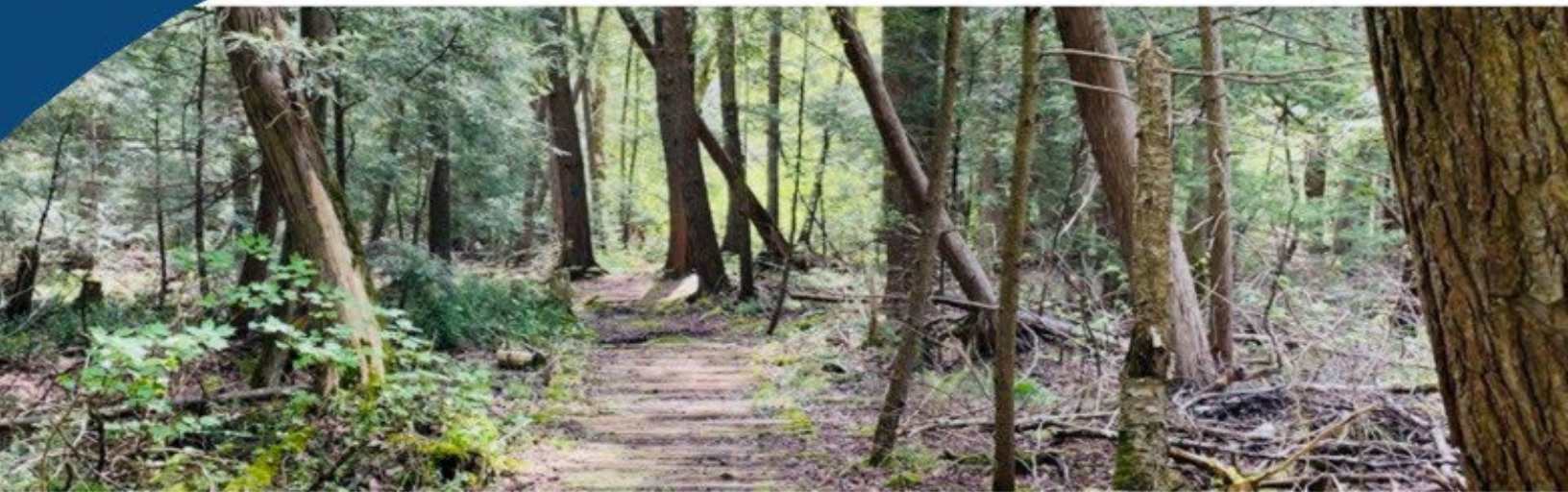




LOWER TRENT
CONSERVATION

Business Plan 2026



*Healthy Watersheds
for
Healthy Communities*

Member of

**Conservation
ONTARIO**
Natural Champions



A Message from the Chief Administrative Officer...

Rhonda Bateman, CAO

Lower Trent Conservation is facing unprecedented challenges in 2026 with the proposed consolidation of conservation authorities introduced by the province in the fall of 2025. Lower Trent Conservation will be amalgamated with six other conservation authorities to create the Eastern Lake Ontario Region Conservation Authority. The framework for these changes has not been released. The proposed consolidations will begin following the municipal elections in October 2026.

The province has also passed legislation resulting in changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act* that will establish the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency. This agency's objectives are many, but the overall mandate is to oversee governance of authorities including operations, programs and services, strategic planning, promote consistency in policies and operating standards, assess effectiveness and financial performance, develop and implement standardized application processes, digital strategies and shared services.

Conservation Authorities have evolved over the past decades with changes to their mandates and responsibilities dictated by the province of Ontario. Conservation Authorities have managed, through their strong relationships with their municipal partners, to become the envy of jurisdictions outside of Ontario and around the world being showcased as successful models for protection of people and property from natural hazards and leaders in environmental stewardship.

The challenge for management and staff for 2026 is to fulfill our roles and responsibilities to our municipal partners and residents to the best of our ability whilst preparing for the proposed changes without a coherent roadmap.

The 2026 Business Plan outlines work LTC proposes to accomplish throughout the year. We invite you to review our Strategic Plan on our website at www.LTC.on.ca to find the best way for you to contribute to achieving our shared vision of Healthy Watersheds for Healthy Communities.

