



Long Point Region
Conservation Authority

Annual Report 2020



Contents

3

Message from the Chair & General Manager

4

Protecting Life & Property

8

Enhancing Watershed Health

11

Connecting People to Nature

17

2020 Financial Highlights

18

Board of Directors / LPRCA Staff

19

Long Point Region Watershed

Message from the Chair & General Manager



**Michael
Columbus**
Chair, LPRCA



**Judy
Maxwell**
General Manager,
LPRCA

The past year has certainly been one that we will not soon forget. The pandemic placed the world into a position of uncertainty. With the support of the Board, staff navigated the pandemic disruption and implemented the appropriate policies, protocols and measures to ensure the safety of our staff, community and customers while permitting the Authority to deliver our essential services.

The Board is committed to leading the implementation of the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan which sets out the groundwork for achieving our vision. Guided by our values

of innovation, accountability, communication and teamwork, we are well on our way to advancing the objectives of the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan and our vision of **working together to shape the future well-being of our watershed.**

On behalf of the Board we would like to acknowledge the commitment of all of the Authority's staff and volunteers. We have asked a lot of our people this past year, and through it all we have witnessed inspirational teamwork, respect, creativity and resilience. As we navigate this new reality, we are confident our organization will be able to emerge from this pandemic with new, innovative approaches to deliver high quality services and experiences.

17-year Distinguished Member

Since 2003, Roger Geysens has served the Long Point Region Conservation Authority. A Councillor appointed by Norfolk County, Roger was instrumental in promoting the Authority's mandate and our continued success. Roger served as the Chair of the Board from 2012 through 2014 and has provided outstanding stability, commitment and

leadership.

The LPRCA Board and staff thank Roger for his dedicated service and wish him a very happy retirement.

Thank you Roger.





Protecting Life & Property

Planning & Regulations

Long Point Region Conservation Authority's Planning and Regulation services help protect the Long Point watershed from loss of life and property damage due to natural hazards such as flooding and erosion. Under the Conservation Authorities Act, it is the responsibility of LPRCA to regulate development in and around watercourses, floodplains, valley systems, wetlands and along the Lake Erie shoreline.

In 2020, Planning and Regulations department staff reviewed and issued 296 permits for development under Section 28 of the Conservation

Authorities Act. Staff worked with local municipalities to review and provide technical advice on 121 Planning Act applications, including the review of Official Plan updates for Brant County and Haldimand County. Hundreds of additional inquiries from the public relating to the sale of properties, development proposals, and other general inquiries relating to flooding, erosion, wetlands and dynamic beaches were received and responded to by staff.

	2020	2019
Permit Applications Reviewed	296	259
Municipal Applications Consulted On	121	156

Throughout 2020, Planning and Regulations staff continued to implement recommendations from the 2017 Customer Service Plan, pursuing process improvements and providing timely reviews and approvals. An interactive mapping tool that presents areas regulated by Ontario Regulation 178/06 within the Long Point Region Watershed was launched, allowing visitors to LPRCA’s website to search for properties and view regulated areas.



Flood Forecasting

Long Point Region Conservation Authority is responsible for operating a flood forecasting and warning system in collaboration with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF). The system includes monitoring weather conditions and forecasts, forecasting

flood potential, issuing flood messages and communicating updates to municipalities, the media and the public. This system helps to ensure the welfare of residents and minimize property damage due to flooding.

A total of 23 flood messages were issued in 2020.

	2020	2019
Conditions Statements	9	9
Flood Watches	10	10
Flood Warnings	4	2

In 2020, Lake Erie’s water level remained well above average and risk of flooding was high throughout the year, even in the summer months when flood risk is typically low. LPRCA issued a Lake Erie Conditions Statement – Flood Outlook that remained in effect throughout much of the year to highlight the increased risk of flooding. High water levels combined with periods of strong southwesterly winds resulted in multiple occasions of flooding along the Lake Erie shoreline. On November 15, 2020 significant southwesterly winds caused substantial flooding; gauges in Port Dover and Port Colborne measured levels second only to the record set on December 2, 1985.

