

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 protection plans for every watershed in Ontario. Conservation Authorities are assisting 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.



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

Source Protection - What is it?

Source protection protecting our surface and groundwater sources such as lakes, rivers and aquifers in order to ensure we have a healthy and plentiful supply of water resources for all our uses. Source protection is the first step to prevent contamination or depletion of our water resources. Others include water testing and monitoring, reliable wastewater treatment and distribution systems and training of water managers and staff.

Source Protection Planning

Source protection begins with planning. The Government of Ontario has made a commitment to ensure that every watershed in the province has a source 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 protection planning 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 its implementation.

Stakeholders on the Source Protection Planning Committees will need to become ambassadors who will help promote the plan and teach others about the importance of protecting our sources of drinking water now and for the future.

Challenges

Managing natural resources today requires a delicate balancing act among three, often competing, interests:
Human - Environmental - Economic

What type of information is included in Source Protection Plans?

Water budgets, technical data, inventory of water resources & watershed features that impact those resources, identification of current or potential sources of contamination, high risk land uses and vulnerable areas.

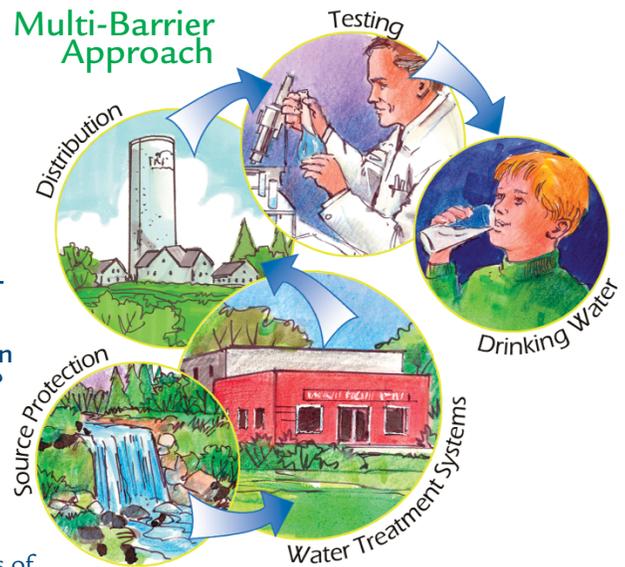
Source Protection Plans will provide information on which we can make decisions about how best to protect the quality and quantity of our water resources.

How is a Plan put together?

- Step 1:** Committee stakeholders agree upon a terms of reference
- Step 2:** Studies are undertaken to provide a picture of the state of our watersheds
- Step 3:** Issues are identified and options evaluated
- Step 4:** Source Protection Plans are developed
- Step 5:** Plans are reviewed with municipalities and watershed residents and refined based on their input
- Step 6:** Plans are submitted to the Province for approval.

It is expected to take up to five years to develop a final source protection plan. As suppliers of drinking water to their residents, municipalities will play a central role in developing and implementing source protection plans.

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



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

Along with other stakeholders in Ontario's watersheds, Conservation Authorities will be developing source protection plans for much of Ontario. For Conservation Authorities this means:

- *Coordinating* development of plans
- Bringing together stakeholders in Source Protection Planning Committees;
- Providing the best science and technical expertise for informed decision-making
 - gathering and analyzing data
 - computer modeling, etc.

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.