Lower Trent Conservation – who we are...

The Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority (Lower Trent Conservation) was formed in 1968 under the *Conservation Authorities Act*. Our area of jurisdiction covers 2,070 km² and includes all, or portions of, seven municipalities.

The *Conservation Authorities Act* of Ontario provides the mechanism for establishing and administering a conservation authority. The *Act* reads:

The purpose of this Act is to provide for the organization and delivery of programs and services that further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources in watersheds in Ontario.

Both the founding principles of the legislation and the legislation itself embody the three fundamental strengths of every conservation authority: local initiative, cost sharing, and watershed jurisdiction.

Local Initiative:

The conservation movement has been driven by and for the people for over 80 years. Community initiative is the strength and success of every conservation authority. Without this local motivation, an authority cannot be formed. People must first recognize the need for environmental action and request the provincial government to form a conservation authority. In making the request, watershed residents are contributing financially to the works of the organization and are participants in its direction.

Cost Sharing:

Traditionally, municipalities within the conservation authority and the provincial government shared the costs of funding conservation programs. Over time, the municipal share of the funding has increased significantly. Conservation authorities have expanded their partnerships to include other agencies and the community. A conservation authority flourishes when local people have enough enthusiasm and support for its programs.

Lower Trent Conservation is a member of Conservation Ontario - a network of 36 Conservation Authorities, all dedicated to conserving, restoring, and managing Ontario's natural resources on a watershed basis.

Watershed Jurisdiction:

A watershed – the area drained by a watercourse and its tributaries – is a natural geographic unit that crosses municipal boundaries. Conservation authorities can have jurisdiction over one or more watersheds. Since decisions and actions made in one location can affect upstream and downstream areas in other locations or other municipalities, watersheds are ideal units for protecting and managing the local environment. Conservation authorities are the only agencies in Ontario that manage natural resources on a watershed basis. Our Strategic Plan outlines our priorities, organizational commitments and environmental goals, which together, will help us thrive in this changing world.

The vision, mission, and our organizational commitments and environmental goals were all taken into consideration in development of the 2026 Business Plan.

VISION STATEMENT

Our Vision Statement is our dream. It is what we believe are the ideal conditions for our watershed - how things would look if the issues important to LTC and its partners were completely and perfectly addressed.

Our vision for the future is:

Healthy watersheds for healthy communities

Our vision exemplifies the link between a healthy environment and the economic and social health of our communities, as well as the physical and mental health of the people who live here.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission Statement defines the purpose of Lower Trent Conservation. It talks about the present leading to the future - how we are going to achieve our vision.

Our mission is:

To protect land, water and living things by working with and inspiring others.

Our mission sets out our reason for being - to protect the local environment and recognize that we can't do it alone. We need to encourage others to take environmental action and work with other partners to achieve our goals.

Utilizing the strategic plan is a key component in helping Lower Trent Conservation prioritize our organizational commitments. We refer to the strategic plan to help direct the planning and decision making for the following year goals and objectives. The strategic plan is found at: <https://ltc.on.ca/about-us/>



Our Conservation Business

Lower Trent Conservation is in the business of protecting, enhancing, and restoring the natural environment. It is a business that builds healthier communities, improves the quality of life for residents, makes our area more appealing to visitors and new business, and helps ensure a more diverse and vibrant regional economy.

Lower Trent Conservation maintains a business approach to ensure accountability and transparency to our member municipalities, other partners, and the general public. The services provided are customer focused – local responses to local needs. Services and programs are delivered through diverse sources of funding and in partnership with municipalities, other agencies, volunteer groups, and our local communities.

MANDATED PROGRAMS

Planning and Regulations

Staff provide municipalities with formal comments under the *Planning Act* (e.g., severances, minor variances, official plans, zoning by-laws, etc.). Lower Trent offers technical advice to residents and developers for building and land use proposals. Appointed staff regulate development activities in environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, shorelines, and waterways. These services are aimed at ensuring that activities in environmentally sensitive areas will not result in a risk to public safety or property damage from flooding or erosion hazards. This preventative approach also ensures that wetlands and waterways are protected.