Low Water Response

Beginning in May, a lack of rainfall left many areas across the watershed with lower than typical stream flow and groundwater levels. By August, conditions were particularly dry with the northern end of the watershed receiving only 50-75% of average rainfall for the months of June, July, and August. On August 17, LPRCA issued a Level 1 Low Water Advisory, encouraging water users throughout the watershed to reduce their water consumption by 10 percent and restrict non-essential uses of water. These measures proactively assist in minimizing the impacts of low water on aquatic ecosystems, conserving water supplies, and reduces the need for stronger water restriction measures. The Level 1 Low Water Advisory was lifted on October 30.

Flood Forecasting & Warning System Improvement Project

Funding assistance from the Federal Disaster Mitigation Program has permitted Long Point Region Conservation Authority to continue improvement and automation of the Flood Forecasting and Warning System. In 2020, automated hydrometric data collection data has been made available in real-time through LPRCA's website. The program has also added additional



gauges through the watershed, facilitated development of flood thresholds and allowed for the implementation of automated data acquisition.

LPRCA and Norfolk County staff identified the need for a real-time gauge to measure and report

Lake Erie levels in the Inner Long Point Bay. Staff completed project planning and are preparing for the installation of a gauge on the Port Rowan pier. Once the gauge is installed, the water level data collected will improve forecasts of and responses to Lake Erie flood events.

Floodplain, Natural Hazard & Regulation Mapping

In 2020, LPRCA completed three multi-year projects to update flood and erosion mapping with support from the Federal National Disaster Mitigation Program. Two of these projects focused

on updating over 94 km of flood, erosion, and dynamic hazard mapping along the shoreline of Lake Erie in Haldimand and Norfolk Counties. The third project updated over 89 km of riverine floodplain mapping in areas most vulnerable to flood damage, including Tillsonburg, Norwich, Vienna, Port Burwell, Cultus, Gilbertville, Simcoe, Port Dover, Waterford, Jarvis and Garnett.

The new mapping provide the most up-to-date and accurate information available on flooding and erosion hazards in the study areas. The information was provided to municipalities to support the preparation of their Official Plans and Zoning By-Law documents. LPRCA will further use the information to provide technical advice and comment on municipal documents, Planning Act Applications, permitting under Ontario Regulation 178/06, and flood forecasting and warning.

Building on these mapping projects, LPRCA staff updated the area regulated by O.Reg. 178/06 along the shoreline in Norfolk and Haldimand Counties and the Lynn River watershed.

Dams & Water Control Structures

LPRCA owns and operates 13 dams and water control structures throughout the watershed. Historically these structures were constructed for flood control, low flow augmentation, recreation,

erosion control, power generation and to serve as municipal drinking water sources. Most of these structures were constructed in the 1960's though some were built over 100 years ago. In 2020, four of LPRCA's dams had substantial work performed:

- The Norwich Dam underwent a safety review with financial support from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure program. The safety review is a detailed study completed by an engineer that determines the dam's hazard classification, assesses the stability and evaluates all other factors that affect public and operator safety.
- The Deer Creek Dam has mechanical operation equipment housed in a concrete chamber. In 2020, modifications were made to the chamber and a side door was added to provide an improved work environment for dam operators.
- The Vittoria and Teeterville Dams had their stop logs sealed by a specialized diving contractor in summer 2020. Stop logs within the dam bays were jacked down and a semi-impermeable seal installed on the upstream face to reduce water loss through the logs. This work will extend the operational life of the stop logs and help maintain water levels in the reservoirs during drought conditions.

Enhancing Watershed Health



Stewardship

Working together to shape the future well-being of our watershed is the guiding vision by which Long Point Region Conservation Authority operates. A large part of doing so is collaborating on environmental stewardship initiatives with municipal, institutional and private partners. Highlights from 2020 include:

- Completion of 5 wetland projects, with funding and support from Environment and Climate Change Canada's Habitat

Stewardship Program (HSP), Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) and ALUS Norfolk.

