



LOWER TRENT
CONSERVATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Member of



**Conservation
ONTARIO**
Natural Champions

Message from the CAO and Chair



Rhonda Bateman, CAO



Bob Mullin, Chair

This past year was exceedingly productive for Lower Trent Conservation, with a focus on collaboration, outreach, flood mapping, and the establishment of municipal program and services agreements.

The successful completion of the Trenton Greenbelt Conservation Area Restoration project on the shore of Trent River was made possible through the dedicated efforts of numerous community volunteers and organizations. This transformative project turned a section of the Trenton waterfront, characterized by poor soil quality and limited biodiversity, into a thriving, biodiverse area, focussed on native plants, an accessible trail, and seating areas. This initiative was a testament to the importance of visionary action and collaboration. A special acknowledgment to the City of Quinte West, a major contributor to the project's success.

Throughout the year, staff organized and led various outreach programs including a new hot composting creation workshop in conjunction with Dahlia May Flower Farm, a Painting with Plants workshop in collaboration with Makers Dozen, and a Family Day in August at Goodrich-Loomis Conservation Area.

Lower Trent Conservation was successful in securing federal Flood Hazard Identification Mapping Project (FHIMP) funding to complete flood hazard mapping on seven local creeks and rivers including the Trent River. Our participating municipalities, Stirling-Rawdon, Trent Hills, Quinte West, Brighton and Cramahe provided 50% of the funding for these projects. The study results, expected in the spring, will be used by municipalities and the conservation authority to support public safety.

Municipal agreements (MOUs) for programs and services, as mandated under provincial regulations, were reached with our municipal partners before the end of the year. These agreements allow Lower Trent Conservation to deliver watershed wide programs such as water quality monitoring and youth education. Additionally, they allow LTC to provide municipality specific programs, including infrastructure inspections and Risk Management and Outreach for source protection.

We would like to thank our municipal partners and volunteers for the continued support for programs and services that enhance the well-being of all residents of our watershed.

Board of Directors 2023

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

The 11-member Board representing the seven municipalities and one appointed agricultural representative, located either entirely or partially within the watershed region, oversee the activities of the Conservation Authority and report back to their respective municipal councils.

Township of Alnwick/Haldimand

Mike Ainsworth

Municipality of Brighton

Jeff Wheeldon

Bobbi Wright

Municipality of Centre Hastings

Eric Sandford

Township of Cramahe

Sherry Hamilton

City of Quinte West

Jim Alyea

Lynda Reid

Township of Stirling-Rawdon

Bob Mullin (Chair)

Municipality of Trent Hills

Rick English

Gene Brahaney (Vice-Chair)