Flood Protection

Lower Trent Conservation provides services to reduce the threat of property damage and loss of life from flooding. These services include flood forecasting and flood warning, and the operation and maintenance of 10 flood and erosion control structures (dam, flood walls, berms, weirs, and overflow channels). Public education and awareness on flood and erosion control and natural hazards is key to preparedness and safety.

Low Water Response

Lower Trent Conservation assists in the coordination and support of local response in the event of a declared drought. Staff monitor local water levels and precipitation closely and work with local water users to reduce demand and mitigate effects of water shortages, encouraging voluntary water conservation measures. The program is based on the Ontario Low Water Response Program.

Conservation Lands

Lower Trent Conservation owns 1,503 hectares of environmentally sensitive lands which form part of a regional system of protected landscapes. Our properties range in size from small parks to over 650 hectares. Ten properties are classified as Conservation Areas and provide venues for healthy and active lifestyles such as hiking, bicycling, fishing, canoeing, and other recreational activities. Staff maintain the facilities and lands and facilitate special events on the properties. Conservation Area Habitat Restoration is vital to decrease invasive species populations and increase native species habitat. Seven Natural Habitat Areas, while open to the public, are left in a natural state with no maintained trails or recreational facilities.

Regional Source Protection Program - Trent Conservation Coalition

Lower Trent Conservation is the program lead for the Trent Conservation Coalition (TCC) Source Protection Program, aimed at protecting the sources of water (rivers, lakes, aquifers) used for municipal drinking water systems. Staff provide administrative and technical support to the Source Protection Committee in its role of updating the source protection plans and monitoring and reporting on implementation progress. The TCC includes the jurisdictions of five Conservation Authorities within the Trent River Watershed – Crowe Valley, Ganaraska Region, Kawartha, Lower Trent and Otonabee Conservation Authorities and additional areas outside of the CAs jurisdiction within the Trent River watershed in Peterborough and Haliburton Counties.

Local Drinking Water Source Protection Services

Lower Trent Conservation provides Risk Management Official/Risk Management Inspector services and a Source Protection Education and Outreach program on behalf of local municipalities. These services help to implement the Trent Source Protection Plan, which came into effect on January 1, 2015.

Environmental Monitoring and Reporting

LTC participates in the provincial water monitoring programs including the Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network and the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network.

NON-MANDATED PROGRAMS

Environmental Monitoring and Reporting

In addition to the provincial monitoring programs, staff sample rivers and streams to better understand watershed health. Our monitoring activities include the Ontario Benthos Biomonitoring Network. The data is used to evaluate and report on existing conditions within the watershed and helps to establish targets for protection and rehabilitation activities for our municipal partners.

Youth Education

Staff provide conservation education programs to students of all ages including the Tri-County Children's Water Festival and programming for schools, youth groups, and day camps. Lower Trent also hosts and attends community events, provides workshops, and distributes publications and other conservation information to help the public learn about the protection of local natural resources.

Stewardship and Community Outreach

Lower Trent Conservation works with landowners and other partners to encourage proactive stewardship of land and water resources. Staff provide information and advice to landowners about a variety of topics including tree planting, shoreline naturalization, invasive species control, and species at risk protection. Grants are available for land stewardship projects and sell native trees and seedlings for spring planting.

ENABLING SERVICES

Corporate Services oversees the business administration of the Conservation Authority as well as external relationships. It includes office and financial administration, human resources and asset management, and program planning and development. Corporate services staff manage the computer network and information systems, provide digital mapping and communications support to other Lower Trent Conservation programs. Customer relations, partnership building, fundraising, communications, and marketing fall under the realm of corporate services.

Financial and Human Resources

In terms of financial management, constant vigilance is needed to ensure that the funding received from our member municipalities, the provincial and federal governments, other partners, agencies and donors is spent wisely for the betterment of our watershed. Ongoing effort is put into establishing partnerships to collaborate on watershed projects, and to seek funding support from other organizations to help get local conservation work done.

