



LOWER TRENT
CONSERVATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



Member of



**Conservation
ONTARIO**
Natural Champions

Message from the CAO and Chair



Rhonda Bateman, CAO



Bob Mullin, Chair

Lower Trent Conservation (LTC) achieved significant milestones in 2024, making it a year of progress, innovation, and partnerships.

Under Ontario Regulation 686/21 Mandatory Programs and Services, the Province outlined specific initiatives that were to be delivered before the end of 2024. With valuable input from the public, partners and stakeholders, we developed and released the Watershed Based Resource Management Strategy and the Conservation Lands and Areas Strategy. We also completed the internal operations manual for our flood and erosion control structures and our lands inventory strengthening our mandate for public safety.

LTC received funding from the provincial government's Community Emergency Preparedness Grant program to upgrade and improve our flood forecasting and warning program. The money from the grant was used to upgrade existing older precipitation gauges and to establish new gauge stations for better coverage of the watershed.

LTC adopted the new flood hazard mapping generated through the federal Flood Hazard Identification and Mapping Project (FHIMP) studies on seven local creeks and rivers including the Trent River. Our participating municipalities were Stirling-Rawdon, Trent Hills, Quinte West, Brighton and Cramahe. The studies, using updated modelling capabilities, have resulted in modified flood lines which affect our regulations and planning evaluations. These advancements provide us with more accurate data, allowing us to better support municipalities and improve planning decisions.

This year, we introduced the Trail Stewards Program as part of our volunteer initiatives, and it has quickly become an overwhelming success. The trail stewards are members of the public who are trained to identify hazard situations or areas of concern within our conservation areas. Their reports provide valuable information that helps our staff prioritize operations to enhance public safety.

A pilot project was launched with funding from Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters through the Community Conservation Grant, Grassroots Conservation Fund, ECO Canada Science Horizons Youth Internship wage subsidy program, Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Program and individuals to assess Brook Trout populations across 110 sites in 11 subwatersheds using underwater video. The data collected will allow the establishment of a vital baseline for watershed health and place focus on future conservation efforts.

