



Board of Directors Meeting

AGENDA

August 21, 2025
 2:00 p.m.
 Longwoods Road Conservation Area
 Indigenous Learning Centre

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1. Opening Prayer

Opening Prayer in Anishinaabemowin by Mariah Alexander and Zhaawshko Nimkii Bneshiih.

2. First Nations Acknowledgement

We will begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of First Nations people who have longstanding relationships to the land, water and region of southwestern Ontario. We also acknowledge the local lower Thames River watershed communities of this area which include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, Munsee Delaware Nation, Delaware Nation, Caldwell Nation and Walpole Island First Nation. We acknowledge the first nations people within the villages, towns and cities of our communities. We value the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America). We are thankful for the opportunity to live, learn and share with mutual respect and appreciation.

3. Call to Order

4. Adoption of Agenda

5. Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

6. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

6.1) Board of Directors Meeting Minutes June 19, 2025



Board of Directors Meeting

DRAFT MINUTES

A meeting of the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority's Board of Directors was held in person and remotely via the Administration Office, 100 Thames Street, Chatham, ON at 2:00 P.M. on Thursday, June 19, 2025. The following directors were in attendance: P. Tiessen, H. Aerts, R. Leatham, S. Hipple, M. Vink, P. Van Meerbergen, L. Vogler and S. Emons. T. Thompson, A. Finn, K. Loveland and M. Bondy sent their regrets.

1. First Nations Acknowledgment

Mark Peacock read the First Nations acknowledgement.

2. Call to Order

3. Adoption of Agenda

BD-2025-45 R. Leatham – L. Vogler

Moved that the agenda be adopted with the addition of 7.4) Additional Dwelling Units - LTVCA Regulations Policies; and 11.4) Township of Puslinch, Town of Shelburne and Town of Orangeville correspondence to the Ontario Provincial Government regarding Bill 5: Protecting Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act 2025 to the agenda package.

CARRIED

4. Disclosures of Conflicts of Interest

None Declared.

5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

BD-2025-46 P. Van Meerbergen – H. Aerts

Moved that the Board of Directors meeting minutes of April 17, 2025 be approved.

CARRIED

6. Business Arising from the Minutes

None declared.

7. Presentations

7.1) Summary of 2025 Tree Planting

Greg Van Every provided a presentation to the Board of Directors on the 2025 Tree Planting season.

7.2) LTVCA Climate Change Strategy

Mark Peacock and Valerie Towsley provided a presentation on the LTVCA Climate Change Strategy.

7.3) Knowledge Mobilization at Longwoods Road Conservation Area

Alison Klages, Curator of Ska-Nah-Doht Village and Museum / Team Lead for Education provided a presentation on how knowledge is shared with the public at Longwoods Road Conservation Area.

7.4) Additional Dwelling Units - LTVCA Regulations Policies

Jason Homewood, Water Resources and Regulations Technician provided a presentation to the Board of Directors on the inclusion of proposed policy concepts regarding ADU's within the LTVCA's Regulation Policy's.

BD-2025-47 P. Van Meerbergen – S. Emons

Moved that presentations 7.1) to 7.4) be received for information.

CARRIED

8. New Business

None noted.

9. Business for Approval

9.1) Income and Expenditure vs Budget to April 30, 2025

BD-2025-48 M. Vink – L. Vogler

Moved that the Board of Directors receive the Budget vs Revenue and Expenditures report for the period ending April 30, 2025.

CARRIED

10. Business for Information

10.1) C.A.O. / Secretary Treasurer Report

BD-2025-49 H. Aerts – R. Leatham

Moved that the C.A.O. / Secretary Treasurer Report be received for information.

CARRIED

- 10.2) Water Management
- 10.3) Planning and Regulations
- 10.4) Conservation Area Lands
- 10.5) Conservation Services
- 10.6) Communications, Education and Outreach
- 10.7) Ska-Nah-Doht Advisory Committee Minutes June 5, 2025
- 10.8) Wheatley Two Creeks Association April 3, Minutes
- 10.9) Wheatley Two Creeks Association May 1, Minutes

BD-2025-50 P. Van Meerbergen – L. Vogler

Moved that Business for Information items 10.2) to 10.10) be received for information.

CARRIED

11. Correspondence

- 11.1) Letter to Mayor Morgan Re: Request to Reduce City of London Levy by 1.5%.
- 11.2) Conservation Ontario Submission: Bill 17, Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025: Planning Act Proposals
- 11.3) Climate crisis on track to destroy capitalism, warns top insurer
- 11.4) Township of Puslinch, Town of Shelburne and Town of Orangeville correspondence to the Ontario Provincial Government regarding Bill 5: Protecting Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act 2025

BD-2025-51 H. Aerts – R. Leatham

Moved that Correspondence items 11.1) to 11.4) be received for information.

CARRIED

12. Other Business

None noted.

13. Adjournment

BD-2025-52 P. Van Meerbergen – S. Emons

Moved that the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

P. Tiessen
Chair



Mark Peacock, P. Eng.
CAO/Secretary-Treasurer

7. Business Arising from the Minutes

8. Presentations

8.1) LTVCA 2025-2026 Floodplain Mapping Projects

Mark Peacock and Jason Wintermute will provide a presentation to the Board of Directors.

9. New Business

10. Business for Approval

10.1) Approval Request on Diversion Channel R-Plan Realignment

Date: August 21, 2025
Memo to: LTVCA Board of Directors
Subject: Approval Request on Diversion Channel R-Plan Realignment
From: Genevieve Champagne, Manager Conservation Lands and Services

Information Received

The Land Owner approached the LTVCA regarding the realignment of the Diversion Channel land holdings at the Rivard Dam which was to be addressed during the initial construction of the asset. Mapping of this property indicates that the dam structure is not fully on LTVCA property. With the understanding that the original mapping and construction documents intended that this structure be completely within LTVCA property limits, the Land Owner request gives the LTVCA an opportunity to address this outstanding issue. The Land Owner suggested a change in property lines which would give the LTVCA additional property to the west of the headwall/outlet of the dam to ensure that the structure is fully encompassed within LTVCA property.

The original parcel that covers the dam was 33,374 m². The new parcel that the Land Owner proposes would be 25,548 m². The Land Owner would have a net gain of 7526 m² or .78 ha or 1.93 acres. Through existing no cost agreements, the Land Owner has worked the parcel of land to be transferred since the construction of the works. Not all of this land is workable land though as it contains part of the McGregor Creek channel. With this re-alignment the property line is simplified and lands are retained to not only contain the entire dam but also to allow maintenance of the structure. From the perspective of land use, no changes are envisioned by the transfer of lands.

The benefits to the LTVCA would be that the entire dam structure and supporting lands (land needed to maintain the structure) would fall within the LTVCA ownership. As well as the divestment of lands that are currently farmed by the Land Owner has a history of flooding and the Land Owner has agreed to naturalize the lower portion of these lands. Moving forward, LTVCA stewardship staff would naturalize the low-lying transferred lands to aid in water run off and phosphorus reduction.

Process Requirements

It is noted that the original Rivard Channelization flood control project was funded in majority through provincial grants. Section 21 of the Act, which addresses Land Transfers, sets out requirements that an authority must follow for divestment of land secured with provincial funding. The process is as follows:

Notice to Minister

(2) Subject to subsection (6), if the Minister has made a grant to an authority under section 39 in respect of land, the authority shall not sell, lease or otherwise dispose of the land under clause (1) (c) without providing a written notice of the proposed disposition to the Minister at least 90 days before the disposition. 2022, c. 21, Sched. 2, s. 2 (2).

Same

(3) If an authority is required to consult the public and post a notice of proposed disposition under subsection (4), the notice to the Minister required under subsection (2) shall, at a minimum, describe how the comments received during the public consultation, if any, were considered by the authority prior to the disposition. 2022, c. 21, Sched. 2, s. 2 (2).

Public consultation prior to disposition

(4) Subject to subsection (6), an authority shall conduct a public consultation and post a notice of the consultation on its website if the authority proposes, under clause (1) (c), to sell, lease or otherwise dispose of land in respect of which the Minister has made a grant under section 39 and the land includes,

(a) areas of natural and scientific interest, lands within the Niagara Escarpment Planning Area or wetlands as defined in section 1 of the *Conservation Land Act*;

(b) the habitat of threatened or endangered species;

(c) lands in respect of which the authority has entered into an agreement with the Minister in relation to forestry development under section 2 of the *Forestry Act*; or

(d) land that is impacted by a type of natural hazard listed in subsection 1 (1) of Ontario Regulation 686/21 (Mandatory Programs and Services) made under this Act. 2022, c. 21, Sched. 2, s. 2 (2).

Length of public consultation and content of notice

(5) The public consultation under subsection (4) shall last for a minimum of 45 days and the notice of public consultation to be posted on the authority's website prior to the proposed disposition shall include,

(a) a description of the type of land referred to in clauses (4) (a) to (d) that the authority is proposing to dispose of;

(b) the proposed date of the disposition; and

(c) the proposed future use of the lands, if known. 2022, c. 21, Sched. 2, s. 2 (2).

Exceptions

(6) With regard to a disposition of land in respect of which the Minister has made a grant to an authority under section 39, the authority is not required to provide a notice to the Minister under subsection (2) or consult the public and post a notice under subsection (4) if,

(a) the disposition is for provincial or municipal infrastructure and utility purposes;

(b) the province, the provincial agency, board or commission affected by the disposition or the municipal government, agency, board or commission affected by the disposition has approved it; and

(c) the authority informs the Minister of the disposition. 2022, c. 21, Sched. 2, s. 2 (2).

Minister's direction on disposition proceeds

(7) If the Minister receives a notice under subsection (2), the Minister may, within 90 days after receiving the notice, direct the authority to apply a specified share of the proceeds of the disposition to support programs and services provided by the authority under section 21.1. 2022, c. 21, Sched. 2, s. 2 (2).

Municipal Process

The LTVCA will follow the Municipal process of registering a new R-Plan with the Municipality for the land transfer.

Staff Process

Staff would then need to update internal documents with the new R-Plan.

Cost Implications

The Land Owner has contracted and paid for the survey of the land of the current land markers and replacement of any missing bars that have come out from the original R-Plan.

The only cost implications would be any planning related fees that would come from registering a new R-Plan with the Municipality and staff time.

Imagery

Image 1: Aerial Image of the property, the red line is current LTVCA ownership, purple line is the proposed change in ownership. Aerial imagery line work (Red Line) is not always accurate, our original mapping does show that the red line would cut through the headwall/outlet of the dam structure and would mean that this structure is not fully on LTVCA property.

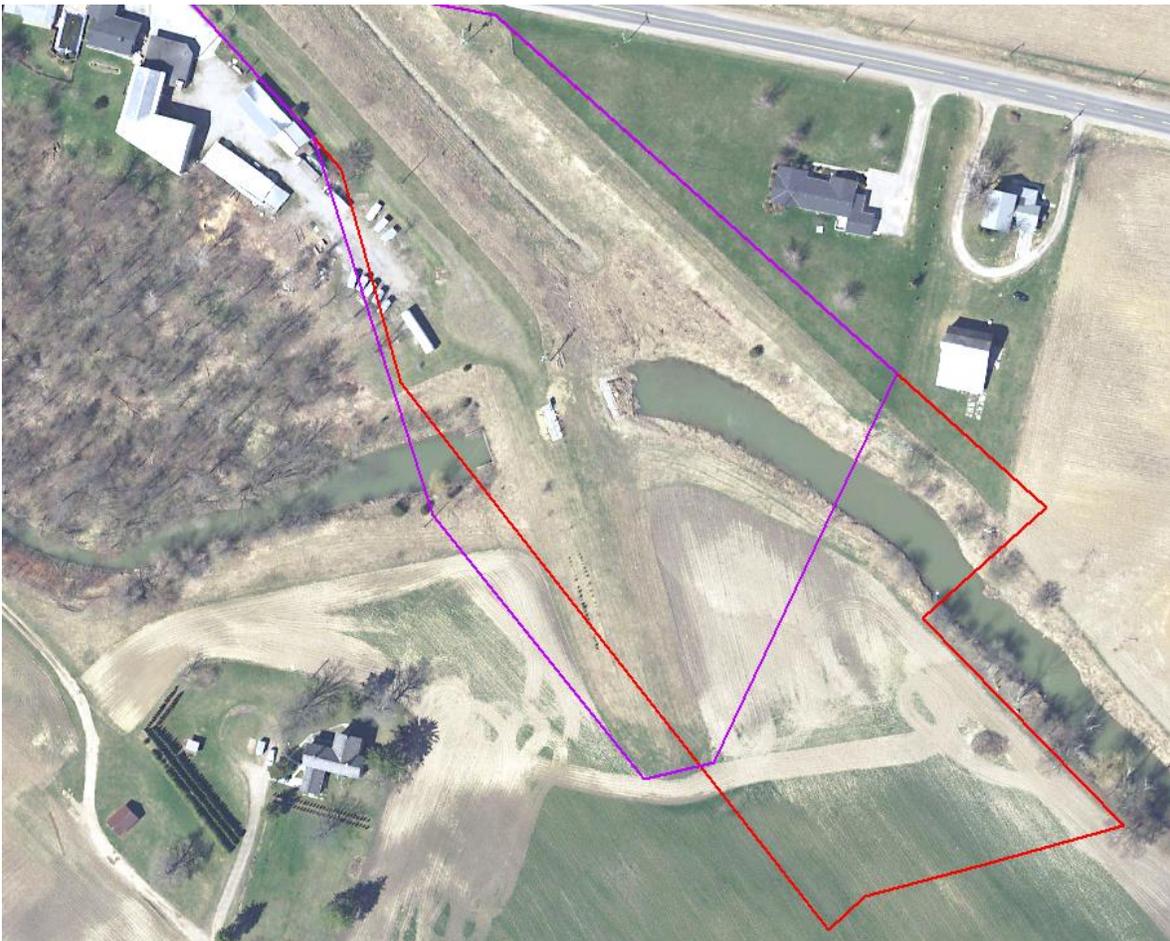
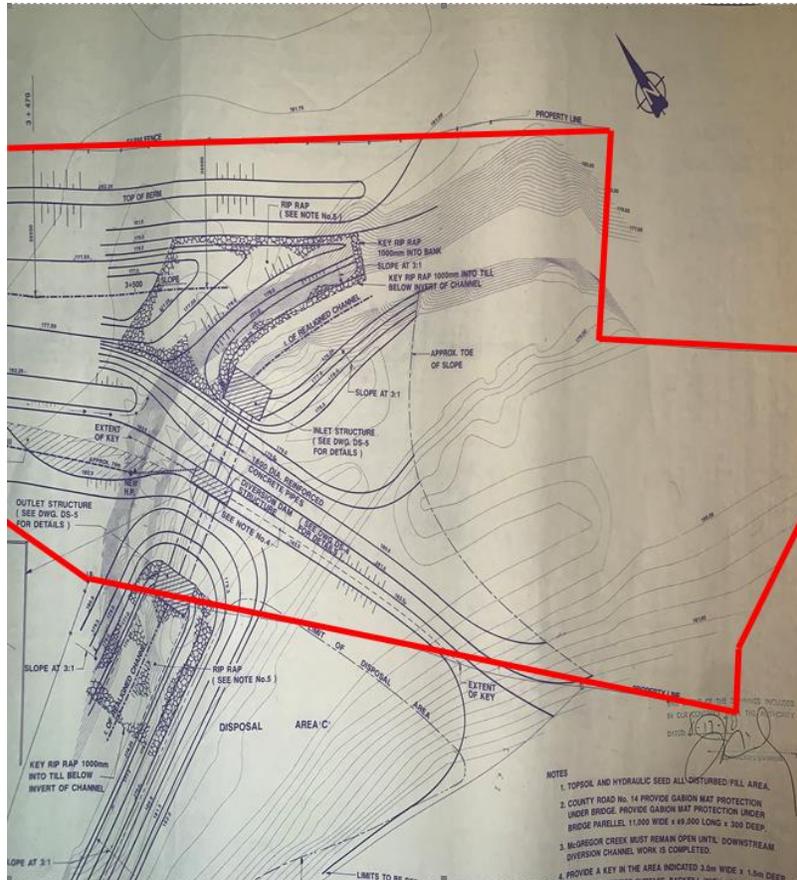


Image 2: Construction drawing indicating the alignment of the property lines showing that the property line intersects with the headwall/outlet of the Rivard Dam.



Recommended Resolution

Be it Resolved That:

The land transfer shown on Figure 1 of this report be approved, and

That staff proceed with the process describe in through Section 21 of the Conservation Authorities Act to transfer lands between the LTVCA and the Land Owner.

This report aligns with the following objectives of the LTVCA's Strategic Plan:

1. Strengthen and Increase Collaboration with Community Stakeholders

Respectfully Submitted:
Genevieve Champagne,
Manager Conservation Lands and Services

Approved By:
Mark Peacock, P. Eng.
C.A.O. / Secretary Treasurer

10.2) Conservation Area Land Strategy Update

Date: August 14, 2025
Memo to: LTVCA Board of Directors
From: Genevieve Champagne, Manager Conservation Lands and Services
Subject: **Conservation Area Land Strategy Update**

Background:

Under Ontario Regulation 686/21, the Mandatory Programs and Services Regulation, the province requires all Conservation Authorities to undertake six strategy's for a number of CA programs and services. One of these was a requirement to complete a Conservation Area Land Strategy.

A draft strategy was brought to the Board of Directors on October 17, 2024 for preliminary review. The Draft document was then posted to our website under public consultation for public feedback (https://www.lowerthames-conservation.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Draft-Lower-Thames-Valley-Conservation-Authority-LAND-STRAT_draft-to-board-Oct-17-24.pdf). A few comments were received and reviewed. No changes to the Conservation Land Strategy were required to be undertaken to address these concerns.

Additionally, Authority Staff received a power point presentation and working session on the Conservation Area Land Strategy. In 2024, the Strategy was provided to Indigenous communities and comments / concerns were requested, no comments being received. Should a first nations community reach out for further information staff will provide this information and consult further on the document.

As part of Provincial requirements, these Strategies were to be finalized by December 31, 2024. Through Board approval in December 2024, the Conservation Area Land Strategy can be considered final. However, the LTVCA sees this Strategy as a living document, and subject to change should the Board wish to strategically shift direction.

Although the final document was approved at the December 19th, 2024 Board of Directors meeting changes are currently needed.

Update:

Minor edits were required throughout the document for spelling, grammar and proper staff identification as a staff member was misidentified.

A vital section was missing from the document and it was Accessibility within the Conservation Areas and Facilities. This is an important section to include for our lands strategy as increased accessibility is important to the LTVCA. Accessibility is always at the forefront of programing and how we deliver programing to the public and school groups. We have been moving forward with accessibility at various locations and staff are always on the look out for grants to assist with updates and modifications to our lands and facilities. We continue to work to help those who need additional accessibility features allowing them to enjoy the lands to their fullest. An Accessibility section has been added as section 8.7 within the Conservation Areas and Facilities (on page 14).

