

# EVERYONE LIVES DOWNSTREAM

Working Together  
To Ensure Safe and Plentiful  
Drinking Water Resources

## Safe, clean and plentiful

drinking water supplies are among the most important natural resources for the health of Ontarians. As a result of Ontario's exploding population growth and a growing demand for limited resources, watershed managers today face increasingly significant threats to our water and land resources.

Since their beginnings over 50 years ago, Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities (CAs) have worked in partnership with all levels of government, other agencies and landowners to ensure the proper management of our water and land resources. CAs provide technical advice and deliver services and/or programs to watershed residents.

Now, more than ever before, it is important for Conservation Authorities to continue this important work in order to ensure we have safe and sustainable water sources today and for future generations.

The Government of Ontario is committed to implementing all of the Walkerton Inquiry's 122 recommendations including developing source water protection plans for every watershed in Ontario. Conservation Authorities can assist the Province with this by bringing stakeholders together in order to map out how this will be done and also to provide the technical support and advice that will be needed to make decisions. With their long history in watershed management, Conservation Authorities are ready to work with their member municipalities and other partners to get on with the job.

*Approximately 10 million people live in watersheds managed by Conservation Authorities.*

## Conservation Authorities

- Are hands-on, community-based resource management organizations which protect, restore and effectively manage Ontario's water and land resources on a watershed basis.
- Deliver local, practical solutions on a wide range of natural resource issues such as watershed management, source protection, flooding, erosion, drought and wetland conservation.
- Use a science-based approach to develop, implement and monitor watershed management plans
- Are recognized globally for their watershed stewardship activities that address the needs of both the natural environment and landowners.
- Provide advice on decisions that directly affect the long term sustainability of our water and land resources.
- Are funded primarily by self-generated revenues and municipal levies with additional funding coming from provincial and federal governments.
- Vary in size, from smaller operations managing one or two watersheds to larger operations managing larger or several adjoining watersheds.
- Are governed by local Board of Directors made up of municipally elected and appointed officials, and other stakeholders.



**Conservation  
ONTARIO**  
Natural Champions

## Conservation Ontario

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Conservation Ontario is a non-governmental organization that represents the common interests of Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities.

## Source Water Protection - What is it?

Source water protection is simply protecting surface water sources such as lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater sources from contamination or overuse. Water is critical to all aspects of our lives. Protecting the sources of our water is important to ensure that there is enough safe water for all our uses - now and in the future.

Source water protection is the first step in a multiple barrier approach to protecting drinking water. Other barriers include water testing and monitoring, reliable water treatment and distribution systems and training of water managers and staff.



## Source Water Protection Planning

Source water protection begins with planning. The Government of Ontario has made a commitment to ensure that every watershed in the province has a source water protection plan. Diverse stakeholders representing both watershed managers and water users will work together and agree on the best approach to take to protect water resources in each of our watersheds.

### Successful plans will:

- meet the individual needs of watersheds
- bring all the key partners together to map out plans
- include key technical data required to make good decisions
- have the political support of all levels of government through funding, legislation and regulations.
- be available to watershed residents
- be adequately funded for development and ongoing updating

### Public Involvement is Critical

Source water protection will only work if the people living and working in a watershed understand why our water resources need to be protected and are committed to following through on implementation.

## What type of information is included in Source Water Protection Plans?

Water budgets, technical data, inventory of water resources and watershed features that impact those resources, identification of current or potential sources of contamination, high risk land uses and vulnerable areas are all included in source water protection plans.

Source water protection plans provide information so that we can make decisions about the best approach to take to protect the quality and supply of water resources.

### Proposed Steps to Developing a Source Water Protection Plan

#### Step 1:

Data is assembled and studies are undertaken to assess the state of our watersheds

#### Step 2:

Issues are identified and options are evaluated

#### Step 3:

Action plans are developed

#### Step 4:

Plans are reviewed with local stakeholders and watershed management partners and refined based on their feedback and input.

#### Step 5:

Plans are submitted for approval.

It is expected to take up to five years to develop a final source water protection plan.

### Types of programs delivered by Conservation Authorities:

- Water Quality and Quantity Management
- Watershed Management
- Flood & Erosion Control
- Ecosystem regeneration
- Reforestation & Sustainable Woodlot Management
- Habitat Protection & Restoration
- Environmental Land Use Planning
- Environmental Education
- Agricultural & Rural Landowners Assistance
- Land Acquisition
- Outdoor Recreation
- Soil Conservation

### Role of Conservation Authorities

Conservation Authorities provide a key role in protecting sources of water by providing technical expertise and advice to assist local municipalities and other stakeholders develop the best approach to protecting local water quality and supplies.

## Challenges

Managing natural resources on a watershed basis today requires a delicate balancing act among three, sometimes competing interests: Human - Environmental - Economic

To be successful, all source water protection planning partners will need to be focused on the goal to ensure there is a safe, sufficient and sustainable supply of water resources for all users.

Conservation Authorities are committed to working with their member municipalities and other partners to protect the environment and the health of Ontarians - today and for our children in the future.