- Continuation of the Long Point Region invasive *Phragmites australis* control program. Environment and Climate Change Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program funding allowed LPRCA to work with Nature Conservancy Canada (NCC) to implement invasive *Phragmites* control measures on private land in the lower Big Creek watershed, treat 9.25 hectares of land at the Lee Brown Marsh and control

invasive Phragmites at Walsingham Flats, Rowan Mills, Middleton Swamp, Sutton CA, Waterford North CA, Haldimand CA and Dereham Wetlands.

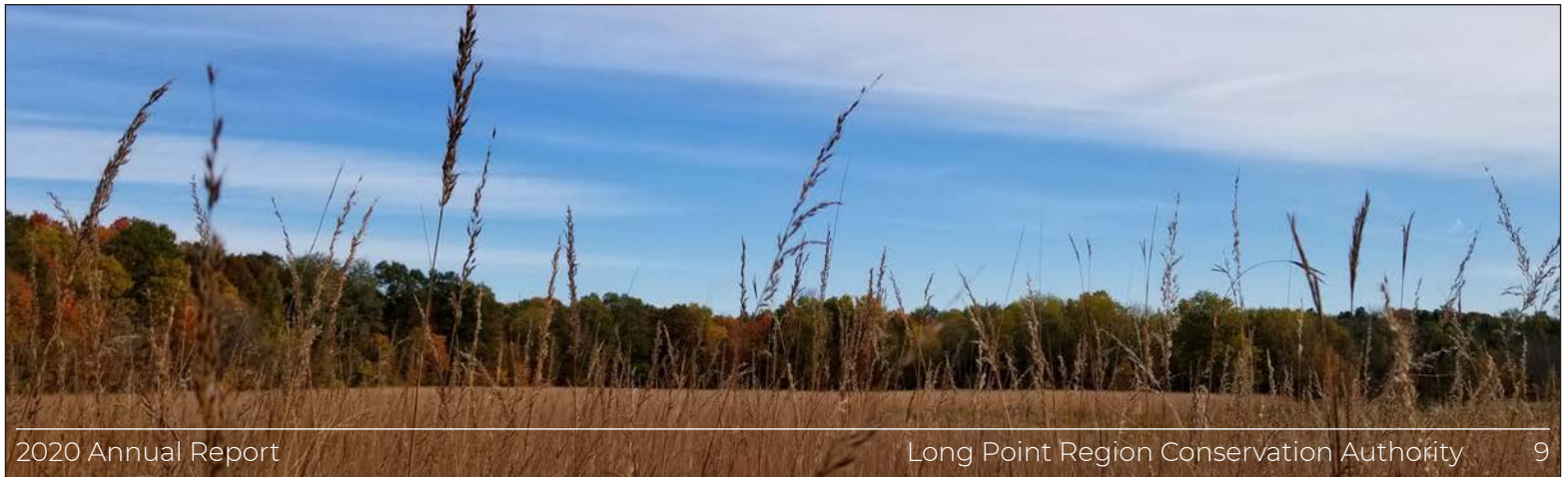
- Establishment of 150 acres of cover crops, funded by Environment and Climate Change Canada's Integrated Conservation Action Plan (ICAP).

ALUS Elgin continues their collaborative environmental stewardship efforts, adding 94 acres of land into the program in 2020 thereby bringing the total acres to 544. The restored land supports alternative use for marginal farmland by establishing tallgrass prairie, tree plantings and wetlands.

Drinking Water Source Protection

Developed throughout 2019 and submitted in January 2020, an amended Assessment Report and Source Protection Plan for the village of Otterville was approved by the Province.