By modifying and updating our Land Strategy, it will support staff in searching and applying for accessibility grants as it is important to have a strategy to back up requests for accessibility funding. Section 10.1 Objective 5, Provide Accessible access to CA Lands. We can measure this by implementation of accessible features throughout Conservation Areas. This initiative would be dependant on grant funding. The LTVCA will strive to meet this objective each year as grants come available. The budget implications would be staff time, grant funding and asset management moving forward. This objective meets the LTVCA Strategic Plan objective of Connecting People to Nature.

Recommendation:

That the Board of Directors approves the Conservation Area Land Strategy dated August 2025, and

That the document will remain a living document to guide the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority staffing and programs, and

That the Conservation Area Land Strategy be updated on the Governance section on our website.

Respectfully Submitted:

Genevieve Champagne

Manager, Conservation Lands and Services.

Reviewed By

Mark Peacock, P. Eng.

C.A.O. / Secretary Treasurer



Conservation Lands Strategy



Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA)

Approved by:
Lower Valley Conservation Authority
Board of Directors

December, 19, 2024
Revised: August 2025

Acknowledgements

The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA) acknowledges that the watershed is within the traditional territory of First Nations people who have longstanding relationships to the land, water and region of southwestern Ontario. We also acknowledge the local lower Thames River watershed communities of this area which include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, Munsee Delaware Nation, Delaware Nation, Caldwell Nation and Walpole Island First Nation. We acknowledge the first nations people within the villages, towns and cities of our communities. We value the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America). We are thankful for the opportunity to live, learn and share with mutual respect and appreciation.

Thanks

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of all those who participated in the development of the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority's Conservation Lands Strategy.

About this Report

References: Information that helped shape this Strategy were taken from the 2024 Watershed-Based Resource Management Strategy, the 2015 Strategic Objectives and Implementation Report and associated 2016-2021 Summary; the 1966 Lower Thames Valley Conservation Report Summary; and the 1963 Lower Thames Valley Conservation Report Land Forest; the 1983 Interim Watershed Plan; with sample documents referenced from Conservation Ontario and other Conservation Authorities.

Input: Input into the Strategy was provided and will continue to be provided by our member municipalities, community and municipal stakeholders, Indigenous watershed communities and LTVCA staff.

LTVCA Report Authors: Mark Peacock, P. Eng., CAO/Secretary-Treasurer; Genevieve Champagne BLA, Manager of Conservation Lands and Services Resource Planner.

Cover Page Image

CM Wilson Conservation Area: Staff Member; Amanda Blain Bird Watching on a Trail, Dudek Photography

Alternative Formats: If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact LTVCA at 519-354-7310 or admin@ltvca.ca.

Correct Citation: Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority, 2024, 'Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority Conservation Lands Strategy', Chatham, Ontario.

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Traditional Territory Acknowledgement

The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority acknowledges that the land on which the watershed is situated within is the traditional territory of First Nations people who have longstanding relationships to the land, water and region of southwestern Ontario. We also acknowledge the local lower Thames River watershed communities of this area which include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, Munsee Delaware Nation, Delaware Nation, Caldwell Nation and Walpole Island First Nation. We acknowledge the first nations people within the villages, towns and cities of our communities. We value the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America). We are thankful for the opportunity to live, learn and share with mutual respect and appreciation.

Through this Conservation Lands Strategy process, the LTVCA re-confirms our commitment to shared stewardship of natural resources and shared waters, and deep appreciation of Indigenous culture and history in the Lower Thames watershed.



Figure 1: Map

Some roots of the language

Ojibwe means – canoe builders

Anishnaabe means – a person / a human

Gichigami (get-chi-goom-ee) – the Sea

Gichi (get-chi) – Big

Gami (goom-ee) – Liquid

Lake Erie would be called Waabishkiigoo (waa-bish-key-goo) Gichigami meaning Neutral Sea

Because Lake Erie would be a boundary for neighboring nations to trading/travel

Lake St. Clair translated would be Waawiyaataan (waa-we-ya-taan) – Curved shores

Resources available at <https://decolonialatlas.wordpress.com/>

1.0 Purpose & Introduction

1.1 Legislative Background:

The following document has been prepared based on requirements of the Conservation Authorities Act and its regulations. Proclaimed provisions within the Conservation Authorities Act and accompanying regulations establish requirements for Mandatory Programs and Services (see Section 21.1 of the Act and O. Reg. 686/21). Ontario Regulation 686/21 sets out the Mandatory Programs and Services which must be delivered by all Conservation Authorities (CAs) in Ontario. Section 10 of the regulation requires all Conservation Authorities to prepare a “Conservation Area Strategy” (“the Strategy”) as a required component of the “Conservation and Management of Lands” mandatory CA program and service area.

As defined under Ontario Regulation 688/21 of the Conservation Authorities Act, “conservation area” means land owned by an authority.

1.2 Purpose

This Conservation Lands Strategy has been developed to align with the recent changes to section 10(1) of Ontario Regulation 686/21 of the Conservation Authorities Act. This strategy will provide a clear set of objectives which will inform decision-making related to the management, acquisition and disposal of lands owned by the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA). Currently, the LTVCA has been operating under a number of Land Management and Conservation Area Management Plans.

1.3 Introduction

The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority is committed to the health and resiliency of the watershed and its residents. The LTVCA works in partnership with various municipalities, communities, groups and agencies to ensure that our community-based resource management strategies protect, enhance and sustain healthy watersheds while protecting the public from natural hazards. The LTVCA offers a wide variety of watershed programs and services from stewardship and restoration programs, to flood forecasting and hazard land management, water quality, agricultural programs, species at risk, environmental monitoring, source water protection, conservation areas, land management and community education programs.

The LTVCA is also a member of, and represented by, Conservation Ontario, which is a non-profit association. Conservation Ontario represents Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities, which are local watershed management agencies, mandated to ensure the conservation, restoration and responsible management of Ontario's water, land and natural habitats through programs that balance human, environmental and economic needs. Conservation Authorities are organized on a watershed basis.

Further information about Conservation Ontario, and the history of the CA's can be found here:

<https://conservationontario.ca/conservation-authorities/about-conservation-authorities>

The LTVCA holds approximately 704 hectares of land/natural areas, with 153 hectares under Forest Management Plans. The LTVCA has the responsibility to protect and conserve these natural areas to protect and increase the resiliency of the watershed and for future public enjoyment; this can include providing opportunities for habitat protection, research, recreation, and outdoor education. Protecting these areas help safeguard them from future development, the impacts of climate change and unnecessary human interactions.

There are many benefits of Conservation Lands including:

- Providing active and passive recreational use to the public
- Protecting significant water resources and contribute to improve water quality (headwaters, riparian lands, significant recharge and discharge areas)
- Protecting hazard lands and reduce flooding and soil erosion (floodplains, erosion of sensitive areas and valley lands)
- Protecting Provincially/ Regionally Significant Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI- Earth and Life Science)
- Providing protection to environmentally significant/sensitive lands (wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitat, significant vegetation communities and fish habitat)
- Contribute to biodiversity and the establishment of a Natural Heritage System which would include linkages and wildlife corridors for migration.

Overall, the conservation lands owned and operated by the LTVCA are not only used for active recreational use, they are protected to promote environmental awareness. The active recreational land use allows the LTVCA to demonstrate economic opportunities through campgrounds, sound agricultural land uses, innovative outdoor education, special events and progressive land stewardship.

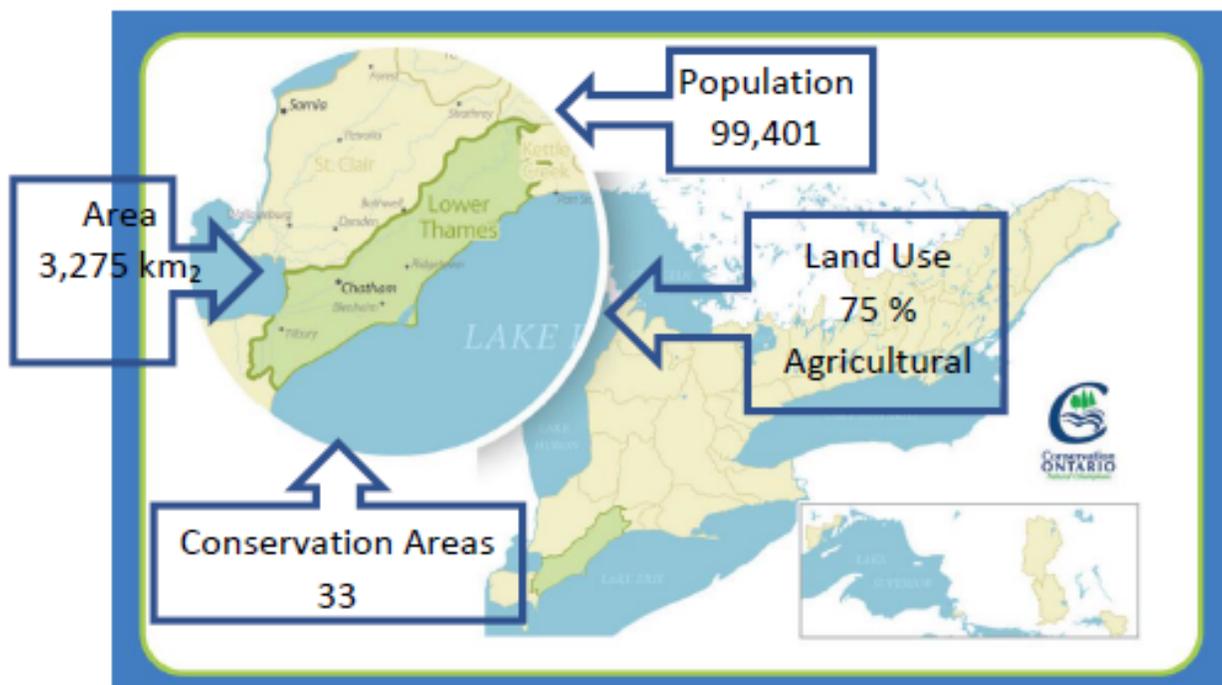


Figure 2: Map of the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority Watershed in relation to the other 36 Conservation Authorities with statistics.

2.0 History of the LTVCA Conservation Lands

The History of the Lower Thames Valley can be found in the Conservation Report 1966 (reference) summary that was completed by the Department of Energy and Resources Management for the Ontario Government. This document describes the Watershed in four categories of Land, Forest, Water and Recreation. The authors also provide recommendations for watershed improvement work within these categories. The Land, Forest and Water sections of the 1966 Conservation Report focus on the entire watershed while the Recreation section gets into potential Conservation Areas that the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority should investigate further for conservation area development. These recommendations created the resource management plan for the early Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority.

Considering the use of outdoor recreation amenities, the report notes that people tend to fit into five types of users. The aim is to balance an equality of service for all of these types.

- The Outdoor Re-creationist: uses the outdoors to enhance personal relationships with nature.
- Consumer: uses the facilities that are available
- The Spectator: uses the outdoors as the tourist and sightseer who passes through
- The Simulator: uses the outdoors to do the same things he would do at home but in different surroundings.
- The Relaxationist: uses the outdoors to find rest, companionship, and opportunity for escape from social relationships.

Considering the highly developed urban and agricultural land use of the LTVCA watershed, residents often travel outside the urban areas to seek recreation along shore lines and park lands. Local land acquisition should be considered to offer a wide variety of functions locally, on a year-round basis.

At the time of the 1966 Conservation Report there was limited to no Conservation Areas, limited provincial and national parks within the region and the only city at that time was Chatham which held any significant recreation areas within the urban setting. The limited recreation available at this time did not reflect the outdoor heritage of Canada and the beauty and appeal of a natural, and wild setting for which Canada is known. There was a growing awareness among the community that better local natural recreation opportunities were needed.

Five separate conservation areas within the LTVCA Watershed were defined after careful study and were suggested based on three factors which included; accessibility, distribution and topography. Of the areas suggested, the LTVCA has secured conservation areas in and around the proposed suggested zones.

<u>1966 Proposed Conservation Areas</u>	<u>Actual Secured Conservation Areas</u>
Jeannettes Creek Conservation Area	Lighthouse Conservation Area
	Courey Conservation Area
	Merlin Conservation Area
Tecumseh Memorial Conservation Area	Administration Building
	Colbourne Street
	Diversion Channel
	C.M. Wilson Conservation Area

Big Bend Conservation Area	Big Bend Conservation Area
	Mosa Forest Conservation Area (Skunks Misery)
	E.M. Warwick Conservation Area
	W.H. Feasby Conservation Area
Muncey Conservation Area	Dutton-Dunwich Conservation Area
	Ekfrid Forest
Mount Brydges Conservation Area	Longwoods Road Conservation Area
	Millstream & Janes Bush Conservation Area
	Delaware Conservation Area
	Sharon's Creek Conservation Area

The LTVCA has acquired other properties outside of these five suggested areas; bringing the wild and natural experience closer to many other communities throughout the watershed as the population grew and expanded.

Although the original Conservation Report provided a good foundation for land acquisition and management in the Lower Thames watershed, it is time to reconsider its recommendations. Access to Conservation Areas for growing communities within the Lower Thames watershed must be considered and strategies devised to continue provision of relevant and needed services.

[2.1 Historical and Cultural Values](#)

The LTVCA works to preserve the historical and cultural resources throughout the watershed. The Conservation Authority owns historically recognized parcels of land, objects, places and infrastructure. Conservation of these cultural resources can involve restoration, rehabilitation or preservation. The LTVCA provides educational and cultural heritage programming and services through its outdoor education programs. Additionally, the historical and cultural aspects of the Thames River is recognised through a Canadian Heritage River designation, and the Lighthouse within the Community of Lighthouse Cove is over 200 years old and is one of the three oldest on the Great Lakes. The LTVCA will continue to work towards restoration, rehabilitation or preservation of these assets.

[2.2 Indigenous Knowledge](#)

Indigenous knowledge and values are important for Conservation Authorities as this knowledge and these values lead to respect and an understanding of responsibility for the environment. The LTVCA partners with Indigenous Nations in projects emphasizing mutual learning and sharing, and building relationships based on trust and respect. The LTVCA will work towards a holistic approach when considering environmental conservation and human well being. Additionally, the LTVCA will collaborate with multiple stakeholders to develop those approaches. The LTVCA is adaptable and flexible in addressing the needs of Indigenous partners when managing its lands.

3.0 Authorities Mission, Vision and Objectives

3.1 Our Vision

The LTVCA for a balanced and Healthy Watershed.

3.2 Our Mission

Leading by example in environmental protection in partnership with the community.

3.3 Our Core Value

Respect, Integrity, Commitment, Objectivity and Collaboration.

4.0 Aligning with the LTVCA Strategic Plan

Guiding the LTVCA through the Conservation Land Strategy is the LTVCA Watershed Based Resource Management Strategy 2024-2029 (WBRMS). This document forms the overall strategic planning document for the Conservation Authority. The WBRMS provides the following guiding objectives for the management and development of Conservation Lands:

4.1 Objectives through Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds



- Watershed Restoration required to increase biodiversity, habitat connectivity and natural cover
- Develop a Climate Change Action Plan to build resilience to our conservation areas and infrastructure.

4.2 Objectives through Connecting People to Nature



- Provide equitable access to our conservation areas across the watershed
- Increase awareness of the value of good watershed stewardship
- Creating more access to greenspaces, which enrich our communities, and strengthen cultural connections and heritage appreciation
- Provide quality educational, stewardship and volunteer opportunities to the public
- Support Indigenous engagement and public learning so people can see nature, and be informed by Tradition Knowledge

4.3 Objectives through Partner of Choice



- Strengthen and increase collaboration with community stakeholders

- Strengthen Indigenous engagement and relationships

5.0 Land Acquisition and Disposal Policy

5.1 Land Acquisition Policy

The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA) does not currently actively seek out properties to purchase however, the LTVCA does secure lands located within its jurisdiction, on a parcel-by-parcel basis to increase the Conservation Land base and to contribute to its vision and goals. Land securement includes, but is not limited to, agreements with willing landowners, donations and land bequests, land trading, fee simple purchases (often using donated/granted funds), and any other means of holding rights on land such as leasing, restrictive covenants, land use agreements and easements.

When protecting environmentally significant lands, the preferred method is holding title to the land. Use of the other land securement methods will be considered on a case by case basis with direction and approval by the Board of the Directors. For more information please refer to the LTVCA Land Acquisition Policy and Land Securement Agreement.

The LTVCA Land Acquisition Policy States:

1. Land should be donated but under certain situations could be purchased
2. Acquired land shall fit into our Land Classification criteria, which will provide either: recreational opportunities or ecological significance
3. Acquired land must be large enough or significant enough to fit into a tax relief program such as: MFTIP, CLTIP, etc.
3. Donated land should have a management fund which accompanies the donation which is used to pay taxes, maintenance of buildings, etc.
4. When possible, legal, zoning, planning and appraisal costs should be assumed by the donor
5. If there is no management fund; there should be an avenue to collect revenue from the property i.e. farm land to rent, woodlot to manage for timber
6. When possible, lands that provide a linkage, corridor or are adjacent to other natural areas, will be priority parcels for acquisition
7. Lands that contain species at risk will be priority parcels for acquisition
8. Lands that are identified with the LTVCA or Municipal Natural Heritage strategies will be priority parcels for acquisition
9. Lands that are already identified as: a) Area of Natural Scientific Interest; b) Carolinian Canada site; c) Great Lakes Conservation Blueprint for Biodiversity priority site; d) Provincially Significant Wetlands and Significant Coastal Wetlands; e) Important Bird Area; f) RAMSAR site; g) Natural Heritage designation under the (2005) Provincial Policy Statement; h) World Heritage Site; i) UNESCO Biosphere Reserve site; j) Significant Woodlands; k) Significant Wildlife / SAR Habitat; l) Significant Valleylands; will be priority parcels for acquisition

5.2 Land Disposal Policy

The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority will retain all properties that meet one or more criteria listed in the Land Acquisition Policy. In some instances, properties acquired by or donated historically to the LTVCA may not meet the needs and objectives of the Authority. In these instances, the Authority may look to dispose of these surplus lands.

6.0 Method of Classifying LTVCA Lands

The LTVCA owns and manages over 30 properties across its watershed. Property use ranges from high to low with full service campgrounds, day use facilities and nature reserves. A full review of each property that looks at parameters such as: taxes, maintenance costs, liabilities, visitor use, areas of potential income, are all factors that will guide property classification.

In the past, each property was classified into one of the following 4 categories.

