



LOWER TRENT
CONSERVATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Member of



**Conservation
ONTARIO**
Natural Champions

Message from the CAO and Chair



Rhonda Bateman, CAO



Eric Sandford, Chair

2021 Annual Report Message from the CAO and Chair

Lower Trent Conservation's 2021 Annual Report is a testament to the spirit and dedication of our staff members to improve the delivery of our programs and services. Although the pandemic continued through 2021, Lower Trent Conservation adapted programming and services to meet the needs of our watershed residents and our municipal partners. While our offices were closed to the public, communication with our staff members continued through telephone and email. When necessary, and with COVID safety protocols in place, office appointments were scheduled and site visits continued.

Partnerships and cooperation with local municipalities, the provincial Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure program, community groups, individuals and non-governmental organizations helped Lower Trent Conservation to accomplish many goals in 2021 including: the installation of a new Log-Lifting system at the Warkworth Dam, the migration of children's education to an online format and the virtual delivery of the Tri-County Children's Water Festival, and the completion of the multi-year Murray Marsh NHA buffer project.

Our Planning and Regulations section recorded large increases with online inquiries up 58%, *Planning Act* applications increasing by 60% and new violations up by 40% over last year.

Three new regulations under the *Conservation Authorities Act* were passed in the fall: Transition Plans and Agreements, Mandatory Programs and Services, and Rules of Conduct in Conservation Areas. Lower Trent Conservation delivered the first requirement under these regulations with the development and distribution of a Transition Plan to our municipal partners and the province before the end of 2021. The remainder of these regulations and their delivery requirements will be a prominent driver for upcoming workplans.

The highlights contained within this Report are the result of the support received from our Board of Directors and the commitment of our staff members. We appreciate the continued support from our partner municipalities and the greater watershed community.

Board of Directors 2021

Municipalities located within the Lower Trent Conservation watershed region appoint representatives to the Board of Directors.

The 10-member Board representing the seven municipalities, located either entirely or partially within the watershed region, oversees the activities of the Conservation Authority and reports back to their respective municipal councils.

Township of Alnwick/ Haldimand

Mike Filip

Municipality of Brighton

Mary Tadman (Vice-Chair)
Mark Bateman

Municipality of Centre Hastings

Eric Sandford (Chair)

Township of Cramahe

Don Clark

City of Quinte West

Jim Alyea
Lynda Reid

Township of Stirling- Rawdon

Bob Mullin

Municipality of Trent Hills

Rick English
Gene Brahaney

About Us

Lower Trent Conservation is a community-based, non-profit environmental protection organization dedicated to protecting, restoring, and managing natural resources across the Lower Trent watershed region.