A two-part Long Point Region Source Protection Plan update came into effect in May 2020. The Source Protection Plan presents a history of the Clean Water Act and source protection planning, sets out the objectives of the Protection Plan, describes the Long Point Region watershed and identifies the policies and programs involved. The Source Protection Plan and additional information can be found on the Lake Erie Source Protection Region website, sourcewater.ca.



Water Quality Monitoring

Several program partnerships with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks depend on water quality data collected by LPRCA. The Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Program (PWQMN), the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN) and the Ontario Benthos Biomonitoring Network (OBBN) support LPRCA and our partners to monitor the changing watershed conditions and facilitate data-lead management of our water resources.

2020 sampling saw a delayed start, however LPRCA collected surface water from nine PWQMN sites, measured groundwater levels at 11 PGMN wells and sampled 10 sites for aquatic benthic invertebrates.

Tree Planting

Despite a year of uncertainty and restrictions, LPRCA planted 32,955 trees throughout the watershed:

- 13,695 trees were planted through Forests Ontario's 50 Million Trees Program.
- 6,400 trees were planted as part of the Ontario Horticultural Trades Foundation's Highway of Heroes Program.
- 10,110 trees were planted with funding



support from Ontario Power Generation.

- 319 trees were planted within the Municipality of Bayham and the Township of South-West Oxford as part of LPRCA's Trees for Roads Program.
- 2,431 seedlings sales were made through LPRCA's Private Land Tree Planting Program.



Connecting People to Nature

Conservation Areas & Land Holdings

Long Point Region Conservation Authority owns 11,087 acres of conservation lands, including five parks with a total of 682 campsites. 2020 was an unconventional year and the camping season was, inevitably, impacted by the pandemic. Though the situation was changing on a near-daily basis, LPRCA was able to find creative ways to adapt our services and provide safe access to healthy outdoor fun and adventure.

LPRCA carefully monitored provincial and local health unit guidelines, adjusting safety processes as required to ensure the wellbeing of staff and the public. In June, LPRCA was able to open our campgrounds to seasonal campers, followed by the resumption of overnight camping for self-contained camping units in July. Working with the provider of our campsite reservation system, LPRCA implemented a day-use reservation system to ensure the number of visitors to each Conservation Area remained manageable and safe.

Despite the often-changing restrictions and limitations on services that could be provided, LPRCA was able to offer a safe and enjoyable experience for seasonal campers, overnight campers and day-use visitors.

Various improvement projects were completed across LPRCA's campgrounds:

- The creation of a new wetland and interpretive trail at the Backus Heritage Conservation Area. Near the entrance to the park, the loop trail leads visitors over to the wetland, showcasing the natural diversity and rich ecosystems of wetland areas.
- Backus Heritage Conservation Area had a native seed garden planted as part of a volunteer partnership to increase the availability of local native wildflower seeds for future restoration projects throughout the watershed.
- Seven Deer Creek Conservation Area sites were upgraded with hydro and water hookups, and nine sites were converted to premium status.
- The final phase of a three-part upgrade project at Waterford North Conservation Area began in 2020, to support the upgrade of 52 sites in 2021.

Forest Management

LPRCA manages our forest tracts with a focus on enhancing watershed health and protecting wildlife habitat and species at risk.

2020 was an active field season for LPRCA. Some project highlights include:

- 285 acres of land across four LPRCA-managed tracts were surveyed to collect data on species at risk and provincially rare plants and vegetation.
- 9-1-1 response signs were installed at forest tracts throughout Norfolk County and the Municipality of Bayham in 2020. Haldimand County, Brant County and Oxford County properties will have signage in place by spring 2021. Once installed, the 9-1-1 signage will enhance safety on LPRCA properties and supplement the new interactive property map available on LPRCA's website.
- Four properties, amounting to a total of 293 acres, were marked and tendered for harvest.