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 2024

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

Vacant

About Us

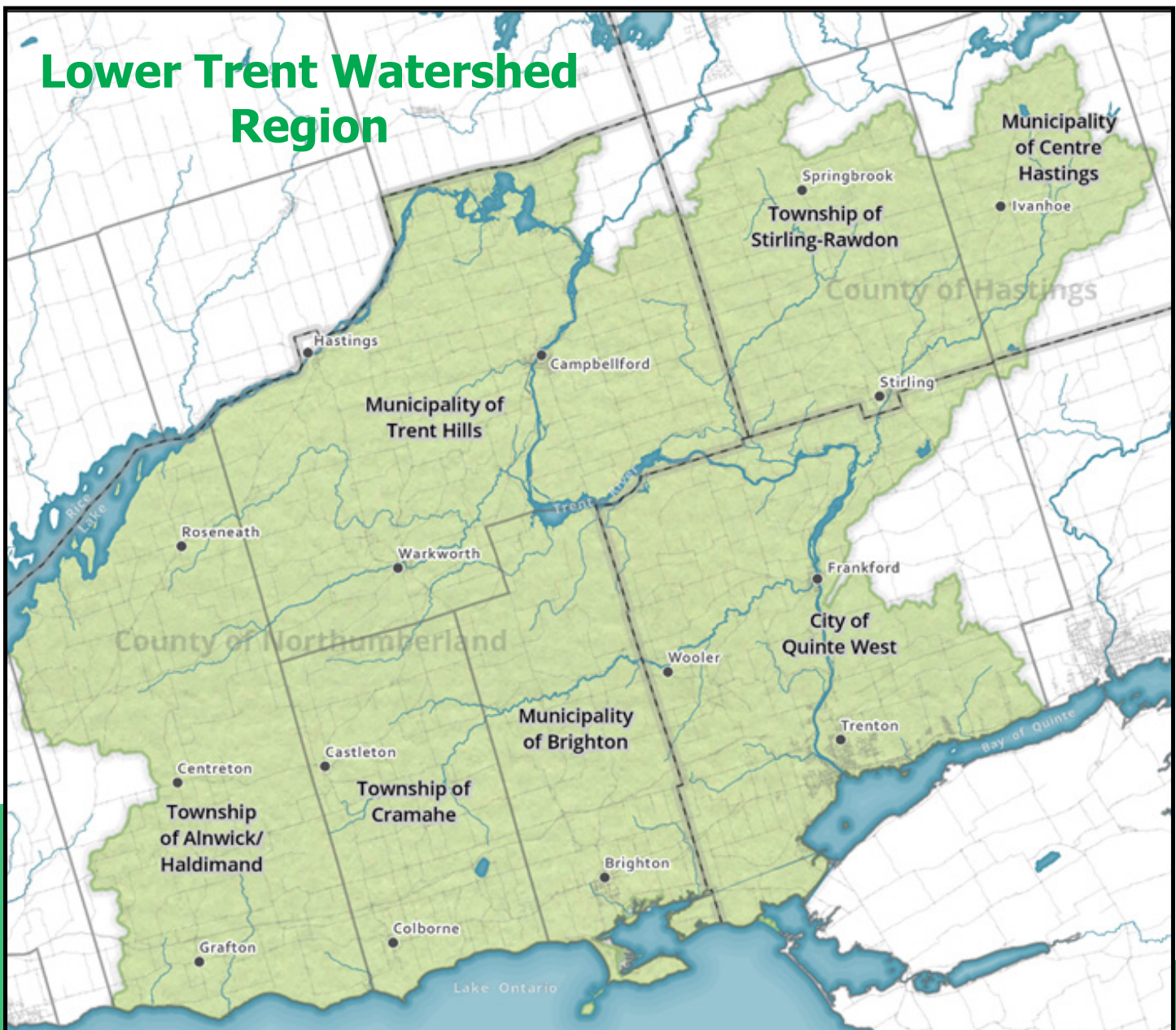
Lower Trent Conservation is a community-based, non-profit environmental protection organization dedicated to protecting, restoring, and managing natural resources across the Lower Trent watershed region.

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.

2024 Highlights

- Provided comments to local municipalities on 204 *Planning Act* applications (severances, minor variances, official plans, zoning by-laws, etc.).
- Provided ongoing review and input to 28 subdivision proposals, 2 condominium proposals, and 10 site plan approval applications.
- Participated in 4 legal court cases regarding Section 28 regulations.
- Received applications for 284 permits for development activities under Section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* (Ontario Regulation 41/24 Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits) and approved 295 permits.
- Identified 39 new violations; Conducted enforcement investigations related to 85 violations (new and ongoing); Resolved 29 Violations Files.
- Investigated 96 complaints.
- Responded to 1,435 online property inquiries and provided comments regarding property specific development constraints and environmental conditions for 528 new general development inquiries and 49 legal requests.
- Conducted 246 site inspections to assist with the environmental review of municipal planning and permit applications.
- Assisted in the implementation of a salt responsibly campaign throughout the watershed.
- Delivered risk management services as part of the implementation of the Trent Source Protection Plan: completed 4 risk management plans addressing 4 significant drinking water threats, conducted 4 risk management plan compliance inspections, amended 4 risk management plans, and issued 40 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.

2024 Highlights

- Issued 9 bulletins regarding high water levels on local water systems: 5 water safety statements, 2 flood outlook statements, and 2 flood watches were issued.
- Issued a level 1 Low Water Condition on November 12, 2024.
- Conducted daily risk assessments for flood forecasting including monitoring weather forecasts, water levels/flows at 13 stations, and precipitation at 10 stations; carried out 11 snow surveys at 4 snow sampling sites.
- Through the Community Emergency Preparedness Grant, four new precipitation gauges were installed in Trenton, Roseneath, Colborne and Stirling-Rawdon areas, while all other existing gauges were upgraded in the network.



- Conducted annual inspections of 10 flood control structures.
- Seasonal operation of the Warkworth Dam: Logs In (May 10, 2024) and Logs Out (October 28, 2024).