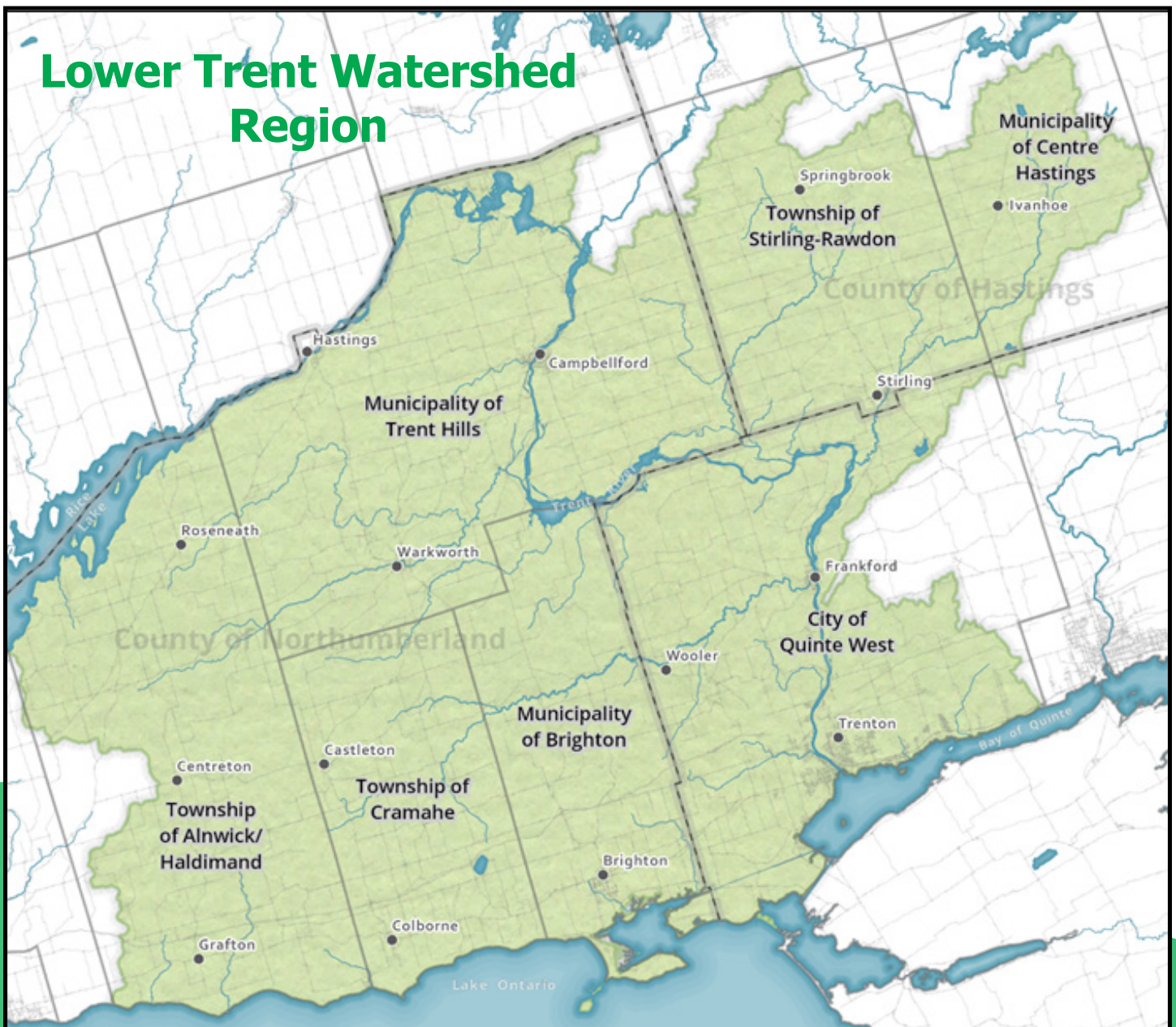
Established by the provincial government and our municipal partners in 1968, under the *Conservation Authorities Act*, Lower Trent Conservation is one of 36 Conservation Authorities in Ontario, and a member of Conservation Ontario.

Lower Trent Conservation works in partnership with municipal, provincial and federal governments, businesses, community organizations and the general public to deliver locally-based environmental programs.



Trent River at the Trenton Greenbelt Conservation Area

Lower Trent Conservation's watershed jurisdiction covers 2,070 square kilometres including the Trent River and the watersheds of eight main tributaries, as well as areas that flow directly into Lake Ontario and the Bay of Quinte between Grafton and Quinte West.



Watershed Science & Services

Environmental Planning and Regulations

Development activities in environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, shorelines, streams, and rivers can damage the environment or pose a threat to public safety. Lower Trent Conservation offers advice to municipalities, developers, and landowners to help them meet provincial policy requirements and to ensure compliance with government legislation. These services also ensure environmental integrity and protect people and property from flooding and erosion hazards.

Regulation of construction activities in environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, shorelines, and waterways ensures that activities in these areas will not result in a risk to public safety or property damage. This preventative approach also ensures the protection of important natural features.

2021 Highlights

- Provided comments to local municipalities on 264 *Planning Act* applications (severances, minor variances, official plans, zoning by-laws, etc.).
- Provided ongoing review and input to 25 subdivision proposals, 2 condominium proposals and 17 site plan approval applications.
- Participated in 3 legal court cases regarding Section 28 regulations.
- Received applications for 383 permits for development activities under Section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* (Ontario Regulation 163/06 Development, Interference with Wetlands & Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses) and approved 332 permits.
- Identified 45 new violations; Conducted enforcement investigations related to 67 violations (new and ongoing); Resolved 35 Violations Files.
- Responded to 65 complaints.
- Responded to 1,134 online property inquiries and provided comments regarding property specific development constraints and environmental conditions for 793 new general development inquiries and 48 legal requests.
- Conducted 282 site inspections to assist with the environmental review of municipal planning and permit applications.
- Delivered outreach and education on source water protection, regulations and planning with a municipal partner.
- Delivered risk management services as part of the implementation of the Trent Source Protection Plan: completed 4 risk management plans addressing 5 significant drinking water threats, conducted 4 risk management plan compliance inspections, 6 inspections for prohibited activities, issued 42 restricted land use notices.



Watershed Science & Services

Flood Forecasting and Protection Works

Lower Trent Conservation, in cooperation with local municipalities and the provincial government, plays a key role in reducing the risk of property damage and loss of life from natural hazards such as flooding.