Agricultural Rep

N/A

About Us

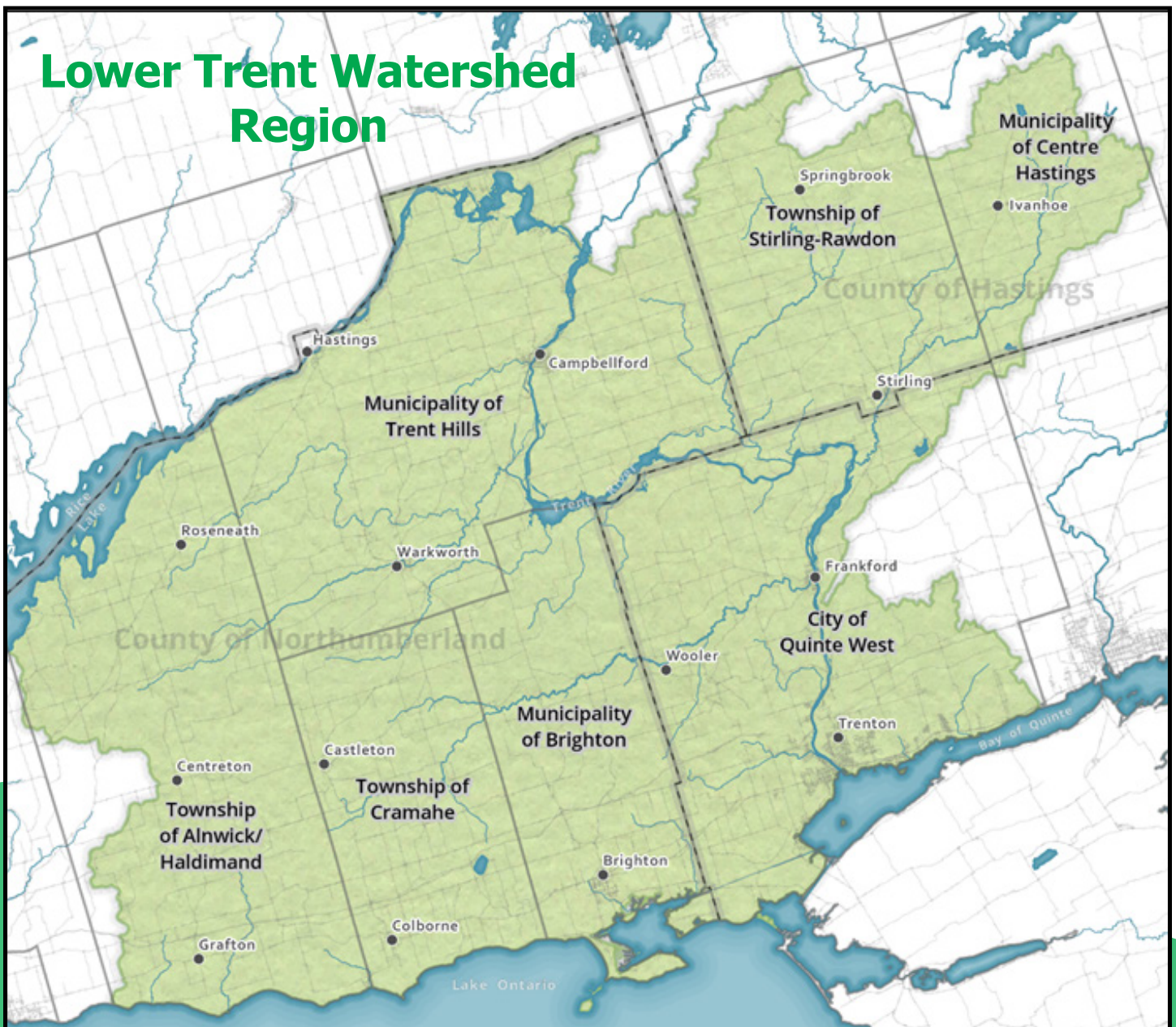
Lower Trent Conservation is a community-based, non-profit environmental protection organization dedicated to protecting, restoring, and managing natural resources across the Lower Trent watershed region.

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.



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.

2023 Highlights

- Provided comments to local municipalities on 213 *Planning Act* applications (severances, minor variances, official plans, zoning by-laws, etc.).
- Provided ongoing review and input to 14 subdivision proposals, 2 condominium proposals, and 11 site plan approval applications.
- Participated in 4 legal court cases regarding Section 28 regulations.
- Received applications for 320 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 284 permits.
- Identified 39 new violations; Conducted enforcement investigations related to 85 violations (new and ongoing); Resolved 14 Violations Files.
- Responded to 77 complaints.
- Responded to 1,003 online property inquiries and provided comments regarding property specific development constraints and environmental conditions for 543 new general development inquiries and 60 legal requests.
- Conducted 246 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 municipal partners.
- Delivered risk management services as part of the implementation of the Trent Source Protection Plan: completed 1 risk management plan addressing 1 significant drinking water threat, conducted 12 risk management plan compliance inspections, and issued 18 restricted land use notices.
- Performed threat verification in support of the Section 36 amendments to the Trent Source Protection Plan. Issued 321 notification letters to inform property owners of policy changes and how they may be impacted.



Site inspection on the Trent River

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.