- a. High Use- staff present year round, facilities, charge for services Ex. C.M. Wilson CA
- b. Medium Use- medium traffic levels, no staff, but public invited to use trails, facilities, and signage present. Ex. Devereux CA
- c. Passive Recreation Use- trails and signage. Ex. Rowsom CA
- d. Nature Reserve- not advertised, no signage, set aside as ecological reserve. Ex. Courey Islands

The difference between Medium Use and Passive Use areas has been determined to be insignificant. Additionally, it has been found that the management of lands used to house administrative staff, with limited environmental use, should constitute an additional category. Based on this, the following categories will be used in this document:

New Categories – Used in this document	Old Categories
Active Use	High Use
Passive Use	Medium Use, Passive
Nature Reserve	Nature Reserve
Administrative Areas	Part of High Use

7.0 Mandatory and Non-Mandatory Programs on LTVCA Lands

Mandatory and non-mandatory programs on LTVCA Lands are described in this section. Additionally, details of how these services are financed are provided. Mandatory or required components are described in the following regulation:

Ontario regulation 686/21 MANDATORY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES states:

Required components (Mandatory Components)

9. (1) Programs and services provided by an authority with respect to the conservation and management of lands under subparagraph 1 ii of subsection 21.1 (1) of the Act shall include the following:

1. A conservation area strategy, prepared on or before December 31, 2024 for all lands owned or controlled by the authority, including any interests in land registered on title, that meets the requirements set out in section 10.
2. Where the authority considers it advisable to achieve the objectives referred to in paragraph 1 of subsection 10 (1),
 - i. programs and services to secure the authority's interests in its lands that include measures for fencing, signage, patrolling and any other measures to prevent unlawful entry on the authority's land and to protect the authority from exposure to liability under the Occupiers' Liability Act,
 - ii. programs and services to maintain any facilities, trails or other amenities that support public access and recreational activities in conservation areas and that can be provided without the direct support or supervision of staff employed by the authority or by another person or body,
 - iii. programs and services to enable the authority, in its capacity as an owner of land, to make applications or comment on matters under the Planning Act,
 - iv. programs and services to conserve, protect, rehabilitate, establish, and manage natural heritage located within the lands owned or controlled by the authority,
 - v. programs and services to plant trees on lands owned or controlled by the authority, excluding commercial logging, and
 - vi. the development of one or more policies governing land acquisitions and land dispositions.
3. A land inventory, prepared on or before December 31, 2024, that meets the requirements set out in section 11.
4. Programs and services to ensure that the authority carries out its duties, functions and responsibilities to administer regulations made under section 29 of the Act.

(2) For greater certainty, programs and services with respect to the conservation and management of lands under subparagraph 1 ii of subsection 21.1 (1) of the Act do not apply to any lands where the authority has no legal interest in the lands registered on title and the authority has entered into an agreement with another person or body to manage the lands on the person's or body's behalf.

From the above regulation it is noted that non-mandatory programming at a conservation area are these services that are recreational activities in conservation areas that are provided with the direct support or supervision of staff employed by the authority or by another person or body. Funding of non-mandatory programs is from fees, land rental, grant programs and municipal levy. It is noted that non-mandatory programs often create demand for mandatory programs. Visitors who participate in active programming often come back to conservation areas for passive recreation use.

8.0 Guidelines for Conservation Land Management

8.1 Location and Classification of Conservation Areas

The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority has 10-member Municipalities and is divided into two jurisdictions; the Eastern District and the Western District.

The Western District is comprised of Chatham-Kent, Lakeshore and Leamington. The Eastern District is comprised of West Elgin, Dutton-Dunwich, Southold, London, Middlesex Centre, Strathroy-Caradoc and Southwest Middlesex. The LTVCA owns and maintains 33 conservation areas and lands ranging from administrative, active recreation, passive recreation and management areas.

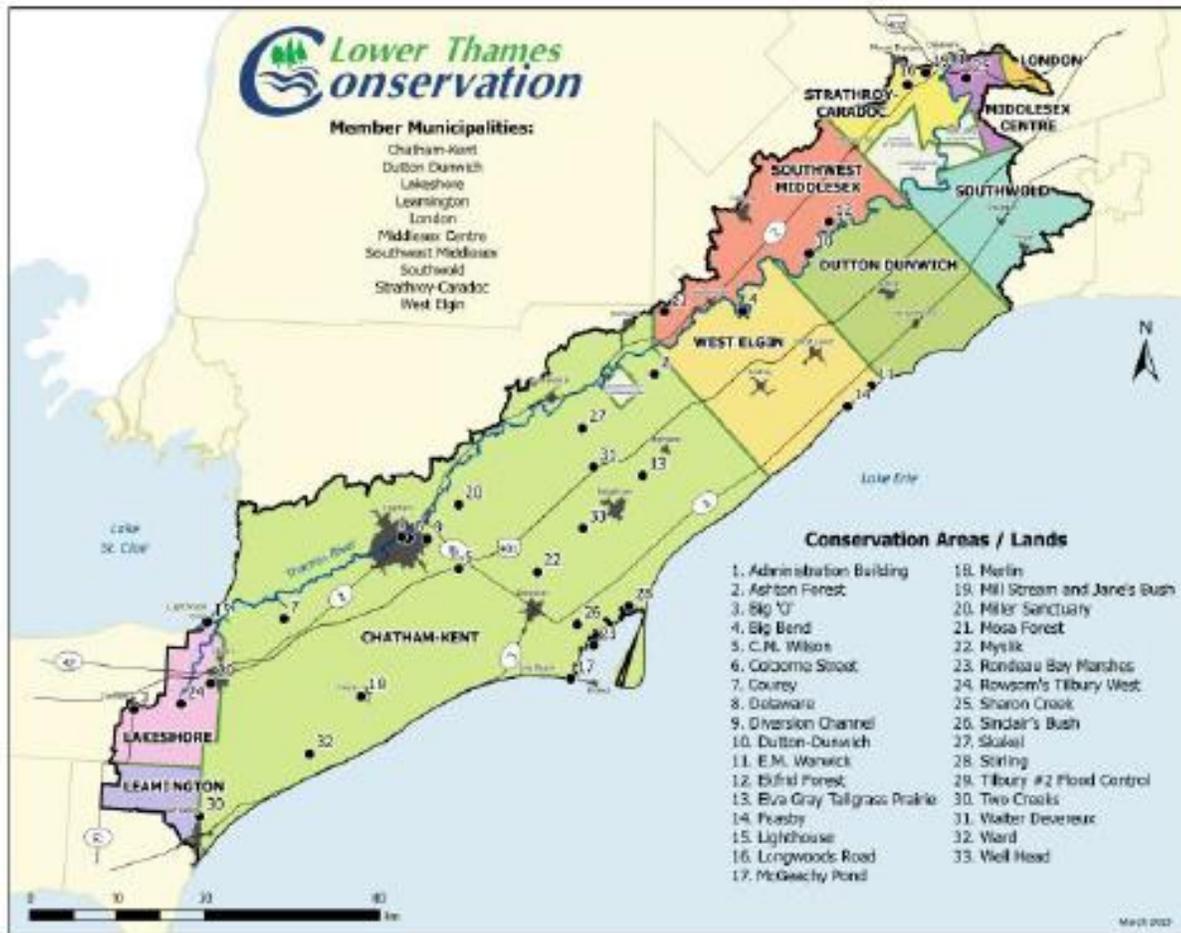


Figure 3: Map of the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority Watershed with all Conservation Areas/Lands

It is the responsibility of all users of public lands to undertake their activities in an ecologically sound and socially responsible manner and to accept risks associated with such activities. Users should be aware of other activities that may be occurring within that area concurrently and should use the site at their own discretion. Conservation areas have an influence on the community they are located within, and the promotion of the conservation areas may be seen through social media, events, publications which would in turn encourage a higher public use.

The LTVCA Conservation Areas are classified as follows:

<u>Administration</u>	<u>Active Recreation</u>	<u>Passive Recreation</u>	<u>Nature Reserve</u>
Administration Building	C.M. Wilson *	Big O	Ashton Forest
	Longwoods Road *	Delaware	Colborne
		Dutton- Dunwich	Courey
		Lighthouse *	Diversion Channel
		McGeachy Pond	Ekfrid Forest
		Merlin	Elva Gray Tallgrass Prairie
		Millstream*	W.H. Feasby
		Janes Bush	
		Mosa Forest	Miller Sanctuary
		Rondeau Bay Marshes	Myslik
		Rowsom's Tilbury West	Skakel**
		Sharon's Creek	Stirling
		Sinclair's Bush	Tilbury #2 Flood Control
		Two Creeks	Ward
		Walter Devereux**	Well Head
		Big Bend**	
		E.M. Warwick	

* Property has a rental house on the property.

** Property has a farm lease associated with the property.

Information regarding each Conservation Area and the activities provided at each location can be found in our *Explore LTVCA Conservation Areas Guide Book*.

8.2 Leased Conservation Lands

In some instances, Conservation Areas are subject to a long or short-term lease agreement between the LTVCA and an individual, a corporation, or a municipality. Through the terms of the lease agreement, the Lessee is typically responsible for the management of these lands, however, these lands may still include public access and active recreation opportunities. Examples of these agreements include agricultural lands, the Chatham Leaf and Yard Waste Facility and the Wolfe Creek BMX track, Wheatley Two Creeks Association.

8.3 Conservation Areas- Active Recreation

Conservation Areas-Active Recreation refers to lands which provide natural habitat protection and/or flood/erosion protection while remaining accessible and open to the public. These lands are well promoted and may contain managed trail networks, parking lots, signage, and facilities. The Authority may actively encourage and facilitate active recreation and have staffed buildings. Typically, these lands include fee for parking, camping, rentals, and/or education. The lands are distinguished from passive recreation lands by the level of development and the intensity of use.

These properties are identified as Category 3 under Ontario Regulation 686/21 of the Conservation Authorities Act for Mandatory Programs and Services. Category 3 programs and services are those that the conservation authority determines are advisable to provide, to further the purposes of the Act. These lands

provide active recreation in the form of seasonal and transient campsites and outdoor education opportunities. Additional facilities and programs are on site to serve the needs of visitors to these properties. Financing for these lands is provided through the revenue generated on the property (i.e., camping fees, day-use fees, education program fees, and donations). Funding for these lands is also provided from the member municipalities (municipal levy) through Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) or agreements.

8.4 Conservation Areas- Passive Recreation

Conservation Areas-Passive recreation refers to lands which provide habitat protection and/or flood/erosion protection while permitting public access on a passive basis. These lands include signage, trails, parking lots, and may have facilities such as washrooms or pavilions. These lands typically are not staffed, but rather visited by staff for maintenance and inspection.

These properties are identified as Category 2 under Ontario Regulation 686/21 of the Conservation Authorities Act for Mandatory Programs and Services. Funding for these lands is provided from member municipalities (municipal levy) through a Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) or agreements.

8.5 Nature Reserves

Nature Reserves refer to lands where public access is prohibited and/or are generally not managed for public access. These lands may serve as resource management areas, agricultural fields, and potential flood lands. These areas typically do not have facilities and/or parking lots. Trail networks, if existing, are simple, minimal, and/or unmaintained. The Trail networks within management areas are for staff personnel only in order to review and manage the property.

These properties are identified as Category 1 under Ontario Regulation 686/21 of the Conservation Authorities Act for Mandatory Programs and Services, which are lands owned or controlled by the Authority for conservation and management. Funding for these lands is provided from member municipalities through municipal levy. The Diversion Channel and the 5th Street Dam is funded annually by the Municipality of Chatham-Kent through a special levy and occasionally by the Province through the Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure funding program (WECl) (for capital projects).

8.6 Administration Areas

The LTVCA has one property that falls under Administration Areas. The Chatham Administration building for the LTVCA Conservation Authority; this building is the main administration building and houses the majority of office-based staff.

The Chatham Administration building property falls under Category 1 under Ontario Regulation 686/21 of the Conservation Authorities Act for Mandatory Programs and Services.

Stewardship staff are located at the Burwell House at the Longwoods Road Conservation Area, the C.M. Wilson Learning Centre at C.M. Wilson Conservation Area and the Chatham Administration building. Education staff are located at the Longwoods Road Resource Centre at the Longwoods Road Conservation

Area and the C.M. Wilson Learning Centre at C. M. Wilson Conservation Area. Conservation Land staff are located at the Longwoods Road Conservation Area Workshop and the C.M. Wilson Conservation Area Workshop.

8.7 Accessibility within the Conservation Areas and Facilities

The LTVCA emphasizes that accessibility is not just about accessing a building with few to no restrictions; it's also providing other means of enjoying our outdoor spaces, regardless of the disability the person has, allowing all to freely enjoying our conservation areas.

Accessible: means a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use.

Accessibility is important for the LTVCA, however, this can be hard to achieve as the trail networks throughout conservation areas are often set up to be naturalized, where ground surface is a natural surface. However, Where possible, the LTVCA manages the trail networks with a goal to ensure barriers are removed.

As for the facilities within our conservation areas, they are equipped with accessibility features and the LTVCA is always striving to blend the natural world with accessibility. For example, at the Longwoods Road Resource Centre this facility is equipped with accessible washrooms, a LULA Lift Elevator, ramps and accessible door access. Additionally, the LTVCA has also added ramps to our Cabins, and the village has accessible pathways leading to it.

However, our outdoor facilities may not always lend themselves to full accessibility. Staff will continue to implement accessibility features that allow accessible recreational activities to be undertaken in conservation areas. Mobility access within conservation areas is often the accessibility requested; however, staff are always looking for new ways to diversify experiences along the trails such as brail, auditory features or text blocks describing features along the trails / facilities.

Staff will continue to look for and apply to any grants that lend themselves to accessibility to enable the LTVCA to continuously upgrade features. These features include but are not limited to: accessible docks and kayak launches at C.M. Wilson and Sharon Creek. Accessible picnic tables at C.M. Wilson, Big Bend, Longwoods, Sharon Creek, E.M Warwick, Two Creeks and any of our other public conservation areas in which we engage the public. Accessible playgrounds and recreational activities at our campground properties such as C.M. Wilson, E.M. Warwick and Big Bend. Funding for accessible upgrades to our conservation areas can be costly and is always in demand. If staff are successful in accessing grants, accessible pathways, trail systems, driveways, parking lots, and entrances throughout the LTVCA's conservation areas will be undertaken.

8.8 Principles Used to Manage the Conservation Areas

The following general principles are used to manage conservation areas in the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority jurisdiction:

- Conservation Areas are demonstrations of naturalized areas to the public.

- Conservation Area activities may be limited should it be deemed that natural resources are being affected by the scale of human use of the area.
- Maintenance and development of roads, access routes and trails will be planned and performed by staff.
- Archaeological sites associated with past human activities, endeavours or events (including surface artifacts, subsurface attributes) shall be protected from disturbance whenever possible.
- Identified species at risk and their habitat should be mapped and protected from possible disruption by other land uses wherever possible.
- Property boundary fences/markers will be maintained or implemented as needed.
- Conservation and Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program properties will be maintained consistent with their approved management plans.
- Staff may need to manage nuisance wildlife in Conservation Areas.
- Properties are open to research activities relating to natural resource conservation with appropriate restrictions which will be outlined in an agreement between the Authority and researcher.
- Controls in the form of access restrictions such as signage, gates and land use plans may be used to define or limit public use of ecologically sensitive portions of area or for safety concerns.
- The use of remote-controlled vehicles of any kind (e.g. land, air, or watercraft, including drones) are not allowed on Authority property without LTVCA permission.
- Any special event that will require exclusive use or closure of an area to the general public shall require a Facility Rental Permit and a fee based on the Conservation Areas Fee Schedule.
- Hunting may be allowed on CA lands if approved by Conservation Area Staff and has been identified in the conservation area management plans.
- Farming and farm demonstrations may be permitted on specific pre-approved conservation area lands.
- Filming permits are required for conservation area lands and must be approved prior to filming taking place.

8.9 General Rules for Conservation Areas

Note: more specific rules are defined in literature provided to users.

- Conservation areas are open and available daily from dawn until dusk unless otherwise posted.
- Overnight camping is only permitted at C.M Wilson Conservation Area, Longwoods Road Conservation Area, Big Bend Conservation Area and E.M Warwick Conservation Area. Camping is to be booked through Let's Camp or through the Administrative Office, it is a fee for service and only permitted on regulated camping sites.
- Dogs (pets) are required to be on leash at all times. 'Stoop and scoop' and removal of waste is required.
- Licensed fishing activities are allowed provided they follow Provincial regulations and are not endangering other users of the property.
- Wedding Ceremonies/Special Events will be allowed on site in accordance with rental permits and payment per the Conservation Area Fee Schedule.
- Visitors to these areas should *'take only memories and leave only footprints.'*

- Garbage facilities may not be available at all sites, it is highly encouraged that all activities exercise *'pack in and pack out'* and take all garbage with them.

8.10 Prohibited Activities

The following activities are prohibited on Conservation Area lands (outside of campsites which are governed by specific camping rules):

- Open Fires
- Drug and Alcohol Consumption
- Off leash pets
- Public Nudity
- Indecent Acts
- Bow Fishing
- Target Practice
- Unauthorized Horseback Riding
- Discharge of Firearms (outside of specific permitted use) including Airsoft Guns/ Paintball
- Unauthorized Hunting/Trapping
- Unauthorized camping/trailers
- Unauthorized motorized vehicles
- Creation of new trails/ structures for mountain bikes
- Unauthorized use of drones
- Littering or dumping of foreign material
- Unauthorized placement of signs
- Unauthorized damage or removal of flora or fauna

8.11 Species at Risk, Invasive Species and Stewardship Programs

The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority currently has a Species at Risk (SAR) team along with a Stewardship team. Species at Risk and Invasive Species are identified through studies conducted on conservation authority properties. The compiled information is then mapped and documented for staff's knowledge. This information can then be shared with government agencies; based on data sharing agreements. The information studied and collected through our SAR and Stewardship Teams can then be tabulated and documented into Ecological Land Classification documents. This background information is fundamental to properly manage natural systems and is contained in Conservation Area specific Management Plans. The work completed for this planning is supported through signed MOU's with each Member Municipality, however, funding is often also provided through grant funding, donation or special levy.

9.0 Revenue and Expenses

Revenues generated through the use of Conservation Lands are through a paid parking program located at C.M. Wilson Conservation Area, Longwoods Road Conservation Area and Sharon's Creek Conservation Area. Revenues are also generated through seasonal campsites at C.M. Wilson and Big Bend, transient camping at C.M. Wilson and Big Bend, and group camping at Longwoods Road and E.M. Warwick. The Authority is committed to utilizing the parking and camping fees to offset operating expenses for the Conservation Areas to enhance the public experience. This may include provision of portable washrooms on seasonally active recreation sites, snow plowing, grass cutting, hazard tree removal, trail repairs, signage and maintenance of access roads and parking areas.