Weather forecasts and conditions along the region's waterways are monitored daily, as part of a flood forecasting and warning system, in order to provide the earliest possible notification to municipalities and the public of the potential for flooding.

In addition, 10 flood control structures, including a dam, flood walls, berms, weirs, and overflow channels, have been constructed to help protect existing development in flood susceptible areas from potential damages resulting from a flood. The structures were constructed with the aid of the Province of Ontario and local municipalities on a cost-sharing basis.

2021 Highlights

- Issued 6 bulletins regarding high water levels on local water systems: 2 water safety statements, 4 flood outlook statements or flood watches were issued. 5 of these notices were watershed wide, 1 was specifically for the Trent River. No water level bulletins were issued for Lake Ontario and the Bay of Quinte.
- Conducted daily risk assessments for flood forecasting including monitoring weather forecasts, water levels/flows at 13 stations, and precipitation at 10 stations; carried out 12 snow surveys at 4 snow sampling sites.



- LTC watershed was in Level I Low Water Conditions for the months of June and July. One Low Water Bulletin was issued on June 2, 2021 declaring the Level 1 Conditions and another Bulletin was issued on August 6, 2021 ending the Drought Advisory.
- Conducted annual inspections of 10 flood control structures.
- Installation of the new overhead gantry log-lifting system at the Warkworth Dam was completed in early 2021.
- Seasonal operation of the Warkworth Dam: Logs In (April 30, 2021) and Logs Out (November 11, 2021).

Environmental Monitoring and Reporting

Watershed monitoring activities focus on collecting data to evaluate and report on existing conditions within the watershed. LTC works in partnership with our municipalities on water monitoring programs to support local initiatives as well as provincial monitoring networks. Due to COVID-19 and lack of funding, the program was reduced based on resources available.

- Monthly provincial surface water quality monitoring was completed (9 sites) as well as monthly LTC surface water quality sampling (9 sites).
- Annual groundwater quality monitoring was undertaken at 11 wells. One well was decommissioned at the request of the land owner. Ongoing water level monitoring is being logged at the remaining 10 wells.

Watershed Science & Services

Education, Outreach and Stewardship

Education and outreach are critically important for engaging residents in environmentally sustainable behaviours and drawing attention to conservation issues. Special events, workshops, and landowner stewardship activities provide opportunities for people to learn about and get involved in the protection of natural resources within the watershed region. Lower Trent Conservation also recognizes that the students of today are the environmental champions of tomorrow. Through a variety of educational activities, young people learn about the importance of our natural environment and are inspired to care for our precious environment. Lower Trent Conservation's youth environmental education initiatives are made possible through grants and donations from local industry, business, service clubs, and private individual supporters.

2021 Highlights

- Developed new virtual class programs to engage youth from Grades 2-12.
- Launched the pilot Love Your Watershed program, which will fund youth-initiated projects that will improve the air quality, water quality, or wildlife habitat.
- Coordinated a virtual Tri-County Children's Water Festival that took place over the month of May.
- Attended 6 Batawa Summer Adventure Camps.
- Presented at Latonnell Conservation Symposium Webinar series.
- In total, the environmental education programming engaged 1,957 people, including 1720 youth, 243 adults, 85 classes, and 42 schools.
- Raised awareness regarding drinking water source protection with 36 social media posts reaching over 11,000 people and assisting in the development of road sign campaign and online quiz.
- Completed "A Management Guide to Control Invasive Phragmites" at the MMNHA with support from the Invasive Species Hit Squad position supported by Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters.
- Delivered 12,000 free trees through the EAB Replacement Tree program to 141 Northumberland County residents.
- Native Plant Sale provided 11,100 tree and shrub seedlings, 180 potted tree saplings, and 3,240 wildflowers to over 300 customers.
- Completed 4 site visits with landowners interested in planting trees through the 50 Million Tree Program.



Conservation Lands

Lower Trent Conservation owns 1,540 hectares of natural open space. These forests, valleys, meadows, and wetlands form part of a regional system of protected landscapes that depict the natural diversity of the region. They are special places in the watershed that are protected from development, where the natural world comes first.

There are 17 properties that range in size from small parkettes to over 650 hectares. Ten properties are classified as Conservation Areas and provide venues for healthy, active lifestyles such as hiking, mountain biking, fishing, canoeing, and other outdoor recreational activities. These properties feature over 27 kilometres of trails, and other facilities such as parking lots, privies, boat launches, picnic shelters, and the Goodrich-Loomis Conservation Centre. In addition, seven Natural Habitat Areas, while open to the public, are left in a natural state with no maintained trails or recreational facilities.

