



LOWER TRENT
CONSERVATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Member of



**Conservation
ONTARIO**
Natural Champions

Message from the CAO and Chair



Rhonda Bateman, CAO



Gene Brahaney, Chair

Lower Trent Conservation (LTC) accomplished several milestones over the course of 2025, many of which were associated with technological improvements that strengthen our overall operations.

LTC has taken proactive steps to achieve our key priorities, as recommended under the Information Technology and Operations Review. One of our highest priorities was to move our Information Management into a cloud-based file sharing and storage system, which have been successfully completed and met our Information Management and Document Retention Policy.

Another key technology advancement was the establishment of an online reporting application as part of our River Watch program. Field reports are now uploaded in real time and accessible by the flood forecasting and warning staff. The use of this software tool will assist in monitoring flood conditions, assist in documenting flood events and will enhance public safety through faster information sharing.

The initial success of our Trail Stewards Program was built upon this past year through modernization of reporting. Notifications are now received through online reporting system which has allowed faster response times from our staff. Trail stewards are members of the public who are trained to identify hazard situations or areas of concern within our conservation areas. These reports are used by our conservation lands staff to prioritize operations based on public health and safety.

The update of our Capital Asset Management Plan was completed and approved by the Board of Directors in December 2025. This plan provides a clear direction for our conservation authority over the next decade, identifying capitol project priorities and spending that supports our programs and services.

Our public engagement and outreach efforts continue to grow with our community partners and local schools. Our education program has been enhanced with the purchase of the Biinaagami Great Lakes map, a large interactive teaching aid that beautifully illustrates water flows, watersheds, special natural areas and First Nations in Ontario.

The final two months of 2025 focussed on the provincial proposal to consolidate conservation authorities into regional authorities. LTC and Board of Directors do not support this initiative and participated in roundtable discussions and submitted an opposition letter through the ERO process. LTC takes pride in delivering programs and services effectively and efficiently, exploring opportunities to streamline processes. We have the capacity to adapt to provincial changes without consolidation and believe that local decision-making is critical to ensuring programs remain responsive to the unique needs of our watershed communities.

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 2025

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 (Vice-Chair)

City of Quinte West

Jim Alyea
Lynda Reid

Township of Stirling-Rawdon

Bob Mullin (Chair)

Municipality of Trent Hills

Rick English
Gene Brahaney (Chair)