Several LPRCA properties are also involved in environmental studies and research projects. Projects in 2020 included:

- Dr. Altaf Arain of McMaster University has been monitoring the Wilson Tract since 2011, to study carbon exchange in temperate deciduous forests in southern Ontario.
- Birds Canada conducted studies for their Ontario Forest Birds at Risk program, monitoring several LPRCA properties for species such as the Acadian Flycatcher and the Cerulean Warbler.
- In 2001, a partnership was established with the MNRF to conduct a study on the Landon Tract to examine how opening gaps in the forest canopy impacts the growth of trees with moderate shade tolerance. Using data from the first stage of the study, in 2020 eight new gaps were formed in the canopy throughout the tract to promote growth of Oak and Carolinian species.

Conservation Stewardship Award

Mike O'Dwyer has been selected as the recipient of the 2020 Long Point Region Conservation Stewardship Award, having been nominated by ALUS Norfolk for his extensive contributions to conservation in the Long Point Region watershed.

Mr. O'Dwyer, a farmer in Simcoe, applies best management practices to ensure sustainable use of the land. Active in his community, Mr. O'Dwyer works with organizations including the Norfolk Federation of Agriculture and ALUS Norfolk.

The preservation of habitat for native species is of particular interest to Mr. O'Dwyer and he has undertaken numerous wetland and forest restoration projects. Since 2008, over 28,000 trees have been planted on his property. Cultivating native species while monitoring for invasive ones has provided ample room for both plants and wildlife to thrive. Long Point Region Conservation Authority is proud to have worked with Mr. O'Dwyer on several restoration projects and we thank him for his tireless efforts to protect the environment in the Long Point Region watershed.



Backhouse Homestead Heritage Designation

On September 22, 2020, Norfolk County approved a by-law designating the Backhouse Homestead, located in the Backus Heritage Conservation Area, under the Ontario Heritage Act. The designation serves as a means for a municipality to publicly acknowledge the heritage value of a site and helps ensure the conservation of important places for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Homestead is a key feature of the Backhouse Historic Site which also includes the 1798 Backhouse Grist Mill National Historic Site.



The Backhouse Homestead as it is today.

John Backhouse and his family arrived in Walsingham in 1796 from the Niagara region, constructing and settling in a single-room log cabin before building a larger home in 1799. The brick Homestead that still sits atop the hill overlooking the bright red mill was built in the early 1850s by his grandson, John H. Backhouse for his wife Sarah Dedrick.

Completed in 1852, this 15-room home has brick walls that are three layers thick and are made using clay taken directly from the surrounding property. In 1956, the Big Creek Conservation Authority purchased the property including the homestead from the Backus family (who had shortened their family name) with the intention of developing the heritage village that is found on the site today. In the 1970s, the homestead underwent a major renovation and was used as the



The Backhouse Homestead in approximately 1930.

headquarters of Bird Studies Canada.

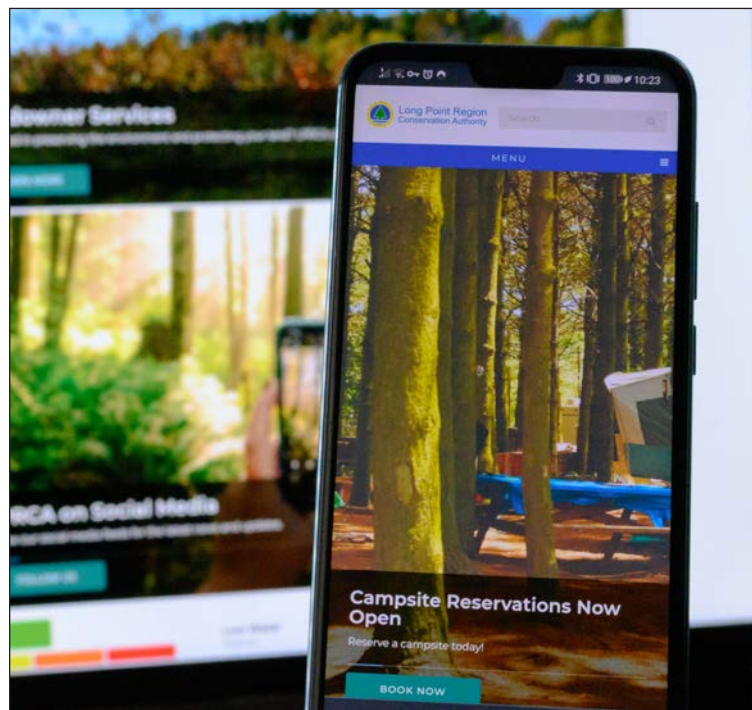
Originally, the homestead had a large wooden pagoda-style porch that extended around the full house. This was removed in the early 1920s in favour of an Italian piazza-style front porch. In the 1990s, a replica of the original porch was re-installed at the front of the home and is what remains there today. The Backhouse Homestead is a fascinating cultural site and a great example of a mid-19th century middle-class home. Backus Heritage Conservation Area is steeped in history and is truly a must-see destination.