2021 Highlights

- Implemented final stage of the Proctor Park Conservation Area Improvement Plan.
- Installed new or rebuilt entrance signs at Bleasdell Boulder, Trenton Greenbelt, Haldimand, and Proctor Park Conservation Areas, including a new (replacement) sign on Hwy #2 west of Brighton.
- Coordinated with Ontario Hydro to relocate an osprey nest to a new safer nesting pole.
- Masonry professionals completed structural maintenance on the King's Mill building.
- An unauthorized trail was closed at Sager Conservation Area to allow for regeneration.
- Upgraded path at Goodrich-Loomis Conservation Area with a drainage swale.
- Ecological Land Classification assessments were initiated for the Trenton Greenbelt Conservation Area and the King's Mill Conservation Area.
- Removed hazard trees including those infected with Emerald Ash Borer and many that were damaged during strong wind storms.
- Performed invasive species removal (autumn olive) at the Goodrich-Loomis Conservation Area.
- Monitored for an endangered butterfly at our conservation areas.
- Supported field assessments of an endangered moth on conservation lands.
- Completed the multi-year wetland buffer project at MMNHA by planting an additional 8,420 trees on Austen Island with support from Forests Ontario, Highway of Heroes, Ducks Unlimited and donations to the Stewardship program.



Osprey nest relocation



Trenton Greenbelt Conservation Area



Maintenance at King's Mill



ELC assessment at a CA

Corporate Services

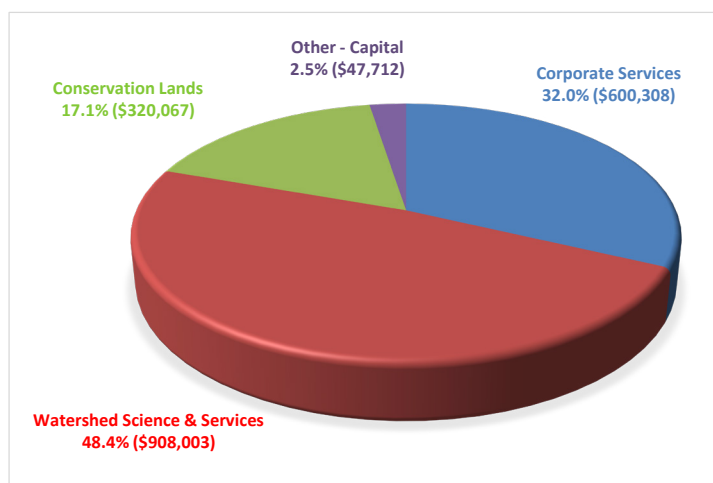
Corporate Services is an important part of day-to-day operations, providing support to all Lower Trent Conservation programs. These include: financial and human resource management; administrative and IT support; program planning and development; customer relations; partnership building; information management; GIS (mapping); and marketing and communications.

2021 Highlights

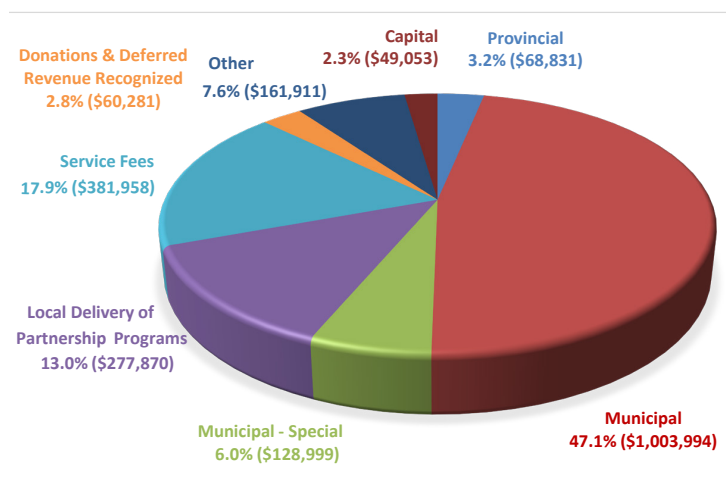
- Launched upgraded accounting software, Sage50 Premium Accounting with new chart of accounts to accommodate departmental reporting.
- Researched, purchased and set up the new online time and attendance (Dayforce) process for all staff, allowing staff time to be allocated to various projects/program activities; as well as, directly linked to the payroll system.
- Provided CS support to fifteen (15) various special projects/programs funded contracts throughout 2021.
- Conducted 2021 Salary Review with proposed changes for 2022 Budget.
- Updated the Human Resources Policy and Procedures, including expanding scope for 'Working from Home' section due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- Launched electronic funds transfer (EFT) payments through CIBC bank.
- Completed first electronic records destruction online to meet Information Classification Retention meeting disposition equalling 'destroy'.
- Successfully implemented the new 10-year Capital Management Plan with 50% capital budget funding for 2021.