Lower Trent Conservation has established policies and procedures to set out administrative controls to: ensure health and safety with fair and consistent treatment of staff; provide guidance to staff for program implementation; and ensure compliance with government legislation. These are reviewed and updated regularly to ensure they are relevant and compliant with legislation.

Information Management and Geographic Information System (GIS)

As a knowledge-based, service-oriented organization, the accessibility of our information is an important part of our program. A significant amount of our data is displayed visually as maps, through our Geographic Information System (GIS). A wide range of map products is used by staff to assist with making decisions about land use planning and regulations, managing our conservation lands, and delivering stewardship programs. Lower Trent Conservation also assists municipalities and other agencies with GIS projects on a fee for service basis.

Communications

Corporate communication activities include media relations and production of annual reports, displays, brochures, and other communications products. In addition to traditional media, LTC uses our website and social media (e.g., Facebook) to keep our municipal partners, watershed residents and other stakeholders, staff and the Board of Directors, up to date on programs and events.

Fundraising

As a non-profit registered charity, Lower Trent Conservation has developed a fundraising program to support our conservation efforts. This includes grant writing, direct requests to businesses and private donors, and fundraising campaigns. Many of our donated funds are currently directed to “Connecting Kids with Nature” in support of youth environmental education initiatives.

SIGNIFICANT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan

The Bay of Quinte was designated an Area of Concern in 1985 by the International Joint Commission under the *Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement* between Canada and the United States. The environmental concerns included excess nutrients, persistent toxic contamination, bacterial contamination, and the loss or destruction of fish and wildlife habitat. Impairments to beneficial uses, such as drinking water, fish, and recreation, are termed “Beneficial Use Impairments.”

Lower Trent Conservation administers the Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan and provides communications and technical support specifically targeted at the issues present in the Bay. Lower Trent Conservation and Quinte Conservation co-chair the Bay of Quinte Restoration Council. The Restoration Council includes agencies from all levels of government, as well as local representatives to implement the Remedial Action Plan and undertake actions to rehabilitate the Bay.



Projects for 2026

As well as our regular business activities, Lower Trent Conservation has recognized program improvements to achieve the priorities identified in the Strategic Plan. Program improvements scheduled for 2026 will be undertaken as financing allows.

OUR ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENTS

- Support staff through Conservation Authority Consolidation process
- Provide deliverables based on new upcoming legislative requirements
- Natural Asset Management Planning
- Increase staff training opportunities
- Deliver requirements under the *Working for Workers Act*
- Research opportunities under the new Naming Rights Policy
- Upgrades to phone system

ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS

ADVANCE WATERSHED KNOWLEDGE

- Purchase of new survey equipment for better field mapping accuracy
- Continued development and refinement of mobile field applications
- Upgrades to computer equipment
- Phase out of on-site server
- Moving GIS data to Cloud environment

PROTECT LAND AND WATER RESOURCES

- Complete Phase 2 of the conservation areas and lands signage plan
- Barry Heights Flood Control Channel clean-out
- Begin conditions assessment of specific capital assets

SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

- Public engagement and consultation on the new gathering space for Proctor Park Conservation Area
- Fundraising for the Proctor Park gathering space
- Begin mapping of phragmites in the Lower Trent Phragmites Management Area
- Continue hazard tree assessments and removal program