The general maintenance and LTVCA staff time is allocated from revenues and the levy provided by our member Municipalities.

Capital improvements (trail surfacing, shelters, bridges, boardwalks, camping facilities) are funded through special levies, grants, donations, reserves, revenues from the paid parking and camping programs and municipal levy.

10.0 Implementation - Measurable Achievements

Staff have developed a Conservation Area Strategy that includes realistic and measurable achievements broken down into an implementation chart. The chart below gives an outline of the objectives the LTVCA would like to achieve over the 5-year term. The chart lays out the framework for who within the Conservation Authority would maintain ownership of ensuring these objectives are met, the measurement of success, the implementation initiatives, budget implications and the Strategic Plan Connection.

10.1 Implementation Chart

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Ownership</u>	<u>Measurement</u>	<u>Initiatives</u>	<u>Budget Implications</u>	<u>Strategic Connection</u>
1.	Review and Update Land Acquisition and Land Disposal Policy	CA Land Manager	Completed up to date Policy	Year 2- Review Year 3- Board Approval	Staff time	Partner of Choice
2.	Create Ecological Land Classifications for the CA Lands	SAR Team	Annually completing a number of ELCs based on funding available	Year 1 to 5- completing at least 1 ELC per year based on available funding available for staff time	Staff time Fuel, Equipment, In-kind for Gants	Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds
3.	Create CA specific Conservation Management Plans	CA Land Manager, SAR Team, Lands Team	Annually completing a Land Management Plan per CA	Year 1 to 5- completing at least 1 Land Management Plan per year based on available funding and data	Staff time	Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds
4.	Provide equitable access to CA Lands	Communication Team	Distribution of CA Land Passes	Year 1-5 Annually provide a number of passes to each Municipality to host in their libraries Work with DEI groups	Staff time No revenue generated through the donation	Connecting People to Nature
5.	Provide accessible access to CA Lands	Education and Lands Team	Application of Accessible features throughout Conservation areas	Year 1-5 Apply for grant funding to meet accessibility requests from users and staff	Staff time Grant Funding Asset management	Connecting People to Nature
6.	Review assets annually and update/repair infrastructure	Lands Staff	Asset management plan implementation	Year 1-5 Annually review and update/ repair infrastructure – annual work planning	Staff time Cost per asset updated/repared	Organizational Excellence

7.	Land Acquisition	Lands Staff	Acquire lands close to growing communities to provide access to nature	Continue to work with community to have lands donated in these areas	Staff time, lawyer fees, survey acquisition costs	Connecting People to Nature
8.	Hunting	Lands Staff	Hunting considered in Conservation Area Management Plans	Management Plans	Staff time	Connecting People to Nature

11.0 Conservation Lands Strategy Review

To ensure this document remains current, a review of the Strategy will be conducted every 5 years. The Strategy will be updated, and public consultation requested when major changes are made to the overall objectives and goals of the Authority, or when new land is acquired. If the Strategy is deemed to be current and accurate, the Board of Directors may approve the Strategy as is for the next 5-year cycle. If updates are necessary, the Board of Directors will determine whether public consultation is required as part of the update process.

10.3) Income and Expenditure vs Budget to June 30, 2025

Date: August 21, 2025
 Memo to: LTVCA Board of Directors
 Subject: **Income and Expenditure vs Budget to June 30, 2025**
 From: Todd Casier, CPA, CA, Manager, Corporate Services

Background:

Review the 2025 Budget to the Revenue and Expenditures for the 6 months ended June 30, 2025.

REVENUE	2025 BUDGET	2025 BUDGET JUN PROJECTED		2025 ACTUAL TO JUN 30	\$ VARIANCE TO PROJECTED
GRANTS	5,368,352	2,684,176	*	1,427,945	(1,256,231)
GENERAL LEVY	1,760,716	1,760,716	^	1,582,756	(177,960)
DIRECT SPECIAL BENEFIT	213,200	213,200	^	213,200	0
GENERAL REVENUES	832,764	416,382	*	673,299	256,917
FOUNDATION GRANTS & REVENUES	0	0	*	5,387	5,387
RESERVES	0	0	*	0	0
CASH FUNDING	8,175,032	5,074,474		3,902,587	(1,171,887)
OTHER	0	0		0	0
TOTAL FUNDING	8,175,032	5,074,474		3,902,587	(1,171,887)

*-based on a 6 of 12 month proration of the budget

^-based on cash received to date

Grant income is less than budgeted due to timing of grants invoiced. A large portion of the difference is due to the Clean Water Program-Precision Phosphorous Reduction Program not making payments to participants until later in the year and the revenue for those payments not being invoiced.

Note: Grant income is based on funds received/invoiced and not matched to expenses, meaning there may be expenses outstanding and not recognized in the attached expense statement. At year-end, each grant is reviewed individually, spent funds for grant programs not invoiced are set-up as receivables and added to grant income, unspent funds are reduced from grant income and deferred for future expenditures.

Levy revenue is shown on a cash basis. The following municipalities are paid in full as of August 14th, 2025: Chatham-Kent, Dutton/Dunwich, Lakeshore, Middlesex Centre, Southwold, Strathroy-Caradoc, and West Elgin.

General Revenue is above budget due to the following factors:

- Permit fees is above budget due to an increase in expected permits over budget, Conservation Areas is above budget due to receiving seasonal camping revenue, Conservation Services and Chatham Kent Greening are above budget as tree planting is done and landowners have been billed and interest income is above budget due to increased interest rates.

Foundation Grants and Revenues are above budget due to the payment of memorial trees for 2025 versus the uncertainty of funds available when budgeting.

Reserves are zero as this account is used to balance the accounts at year-end if expenses are greater than revenues.

EXPENSES	2025	2025 BUDGET	2025	\$ VARIANCE
	BUDGET	JUN PROJECTED	ACTUAL TO JUN 30	TO PROJECTED
WATER MANAGEMENT				
FLOOD CONTROL STRUCTURES	224,158	112,079	90,448	(21,631)
EROSION CONTROL STRUCTURES	9	5	5	0
FLOOD FORECASTING AND WARNING	111,333	55,666	54,781	(885)
TECHNICAL STUDIES	197,211	98,606	60,544	(38,062)
PLANNING & REGULATIONS	464,496	232,248	214,412	(17,836)
WATERSHED MONITORING (PGMN)	169,902	84,951	99,342	14,391
SOURCE PROTECTION	28,312	14,156	15,117	961
THAMES MOUTH DEBRIS REMOVAL	0	0	0	0
Water Management Subtotal	1,195,421	597,711	534,649	(63,062)
CONSERVATION & RECREATION PROPERTIES				
CONSERVATION AREAS	871,678	435,839	486,469	50,630
COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND EDUCATION				
COMMUNITY RELATIONS	149,477	74,738	67,585	(7,153)
CONSERVATION EDUCATION	134,671	67,335	52,662	(14,673)
SKA-NAH-DOHT VILLAGE	126,990	63,495	45,116	(18,379)
Community Relations & Education Subtotal	411,138	205,568	165,363	(40,205)
CONSERVATION SERVICES/STEWARDSHIP				
CONSERVATION SERVICES (FORESTRY)	246,071	123,036	149,955	26,919
CHATHAM-KENT GREENING PROJECT	584,604	292,302	383,563	91,261
PHOSPHORUS REDUCTION	4,742,504	2,371,252	742,575	(1,628,677)
SPECIES AT RISK	123,616	61,808	114,752	52,944
Conservation Services/Stewardship Subtotal	5,696,795	2,848,398	1,390,845	(1,457,553)
CAPITAL/MISCELLANEOUS				
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING	0	0	0	0
REPAIRS/UPGRADES	0	0	0	0
UNION GAS CENTENNIAL PROJECT	0	0	0	0
EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS (FED/PROV)	0	0	0	0
Capital/Miscellaneous Subtotal	0	0	0	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	8,175,032	4,087,516	2,577,326	(1,510,190)

Water Management

Flood Control Structures expenses are slightly below budget due to some larger annual expenses that are incurred later in the year.

Flood Forecasting and Warning expenses are comparable to budget.

Technical Studies and Planning and Regulations expenses are below budget due to staff time being spent in other areas like Flood Forecasting above.

Watershed Monitoring expenses are above budget due to spring sampling and extra staff time spent on the project.

Source Protection expenses are comparable to budget.

Conservation Areas

Conservation area expenses are above budget due mostly to the costs of opening of the Conservation Area campgrounds and work on the House at our Lighthouse Conservation Area.

Community Relations and Education

Community Relations, Conservation Education and SKA-NAH-DOHT Museum and Village are below budget due to staff spending time in other programs.

Conservation Services/Stewardship

Conservation Services (Forestry) and Chatham-Kent Greening expenses are above budget as most large activities, like tree and prairie planting, and the related expenses have been completed.

Phosphorous Reduction is significantly below budget mostly due to the Clean Water Program-Precision Phosphorous Reduction Program not making payments (≈\$2.9M) to participants until later in the year/year-end.

Species at Risk is above budget due to March 31 year-end budget expenditures and extra grant funding at the end of the 2024-2025 year.

Capital/Miscellaneous

No Capital/Miscellaneous expenses to date.

Summary:

	2025 BUDGET	2025 BUDGET JUN PROJECTED	2025 ACTUAL TO JUN 30	\$ VARIANCE TO PROJECTED
TOTAL CASH FUNDING	8,175,032	5,074,474	3,902,587	(1,171,887)
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	8,175,032	4,087,516	2,577,326	(1,510,190)
OPERATING SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	0	986,958	1,325,261	338,303

At June 30, 2025, LTVCA's operating surplus is favourable mostly due to less expenditures compared to budget because of the seasonal nature of a large amount of the Conservation Authorities expenses as noted above.

Note: Part of the difference between the projected budget funding and projected budget expenditures is due to the recognition of the annual General Levy and Special Levy versus all other income and expenses are prorated for the period.

Recommendation:

That the Board of Directors receives the Budget vs Revenue and Expenditures report for the period ended June 30, 2025.

The reports align with the following objectives of the LTVCA's Strategic Plan:

4. Improve Transparency and Understanding of Financial Statements

Respectfully Submitted

Todd Casier, CPA, CA
Manager, Corporate Services

Mark Peacock, P. Eng.
C.A.O. / Secretary Treasurer

11. Business for Information

11.1) CAO / Secretary Treasurer Report

Date: August 21, 2025
Memo to: LTVCA Board of Directors
Subject: CAO /Secretary-Treasurer Report
From: Mark Peacock, P. Eng., C.A.O. / Secretary Treasurer

Chief Conservation Executive

As highlighted in the news release, (included in correspondence) the government has hired Mr. Basit as the Chief Conservation Executive to work together with the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to look for ways to further to improve the effectiveness of the province's conservation authorities, including to create greater consistency among conservation authorities, streamline inefficiencies with overlapping jurisdictions, and reduce costs. This work will build on the many legislative and regulatory amendments made over the past 6 years. The intent is to ensure conservation authorities have the tools required to protect the communities they serve, supporting economic prosperity while balancing environmental protection and development needs.

It is important to additionally highlight that the government recognizes the importance of and is committed to consulting with conservation authorities, municipal partners and other stakeholders as this process unfolds. We hope to learn more about what this means to the LTVCA as this position is brought into place.

Compensation Review

Staff are working with the consulting firm Pesce and Associates in the completion of the compensation review approved by the board in its April 2025 Board meeting. The consultant has completed the scoring of all positions, the market salary review and the development of a new salary grid for the LTVCA. We will be taking the preliminary results to the Executive Committee for review during the first week of September and to a special board meeting following development of recommendation with the Executive Committee. This timing will allow us to move forward with development of a draft budget for review by the board in October 2025, which meets requirements of municipal submissions.

C.M. Wilson Water System Upgrades

Approximately 20 years ago an engineering report recommended major upgrades to the C.M. Wilson principal water system (C.M. Wilson Conservation Area Well Supply System) that is housed in the shop. The C.M. Wilson Conservation Area Well Supply System is the sole water system that provides fresh treated water for drinking and other purposes to the C.M. Wilson Learning Centre, visiting groups, students and staff members. The C.M. Wilson Learning Centre houses a private school which is classified as a designated facility.

The original engineer proposed works were never completed. With the rental of a portion of the C.M. Wilson Education Centre to the school these works are now required. Due to the presence of the school the water system must be upgraded from compliance with Ontario Regulation 319/08 to compliance with Ontario Regulation 170/05. Additionally, an old heating fuel tank must be decommissioned as it is too close to the source well to meet either of the regulations. The furnace that is fed by this oil tank is at end of life and needs replacement.

To address the above issues the LTVCA staff have moved forward with extending the existing natural gas line to the shop to be able to decommission the fuel tank and replace the old oil furnace. Installation of the gas line is being completed during the week of August 10, 2025. The new furnace has been ordered and will be installed before cold weather set in.

To address the change required under Ont. Reg. 170/05 bids have been received from contractors and will be awarded during the week of August 10, 2025. The costs of these works will be below the threshold requiring board approval. The existing system is being upgraded to have primary UV disinfection and secondary Chlorination disinfection (new UV system and Chlorination pump). Additionally, the water storage is being upgraded to ensure contact times consistent with requirements of Ont. Reg. 170/05. (3000 Imp Gal storage tankage)

Construction of the upgraded system is scheduled to be undertaken in the last week of August. and be completed by the start of September 2025. This will allow the school to start with the required water system in place.

Additional Water System Issues

The water system at the Longwoods Rd Conservation Area was developed consistent with Ontario Reg 319/08 as required by the Ministry of the Environment. The system is fed by sand points and these sand points, being shallow, are affected by periods of drought. Additionally, the system was built with plastic piping joined with cast fitting. Due to the age of the system the cast fittings are now failing. This has created a number of leaks that have exasperated the low water table conditions. Staff have completed a number of major repairs this year which will resolve many of the issues moving forward. However, staff will be assessing the sand points as we move forward as we may need to look at drilling a well to service the site to provide a more secure water supply for the area.

Letter to Mayor Morgan of the City of London

As noted in the last report from the CAO, a letter has been sent to Mayor Morgan of the City of London from the Chair requesting a meeting regarding the 2026 budget. This is to address Mayor Morgan's request to cut the levy request from LTVCA for the 2026 budget year. No response has been received from the mayor's office.

Recommended Resolution:

That the CAO Secretary-Treasurer Report be received for information

The report aligns with the following objectives of the LTVCA's Strategic Plan:

1. Strengthen and Increase Collaboration with Community Stakeholders

Respectfully Submitted
Mark Peacock, P. Eng.
C.A.O. / Secretary Treasurer

11.2) Water Management

11.2.1) Flood Forecasting and Operations

Flood Messaging and Flood Events

There has been only 1 flood message issued since the last written report to the Board of Directors. It was a Watershed Condition Statement – Flood Outlook message and was issued on June 18th. Thunderstorms and heavy rains passed through the region that morning, with more rain suggested for the afternoon through into the overnight. There wasn't as much additional rain as predicted, and no issues were reported.

Report on Lake Conditions

Average daily lake levels on Lake Erie at the beginning of August were around 174.42 m (I.G.L.D.). The all-time record high monthly average for August was 175.02 m, set in 2019. Water levels at the beginning of August were 13 cm above what would be considered normal for the month of August. Water levels now appear to be in their seasonal decline. Water levels are predicted to drop around 10 cm by the beginning of September.

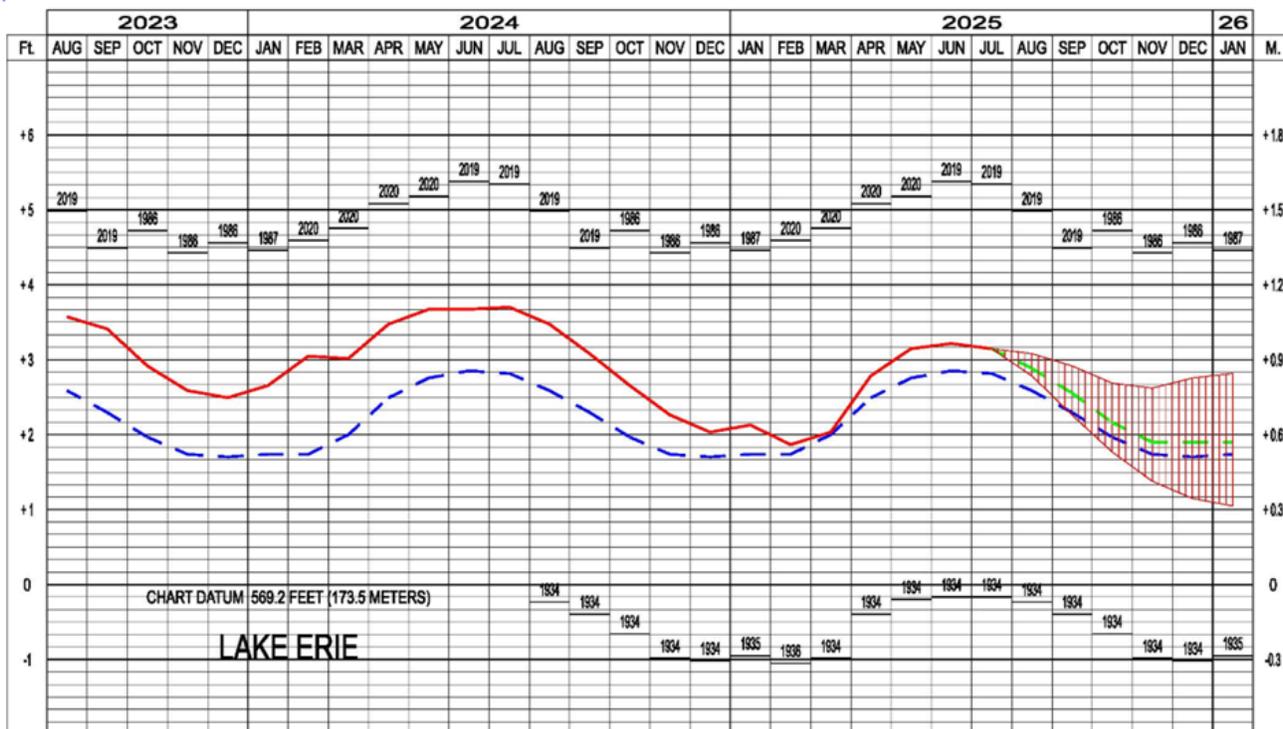
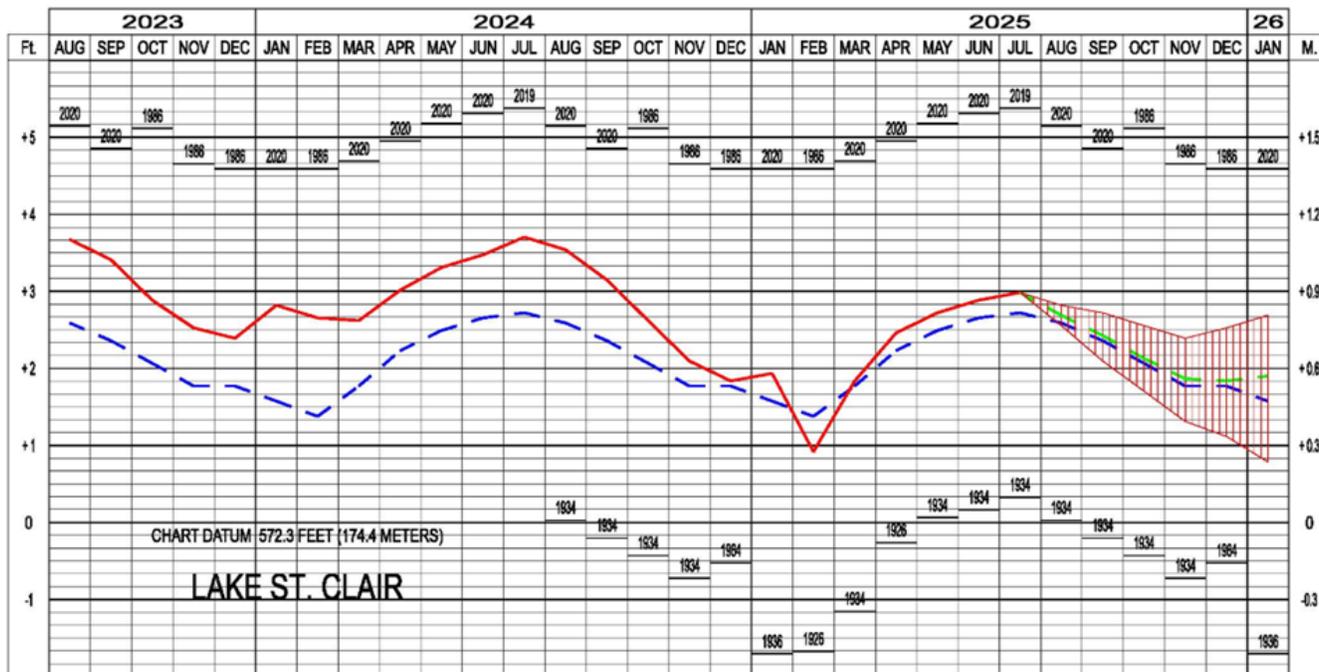
Average daily water levels on Lake St. Clair at the beginning of August were around 175.34 m (I.G.L.D.). The all-time record high monthly average for August was 175.97, set in 2020. Water levels at the beginning of August were 15 cm above what would be considered normal for the month of August. Forecasts suggest that water levels should reach their peak soon and begin their seasonal decline. Water levels are predicted to drop around 8 cm by the beginning of September.

