out 2020 on a high

note receiving an exceptional level of support from the donor community, which went toward connecting the Credit Valley Trail (CVT) and conservation initiatives across the Credit River Watershed.

The CVT gained its first stake in the ground on Tuesday, November 3, as project partners officially unveiled the trail's first wayfinding signage at Upper Credit Conservation Area in Alton. The Credit Valley Conservation Foundation (CVCF) also announced the launch of a major \$10 million fundraising campaign to help connect the full 100-kilometre trail. In attendance were representatives from the Credit Valley Trail Leadership Council, Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) Board of Directors, CVCF Board of Directors, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation Community, Greenbelt Foundation and 407 ETR.





In 2020, CVC Foundation was generously supported by



301

individuals & families

**22**

community organizations



\$642,380

contributed to CVC

Thank you!

2020 Financial Highlights

Total contributions from municipal levy

Total raised through other sources (grants, etc.)

Total revenue generated by CVC (parks, planning fees, etc.)

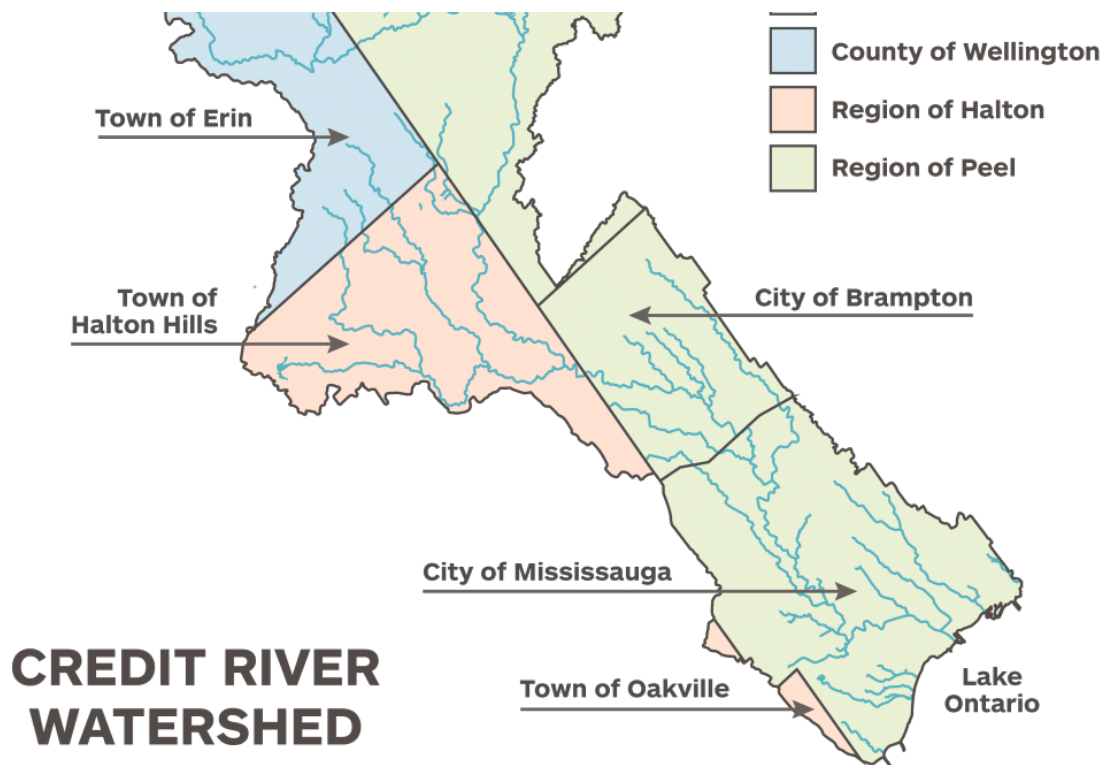
*Actuals recognized based on the accrual method of accounting.

For more information please see our [Audited Financial Statements](#).

Thank you to our member municipalities for your support and valued partnerships!