2021 Financial Summary

Expenditures - \$1,876,090



Revenues - \$2,132,897



Financial summary does not include partnership programs (Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan & Drinking Water Source Protection) administered by Lower Trent Conservation.

Partnership Programs

Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan



Lower Trent Conservation coordinates the local administration of the Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan, co-chairs the Bay of Quinte Restoration Council, and provides communications and technical support aimed at rehabilitating the Bay.

In 2021, further progress was made with addressing the environmental health issues for the Bay of Quinte. Degradation of aesthetics was submitted to the federal and provincial governments for formal redesignation to not impaired. Three environmental health issues remain to be addressed: restrictions on fish and wildlife consumption, eutrophication or undesirable algae and degradation of phytoplankton and zooplankton populations.

Eutrophication and undesirable algae has always been the main issue with the Bay and a long-term phosphorus management plan is required. A discussion paper has been prepared and consultation with local municipalities and other stakeholders continued in 2021. A long-term monitoring plan for the phosphorus management plan is under development.

Stewardship programs were delivered to assist landowners with implementation of the recommendations in the phosphorus management plan.



Drinking Water Source Protection

As the lead Source Protection Authority for the Trent Conservation Coalition Source Protection Region, Lower Trent Conservation provides technical and administrative support to the Source Protection Committee and Crowe Valley, Ganaraska Region, Kawartha-Haliburton, Lower Trent, and Otonabee-Peterborough Source Protection Authorities. Source Protection Plan policies are in effect across this vast region to protect sources of drinking water for 52 municipal drinking water systems (34 groundwater wells and 18 surface water intakes).

- Reviewed several applications for developments that could impact the vulnerability of drinking water systems.
- Proposed a new method of calculating what would constitute a road salt application threat to drinking water, this approach was adopted by the MECP.
- Involved in a peer review of the Durham Region Groundwater Modeling Study.
- Involved in creating a music video to promote understanding of the Drinking Water Protection Zone Road Signs which was part of a Province wide campaign



The 28-member Source Protection Committee has been monitoring the progress of the policy implementation phase, while working on improvements to the existing policies in an effort to enhance the effectiveness of the policies. Plan amendments are also required when a drinking water system changes. Amendments to the Source Protection Plan for the new wells in Colborne and Blackstock were initiated in 2021 with approval expected in 2022.

Our 2021 Staff

Rhonda Bateman, CAO/Secretary-Treasurer

Corporate Services

Kelly Vandette, Manager, Corporate Services

Corinne Ross, Communications Specialist

Anna Morgan, Finance & Information Technician

Jeffrey Meyer, GIS and Information Technology Specialist

Watershed Science & Services

Anne Anderson, Manager, Community Outreach & Special Projects

Janet Noyes, Manager, Development Services & Water Resources

Leah Stephens, Environmental Planner/Regulations Officer (Jan - Sept)

Ashley Anastasio, Environmental Planner

Gage Comeau, Water Resources Specialist/Regulations Officer

Victoria Heffernan, Assistant Planning Technician (Jan - July)

Kim Stephens, Assistant Planning Technician

Ewa Bednarczuk, Ecology & Stewardship Specialist

Chris McLeod, Source Protection Risk Management Official/Inspector

Jenn McCallum, Environmental Education Technician

Massimo Narini, Assistant Development Technician *

Savanah Muller, Communications and Outreach Assistant +

Emil Senathirajah, Invasive Species Outreach Specialist +

Daniel Butler - Student Placement

Kayla Nelson - Student Placement

Conservation Lands

David Beamer, Manager, Conservation Lands

Frank Cherrier, Conservation Lands Maintenance Technician (Retired May)

Luke Oomen, Conservation Lands Technician

Matthew Doxtator, Conservation Lands Field Assistant *

Jett Brown, Conservation Lands Field Assistant +

Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan

Sarah Midlane-Jones, Community Outreach Specialist

Shan Mugalingam, Technical Specialist

Jason Jobin, Environmental Stewardship Technician *

Drinking Water Source Protection

Keith Taylor, Program Coordinator *

Trent Bos, Program Assistant*

* Contract/Seasonal Position

+ Summer Student Position



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