INSPIRE OTHERS TO TAKE ACTION

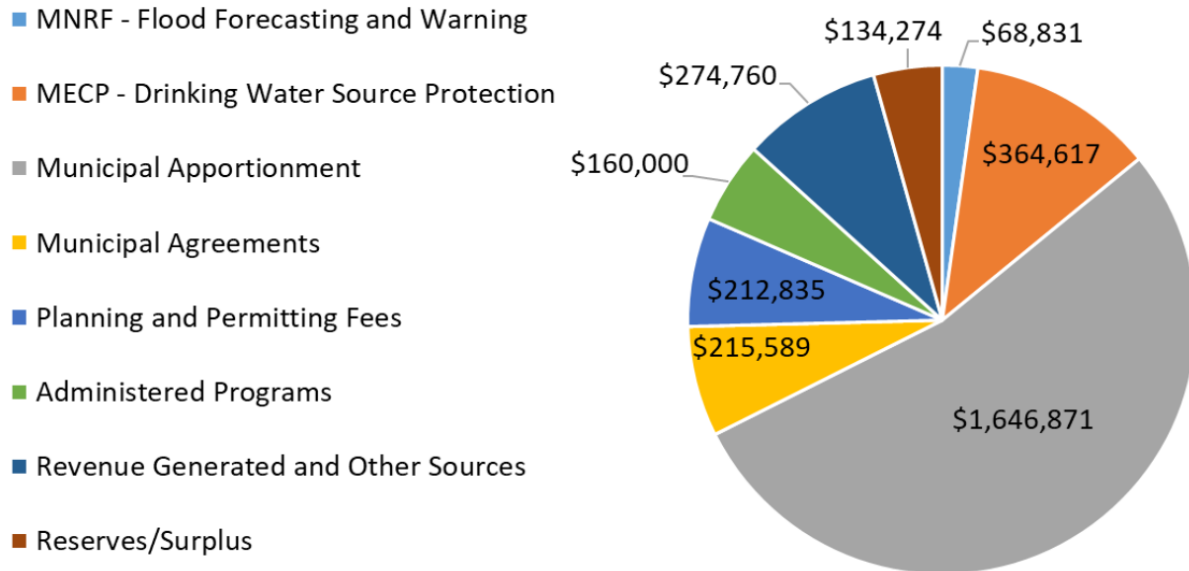
- Research opportunities under the new Naming Rights Policy to community partners and businesses
- Offer new products under our popular Annual Native Plant Sale, fostering community engagement
- Build on the success of the Trail Steward Volunteer Program
- Collaborate with educational institutions for experiential learning opportunities
- Innovate classroom and outdoor education experiences with new teaching tools
- Continue to offer targeted programming for students to actively participate in the enhancement and restoration of conservation lands, providing hands-on experience
- Increase opportunities for community-driven projects such as tree planting days, clean-up events, or habitat restoration, creating opportunities for hands-on involvement
- Encourage community members or businesses to sponsor specific conservation areas, capital assets or projects, providing recognition and potential naming rights.



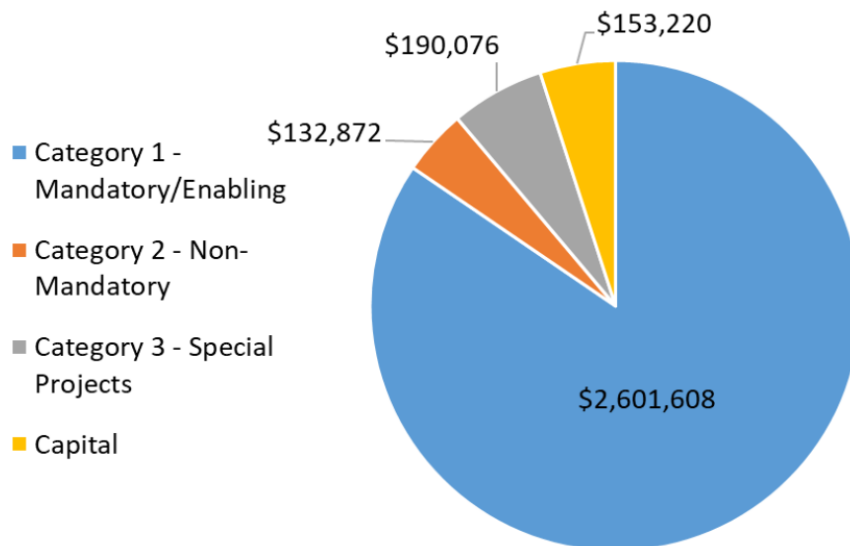
LOWER TRENT REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

2026 BUDGET DETAILS - BOARD APPROVED 2025-12-11

2026 REVENUE SOURCES



2026 EXPENDITURES BY CATEGORY



Monitoring Success

Healthy Watersheds for Healthy Communities

LTC will spend \$2,601,608 to provide mandated services including natural hazard management, drinking water source protection, operate conservation areas and maintain trails, and manage other sensitive environmental lands, provincial water quality monitoring and corporate services. Under Category 2 LTC will spend \$132,872 to provide planning services, local water quality monitoring and drinking water risk management and education services. Under Category 3 programs, LTC will spend \$190,076 to provide youth environmental education, promote stewardship and undertake community outreach.