Agricultural Rep

Vacant

About Us

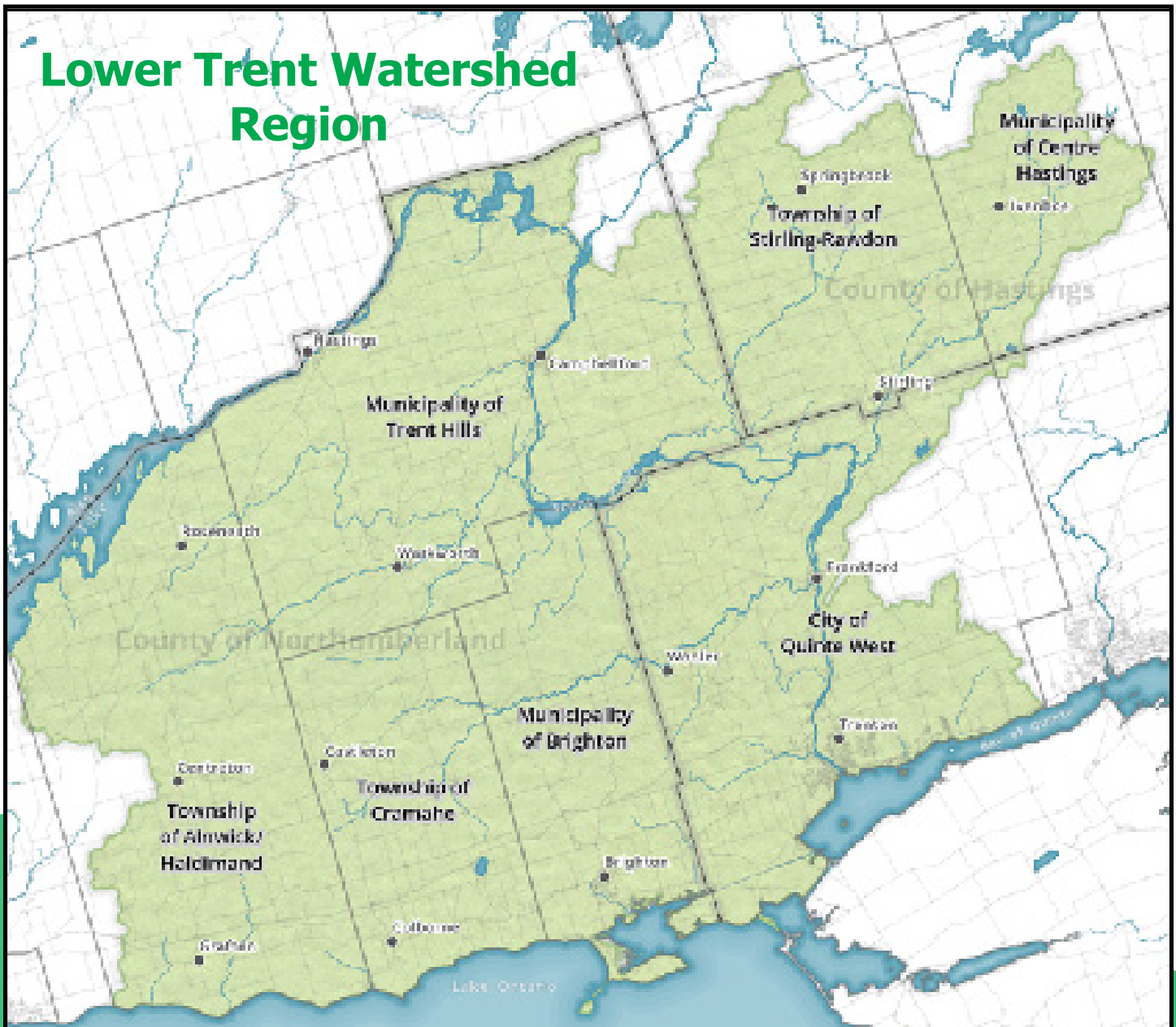
Lower Trent Conservation is a community-based, non-profit environmental protection organization dedicated to protecting, restoring, and managing natural resources across the Lower Trent watershed region.

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.

2025 Highlights

- Provided comments to local municipalities on 188 *Planning Act* applications (severances, minor variances, official plans, zoning by-laws, etc.).
- Provided ongoing review and input to 42 subdivision and condominium proposals.
- Participated in 4 legal court cases regarding Section 28 regulations.
- Received applications for 246 permits for development activities under Section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* (Ontario Regulation 41/24 Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits) and approved 236 permits.
- Identified 38 new violations; Conducted enforcement investigations related to 88 violations (new and ongoing); Resolved 29 Violations Files.
- Investigated 90 complaints.
- Responded to 1,162 online property inquiries and provided comments regarding property specific development constraints and environmental conditions for 414 new general development inquiries and 29 legal requests.
- Conducted 287 site inspections to assist with the environmental review of municipal planning and permit applications.
- Delivered risk management services as part of the implementation of the Trent Source Protection Plan: completed 6 risk management plans addressing 9 significant drinking water threats, conducted 12 risk management plan compliance inspections, amended 4 risk management plans, and issued 17 restricted land use notices.



Watershed Science & Services

Flood Forecasting and Watershed Monitoring Programs

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.