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 144 surface water quality samples were collected from March to October.
- 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.
- A pilot project was launched to assess Brook Trout populations across 110 sites in 11 subwatersheds using underwater video. The data collected will establish a vital baseline for watershed health and future conservation efforts.



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.

2024 Highlights

- Hosted the 2024 Tri-County Children's Water Festival at Batawa Ski Hill bringing in 927 students from all four school boards within our watershed.
- Delivered in-class programming across the watershed, including a specialized session at Campbellford High School on benthic invertebrate / watershed monitoring and elementary students with hands-on learning experiences focused on natural hazard management, drinking water source protection, and conservation initiatives such as the Trenton Greenbelt restoration, reaching approximately 900 students.
- Presented at the Hastings and Campbellford Public Libraries highlighting source protection and watershed monitoring as well as the launch of a citizen science water testing initiative with a Water Rangers testing kit that can be borrowed at the Campbellford library, reaching approximately 32 people.
- Participated in several community events held in Campbellford, Quinte West, and Hastings, including the Hastings County Plowing Match. Educating the community on Drinking Water Source Protection Program and Lower Trent Conservation. These efforts reached approximately 900 people.
- Delivered March Break programming throughout the watershed, including spring water awareness sessions at Campbellford and Brighton Public Libraries and watershed education at the 8 Wing/ CFB Trenton. Additionally, provided summer programming for camps and youth groups in Batawa, Quinte West, Trent Hills, Brighton, and surrounding areas.
- Organized a volunteer planting event at the Trenton Greenbelt and a Rotary cleanup at Bleasdel Boulder, in addition to, two volunteer trail steward orientations, offering opportunities for community engagement and environmental stewardship.
- Provided support for cover cropping to 28 landowners covering 3,000 acres of agricultural land. 15 agricultural landowners participated in soil sampling over 900 acres of land.
- Native Plant Sale received 203 orders provided 8,730 tree and shrub seedlings, 295 potted tree saplings, 161 wildflower and 6 Little Forest kits.



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.

2024 Highlights

- Implemented the Volunteers for Conservation Program to incorporate the expansion of volunteer trail stewards (spring to fall).
- 16 special events were hosted at conservation areas, encompassing weddings, spring and fall camps, as well as fundraising runs.
- LTC Involvement Days: Organized multiple hands-on conservation efforts, including a post-eclipse cleanup across all Conservation Areas, invasive species removal at Trenton Greenbelt and Sager Conservation Areas, and frost seeding of wildflowers at the Trenton Greenbelt restoration site.
- Installation of a bench at the Trenton Greenbelt, generously donated by the Trenton Lions Club was completed, as well as the creation and installation of a new bench along the Esker Trail at Goodrich-Loomis Conservation Area.
- Complete removal of the formerly decommissioned bridge on the Beaver Trail at Goodrich-Loomis Conservation Area.
- Felled 200 hazardous trees from various conservation areas, in addition to the removal of 118 red cedar trees encroaching on a sensitive ecosystem at Sager Conservation Area.
- The Proctor Park Conservation Area pavillion was demolished due to structural deterioration and safety concerns. This is the first step toward a future redevelopment project to create a new gathering space.
- Completed the installation of trailhead and educational signage throughout the Greenbelt restoration area, enhancing visitor experience and awareness of local conservation efforts.
- Upgraded infrastructure at Goodrich-Loomis Conservation Centre Nature Center, replacing old oil-burning appliances with a high-efficiency boiler system and installing eavestroughs and downspouts to improve energy efficiency and water management.