In addition to the funds shown in the budget, Lower Trent Conservation receives funds to deliver its significant partnership programs. Approximately \$120,000 is received from the federal and provincial governments to deliver the Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan. Approximately \$449,000 is received from the provincial government to deliver the Regional Drinking Water Source Protection program.

Lower Trent Conservation releases its Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements in March. Staff track and report on progress made in implementing the goals and priorities set out in the Strategic Plan through regular quarterly program reports to the Board of Directors.



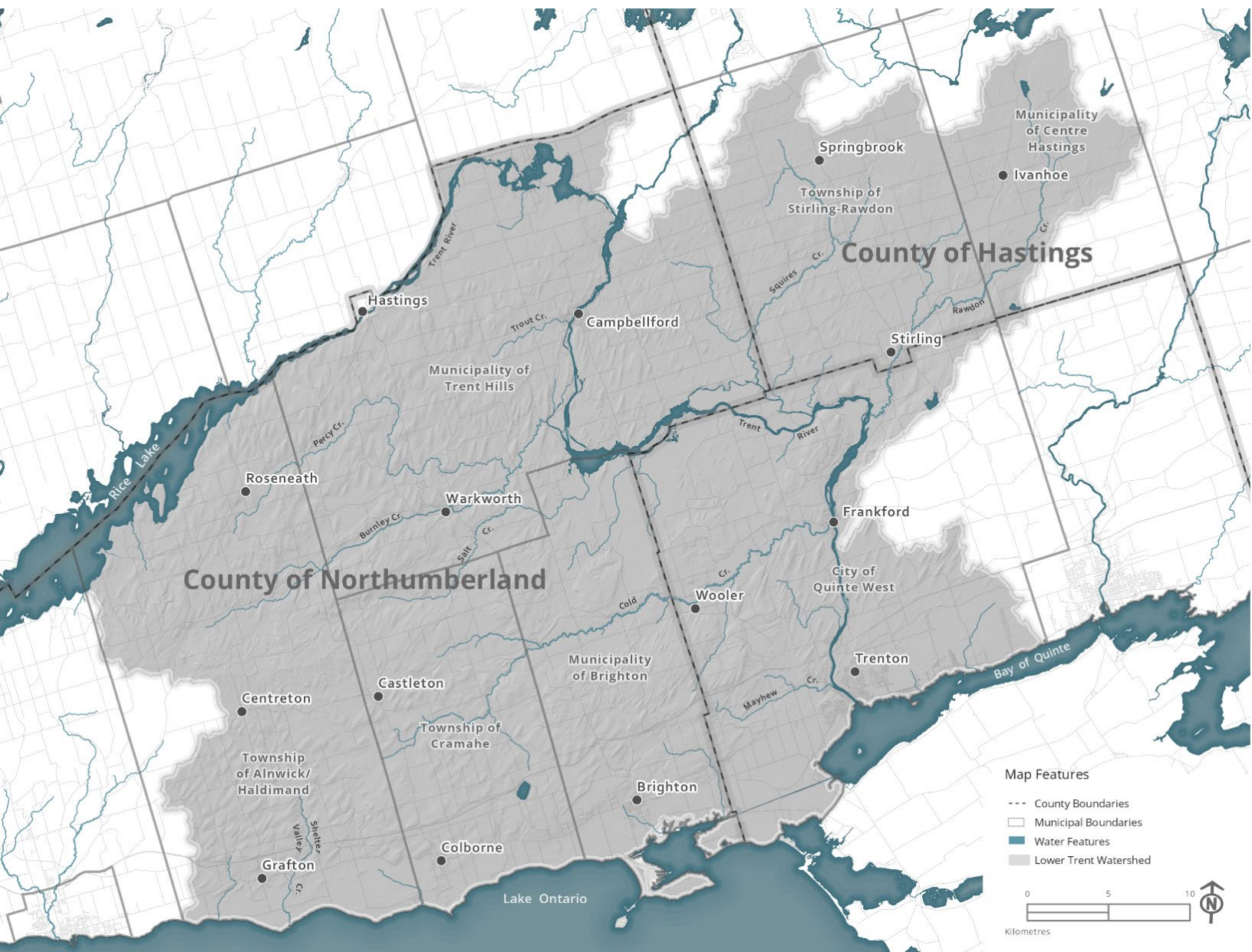
What it means to your municipality?