2025 Highlights

- Issued 13 bulletins regarding high water levels on local water systems: 3 water safety statements, 3 flood outlook statements, and 3 flood watches and 4 flood warning were issued.
- Issued 5 Low Water Condition Statements.
- Conducted daily risk assessments for flood forecasting including monitoring weather forecasts, water levels/flows at 13 stations, and precipitation at 13 stations; carried out 8 snow surveys at 4 snow sampling sites.
- Conducted annual inspections of 10 flood control structures.
- Seasonal operation of the Warkworth Dam: Logs In (May 14, 2025) and Logs Out (November 20, 2025).



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 9 additional sites, with E. coli sampled at all 18 sites across the watershed. A total of 144 surface water quality samples were collected from March to October.
- Annual groundwater quality monitoring was undertaken on a rotating basis, with samples collected from 1 sampling well in the spring, which included a separate sample for pesticide contamination, and 5 wells sampled in the fall. Ongoing water level monitoring continued at 11 wells, with repairs occurring on telemetry equipment at the 1 active telemetry station to allow for real-time data collection.
- As of July 2025, LTC is the lead for the Lower Trent Phragmites Management Area, coordinating mapping and management of invasive phragmites in the Lower Trent watershed. This also gives access to funding to allow for specialized projects to improve management throughout the watershed and coordinate with program partners.



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.

2025 Highlights

- Hosted the 2024 Tri-County Children's Water Festival at Batawa Ski Hill bringing in 1,110 students from all four school boards within our watershed.
- Attended outreach events throughout the watershed, including Incredible Edibles, the Hastings Waterfront Festival, Quinte West pop-up events, and the Hastings County Plowing Match, as well as participating in Doors Open Quinte West in October, collectively engaging approximately 1,000 people.
- Hosted Farewell to Frost and Summer Fest, free family-friendly events at Goodrich-Loomis Conservation Area, welcoming approximately 60 participants from across the watershed, fostering community connection and engagement with our conservation lands.
- Delivered a range of engaging educational programs across the watershed in partnership with local libraries, schools, camps, and community organizations, providing interactive outreach for children and youth in communities including Batawa, Quinte West, Trent Hills, Brighton, and surrounding areas.
- Partnered with community groups to support commemorative planting initiatives, including planting Eastern Redbud at Proctor Park Conservation Area with the Brighton Garden Club to celebrate their 100-year anniversary, and establishing a Miyawaki-style little forest at Trenton Greenbelt Conservation Area in collaboration with Trenton United Church to mark the United Church's 100-year anniversary.
- Conducted restoration and stewardship activities as part of an Invasive Species Grant, including volunteer and staff tree planting at Seymour Conservation Area and Proctor Park Conservation Area, where over 540 trees were planted in forest understory areas impacted by Emerald Ash Borer. A volunteer invasive species removal event was also hosted at Bleasdell Boulder Conservation Area, targeting Dog Strangling Vine to protect native vegetation and support long-term ecosystem recovery. In addition, 1,222 Common Buckthorn were treated and the mechanical removal of 30 Wild Parsnip at Sager Conservation Area.
- Provided support for cover cropping to 20 landowners covering 1,171 acres of agricultural land. 8 agricultural landowners participated in soil sampling over 660 acres of land.
- Native Plant Sale received 215 orders provided 7,700 tree and shrub seedlings, 305 potted tree saplings, 64 wildflower and 6 Little Forest kits.



Tri-County Children's Water Festival

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.