Website Launch

In December 2020, LPRCA launched a new website to better serve our partners and communities. LPRCA staff spent the year refining content to create a clean and modern site that presents information that is accurate and easy to navigate.

The new site is fully compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), ensuring that all visitors to the site can access content in a format that suits their needs. Mobile usability was also a key requirement, with up to 72% of visitors accessing lprca.on.ca from mobile devices. Now the site scales dynamically to the size of the screen being used.

Additional enhancements and features were also added to improve user experience, including a search bar, interactive mapping tools that show what areas of the Long Point Region Watershed are regulated under the Conservation Authorities Act and near-real-time data charts that showcase the information LPRCA's gauges collect. Further website enhancements will be made in 2021, with features like online donation processing and flood status email alerts coming soon.



Virtual Memorial Forest Service

To protect the health and safety of LPRCA staff and our communities, the annual Memorial Forest Dedication Service was held virtually in 2020. A service was filmed, featuring LPRCA Chair Michael Columbus, Lay Worship Leader Phyllis Buchner and musicians Brenda Atkinson, Joe Rohrer and Jody Dedrick. The video premiered on YouTube on September 20, 2020. With support from Backus park staff, the recorded service was also featured footage of the memorial trees being planted. Strict COVID-19 protocols were followed to safely produce the virtual event, allowing friends and family from around the world to reflect on and cherish memories of their loved ones who have passed.

Land Donations

Land donations to LPRCA benefit the watershed by preserving important natural areas. In 2020, LPRCA was fortunate to receive a land donation from Sharon Clarmo, Lynda Allman, Cathy Gage and Dianne Lang in memory of their parents Robert and Lucy Gage, and their brother Bill. The 50-acre property, now the Gage Tract, was the dowry of Roxa Beemer when she married William Gage in 1892. It has been passed down through the family since, now being donated to LPRCA by Roxa and William's great-granddaughters.

In Memoriam - Craig Ashbaugh

It is with sadness that Long Point Region Conservation Authority notes the passing of Craig Ashbaugh in November 2020. Craig was the Vice-Chair of the Long Point Region Conservation Authority Board of Directors from 2001 through 2006, also stepping into the role of Chair from September to December 2006. During his time with LPRCA, Craig was a member of numerous committees, including the Budget Committee, the 2003 Fundraising Committee and the 2005 Safety Committee.



Extensively passionate about the health and wellbeing of the environment, Craig was appointed as the inaugural Chair of Lake Erie Source Protection Committee, a position he held from November 2007 through July 2015. It was with his leadership that the Source Protection Committee developed Source Protection Plans for the Catfish Creek, Grand River, Kettle Creek and Long Point Region Source Protection Areas. A lifetime educator and conservationist, Craig will be greatly missed.