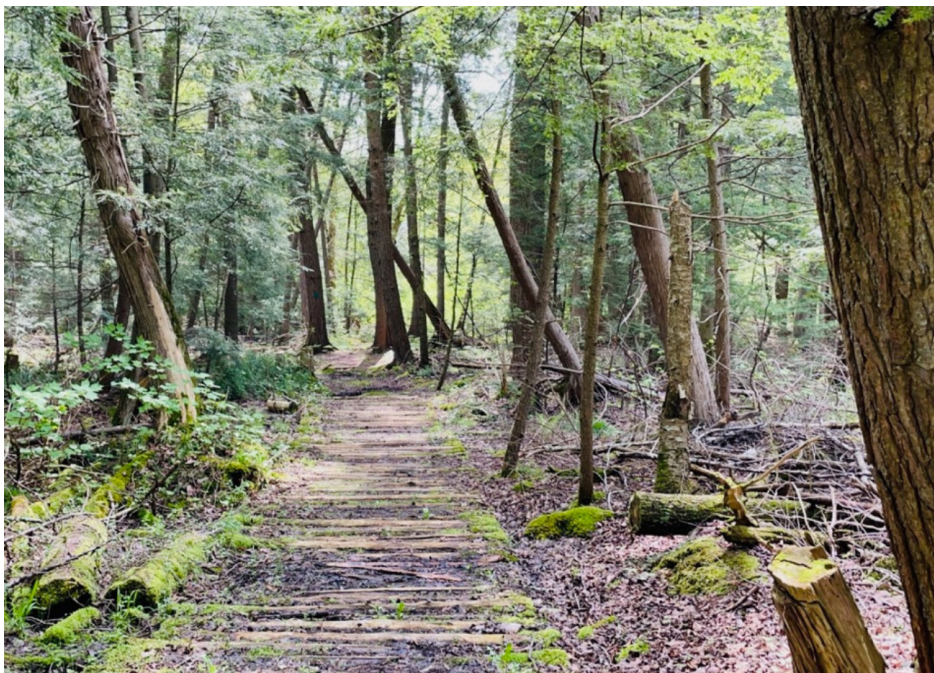


Corporate Services

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.

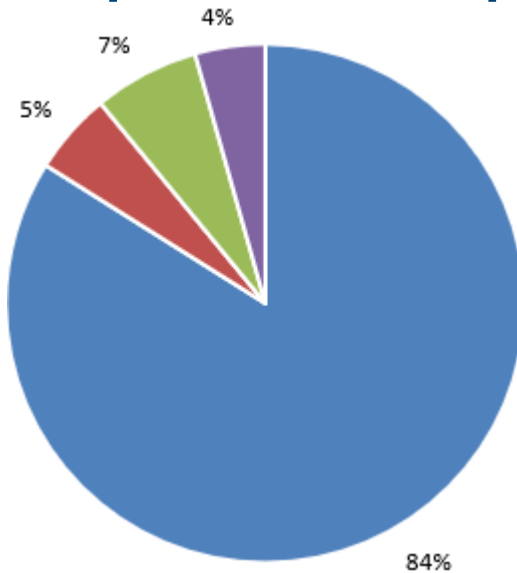
2024 Highlights

- Selected new managed Information Technology services provider. Implemented IT service level agreement and projects including discovery, modernizing software licensing for cloud services, and security enhancements for 24 end-user machines.
- Provided human resource support for the hiring of 10 staff members, which included drafting job descriptions, posting vacancies on relevant platforms, and managing the onboarding procedures with department managers.
- Completed the Watershed Based Resource Management Strategy and Conservation Lands and Areas Strategy as per regulation.
- Implemented a new budget process and structure starting from 2024 to meet regulatory requirements of the updated *Conservation Authorities Act*.
- Implemented new memoranda of understanding with member municipalities starting from 2024 to carry out Category 2 and 3 programs and services.
- Initiated staff working group for cross-team collaborations and efficiencies supporting applications for grant funding and other opportunities.
- Implemented the Conservation Lands Properties Inventory Asset Database, integrating it within a SharePoint platform.