2023 Highlights

- Issued 15 bulletins regarding high water levels on local water systems: 5 water safety statements, 8 flood outlook statements, and 2 flood watches were issued.
- Conducted daily risk assessments for flood forecasting including monitoring weather forecasts, water levels/flows at 13 stations, and precipitation at 10 stations; carried out 10 snow surveys at 4 snow sampling sites.
- Issued a level 1 Low Water Condition for the months of November and December. Low Water Bulletin released on October 27, 2023 declaring level 1 conditions.
- Conducted annual inspections of 10 flood control structures.
- Seasonal operation of the Warkworth Dam: Logs In (May 9, 2023) and Logs Out (October 18, 2023).

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.

- Monthly provincial surface water quality monitoring was completed at 9 sites, as well as monthly LTC surface water quality sampling at the same 9 sites. A total of 135 surface water quality samples were collected from March to October; provincial samples for September were excluded.
- Annual groundwater quality monitoring was undertaken on a new rotating basis, with samples collected from 4 wells. Additionally, ongoing water level monitoring logged at 11 wells.



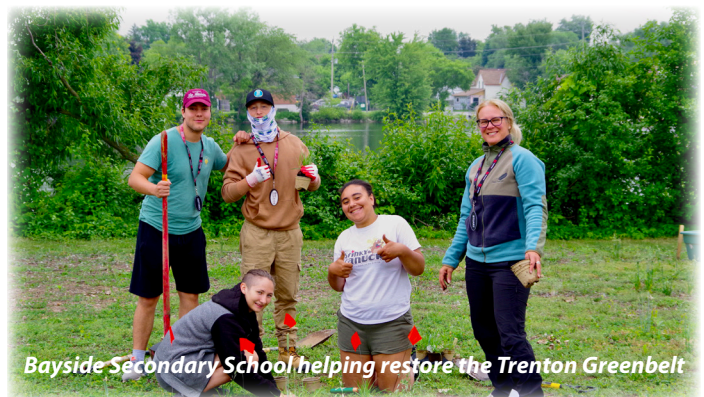
Watershed Science & Services

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.

2023 Highlights

- Hosted the 2023 Tri-County Children's Water Festival at Batawa Ski Hill bringing in 1,200 students from all four school boards within our watershed.
- Collaborated with 4 high schools, engaging with 143 students in Trenton to offer hands-on education in restoration and planting at the Trenton Greenbelt restoration project.
- Provided 24 in-class/in-field presentations to 542 students; attended 9 children's day camps/youth groups, with over 501 children.
- Organized a public event in August at the Goodrich-Loomis Conservation Area, shining a spotlight on our conservation lands and our role within the watershed and community. The event attracted 57 participants.
- Participated in 5 community events held in Campbellford, Quinte West, and Hastings, including the Hastings County Plowing Match. Our aim was to educate the public on Drinking Water Source Protection and Lower Trent Conservation. These efforts reached approximately 653 people.
- Facilitated information sessions on Drinking Water Source Protection for the public in both Centreton and Roseneath.
- Developed a series of six Drinking Water Source Protection videos outlining best practices. Also, created 12 social media posts reaching over 7,000 people on our social media channels.
- Hosted a workshop titled "Painting with Plants" in collaboration with Makers Dozen at Seymour Conservation Area, providing participants with an opportunity to explore the creative process of integrating plants and nature into their artwork.
- Provided support for cover cropping to 25 landowners covering 2,000 acres of agricultural land. Eleven agricultural landowners participated in soil sampling over 450 acres of land.
- Delivered 12,000 free tree seedlings through the Emerald Ash Borer Replacement Tree program to 141 Northumberland county residents.
- Native Plant Sale received 203 orders provided 10,250 tree and shrub seedlings, 80 potted tree saplings, 160 wildflower and 11 Little Forest kits.
- Implemented 3 projects under 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.

2023 Highlights

- 20 special events were hosted at conservation areas, encompassing weddings, spring and fall camps, as well as fundraising runs.
- A total of 470 hazardous trees affected by the Emerald Ash Borer, were removed from our properties.
- Installation of a bench at the Trenton Greenbelt, generously donated by the Rotary Club of Trenton was completed.
- Enhancements to the Beaver Trail at Goodrich-Loomis Conservation Area were completed, including the removal and replacement of a failed water crossing. Additionally, a wooden seating area was added for hikers to enjoy along the trail.
- Participated in a restoration planting event with the Quinte Field Naturalist, planting approximately 100 Lupines on the North Loop at Goodrich-Loomis Conservation Area.
- Conducted dog-strangling vine seed pod removal across multiple conservation areas, as well as targeted dog-strangling vine spray treatments specifically at the Sager and the Trenton Greenbelt locations for a more aggressive control measure.