The six-month forecasts suggest that water levels on the two lakes will remain around average, or just slightly above, for the rest of 2025.

Stronger wind events (most likely gale force wind events lasting several hours in duration) are now required to cause minor flooding along the LTVCA's Lake St. Clair shoreline and along most of its Lake Erie shoreline. However, the damage caused by high lake levels over the last few years along Erie Shore Drive means it's likely still more vulnerable at lower wind speeds.

The figures below are published by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and graph the monthly average water levels and water level forecast over the next 6 months. These versions were published at the beginning of August.





11.2.2) Flood Control Structures

With no significant rainfall events over the last two months, there has been little activity around the LTVCA flood control structures. Activity has mostly been routine maintenance, with most of that being vegetation control on the Diversion.

11.2.3) Low Water Response Program

The Low Water Response Program looks at both precipitation and flow in local watercourses in determining whether there is a low water condition. For precipitation, both 18-month and 3-month rainfall totals are examined, and the program thresholds are: Level 1, 80% of average; Level 2, 60% of average; and Level 3, 40% of average. For flows, the average flow over the last month is examined and the summer thresholds are: Level 1, 70% lowest average summer flow (LASF); Level 2, 50% LASF; and Level 3, 30% LASF. During the growing season, LTVCA staff create a brief report summarizing conditions around the watershed, which is available by request.

The 3-month rainfall totals indicated near normal conditions for most of the watershed. For those rain gauges considered, the rainfall was between 85 and 130% of normal. However, July was quite dry, with much of the rain falling in the last few days of the month. This is reflected in the relatively low flows on the Thames River for July. At Dutton, flows for most of July were below both the average and median values. They even dipped beneath the lower quartile for a few days on two occasions. Flows were a bit higher at Thamesville, being closer to the median for most of the month and not dropping beneath the lower quartile. Overall, the monthly average flow on the Thames ended up lower than the LASF, but still higher than the Level 1 Low Water Condition criterion. The 18-month rainfall indicator shows just slightly lower than normal rainfall conditions over the long term.

Based on these rainfall indicators there does not appear to be a need to declare any kind of Low Water Condition.

Further information on the Provincial Low Water Response Program can be found at <https://www.lioapplications.lrc.gov.on.ca/webapps/swmc/low-water-response/>

11.2.4) Watershed Monitoring

Watershed-wide surface water quality monitoring continues at 22 sites throughout the watershed. In addition to regularly scheduled sampling, staff are attempting to capture event-based runoff when it occurs. Event sampling is unpredictable, but the automation of samplers has made it possible to capture summer thunderstorms. Maintenance on the autosamplers is ongoing. Work on the intake and bubbler lines has recently been completed. A line heater will be installed in the fall at McGregor Creek to prevent the line from freezing over the winter. Filamentous algae mats at Big Creek had clogged the intake line during 2 events. Maintenance for this issue is ongoing during every site visit. The sampling is funded by the MECP through the PWQMN program as well as a grant through the Canada-Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health (COA).

Sampling has also continued under the Health Canada contract to collect pesticides at 6 locations in the western portion of the watershed. Samples are being collected on Jeannette's Creek, Big Creek, and McGregor Creek as well as at the Rivard, Deary and Dauphin municipal pump stations. Sampling frequency varies by site. Overall, 102 pesticide samples have been shipped to Health Canada since April 1st with roughly a dozen currently in the freezer. Passive samplers have also been deployed under the program and have been changed out twice, with 2 more changes scheduled for this year.

Several additional sampling runs have also been undertaken with an algae sensor to see whether there were any concerns yet regarding blue-green algae blooms. Additional information about algae blooms can be found in the next section.

The Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN) program also continues. LTVCA staff maintain the sites and download the information from data loggers. Sites are typically visited once every 3 months. The most recent downloads were completed on July 17th.

11.2.5) Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB)

Lake Erie Blooms

The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) issues a seasonal forecast, typically in early July, for potential HABs on Lake Erie. The Seasonal Lake Erie HAB Forecast gives coastal managers and drinking water facility operators a general sense of how “bad” the upcoming bloom season has the potential to be. The seasonal forecast is an ensemble of models based largely upon phosphorus discharge from the Maumee River. This year’s seasonal forecast was updated on July 31st. (see forecast below).

During the bloom season, the operational NOAA Lake Erie HAB Forecast provides the current extent and 5-day outlooks of where the bloom will travel and what concentrations are likely to be seen, allowing managers to determine whether to take preventative actions. At the time this agenda was drafted, the most recent Forecast was from August 7th (see forecast below).

The cyanobacteria bloom is present in western Lake Erie. It began around Maumee Bay around July 10th. It has been expanding slower than usual and has been about 3 weeks behind the progression seen in 2024. The bloom is expected to peak in mid to late August and last into September. Currently, the bloom is restricted to the western basin, around the mouth of the Maumee west of Pelee Island, and around Sandusky Bay. The bloom is expected to remain mostly within the western basin.

Thames River Blooms

The LTVCA now has an active program for monitoring algae blooms on the Thames River. Monitoring for potential algae blooms is conducted by LTVCA staff with an algae sensor, when the potential for a bloom seems to exist. Algae testing is scheduled once per month during the 4th week of the month. If any algae is noticed at other times while staff is conducting sampling for its other water quality monitoring programs, additional algae sampling days will be added. Scheduled runs have taken place on July 10th (delayed due to equipment repair) and July 31st. The next day is scheduled for August 28th. No blooms large enough to be detected and followed up on have been reported for the Thames River yet this year.

Other Reported Blooms

Rivard Pump Station: On May 29th, Chatham-Kent Drainage received reports of an algae bloom at the Rivard Pump Station. On July 30th, staff visited to the pump station to test the water. Chlorophyll levels and phycocyanin were highly elevated (254ug/L and 120ug/L respectively) so water samples were taken and sent to the MECP lab. Results came back with levels of Anatoxin-A and Total Microcystins below detection limits.

Rondeau Bay: Filamentous algae was reported at Rondeau Bay Estates on July 7th. Staff visited the area and tested the water with the YSI algae sensor, but there was only filamentous algae present. Staff also received phone calls regarding rashes suspected to be from swimming in the bay. They were redirected to the Health Unit who is responsible for human health related concerns regarding algae blooms.

McGregor Creek: Staff noticed the start of a brown algae bloom on July 10th and 11th on McGregor Creek between Princess St. and 6th St. On July 15th the bloom had become green at the 6th Street Dam. Emails were sent out and an MECP officer came to sample the water the next day but by then the bloom had cleared up.

Western Lake Erie HAB Seasonal Projection Update

Bulletin 07 - 2025-07-31

Summary: This Bulletin provides an updated estimate of potential *Microcystis* harmful algal bloom (HAB) severity in western Lake Erie. The projected severity depends on input of total bioavailable phosphorus (TBP) from the Maumee River during the loading season (Mar. 1-Jul. 31) and uses measurements of Maumee River discharge from USGS and TBP loads measured by Heidelberg University National Center for Water Quality Research. With Maumee River TBP load observations through July 29 we continue to predict a potential bloom severity of 3 with a range of 2.5-4. Rainfall and associated runoff in July was within the forecasted uncertainty and resulted in an expected, additional ~10 metric tons of TBP. With this modest increase, we continue to expect a mild to moderate bloom.

The bloom began in Maumee Bay around July 10th and has been slow to expand. The bloom progression has been about three weeks behind the progression in 2024. Cool air in June kept lake temperatures low. During the high temperatures in July the surface water heated rapidly, causing stratification, which keeps the surface and bottom waters separated. This meant that the bottom water took longer than usual to warm. The stratification also led to low oxygen in the bottom water, resulting in an unusual hypoxic event in the western basin in mid-July. This hypoxic event could lead to some TBP being released from bottom sediments, which is not accounted for in our model. This additional TBP load could be as much as ~10% of the year's Maumee River TBP load. If so, it could push the bloom severity to the higher end of the forecasted range (SI ~4).

We expect the bloom to peak in mid to late August, continuing into September, with variation in size and location due to wind. At this severity we expect the bloom to remain mostly in the western basin. While toxicity varies throughout the duration of the bloom, toxins will concentrate in any surface scums that form during calm weather. People and pets should not swim in areas with scum. Information on the location and intensity of the bloom can be found at [NOAA's Lake Erie Harmful Algal Bloom Forecast webpage](#). For additional information on safe recreation, please visit [Ohio EPA's webpage on HABs](#).

Predicted Bloom Severity

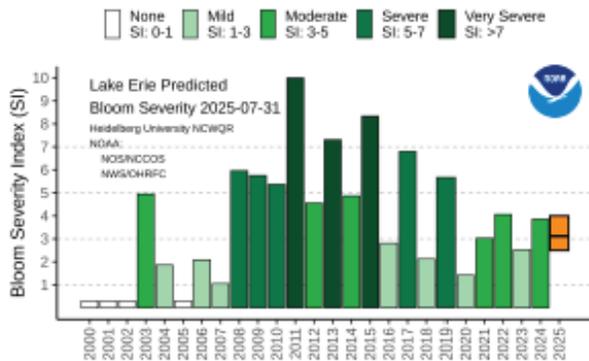


Fig. 1. Predicted bloom severity as compared to previous years. The wide orange bar is the likely range of severity based on the limits of the forecast uncertainty (2.5-4; Mild to Moderate bloom). The forecast range captures uncertainty in the bloom severity models.

Cumulative Total Bioavailable Phosphorus

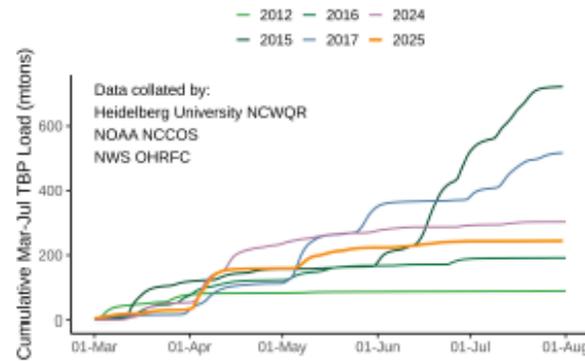


Fig. 2. Cumulative TBP loads for the Maumee River (Waterville, OH). Each line denotes cumulative load for different years. 2025 is in orange.

Total Bioavailable Phosphorus

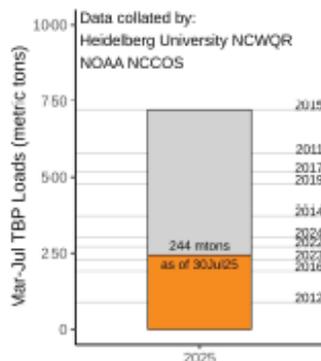


Fig. 3. Total bioavailable phosphorus (TBP) load accumulated from the Maumee River near Waterville, OH to date. The right axis denotes the TBP load from selected previous years.

Satellite Image

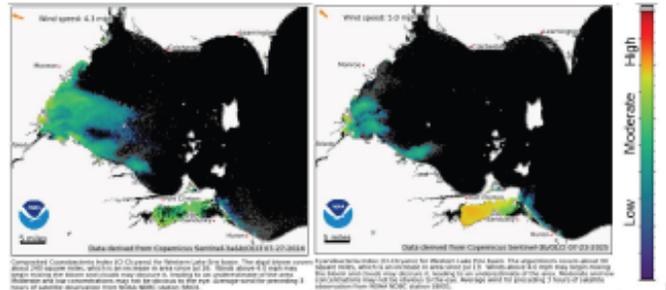


Fig. 4. Satellite image showing the cyanobacteria index (CI-Cyano) for western Lake Erie for 27 July 2024 (left) and 23 July 2025 (right). As compared to 2024, the 2025 *Microcystis* bloom has been slower to start. The bloom currently extends from Maumee Bay east to Magee Marsh Wildlife Area, OH and north towards Monroe, MI. Sandusky Bay has a local bloom of mixed cyanobacteria.

For more information visit: coastalscience.noaa.gov/science-areas/habs/hab-forecasts/lake-erie/ or [ncwqr.org/](mailto:ncwqr.org)

Questions? Contact: hab@noaa.gov

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coastalscience.noaa.gov

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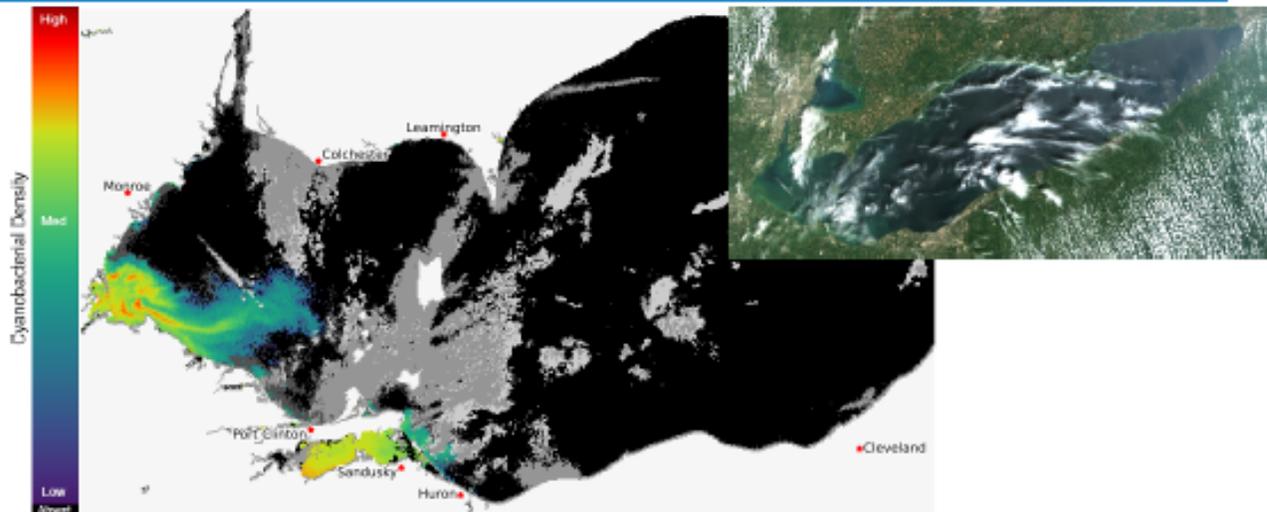
Lake Erie Harmful Algal Bloom Forecast

2025-08-07

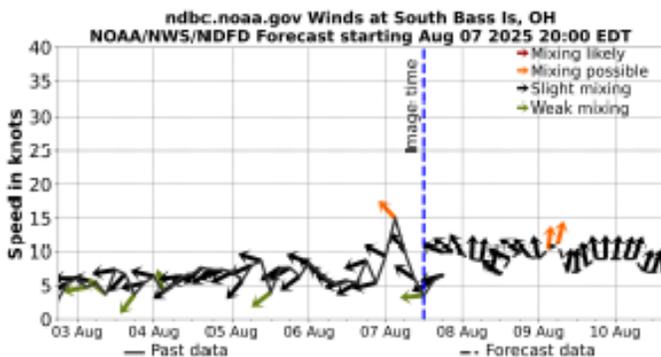
Summary

The cyanobacteria bloom is present in western Lake Erie but cloud cover or winds above 9.0 mph prevent determining the area. The cyanobacteria bloom has intensified this week and currently extends from Maumee Bay north to Monroe, MI, east toward Port Clinton, OH and into the western basin to West Sister Island, OH. Scums are forming in Maumee Bay and east toward Reno Beach during light winds. Concentrations are highest in the western basin. Sandusky Bay has a local, widespread bloom of mixed cyanobacteria. Toxins have been detected in Sandusky Bay and can exceed the recreational limit (8 ug/L microcystin) in scums and discolored (green) water. Toxins have been detected below the recreational limit in western Lake Erie. They can be highly concentrated in scums! If you see scum, keep your pets and yourself out of the water. In the satellite imagery or bloom forecast position products, any areas that are orange or red are likely to have scum, especially during calm winds, see Mixing Forecast product. --Hounshell, Stumpf, 07 Aug. 2025

The past few days of imagery can be seen at [the HAB monitoring site](#). The Lake Erie Forecast is operated by the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science. Contact hab@noaa.gov for technical Questions. Last Updated: 2025-08-07 07 PM EST

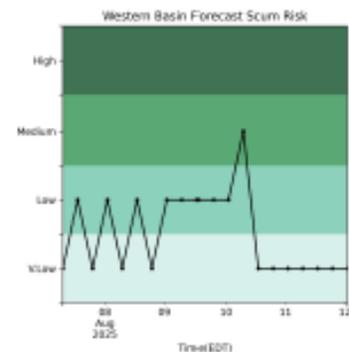


Current Lake Erie Sentinel-3 satellite imagery from the Ocean and Land Color Imager (OLCI) on Aug 07, 2025, showing bloom location and extent in the western basin. Grey indicates clouds or missing data. The estimated threshold of cyanobacteria detection is 20,000 cells/mL. Inset shows a truecolor image of the entire lake. Data derived from Copernicus Sentinel-3.