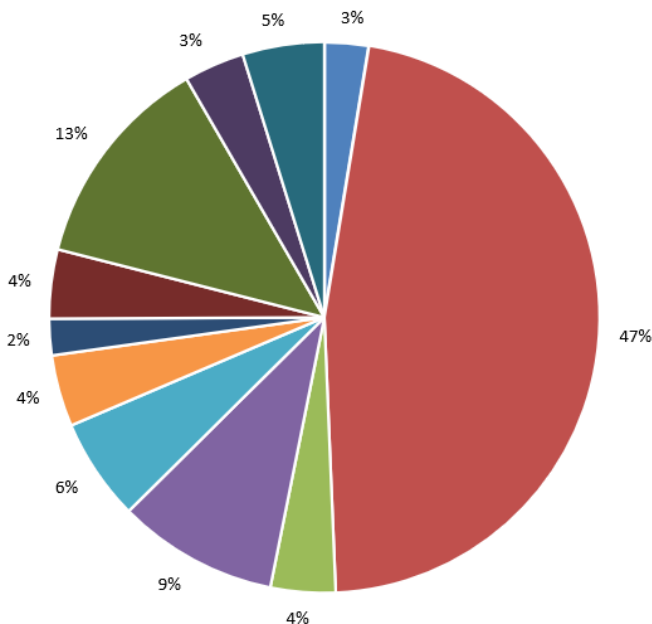
Financial Summary

2024 Operations and Capital Expenditures = \$2,395,062



- Category 1 - Mandatory & Enabling Services \$2,010,420
- Category 2 - Non-Mandatory Services \$122,157
- Category 3 - Non-Mandatory Special Programs \$157,743
- Capital - Amortization, Major Repairs & Maintenance \$104,742

2024 Operations and Capital Revenue Sources = \$2,643,006



- Provincial Grant \$68,831
- Municipal - Operating \$1,235,239
- Capital - Municipals & Grants \$100,677
- Municipal - Agreements \$249,406
- Legal Enquiries and Permits \$158,620
- Plan Reviews \$111,115
- Property Rentals & Recoveries Property Taxes \$56,448
- Grants - Stewardship Projects \$107,039
- Partnership Programs \$334,983
- Community Stewardship & Dedicated Contributions \$93,880
- Unrestricted Donations, Interest, Sundry, & Summer Jobs Grant \$126,768

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 2024, 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

Lower Trent Conservation serves as the lead Source Protection Authority for the Trent Conservation Coalition Source Protection Region. Regional staff 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). The Source Protection Plan and Assessment Report is going through an amendment process to address new Technical Rules and to improve the effectiveness of some policies. The proposed amendments were submitted to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks for final approval. In 2024, staff worked with the Ministry to fine tune the amendments. The amendments that represent the culmination of approximately 5 years of work by the staff and Committee, are expected to be approved by the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks in early 2025.



Our 2024 Staff

Rhonda Bateman, CAO/Secretary-Treasurer

Corporate Services

Kelly Vandette, Manager, Corporate Services (Jan-May)

Chitra Gowda, Manager, Corporate Services (June)

Corinne Ross, Communications Specialist

Anna Morgan, Finance and Information Technician

Jeffrey Meyer, GIS and Information Technology Specialist

Watershed Science & Services

Anne Anderson, Manager, Community Outreach and Special Projects

Gage Comeau, Manager, Watershed Management, Planning and Regulations

Kim Stephens, Planning Ecologist

Marcus Rice, Source Protection Risk Management Official/Inspector

Nicholas Reynolds, Environmental Education Technician

Scott Robertson, Development Officer

Alexander Moroni, Regulation and Enforcement Officer (Jan-Apr)

Amanda Dixon, Administrative and Client Services Technician (Apr)

Brooke Wright, Planning Technician

Toby Farrell, Regulation and Enforcement Officer (August)

Massimo Narini, Watershed Services Specialist

Lauren Henry, Education and Outreach Assistant+

Nolan Bates, Invasive Species Outreach Specialist+

Raven Chartrand, Assistant Watershed Monitoring Technician+

Emily Lemon, Assistant Watershed Monitoring Technician+

Simon Pollard, Aquatic 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+

Kevin Moran, 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* (Jan- Nov)

Drinking Water Source Protection

Keith Taylor, Program Coordinator*

Trent Bos, Program Assistant*

* Contract/Seasonal Position

+ Summer Staff Position



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