2025 Highlights

- Developed a mobile phone application linked to GPS for Lower Trent Conservation's Trail Stewardship reporting program, enabling volunteers to submit 165 tickets that supported Conservation Lands staff in identifying and addressing site needs, including hazard trees, broken branches, litter, vandalism, and "all clear" conditions.
- In early April, the watershed and surrounding areas were impacted by a severe ice storm that resulted in extensive tree damage and widespread power outages. Lower Trent Conservation trails were temporarily closed while staff undertook significant cleanup and hazard tree removal operations, with the final trail reopening approximately seven weeks after the event. The storm alone resulted in 228 hazard trees requiring removal along trail systems. In total, 288 hazard trees were removed from Conservation Area trails in 2025 by LTC staff, with an additional 40 trees removed by contractors to ensure public safety and restore access.
- Installed digital donation signage at each Conservation Area to enhance visitor engagement and support contributions toward conservation and stewardship initiatives.
- Retrofitted and upgraded the bridge access at Goodrich-Loomis Conservation Area to improve safety and ensure reliable access for the thousands of school children who use the site annually.
- Installed a permanent dog waste bag dispenser station at Seymour to support responsible pet ownership and maintain our conservation areas.
- Continued solarization efforts to reduce the wild parsnip seed bank and prevent the spread of wild parsnip at the Warkworth Dam, including the application of additional solarizing materials to suppress existing plants.



Staff planting day at Proctor Park Conservation Area



Volunteer Invasive Species Pull Day

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.

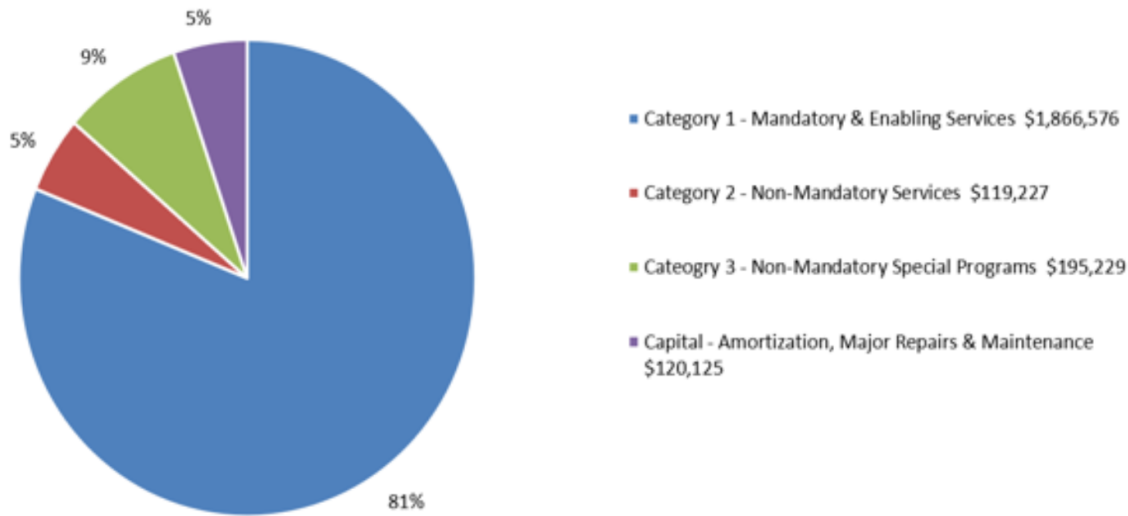
2025 Highlights

- Completed the new Capital Asset Management Plan to support public safety, maintain required service levels of LTC capital assets, and optimize investments.
- Established the CA-municipal Proctor Park Working Group to collaboratively develop a new community gathering space, developed design concepts, provided project management.
- Streamlined budget development process to enhance efficiencies, supported financial progress reporting and projections for multiple externally funded programs and projects.
- Developed new Project and Budget Management tools and templates, provided training to project managers.
- Modernized orientation process for new and returning employees, implemented new legislative updates including Employment Information Statements/Forms.
- Provided human resource support for the hiring of 9 staff members and 3 interns, which included drafting job descriptions, posting vacancies on relevant platforms, supporting interview processes, developing employment agreements.
- Enhanced internal document management and records keeping by adopting web-based services and forms, while decommissioning legacy on-site servers and transitioning to cloud-hosted backup and disaster recovery systems.