Municipal Services	Lower Trent Conservation Services <i>"specialist staff expertise shared among municipalities"</i>
Planning and Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional environmental planning expertise, including a network of provincial experts through Conservation Ontario and provincial ministries • Provincial policies and standards on environmental matters brought into the municipal decision-making process based on Board of Directors approved local policies • Delivery of regulations to provide hazard land, floodplain, and wetland protection in a manner that coordinates with municipal planning responsibilities • Input into official plans, community plans, zoning by-laws regarding natural hazard and water protection • Advice on <i>Planning Act</i> applications (severances, subdivisions, zoning by-law amendments, etc.) • Support for municipality when other reviews or approvals are required
Emergency Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and programs inform municipal emergency response planning responsibilities • Flood forecasting and warning • Low water response • Mapping (floodplains, wellhead protection areas, intake protection zones) • Operation and maintenance of flood and erosion control structures • Watershed data collection for water budget and extreme event analysis and modelling • Regulation of natural hazards reduces municipal liability when severe weather events occur
Water Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking Water Source Protection • Surface water monitoring • Groundwater monitoring • Environmental monitoring • Infrastructure review
Tourism and Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Areas for year round passive recreation opportunities (hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, picnicking, geocaching) • Acquisition and protection of ecologically valuable lands • Active outdoor living programs (hikes, events) • Children's environmental programs (e.g., Water Festival) • Facilities for environmental education and outdoor sport/special events at Goodrich-Loomis, Proctor Park and Seymour Conservation Areas • Hunting opportunities only available in Murray Marsh Natural Habitat Area
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to development of desirable communities to live, work, and play (clean water, green space, outdoor tourism, environmentally aware residents) • Extra dollars drawn into the local community (government and business grants, private donations) • Lower Trent Conservation buys locally from many community businesses and suppliers
Sustainable and Resilient Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of good stewardship and low impact, ecologically sustainable development • Monitoring and reporting on watershed health to identify program priorities • Native Plant Sale • Shoreline naturalization (landowner advice and grants) • Protection of surface water and groundwater resources • Wetland protection and enhancement and habitat and biodiversity conservation • Improvement and protection of the Bay of Quinte to ensure long-term health and benefits to the community (through administration of the Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan)

Member Municipalities

Township of Alnwick/Haldimand
Municipality of Centre Hastings
City of Quinte West
Municipality of Trent Hills

Municipality of Brighton
Township of Cramahe
Township of Stirling-Rawdon



Working with Others

Partners in Conservation

Lower Trent Conservation's Board of Directors and staff work with a growing number of partners who share our concern for the future of our region's environment. Lower Trent Conservation has worked with every sector of the community – from school children, individual landowners, and service clubs to major corporations, colleges, and government ministries – to achieve our collective vision of a healthy environment. Our partners provide information, ideas, labour, and funding.

Conservation Donors

Lower Trent Conservation, as a non-profit organization, relies on donations to support delivery of our programs. Maintaining our exceptional youth environmental education programs through donations from businesses, foundations, community organizations, and the general public.

Volunteers for Conservation

Lower Trent Conservation's **"Volunteers for Conservation"** program offers opportunities for individuals to get involved with local environmental projects. These dedicated groups and individuals devote time and energy to various local conservation projects.

Trail Stewards Volunteer Program

Lower Trent Conservation's **"Trail Stewards Volunteers"** program provides opportunities for nature enthusiasts to actively engage in maintaining and reporting on the trails in our conservation areas. These committed volunteers lend their time and effort to help maintain and improve the natural beauty of the trails, ensuring they remain safe, accessible, and enjoyable for everyone.



We thank all of our partners, donors, and volunteers and look forward to working with you and others toward our common vision of healthy watersheds for healthy communities.