Staff Earth Day clean up at the Trenton Greenbelt

Restoring the Trenton Greenbelt Highlights

In 2023, restoration efforts at the southern portion of the Trenton Greenbelt Conservation Area continued, focusing on replacing compacted lawn with a vibrant wildflower meadow and prairie habitat. The site now boasts many benefits for people and wildlife. Increased climate resiliency, healthier soils, improved habitat for wildlife, and opportunities for community members to connect with nature in an urban setting are just a few of these.

- A Community Survey was completed by 108 residents, revealing overwhelming support for the project.
- Over 6,300 wildflowers and grasses, and 390 trees and shrubs representing 38 native species were planted on site.
- A 105m-long limestone pathway was installed to guide visitors through the site.
- The picnic tables and shelters were beautified with murals of local plants and insects by a local artist.
- To help connect community members with the project, 2 workshops trained 33 participants on how to create hot compost, while a seed collection workshop taught 8 participants how to collect local seeds.
- A dozen local groups and organizations supported the project through advice, professional services, donations, and sweat equity.



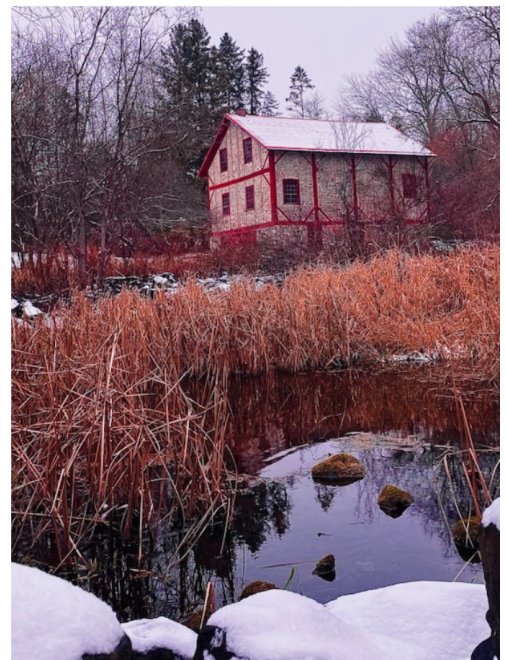
Wildflower meadow at the Trenton Greenbelt Conservation Area

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.