Wind speed and direction from SouthBassIs, OH. Blooms mix through water column at wind speeds > 15 knots.

For more information visit: coastalscience.noaa.gov/science-areas/habs/hab-forecasts/lake-erie/



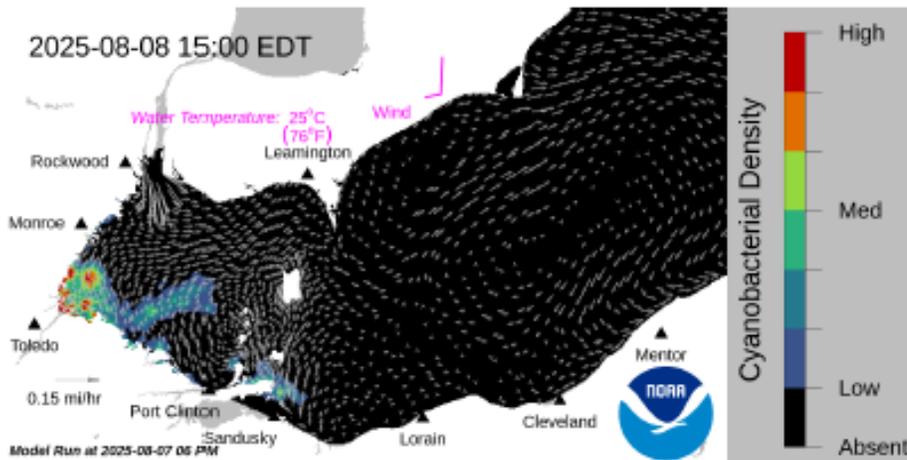
Where the bloom is present in western Lake Erie, the potential risk of scum.

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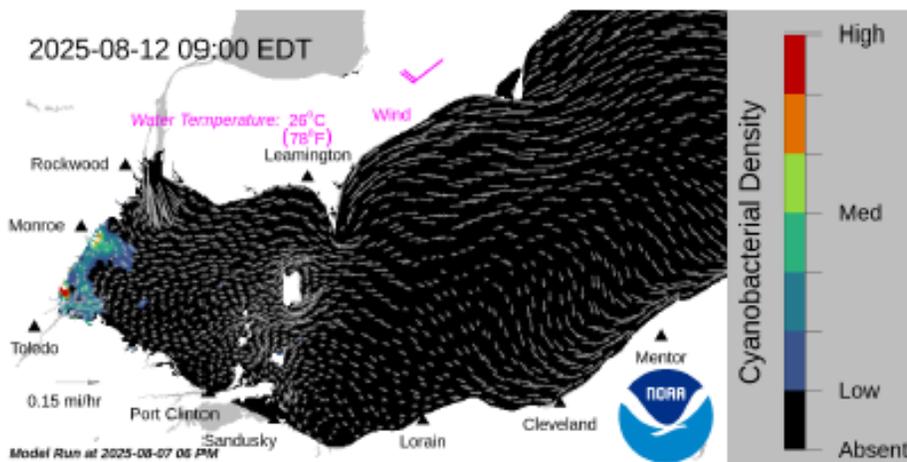
[noaacostalsci](#) | [noaa.coastal.sci](#)

Lake Erie Harmful Algal Bloom Forecast

2025-08-07



Forecast surface bloom position for Aug 08, modeled from the last satellite image with water currents estimated from the Lake Erie Operational Forecast System (LEOFS). Potential for bloom movement is forecast in 3-dimensions with a hydrodynamic model using satellite imagery and currents. The modeled output does not contain clouds. Black indicates the absence of chlorophyll and gray indicates area with no data. The arrows show forecasted currents. Water temperature and winds (in magenta) are the averages for the western basin from the model.



Forecast surface bloom position for Aug 12. Black indicates the absence of chlorophyll and gray indicates area with no data. The arrows show forecasted currents. Water temperature and winds (in magenta) are the averages for the western basin from the model.

Additional resources:

- [Archived Lake Erie Forecasts](#)
- [More information](#)
- [FAQs](#)
- [Contributors and Data Providers](#)
- [Lake Erie HAB Forecast Guide](#)

For more information visit: coastalscience.noaa.gov/science-areas/habs/hab-forecasts/lake-erie/



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11.2.6) Geographic Information Systems

Annual updates to the LTVCA's regulated screening area (O.Reg. 41/24: Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits) have been completed and the information is under review by internal staff. Following these internal QA/QC checks, the updated regulated area screening layer will be shared publicly through our ArcGIS Online portal (available on our website) and to our member municipalities and local counties for their use.

The review and update of our natural heritage layer is now complete. Modeling is now underway to determine the connectivity of these features across the landscape. The next step will be to incorporate this data into a StoryMap, produced jointly between the Upper Thames Valley Conservation Authority and the LTVCA, that highlights a watershed strategy that collaboratively improves watershed conditions. This work is funded through a grant provided by the MECP. This project and its initial results will be highlighted at the Latornell Conservation Symposium in November.

A geospatial scoping study with the Canada Water Agency that aims to determine the spatial distribution and semi-quantify areas suitable for wetland restoration within the eastern Lake St. Clair floodplain and riverine deltas is underway and will continue as a major project until the end of 2025.

Regular activities that support LTVCA staff with their GIS needs also continue, such as fulfilling data requests, the creation of additional data layers, custom mapping products, and other GIS products.

The reports align with the following objectives of the LTVCA's Strategic Plan:

2. Strengthen and Increase Collaboration with Community Stakeholders
3. Increase the Awareness of the Value of Good Watershed Stewardship
4. Improve Capital Asset Review

11.3) Planning and Regulations

11.3.1) Planning

From the end of May 2025 through to the end of July 2025, there were 37 planning submissions reviewed by staff for this reporting season with respect to the Provincial Planning Statement, Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act and Ontario Regulation 41/24. On average it takes roughly 5 days to respond to submissions, ranging from same day response to 15 days for more involved planning submissions. There have also been 48 phone calls and over 354 email responses to inquiries that staff have responded to.

Planning Numbers	2024 Totals	Jan Totals	Feb Totals	Mar Totals	Apr Totals	May Totals	June Totals	July Totals	2025 Totals
Chatham-Kent	197	5	16	7	22	30	7	13	100
Elgin	33	5	0	1	5	4	4	3	22
Essex	31	0	0	0	4	2	1	3	10
Middlesex	28	7	2	1	3	3	2	4	22
Total Numbers	289	17	18	9	34	39	14	23	154

11.3.2) Planning Fees

No planning submission fees were received from member municipalities for the time period between June 1, 2025 through to July 31, 2025.

MUNICIPALITY	JUNE TO JULY 2025	2025 TOTAL	2024 TOTAL
Chatham-Kent		\$450.00	\$3,300.00
Elgin County			
Southwold		\$10,000.00	\$1,215.00
Dutton Dunwich			\$0
West Elgin			\$900.00
Essex County			
Lakeshore			\$1,400.00
Middlesex County			
Middlesex Centre			\$0
YTD Total		\$10,450.00	\$6,815.00

11.3.3) Section 28 Regulations / Permitting

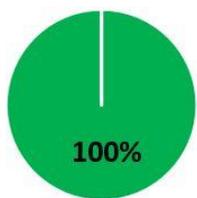
With respect to Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act and Ontario Regulation 41/24, the LTVCA received a total of 131 new permit applications in the months of June and July.

Of the new applications and, combined with previously submitted “incomplete” applications, a total of 136 applications were deemed to be “complete” in June and July and could be reviewed for permitting. Those 136 applications were in addition to the previous queue of three “complete” applications leading into this reporting period. 133 of the 139 “complete” applications were processed and all were approved by staff with or without conditions. As of the end of July, six “complete” applications were in the queue for processing.

\$72,200 in permit application fees had been, or was to be, collected as of the end of July which is an increase of \$21,600 over the first five months of the year.

11.3.4) Application Timelines:

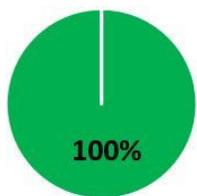
Review for Completeness:



Ontario Regulation 41/24 requires that conservation authorities are to make a determination on whether an application is considered to be “complete” or “incomplete” and provide a response of such to the applicant within 21 calendar days. For the months of June and July, the average response time with respect to this was two days (ranging between 0 and 5 days). 100% of all applications met the required timeline for a “completeness” response.

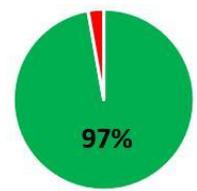
Permit Processing:

For applications issued in June and July, the table and charts below indicate that 100% of “routine” applications, 97% of “minor” private property applications and 100% of all other “minor” applications met their applicable LTVCA customer service standard for turnaround time.



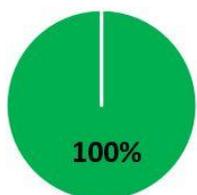
Routine Applications:

For the months of June and July, the average turnaround time for a routine permit application was two days (ranged between 0 and 5 days). The customer service standard for routine permits is a turnaround within 14 days. The processing time for routine permit applications is meeting the customer service target.



Minor Applications – Private Property Owners:

For the months of June and July, the average turnaround time was three days (ranged between 0 and 34 days) for minor private property related permit applications. The customer service standard for minor complexity permits is a turnaround within 21 days. The processing time for minor permit applications for private property owners is meeting the customer service target.



Minor Applications – Municipalities and Utility Companies:

For the months of June and July, the average turnaround time was one day (ranged between 0 and 11 days) for minor applications from municipalities and utility companies. The customer service standard for minor complexity permits is a turnaround within 21 days. The processing time for minor permit applications for municipalities and utility companies is meeting the customer service target.

11.3.5) Property Inquiries:

Up to the end of July, 1085 property inquiries (including permit pre-consultation questions) were received and responded to by the Regulations Technician which is 316 more since the last board report. The June and July inquiries were responded to with ~600 e-mails and ~30 phone calls.

At the time of writing of this staff report, the current response time to property and pre-consultation inquiries is up to 10 business days for e-mails and 20 business days for phone calls. The length of time to respond to both e-mails and phone calls has increased since the last board report – primarily due to staff vacation time.

11.3.6) Policies & Procedures Update:

Given the current workload, there has been no work completed on the Policy & Procedures Manual and, therefore, no additional municipal or public consultations on the Manual have been undertaken. The Manual hasn't been updated since the original draft from the March 2024 board meeting. The Manual still requires multiple new sections and revisions to meet the requirements of Section 12 of Ontario Regulation 41/24.

Additionally, with respect to the Additional Residential Unit ("ARU") discussion from the June Board of Directors' meeting, staff have drafted and circulated proposed ARU policies to planning staff at our member municipalities and the local counties, as well as to building department staff at our member municipalities. Comments have been received and discussions are on-going with municipal staff at Chatham-Kent. Given the ongoing discussions with Chatham-Kent staff, public consultation on the proposed policies have not commenced.

11.3.7) Section 28 Enforcement:

In the first seven months of 2025, 19 complaints / tips were received from the public about possible enforcement issues. This is an increase of six from the last board report in June.

11.3.8) O. Reg. 41/24 Permit Applications

O.Reg. 41/24 Permit Applications
(Permits Issued in June and July 2025)

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App No.	Location	Community / Township	Municipality	Decision	Processing Time (days)
204-2025	33106 Scotch Line	Southwold	Southwold	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
205-2025	Bend of Scotch Line	Southwold	Southwold	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
206-2025	33506 and 33537 Scotch Line	Southwold	Southwold	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
207-2025	Burwell Road at Lidster Drain	Southwold	Southwold	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
208-2025	Burwell Road	Southwold	Southwold	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
209-2025	North of 8115 Burwell Road	Southwold	Southwold	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
210-2025	33025 Erin Line	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
211-2025	32774 and 32789 Erin Line	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
212-2025	32789 Erin Line	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
213-2025	South of 6993 Iona Road	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
214-2025	33471 Lake Line	Southwold	Southwold	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
215-2025	Lake Line at Border	Southwold	Southwold	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
216-2025	North of 32531 Fingal Line	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
217-2025	29107 Fingal Line	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
218-2025	Erin Line by Fingal Line	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
219-2025	Erin Line at Lunn & Jones Drain No. 3	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
220-2025	Erin Line at Small & Holland Drain Ext.	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
221-2025	Willey Road at Small & Holland Drain	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
222-2025	31760 to 32106 Erin Line	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
223-2025	29424 Lakeview Line	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
224-2025	30022 Lakeview Line	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
225-2025	30206 Lakeview Line	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
226-2025	30579 Lakeview Line	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
227-2025	6212 Grandview Road	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
228-2025	28782 to 29094 Silver Clay Line	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
229-2025	28901 Ash Line	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
230-2025	South of 28970 Ash Line	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
232-2025	Pioneer Line at McFarlane-Salmon Drain	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
233-2025	31556 Pioneer Line	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
234-2025	Pioneer Line at Rapelje-Tolman Drain	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
235-2025	Stride Road at David Carroll Drain	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0

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(Permits Issued in June and July 2025)

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App No.	Location	Community / Township	Municipality	Decision	Processing Time (days)
236-2025	Pioneer Line at McGeachy Drain	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
237-2025	Near 127 & 132 Shackleton Street	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
238-2025	Shackleton Line at Brown Drain	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
239-2025	Shackleton Line at McFarlane-Salmon Drain	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
240-2025	Silver Clay Line at McKillop No. 1 Drain	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
241-2025	Silver Clay Line at McFarlane-Blue Drain	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
242-2025	Silver Clay Line at Galbraith Drain - West Branch	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
243-2025	Willey Road at McFarlane-Blue Drain	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
244-2025	Willey Road at McKillop No. 1 Drain	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
245-2025	9560 to 10032 Iona Road	Southwold	Southwold	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
246-2025	Iona Road at Racz Drain	Southwold	Southwold	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
247-2025	Walnut Line at McFarlane Drain	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
248-2025	Near 31784 Walnut Line	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
249-2025	Walnut Line at Lunn & Holland Drain	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
250-2025	8283 to 9700 Homestead Road	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
251-2025	Near 8358 Iona Road	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
254-2025	29812 to 30614 Pioneer Line	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
255-2025	32540 to 32828 Silver Clay Line	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
256-2025	Oneida Road by McDiarmid Line	Southwold	Southwold	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
257-2025	Fingal Line at 1999 Casey Drain	Southwold	Southwold	Granted: July 04, 2025	0
258-2025	2840 3rd Concession Line to Coatsworth Road	Romney	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 04, 2025	9
259-2025	Coatsworth Road at Hutchinson Drain	Romney	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 04, 2025	9

O.Reg. 41/24 Permit Applications
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App No.	Location	Community / Township	Municipality	Decision	Processing Time (days)
283-2025	Lakeshore Road 303 at Trembley Creek	Tilbury West	Lakeshore	Granted: June 27, 2025	2
284-2025	Lakeshore Road 303 at Big Creek Drain	Tilbury West	Lakeshore	Granted: June 27, 2025	2
285-2025	Tecumseh Line by Thames River - S of Townline Drain	Tilbury East	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 27, 2025	2
287-2025	Talbot Trail Re-Alignment	Romney	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 06, 2025	0
289-2025	10912 Blind 4th Line	Harwich	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 27, 2025	2
290-2025	Blind 4th Line at Hutchinson Drain	Harwich	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 27, 2025	2
291-2025	Pinehurst Line at Kelly Drain	Harwich	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 27, 2025	2
292-2025	Burk Line at White Drain	Harwich	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 27, 2025	2
293-2025	Creek Road at McGregor Creek	Harwich	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 27, 2025	2
294-2025	Boundary Line at Kelly Drain	Harwich	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 27, 2025	2
295-2025	19080 Light Cove Avenue	Lighthouse Cove	Lakeshore	Granted: June 09, 2025	7
296-2025	27908 McKenzie Line	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: June 02, 2025	0
297-2025	Dunborough Road Drain	Aldborough	West Elgin	Granted: June 04, 2025	2
298-2025	745 Lefaive Drive	Lighthouse Cove	Lakeshore	Granted: June 05, 2025	2
306-2025	56 Parkview Court	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 04, 2025	0
307-2025	10 McIntosh Avenue	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 04, 2025	0
344-2025	22 Rosewood Crescent	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 05, 2025	3
345-2025	10973 River Line	Harwich	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 05, 2025	0
346-2025	AD Shadd Road over Carter Drain	Raleigh	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 06, 2025	2
347-2025	Tomecek Drain	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 06, 2025	1
348-2025	Horton Street Subdivision (Shedden Meadows)	Shedden	Southwold	Granted: July 10, 2025	34
350-2025	5828 Gentleman Drive	Ekfrid	Southwest Middlesex	Granted: June 06, 2025	0
351-2025	Spring Creek Drain	Howard	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 16, 2025	11
352-2025	6 Middleton Line	Wheatley	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 06, 2025	0
353-2025	908 Charing Cross Road	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 10, 2025	0
354-2025	Gregory Drive East at CSX Rail Line	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 10, 2025	0
355-2025	319 Ironwood Trail	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 18, 2025	0
356-2025	Landings Pass Subdivision Extension - Phase 1	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 27, 2025	2
357-2025	6161 Rivard Line	Dover	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 27, 2025	3
358-2025	6184 Rivard Line	Dover	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 27, 2025	3