The Credit River Watershed is the area of land that drains runoff from rain and snow into the tributaries of the Credit River. In addition, smaller adjacent watersheds that drain directly into Lake Ontario and a section of the Lake Ontario shoreline make up CVC's jurisdiction. From north to south this area includes sections of Amaranth, Mono, all of Orangeville, East Garafraxa, Caledon, Erin, Halton Hills, Brampton, Mississauga and Oakville.





Honouring the land and water

As we work to further our mission we acknowledge the rich history and enduring presence of Indigenous peoples as stewards of the land and water of the Credit River Watershed.

We acknowledge that the Credit River Watershed is part of the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. The Credit River Watershed is also part of the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee, and home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples today.

Treaties made with Indigenous Peoples are enduring and include responsibilities for both parties. We affirm that this land and water is our common source of life and we must all share responsibility for its care and stewardship for now and future generations.

2020 board of directors

Region of Peel

All City of Mississauga councillors are also Region of Peel councillors.



Karen Ras

CVC Chair

Councillor Ward 2,

City of Mississauga

Ph: 905-896-5200

City of Mississauga

300 City Centre Dr.

Mississauga, ON

L5B 3C1



Stephen Dasko

Councillor Ward 1,

City of Mississauga

Ph: 905-896-5100

City of Mississauga
300 City Centre Dr.
Mississauga ON
L5B 3C1



Matt Mahoney

Councillor Ward 8,
City of Mississauga
Ph: 905-896-5800

City of Mississauga
300 City Centre Dr.
Mississauga ON
L5B 3C1



Ron Starr

Councillor Ward 6,
City of Mississauga
Ph: 905-896-5600

City of Mississauga
300 City Centre Dr.
Mississauga ON
L5B 3C1



Johanna Downey

Regional Councillor Ward 2,

Town of Caledon

Ph: 905-584-2272

Town of Caledon
6311 Old Church Rd.
Caledon, ON
L7C 1J6



Martin Medeiros

Regional Councillor

Wards 3 & 4,

City of Brampton

Ph: 905- 874-2634

City of Brampton
2 Wellington St. W.
Brampton, ON
L6Y 4R2



Michael Palleschi

Regional Councillor
Wards 2 & 6,

City of Brampton

Ph: 905-874-2602

City of Brampton
2 Wellington St. W.
Brampton ON
L6Y 4R2

Region of Halton



Tom Adams

CVC Vice Chair

Regional Councillor Ward 6,
Town of Oakville

Town of Oakville
1225 Trafalgar Rd.
Oakville ON
L6J 5A6



[Ann Lawlor](#)

Councillor Ward 4
Town of Halton Hills
Ph: 905-877-5662

Town of Halton Hills
1 Halton Hills Drive
Halton Hills, ON L7G 5G2



[John Brennan](#)

Town Councillor,
Town of Erin

Ph: 519-833-7309

Corp. of the Town of Erin

5684 Trafalgar Rd.

Hillsburgh,

ON N0B 1Z0



Tom Nevills

Councillor

Township of East Garafraxa

Ph: 519-855-4324

Township of East Garafraxa

374028 6th Line

Amaranth, ON L9W 0M6

Resigned from the CVC Board August 2020



John Stirk

Deputy Mayor

Township of East Garafraxa

Ph: 519-939-0703

Township of East Garafraxa

374028 6th Line

Amaranth, ON L9W 0M6

Joined the CVC Board September 2020



Grant Peters

Town Councillor

Town of Orangeville

Ph: 519-209-2978

Town of Orangeville

87 Broadway

Orangeville ON L9W 1K1

Thank you to our member municipalities for your support and valued partnerships!

Senior management team



Jeff Payne

Deputy CAO and Director, Corporate Services

**Josh Campbell**

Director, Planning and Development Services

**Tim Mereu**

Technical Director, Watershed Management

**John Sinnige**

Associate Director, Watershed Management





Gayle Soo-Chan

Director, Watershed Knowledge

connect with us

Credit Valley Conservation

1255 Old Derry Road

Mississauga, ON

L5N 6R4

905-670-1615

1-800-668-5557