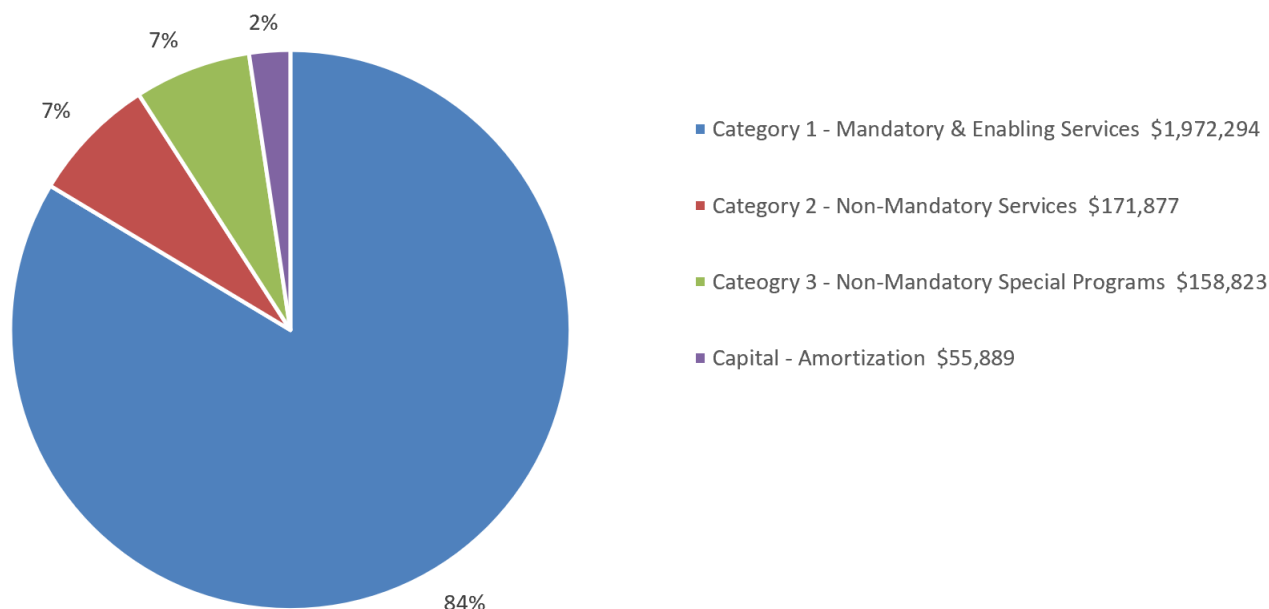
2023 Highlights

- Launched the much anticipated new website.
- Completed an operational review of Information Technology to pinpoint best practices and identify any existing gaps.
- Provided human resource support for the hiring of 11 staff members, which included drafting job descriptions, posting vacancies on relevant platforms, and managing the onboarding procedures with department managers.
- Finalized the development of the 2024 budget process and structure.
- Developed and initiated a Photos Storage and Records guideline to organize image records.
- Updated the Volunteers for Conservation Program to incorporate the expansion of volunteer trail stewards.
- Created and implemented the Conservation Lands/ Properties Inventory Asset Database, integrating it within a SharePoint platform.
- Reviewed and updated the Accessibility Policy and Accessible Customer Service Plan, as well as the Corporate Communications Strategy.