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App No.	Location	Community / Township	Municipality	Decision	Processing Time (days)
359-2025	6336 Rivard Line	Dover	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 27, 2025	3
360-2025	24581 Townline Road	Dover	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 27, 2025	3
361-2025	5914 Rivard Line	Dover	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 27, 2025	3
362-2025	Near 5961 Rivard Line	Dover	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 27, 2025	3
363-2025	6092 Rivard Line	Dover	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 27, 2025	3
364-2025	21960 Mull Road	Harwich	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 17, 2025	0
365-2025	English Line at McGregor Creek	Harwich	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 27, 2025	2
366-2025	Maynard Line at Mull Road	Harwich	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 27, 2025	2
367-2025	East of 10981 Maynard Line	Harwich	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 27, 2025	2
368-2025	Knights Line at Tedford Drain	Harwich	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 27, 2025	2
369-2025	22498 English Line	Harwich	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 20, 2025	0
370-2025	25658 Jacob Road	Dover	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 02, 2025	5
371-2025	10942 New Scotland Line	Harwich	Chatham-Kent	Granted: June 20, 2025	1
372-2025	Edgewood Subdivision - 2252 Trillium Way	Mount Brydges	Strathroy-Caradoc	Granted: July 03, 2025	7
383-2025	Block 9 - 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24 Magnolia Lane	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 03, 2025	0
384-2025	Block 10 - 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42 Magnolia Lane	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 03, 2025	0
385-2025	Block 11 - 48, 50, 52, 54, 56 Magnolia Lane	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 03, 2025	0
386-2025	Block 12 - 62, 64, 66, 68, 70 Magnolia Lane	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 03, 2025	0
387-2025	Block 13 - 23, 25, 27, 29, 33, 35 Magnolia Lane	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 03, 2025	0
388-2025	Block 14 - 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17 Magnolia Lane	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 03, 2025	0
389-2025	975 Kent Road 1	Mersea	Leamington	Granted: July 02, 2025	5
390-2025	6538 Krista Lane	Melbourne	Southwest Middlesex	Granted: July 10, 2025	2
391-2025	59 Jeffrey Street West	Tilbury	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 08, 2025	4
392-2025	8009 Iona Road	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 08, 2025	13
393-2025	24780 Carroll Line	Aldborough	West Elgin	Granted: July 10, 2025	2
394-2025	Evergreen Line over White Drain	Camden	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 08, 2025	11
395-2025	Culvert C-08-479 over Robb Dales Drain	Tilbury West	Lakeshore	Granted: July 07, 2025	10
396-2025	Fairview Line at Communication Road	Harwich	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 11, 2025	0

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App No.	Location	Community / Township	Municipality	Decision	Processing Time (days)
397-2025	1910 County Road 8	Mersea	Leamington	Granted: July 04, 2025	1
398-2025	7th Line West @ Waddick Drain	Raleigh	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 04, 2025	1
399-2025	14251 Baseline Road	Zone	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 08, 2025	4
400-2025	71 Rosewood Crescent	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 09, 2025	0
401-2025	104 Fenceline Drive	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 08, 2025	0
402-2025	19 Cornerstone Place	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 09, 2025	0
403-2025	23 Cornerstone Place	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 09, 2025	0
404-2025	168 Rosewood Crescent	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 17, 2025	8
405-2025	48 Lantern Lane	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 17, 2025	0
406-2025	52 Lantern Lane	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 17, 2025	0
407-2025	56 Lantern Lane	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 17, 2025	0
408-2025	60 Lantern Lane	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 17, 2025	0
409-2025	12370 Front Line	Howard	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 16, 2025	6
410-2025	31079 Fingal Line	Dunwich	Dutton Dunwich	Granted: July 16, 2025	0
411-2025	20667 Haskell Road	Tilbury East	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 15, 2025	0
413-2025	3650 Wheeler Line	Tilbury East	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 16, 2025	0
414-2025	550 Tweedsmuir Avenue West	Chatham	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 28, 2025	5
415-2025	21546 AD Shadd Road	Raleigh	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 23, 2025	0
416-2025	11587 Miller Road, Tower 125 to 127	Delaware	Middlesex Centre	Granted: July 29, 2025	1
417-2025	4956 Murray Road, Tower 71	Westminster	London	Granted: July 29, 2025	1
421-2025	Road reconstruction on Fingal Line and Union Road over Fingal Drain and Fowler Street, and Millpark Street	Southwold	Southwold	Granted: July 31, 2025	3
422-2025	3379 2nd Concession Line	Romney	Chatham-Kent	Granted: July 29, 2025	0

11.4) Conservation Lands

11.4.1) Conservation Areas

Fire Bans

Due to the increase in wildfires and the lack of precipitation the Municipalities of Middlesex, Southwest Middlesex, West Elgin and Dutton-Dunwich have all issued Fire Bans, Chatham-Kent is daily waiting and assessing the conditions. This impacts our campground in the east currently. We will be posting notices at the campgrounds with the messaging from each Municipality and doing social media posts to help with spread this message to help reduce the risk of forest fires in our watershed.

Main Office

The main office features a Barn Quilt. In order to maintain proper views of the barn quilt (to address vegetation growth throughout the years) the front of the Main Office received additional landscaping. The summer students trimmed a 1'-2' perimeter around the entire property to ensure that vegetation is kept clear of driving and walking pathways. Then the students cleared vegetation and installed mulch around the barn quilt, the fire hydrant and interpretive signage and our pathway to the sidewalk, and front entrance signage to maintain sight lines.



Photos of the Main Office Landscaping

Longwoods Road Conservation Area

The Longwoods Resource Centre elevator, washroom and gallery renovation are in the final stages of receiving occupancy as the Integrated Systems Testing (IST) review has been completed as we wait for the final report, the Elevator TSSA inspection has been completed and approved. These items are required to move forward with the final occupancy requirements for the building inspector. Materials for the site are being purchased such as tables, chairs and covers (all are now all on site), kitchen supplies are slowly trickling in on as need basis at this time and cleaning supplies are purchased as well on an as need basis. Next steps would include completing the special events manual for this site and rentals in general, updating the fee schedule to reflect usage of the site and security requirements and getting the kitchen approved by public health.

The Longwoods Conservation Areas aging infrastructure (the water system) has created a turbulent few weeks at the beginning of August. A water line leading to the Resource Centre split open and caused an excessive leak in the system which drained a sand point completely and required staff to dig up the majority of the line and install turn offs along this line for future use. This break in the system was very difficult to find as the waterline was sleeved with a tile line under the roadway and drained into the water table the water never came to the surface. Mike Shore, our Eastern District Supervisor has done an outstanding job of maintaining a functioning water system for our rental tenants, while moving through the system systematically to ensure each building had and could maintain water pressure before allowing staff back into those facilities. (for health and safety standards). We closed the Conservation Area for the majority of this emergency as there were large excavations throughout the lands to find and locate the source of the leaks and the installation of shut off valves. As we believe we have found the source of this leaks (at the time of writing this report) we will continue to monitor the water situation and hopefully by fall the one sand point that was drained has had time to recover and we can re-connect it at that time. This has been a challenging few weeks however it was met with positive attitudes and silver linings. We will now know the routing of the water line and have appropriate shut off valves for our facilities on site so we can identify and address future issues faster.



Photos of the Water Line repairs and Sand Point Maintenance

CM Wilson Conservation Area

C.M Wilson Conservation Area is gearing up for the next school year. In order to do so, we are required to upgrade our water system at C.M Wilson Conservation Area. This upgrade in the water system is the result of the rental of one of the classrooms within the Learning Centre as it is a registered school which requires the water system to function under a different Ontario Regulation than that of our campground and other facilities. This upgrade includes a new gas line for a gas furnace as the oil system is not compliant for where our well is located. Staff have been meeting with contractors for quoting on the implementation of an increased water reservoir and additional water treatment equipment to increase contact times and water treatment. This is a major water infrastructure change at Wilson; however, it is an important change to our system to ensure the health and safety of all students and campers.

C.M Wilson also received a little green guy to help remind campers and residents to slow down within the Conservation area as we do have lots of wildlife and children present.



Photos: Green Slow Guy, with Lukas and Brianna. Passport Parking signage mounted.

Diversion Channel

The Diversion Channel has been getting attention this year as our Lands staff have been actively working to ensure the maintenance of this channel. Staff have been trying to access the diversion channel on a weekly basis to maintain the channel and to be on site consistently throughout the season.

Rental Houses

Livermore House (Longwoods Rd CA) recently required a new furnace and A/C replacement which has been completed.

At the C.M. Wilson Conservation Area, the tenant keeps busy on this property and often does little repairs himself. We have added signage to let campers know the residence is a private residence so they do not bother him when staff are not present on site .

At Millstream Conservation Area, this tenant takes wonderful care of the residence and often does little repairs herself. However, she recently had a leak in the roof which causes a bit of internal damage in her bedroom. The roof was assessed at the same time as the other roofs identified for 2025 replacement in asset management. It was determined that it made sense to replace this roof at the same time as the others to lock in pricing and complete the required repairs.

At the Lighthouse Conservation Area, the Lighthouse keepers house sustained substantial damage from the previous tenant. The house has been re-finished on the interior and mold remediation has been completed for damage that occurred in the kitchen. The house has been listed for rent and staff has been working with a 3rd party realtor to set the rent price and obtain a tenant. At the time of writing this report, an agreement has been signed and there will be a tenant present in the house by the end of August.

Team Building & Events

Staff have been scheduled for ORKA Canoe Training this summer and fall. One group has completed this training while the second group is due to take the training in September.

Land Staff have been assisting with Bathymetry surveys along the Thames River.

C.M. Wilson Conservation Area will also be doing a private name dedication ceremony for the Stenton Barn on August 23rd, at 11 am for the Stenton Family in recognition of the Barn Donation in 1974. After the dedication ceremony, the family will have a reunion in the Barn so they can have a moment to reflect and remember their grandparents.



Photo: Gabe helping Adam install the original Barn Sign.

The reports align with the following objectives of the **LTVCA's Watershed Based Resource Management Strategy**.

Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds

Connecting People to Nature

Organizational Excellence

11.5) Conservation Services

11.5.1) General Update

Urban Stewardship

Over the past few months, significant progress has been made on several stewardship and restoration initiatives across the watershed. Two invasive species removal events were held at Thames Grove Conservation Area in partnership with Community Living Chatham. These hands-on events focused on removing autumn olive and white mulberry—two aggressive invasive species that are encroaching on a well-established tallgrass prairie. The work was both impactful and educational, helping to protect a rare and valuable ecosystem while building community connections.



In Chatham, we collaborated with Chatham Christian High School to plant a shade-tolerant pollinator garden, contributing to a multi-year initiative to green their schoolyard. This project supports biodiversity, enhances student learning opportunities, and demonstrates how underutilized green spaces can be transformed into thriving habitat for native species.



Another major milestone was the official launch of the Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan (SNAP) program, funded by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP), at the Wheatley Waves On community event. Delivered in partnership with the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, this program will focus on bringing nature-based climate solutions to urban neighbourhoods. To begin the public engagement phase of the program, we are planning three community consultation sessions in the selected neighbourhoods over the coming weeks.

We are also pleased to report that we were successful in receiving a TD Tree Days grant to support a large-scale native tree planting at Sharon Creek Conservation Area this fall. In addition to this project, planning is underway for three additional large-scale tree plantings across the watershed. These plantings will play a critical role in restoring habitat, enhancing climate resiliency, and supporting our ongoing efforts to increase native tree cover across the region.

In July, our Urban Stewardship Technician attended a multi-day professional development retreat at the TRCA’s Albion Hills Conservation Area as part of the ongoing Young Conservation Professionals (YCP) program. The retreat focused on leadership development, with sessions on leading as a partner, fostering collaboration, and navigating conflict resolution. This experience continues to strengthen our capacity to build meaningful partnerships and lead effective, inclusive environmental initiatives across the watershed.



ALUS Elgin

Russel Vey: June and July were packed with project development, reporting, and monitoring activities in ALUS Elgin.

Much of June was dedicated to site visits across the region. I joined wetland contractors, DUC, and LTVCA staff on visits to over ten participant’s properties—several of which have already been approved for project establishment and are now in the planning phase. Another highlight in June was the completion of grassland seeding at Mike Oden’s farm, wrapping up the buffer planting around the wetland established in 2024. Additionally, with RALP funding confirmed for ALUS, all ALUS Elgin grassland projects tied to this funding were updated to align with the funder’s 10-year Conservation Agreement requirement. With this requirement, I’ve ensured all participants were made aware of the contract updates and updated the database accordingly.

A major focus across both months was preparing, drafting, and finalizing the 2024 Interim Report. This report process included correcting database entries, verifying project establishments, and confirming invoices across several shared projects with Elgin conservation partners. After multiple rounds of review and collaboration with ALUS National, the Interim Report was completed in late July.

In mid-July, I began project monitoring for established grassland buffer projects. I developed a comprehensive list of all ALUS Elgin grassland buffers and began site visits to validate their current status against our database records. These visits have been instrumental in confirming project integrity, reconnecting with participants I hadn’t met previously, and identifying potential opportunities for new projects in 2026.



Completed project monitoring of Bonnie Ball’s grassland buffer surrounding her wetland. Although it was recently cut, the grassland buffer remains healthy and consistent in size since establishment in 2018.

Another major focus over June and July was the comprehensive overhaul of the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the ALUS Elgin PAC. Developed in collaboration with Drake Larsen and refined through two rounds of PAC feedback, the ToR was updated to clarify member expectations, decision-making procedures, and leadership roles. Key revisions emphasize farmer-led governance, transparency, and operational continuity, and include strengthened conflict of interest protocols, clearer quorum and election guidelines, and structured participation requirements to support greater accountability and engagement.

At the July PAC meeting, we also had the pleasure of welcoming the Mayor of Pelham and members of the ALUS Niagara Steering Committee. They joined us to observe our PAC in action and learn more about ALUS operations as they begin laying the groundwork for a new ALUS program in the Regional Municipality of Niagara.

Eastern District

Tyler Thornton: During the summer months of the year our Conservation Services Team are continuing to conduct site visits and engage landowners within the rural community, as we look to propose and implement future stewardship projects throughout our watershed. As part of the LTVCA's contractual obligations in liaison with Trees Canada, first-year tree survival assessments for our 2024 tree planting projects (7 total) were conducted, as well as the reporting & documentation required for submission. The 12 spring tree planting sites within the eastern district of our watershed required survival audits to be completed as part of our obligations with Trees Canada, which have all been performed and submitted well ahead of the submission deadline. During the months of June and July I have simultaneously collaborated with contractors, funders, colleagues, and landowners to establish three wetland projects within the eastern district of the watershed, which was a combined total of 1.75 acres of new wetland habitat. Two of the completed wetland projects had erosion control components and were designed to address major soil erosion concerns on their respective properties. The implemented erosion control design and control structures will play an important role in mitigating excess nutrients & sediment from entering the Thames River, which is adjacent to both the projects mentioned. By mitigating these materials from entering the Thames River it will benefit the overall water quality of the Thames River and aid in protecting species at risk that are identified in those areas. Several other wetland projects, which would combine for a total of approximately 1.9 acres of additional wetland habitat are currently ongoing and are anticipated to be completed before October 2025, weather permitting.

Clarke Road Secondary School was commissioned to build 6 wood duck, 4 blue bird, and 8 turtle protection boxes, which have already been constructed and picked up. While picking up the constructed boxes I hosted an hour-long Q&A session with teachers and the students who built these boxes, as I discussed the importance of our LTVCA stewardship initiatives. The bird box & turtle box builds are to be given out to landowners who have conducted stewardship projects with LTVCA in 2025, and they will serve as valuable homes for future habitat.

Our Urban Stewardship team is currently working in liaison with myself and the Municipality of Dutton to organize a large-stock tree planting event, which is set to take place on October 4th. This event is anticipated to see heavy local community engagement where we will be planting approximately 100, 3–5-gallon native trees within the “Sons of Scotland Park” located at the center of the Dutton Township. This event will be the first of an anticipated three-stage process that plans on providing a total of 300 trees to the park over the course of the next year. The to be planted trees will provide shade relief for the recreational activities that are provided with the park, as well as create valuable wildlife habitat, and privacy from adjacent residential landowners.

Site visits for future 2025 & 2026 stewardship projects are steadily ongoing as I continue to prepare and plan to establish these future projects.

Please see below for pictures encapsulating some of the work conducted in the eastern district this summer.

Summer Wetland Sites 2025



Nichol Wetland Site near Melbourne - 0.4 acres (two days after construction)



Hind Wetland Site near Big Bend- 0.5 acres (Day after construction, wetland area 2)



Hind Wetland Site near Big Bend- 350 feet grassed swale section (Day after construction)



Hind Wetland Site near Big Bend- 0.5 acres (Day after construction, wetland area 1)



Hind Wetland Site near Big Bend- 0.5 acres (Day after construction, wetland area 1)



Vojvodin Wetland & Erosion Control site near Dutton - 0.25 acres

Trees Canada First Year Survival Assessments for 2024 Tree Planting Sites



Dyck 2024 Tree Planting Project- Near Iona (First Year Tree Survival Photo)



Rose 2024 Tree Planting Project- Near Wallacetown (First Year Tree Survival Photo)



Dramnitzke 2024 Tree Planting Project- Near Wardsville (First Year Tree Survival Photo)



Hadler 2024 Tree Planting Project- Near Iona (First Year Tree Survival Photo)

ALUS Middlesex

Erica Ion: Despite the hot and humid weather that we have had this summer, we have been busy here at ALUS Middlesex. We have spent a lot of time outdoors conducting site visits with prospective participants to assess the suitability of sites for new projects and visiting with current participants to offer project renewals. As usual, we have also been conducting our annual monitoring of existing projects, with help from our summer student Rowan who will continue to monitor until he completes his co-op term at the end of August. Rowan has also been focused on creating a standardized monitoring protocol to allow for continuity and easier comparison of database entries over time.



Erica and Rowan at a site visit with a current participant to assess previous projects completed, as well as a new project that was established this spring.

Part of the protocol involves the selection and tracking of site visits. Rowan has developed a mapping tool which helps to visualize properties with ALUS Middlesex projects, allowing properties near each other to be strategically visited on the same day to reduce operational costs and increase monitoring efficiency. The map is interactive, so sites that have already been monitored can be filtered out of the visual representation. Additionally, the interactive tool allows projects with specific attributes to be selected. For example, the properties containing delayed hay projects can be differentiated in the map using colour to identify priority sites to monitor in early July.



Rowan, our summer student, is using a field tablet to monitor an existing wetland project.

In addition to monitoring and project implementation over the summer, we have continued to participate in outreach opportunities and attend local events. One of the events we attended was the Annual General Meeting for the London Environmental Network (LEN). As a member of the network, we have worked with the LEN over the past year to implement a Wildlife Monitoring Program to promote community engagement in local wildlife. We received funding from LEN to purchase trail cameras and other equipment, and we worked with them to film a short video showcasing the project. When the video premiered at the LEN Annual General Meeting, we were excited to share our work with other like-minded individuals. It was a great opportunity to network with representatives from other local conservation groups, and we were lucky enough to win a wood duck box to install at a project site.



Graham Moddle and Erica Ion setting up the bird box for the Wildlife Monitoring Program in collaboration with the London Environmental Network.