2020 Financial Highlights

2020 Revenue

Municipal Levy - Operating	\$	1,644,960	34%
Municipal Levy - Capital	\$	434,450	9%
Provincial Funding	\$	35,229	1%
Fees	\$	1,874,019	38%
Forestry Sales	\$	419,684	8%
Donations	\$	325,000	7%
Gain on Sale of Assets	\$	131,446	3%
Total	\$	4,864,788	100%

2020 Expenditures

Planning and Watershed Services	\$	995,119	25%
Backus Heritage Conservation Area	\$	316,683	8%
Maintenance Operations Services	\$	515,243	13%
Forestry Services	\$	283,889	7%
Conservation Parks	\$	554,953	14%
Corporate Services	\$	1,124,578	28%
ALUS Elgin Partnership	\$	229,105	5%
Total	\$	4,019,570	100%

Use of 2020 Operating Levy

Corporate Services	\$	711,025	43%
Planning & Watershed Services	\$	466,978	29%
Backus Heritage Conservation Area	\$	133,912	8%
Maintenance Operations Services	\$	333,045	20%
Total	\$	1,644,960	100%

Share of 2020 Operating Levy

Haldimand County	\$	232,601	14%
Norfolk County	\$	865,971	53%
Oxford County	\$	349,760	21%
Brant County	\$	109,970	7%
Bayham Municipality	\$	74,792	4%
Malahide Township	\$	11,866	1%
Total	\$	1,644,960	100%