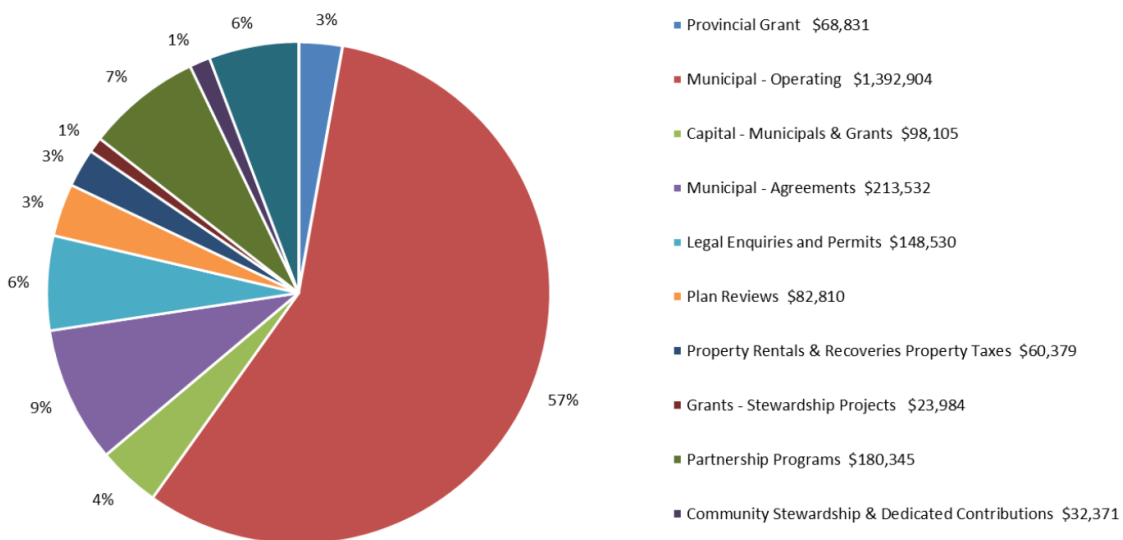


Financial Summary

2025 Operations and Capital Expenditures = \$2,301,157



2025 Operations and Capital Revenue Sources = \$2,442,631



- 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 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, which is the largest Source Protection Region in the Province. 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 Partnership Programs Drinking Water Source Protection 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. Regional staff completed the amendment package in 2025 which included successfully negotiating with the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks a viable solution to improve how the Ministry manages drinking water threats through their approval processes. The final amendment package was submitted in July 2025 and is expected to be approved in early 2026.



Our 2025 Staff

Rhonda Bateman, CAO/Secretary-Treasurer

Corporate Services

Chitra Gowda, Manager, Corporate Services

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

Amanda Dixon, Administrative and Client Services Technician

Toby Farrell, Regulation and Enforcement Officer

Massimo Narini, Watershed Services Specialist

Mike Wilson, Water Resources Project Coordinator (Dec)

Sarah Glasser, Education and Outreach Assistant+

Addison Baldwin, Invasive Species Outreach Specialist+

Noah Kim, Assistant Watershed Monitoring Technician+

Kathy Wang, Assistant Watershed Monitoring Technician+

Conservation Lands

Chris McLeod, Conservation Lands Supervisor

John Mahoney, Conservation Lands Technician

Vern Bastable, Ecology Technician (Aug)

Nicholas Peat, Conservation Lands Maintenance Assistant*

Colton Cooper, Conservation Lands Field Assistant+

Erich Stephens, Conservation Lands Field Assistant+

Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan

Sarah Midlane-Jones, Community Outreach Specialist

Shan Mugalingam, Technical Specialist (Jan - Sept)

Raven Chartrand, Environmental Stewardship Technician* (Apr)

Drinking Water Source Protection

Keith Taylor, Program Coordinator*

Trent Bos, Program Assistant*

* Contract/Seasonal Position

+ Summer Staff Position



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