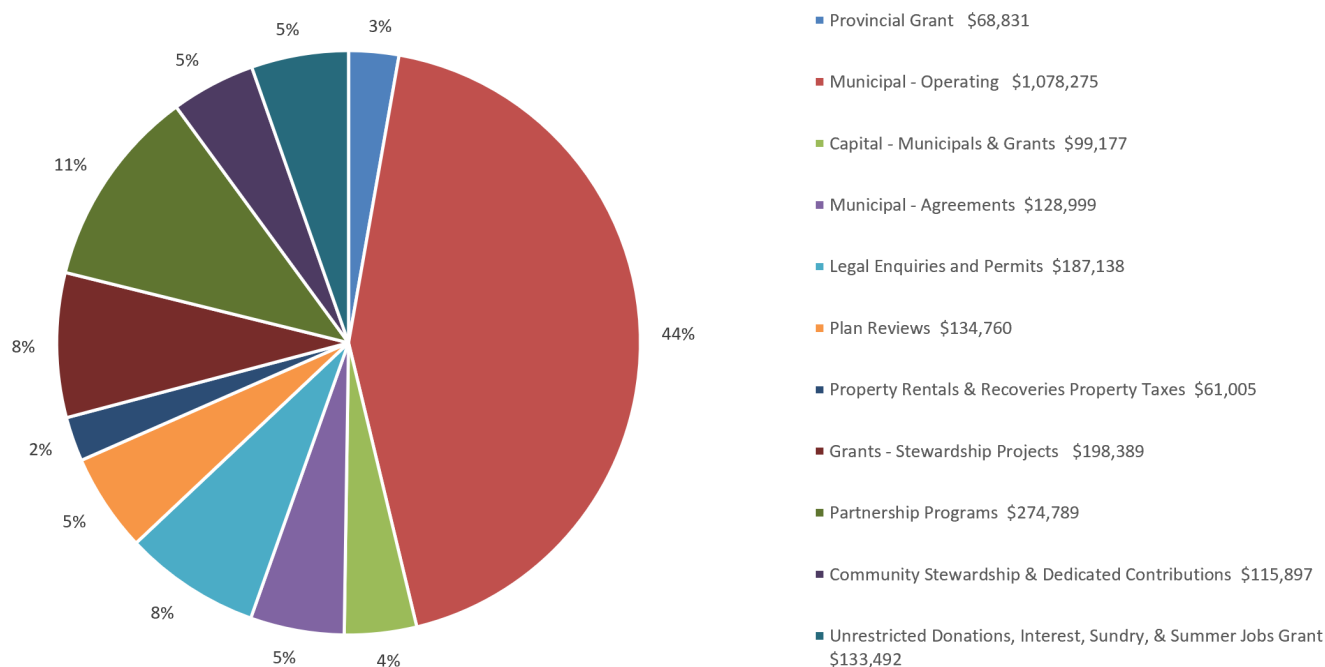


Financial Summary

2023 Operations and Capital Expenditures = \$2,358,883



2023 Operations and Capital Revenue Sources = \$2,480,752



- Financial Summary does not include partnership funded programs (Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan and Drinking Water Source Protection), administered by Lower Trent Conservation.
- Audited Financial Statements are available on www.LTC.on.ca

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 2023, significant progress was made in addressing environmental health issues identified for the Bay of Quinte. Of the eleven concerns identified, three remain to be addressed: restrictions on fish and wildlife consumption, eutrophication or undesirable algae, and degradation of phytoplankton and zooplankton populations.

A Phosphorus Management Plan is currently under development to sustainably maintain the Bay's health by reducing the risk of harmful algae blooms while ensuring a sustainable fishery. The plan addresses necessary reductions in phosphorus levels from sewage treatment plants, urban stormwater, and agriculture. Additionally, a long-term monitoring plan for the phosphorus management plan is in development.

Stewardship programs were also delivered to assist landowners in implementing recommendations outlined 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).

An extensive amendment package for changes to the Source Protection Plan and Assessment Report was submitted to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks for final approval. This submission followed completion of all consultation requirements and addressing received comments. The package contains numerous amendments to policies and the text of the documents, approved by the Source Protection Committee, aimed at addressing new technical rules and enhancing policy effectiveness. The amendments represent the culmination of approximately 5 years of work by the staff and Committee.

The Best Practices initiative has been using the science and knowledge acquired from the Source Protection Program, to provide owners of private drinking water systems such as wells, with information about how to protect their sources of drinking water. Several webinars were conducted in partnership with our neighbouring Source Protection Regions to provide helpful information. Topics included Harmful Algal Blooms, Well Care 101 and Septic Systems 101.

Staff has been involved in several provincial groups, working with Conservation Ontario to enhance resources to enhance the Source Protection Program and provide increased awareness through the production of guidance documents and resources that can be used across the province.

Our 2023 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 (Jan-Mar)

Ashley Anastasio, Environmental Planner (Oct - Maternity Leave)

Gage Comeau, Water Resources Specialist/Regulations Officer (Jan-Mar)

Gage Comeau, Manager, Watershed Management, Planning and Regulations (April)

Kim Stephens, Planning Ecologist

Ewa Bednarczuk, Ecology & Stewardship Specialist (Jan-Apr)

Marcus Rice, Source Protection Risk Management Official/Inspector

Nicholas Reynolds, Environmental Education Technician*

Scott Robertson, Development Officer

Alexander Moroni, Regulation and Enforcement Officer (July)

Jenna Silver, Administrative and Client Services Technician (Apr-Sept)

Brooke Wright, Planning Technician (Dec)*

Massimo Narini, Watershed Services Specialist (June)

Lauren Henry, Education and Outreach Assistant +

Erica Francis, Invasive Species Outreach Specialist +

Raven Chartrand, Assistant Watershed Monitoring Technician +

Jessica Livingstone, Assistant Watershed Monitoring Technician +

Conservation Lands

Chris McLeod, Conservation Lands Supervisor

John Mahoney, Conservation Lands Technician

Nicholas Peat, Conservation Lands Maintenance Assistant*

Jared Milligan, 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 *

Brooke Wright, Environmental Stewardship Assistant *

Drinking Water Source Protection

Keith Taylor, Program Coordinator *

Trent Bos, Program Assistant*

* Contract/Seasonal Position

+ Summer Student Position



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