2020 Board of Directors

Chair

Michael Columbus, Norfolk County

Vice Chair

John Scholten, Township of Norwich

Directors

Dave Beres, Town of Tillsonburg

Robert Chambers, County of Brant

Kristal Chopp, Norfolk County

Roger Geysens, Norfolk County

Ken Hewitt, Haldimand County

Tom Masschaele, Norfolk County

Stewart Patterson, Haldimand County

Ian Rabbitts, Norfolk County

Peter Ypma, Township of South West Oxford

Valerie Donnell, Municipality of Bayham &
Township of Malahide

Lee Brown Marsh Management Committee

Tom Haskett, Chair

Trevor Brown

Larry Chanda

Michael Columbus

John Scholten

Barry Smith

Backus Museum Committee

Betty Chanyi, Chair

Dave Beres

Michael Columbus

Robert Chambers

Dene Elligson

Roger Geysens

Heather Smith

Julie Stone

Madeline Wilson

LPRCA Staff

Judy Maxwell, General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer

Aaron LeDuc, Manager Corporate Services

Ben Hodi, Watershed Services Manager

Lorrie Minshall, Project Manager, Watershed Services

Helen Bartens, Assistant Curator

Bonnie Bravener, Resource Technician

Kim Brown, Marsh Manager

Jeff Calliauw, Carpenter

Matthew Churley, Water Resources Analyst

Zachary Cox, Marketing Coordinator

Nathan Dunbar, Operations Support

Paul Gagnon, Lands & Waters Supervisor

Brandon Good, Superintendent of Conservation Areas

Carolyn Jacques, Accounting & Administration Supervisor

Jumanah Khan, ALUS Elgin Coordinator

Leigh-Anne Mauthe, Supervisor of Planning Services

Dana McLachlan, Administrative Assistant

Nicole Petker, Outdoor Educator

David Proracki, Natural Hazards Technician

Chris Reinhart, Forestry Technician

Frank Schram, Workshop Supervisor

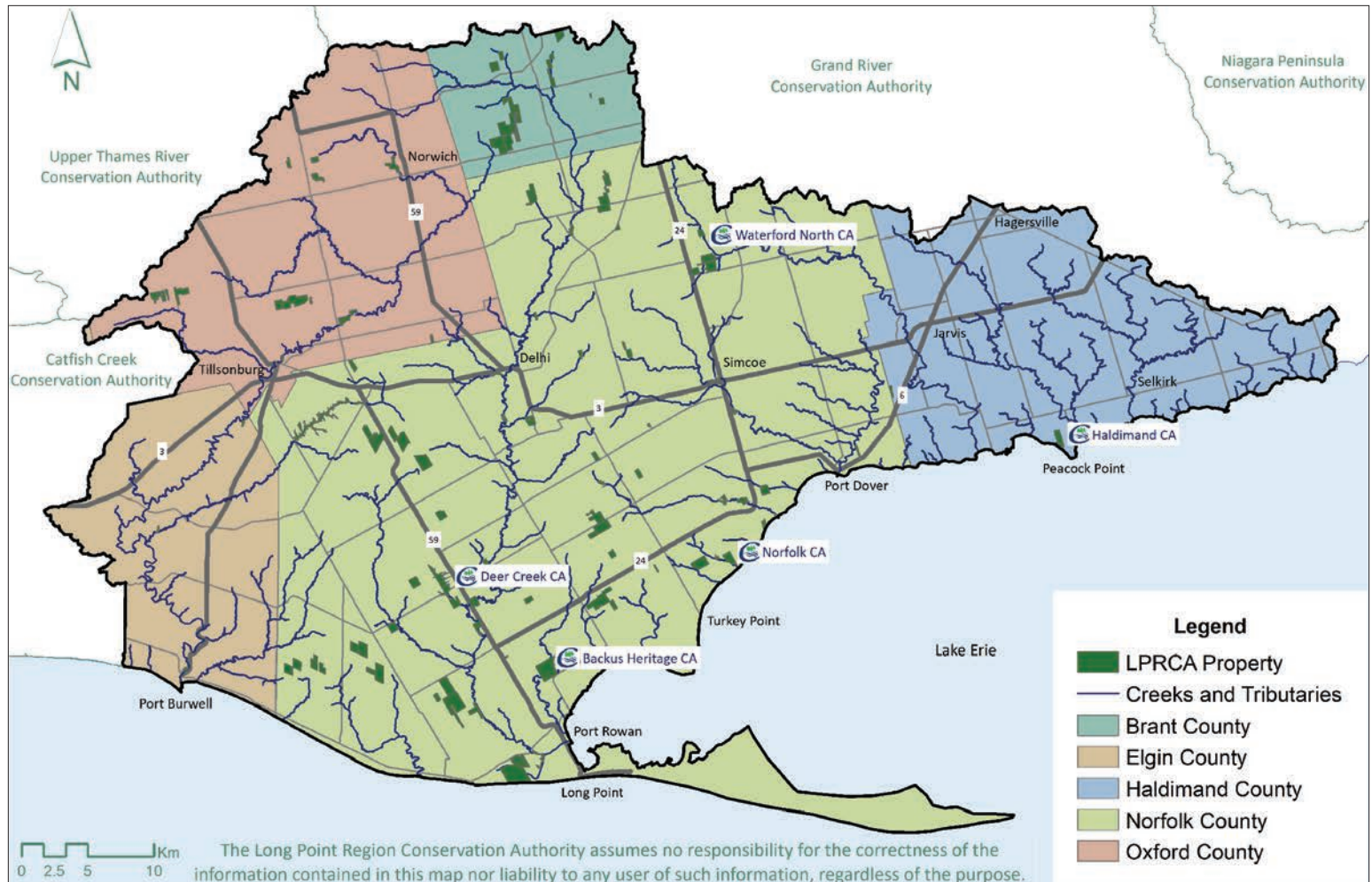
Nicole Sullivan, Reception

Debbie Thain, Supervisor of Forestry

Ginny Vanlouwe, Accounting Clerk

And our many seasonal staff and summer students

Long Point Region Watershed





Long Point Region Conservation Authority



Member of the
Conservation Ontario Network

4 Elm Street, Tillsonburg, Ontario N4G 0C4

Phone: 519-842-4242

Toll free: 1-888-231-5408

Fax: 519-842-7123

Email: conservation@lprca.on.ca

www.lprca.on.ca

 @lpr_ca

 @LongPointConservation

 @longpointca

THANK YOU TO OUR MUNICIPAL PARTNERS

Municipality of Bayham / County of Brant / Haldimand County / Town of Tillsonburg
Township of Malahide / Norfolk County / Township of Norwich / Township of South West Oxford