ALUS Middlesex has also continued to support national collaboration by helping coordinate ALUS participation in the 2025 Outdoor Farm Show. After initiating attendance at the event in 2024, ALUS Middlesex has played a key role in shaping a broader effort that now includes support from ALUS Canada and other regional programs. With over 10,000 attendees each year, the show provides an excellent platform to connect with producers and share the impact of ALUS projects across the province.

Furthermore, ALUS Middlesex hosted a barbeque at a PAC member's home for our last PAC meeting. We proposed a number of new projects that we hope to implement this year. At the meeting, Rowan also presented the monitoring tool he created, which sparked discussion and ultimately assisted us in our strategic outreach goals for growing our program. Thanks to his help creating this map, we now know which areas to focus our efforts on to expand our program reach.

Following a successful collaboration earlier this year through the Eco-Action Grant, ALUS Middlesex continues to work closely with Nature London to explore opportunities for future partnership. The strong turnout and positive response to this spring's community planting event have sparked early conversations around potential activities for the upcoming year. We have also taken some time this summer to explore future funding opportunities by working on applications to relevant grants in hopes of receiving additional funding for our program delivery and project costs for the next year.

ALUS Chatham-Kent

Rashel Tremblay: With 70% of our PAC being farmers, summer meetings are paused due to seasonal demands. This year we are piloting voting and decision-making over email, to maintain momentum in project approvals and event planning, despite the busy growing season.



Spotted in tallgrass prairie projects – Missouri Ironweed and a Tawny Emperor Butterfly.

Project Restoration Update

We've made significant progress in 2025, restoring 100 acres of marginal farmland across Chatham-Kent, and the year isn't over yet!

100 acres restored so far:

- Tree Planting: 15 projects | 50 acres
- Grasslands (native tallgrass prairie, non-native buffers): 13 projects | 37 acres
- Wetlands & Riparian Habitat: 7 projects | 13 acres
- 62 site visits (including new projects, renewals, assessments, and consultations)
- 23 new participants
- 32 projects established or being established
- 50% of eligible projects established in 2020 have been successfully renewed so far



Checking up on wetland projects established in 2019. These three projects were approved for a 5-year renewal.

Funding Update

All ALUS-sourced funds have been allocated, except for RALP (Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program) funding, which was received in July after interim reports were submitted. This new funding doubles our total annual budget and resolves a previous shortfall, enabling us to establish additional projects in 2025. RALP also doubled our acreage targets from 28 new acres to 73 new acres.

Funding Breakdown

ALUS-sourced funder	Target	Actual	Financial Support
NRCAN	28 new acres / 16,000 Trees	49 new acres / 20,805 Trees + 1,660 Shrubs	\$28,000
ECCC – Precision Conservation	25 new acres of wetlands or riparian projects	35 new acres of wetlands and riparian projects	\$110,000
ECCC – Priority Place	41 new or renewed acres	11.5 new acres and 36.5 renewed acres	\$75,000
TD NAP Phase 6	12 new or renewed acres	12.5 new acres	\$23,250
RALP Ontario	45 new acres	New funding received	\$230,000



Spotted in a ditch in Dover during a site visit, the elusive Black-Crowned Night Heron.

11.5.2) Agricultural Initiatives

Precision Phosphorus Reduction Program (PPRP)

The Precision Phosphorus Reduction Program (PPRP), developed by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and delivered by the Canada Water Agency (CWA) through the Great Lakes Freshwater Ecosystem Initiative – Precision Conservation Substream. PPRP is a four-year program funded by Canada Water Agency (CWA). The 13,000,000.00 contribution enables the LTVCA to address the issue of phosphorus loading in the Lower Thames River watershed by prioritizing best management practice adoption in areas at highest risk of phosphorus loss.

Agriculture Outreach & Communications Technician - Amanda Doucette

The Agriculture Outreach and Communications Technician has been working with a local videographer to produce educational videos to promote PPRP and the main 3 pillars of the project. The water monitoring quality video is in the final stages of editing, with Amanda working on ensuring the production aligns with the program voice, brand and vision.

Project outreach continued by attending and sponsoring community summer events. This included promoting youth agriculture education through presentations at the Chatham Kent 4H club and attending the Blenheim children's festival to influence the next generation of farmers with our cover crop display.

Amanda has joined the stewardship specialist and water quality team for field work to create a photo bank of pictures to use when referencing the project in digital or print media projects. With new updates to the funding program she redesigned the PPRP guidebook to ensure the new practices and guidelines are comprehensible for all potential applicants.

Additionally, with the upcoming new website launch Amanda has worked on the development alongside LTVCA Communications Specialist to ensure the agriculture page is easy to follow and accessible on mobile browsers for farmers or future applicants.



Agricultural Administration Assistant - Leah Ripley

Over the past few months Leah has been continuing to review and process applications for the 2025 Precision Phosphorus Reduction Program. The bulk of this work has involved using Arcgis online to map out all of the fields we will be funding through this program. When necessary, she has reached out to applicants to seek out missing details from their applications or to gain clarification about their farming operations. Leah has also been continuing to take in new applications as they come and assist farmers who have questions about the program or application process.

Agricultural Technical Assistant - Ani Pearn

Ani Pearn has been hired as an Agricultural Technical Assistant and is working under the Phosphorus Reduction Program at the LTVCA. She has been working on compiling and sorting the accumulated data of the past decade's various phosphorus reduction programs. Work started by unifying the terminology used between different programs or years, and then numbers were calculated to demonstrate the farmer participation of each BMP for every year. Mapping is currently being developed to provide a visual aid of all the farmers that have participated; these maps are intended to be used to aid in education for the public as well as further research purposes for LTVCA staff. Creating the maps also helps to verify the number of participants and the amount of land included, which allows for higher confidence in the work that has been done. Future analysis of the compiled data will include using estimates of the phosphorus reduction impact that each BMP makes, and applying those calculations to the full decade's time period to track likely reductions of phosphorus in the Thames River.

Water Quality Technician - Amber

The Precision Phosphorus Reduction Program's monthly water sampling has continued. There has been very little extra sampling conducted as there have not been many significant rain events. Maintenance at the ISCO sites has been ongoing including grass cutting and some pest control (insects). Amber assisted with the installation of a new ISCO sampling site at Jeanettes Creek. This is the final installation of new stations for the PPRP and there are now sampling stations in all four of the priority subwatersheds. In July, Amber attended 2 days of training at UTRCA to learn and become more familiar with a water information management system called WISKI, which is used for managing, analyzing and reporting collected data.

Agricultural Stewardship Specialist - Andrew Mickle

While PPRP applications for farming practices remain trickling in, Andrews main focus since the last BOD update has been on project planning. The Agricultural Stewardship Specialist has been actively engaged with a busy schedule of site visits, supporting the progress of five ongoing erosion control projects. These projects are in various stages of development, with tailored solutions and construction activities are underway. Key erosion control measures being implemented include the installation of berms, Water and Sediment Control Basins (WASCOBs), and catch basins. Each site presents unique challenges, and these engineered solutions are designed to effectively manage runoff, reduce sediment loss, and protect valuable agricultural land. The LTVCA stewardship staff have been instrumental in offering their expertise and assistance.

Water Resource Analyst - Elizabeth Arango Ruda

In the third quarter, the Water Resource Analyst completed phosphorus load calculations for three tributaries: Big Creek, McGregor Creek, and Talbot Creek, as well as for three pump stations: Dauphin Pump Station, Deary Pump Station, and Rivard Pump Station. These calculations were conducted using the interpolation method and the Erie Loading tool. Additionally, load calculations are being performed using the LOADEST program from the US Geological Survey (USGS).

With this information, Elizabeth has been able to make progress on the GAP report, which includes load calculations for all subwatersheds. The report also analyzes parameters such as dissolved oxygen (DO), Chlorophyll a (Chl a), and others across multiple sites along the Thames River and some of its tributaries.

Moreover, our collaboration with the University of Toronto professor and his students continues to advance. During their most recent visit, the group introduced the "OpenBUGS" program to run a Bayesian model that utilizes total phosphorus (TP) and other variables to analyze data patterns over time and across seasons. For example, Figure 1 illustrates the change in TP at McGregor Creek from 2015 to 2016. This information is valuable for identifying trends in the data and for evaluating the effectiveness of monitoring methods as well as the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) across subwatersheds.

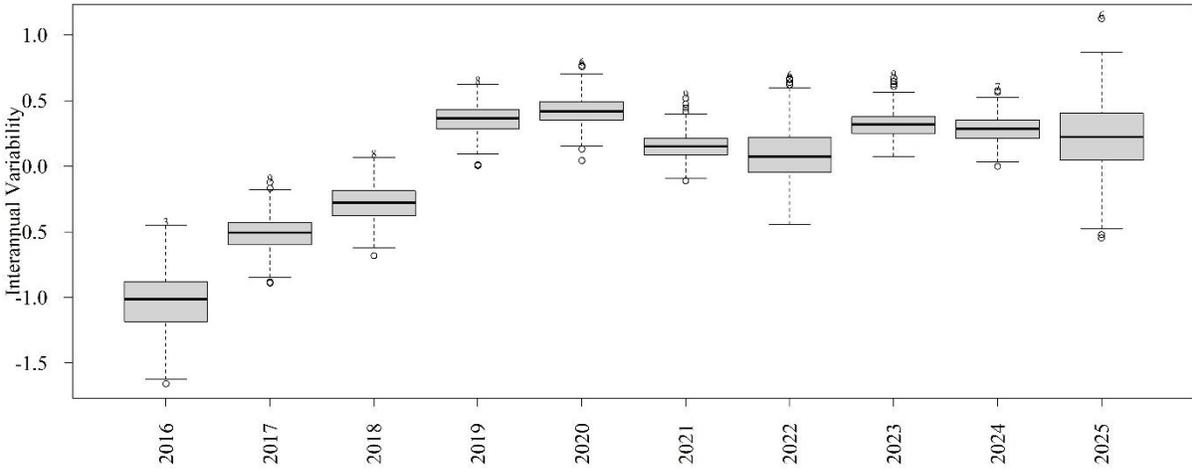


Figure 1. Interannual variability of phosphorus in McGregor Creek obtained from a Mixed Effect Model.

Regarding the story map, discussions are underway about creating a series of story maps to classify the core themes of the program, such as water quality monitoring, BMPs and outreach, and data analysis and research. So far, the story map has incorporated more visual and textual content (see Figure 2).

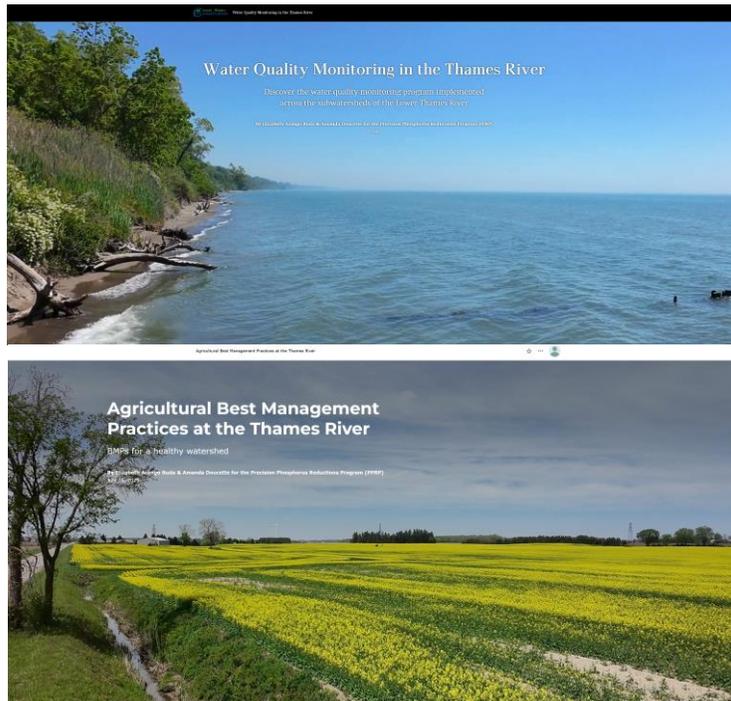


Figure 2. An introductory view of the story map as one of the deliverables of the Precision Phosphorus Reduction Program.

Participation in the WISKI training was also on the agenda. The two-day training at the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority opened up networking opportunities and equipped participants with the necessary tools to import water quality data and calculate loads.

Lastly, during July, a Carleton University student has been working on her Practicum at LTVCA twice a week, concluding the first week of August. The student is analyzing hysteresis patterns between TP and flow at Talbot Creek during specific events.

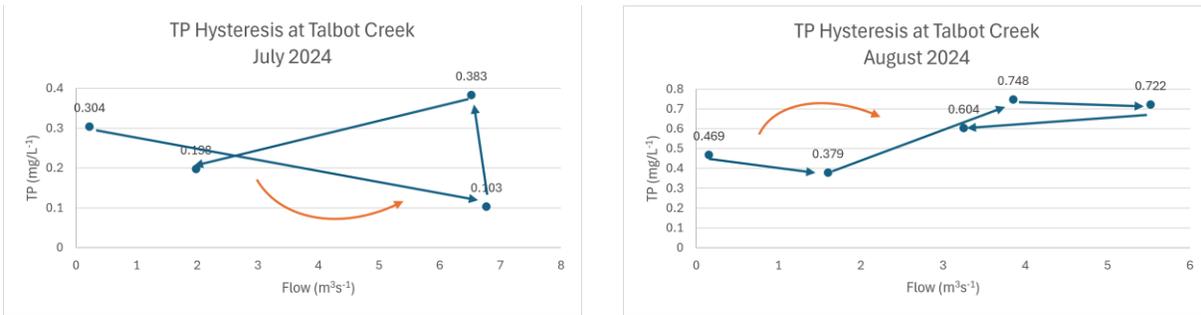


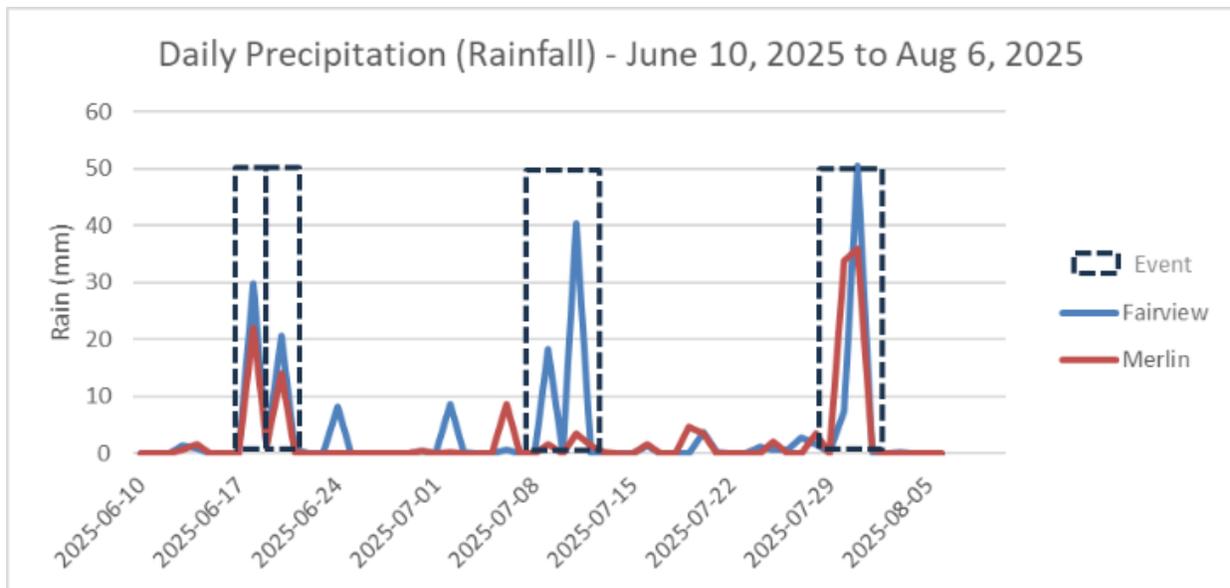
Figure 3. Hysteresis patterns between flow and TP for events in July and August 2024.



On-Farm Applied Research & Monitoring (ONFARM) Program

The program is funded by the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a 5-year federal-provincial-territorial initiative. Developed by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and delivered by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) with support from various organizations including three Conservation Authorities and The Soil Resource Group. The ONFARM program encompasses a range of activities, including monitoring of soil health and water quality on working farms and examining the effectiveness of different agricultural beneficial management practices (BMPs).

Soil and Water Quality Technician - Brittney Littlefield conducted sampling for 4 events in late June and mid July with 60 samples collected across 5 sites. The severe weather during June and July consisted of multiple large thunderstorms. In total from June 10 – Aug 6, 2025, the Fairview site received 203 mm of rain. In contrast, the four Merlin plots received little rain on July 9-11, 2025, leading to 30% less rain in this time period (143 mm total).





Water samples collected from the July 11-13, 2025 rain event on the Fairview site.

Maintenance during the summer season becomes a priority due to improved weather and less frequent rain events. To ensure the sites are easily accessible, staff have ensured that plots are weed whacked once a month. Monthly downloading of data loggers are also done to confirm the equipment is functioning properly.

11.5.3) Aquatic Species at Risk (SAR)



Figure 1: HOBO MX2203 and PME miniDOT loggers installed in the Thames River at Kent Bridge.

Temperature and dissolved oxygen data logger installation in the Thames River, Big Creek (Tremblay/Tilbury Creek) and Rondeau Bay tributaries is complete for 2025. This continues to build the long-term dataset initiated in 2021. Loggers at one station have been tampered with and reinstalled.

The SAR Biologist and Communications Specialist staffed a booth at the Tri-Bay Bass Association Tournament in Erieau on July 20th to discuss local fish and mussel SAR and the invasive Species that can potentially impact them. Participants and their families checked out the displays, which included models of non-native carp species that could invade this area.



Figure 2: SAR Biologist Vicki McKay staffing a SAR tent at the Tri-Bay Bass Association Tournament in Erieau on July 20th.

11.6) Communications, Education and Outreach

11.6.1) Communications

Communication Strategy Update

A Communications Strategy is currently under development, with the first draft presented to management for initial review. This strategy aims to establish clear goals and objectives for the future of LTVCA communications, while also evaluating the effectiveness of current efforts.

The Communications Strategy will serve as a guiding document to:

- Define long-term communication goals and measurable objectives.
- Assess the impact of existing communication initiatives.
- Provide a framework for branding guidelines to ensure consistency in all public documents.

The strategy includes:

- Goals and Objectives: Focused on enhancing outreach, engagement, and public awareness.
- Strategic Actions: Covering areas such as:
 - Social media engagement
 - Presentations to interest groups
 - Regular newsletters and updates
 - Roles and Responsibilities: Clearly outlining the involvement of staff members across departments to ensure coordinated efforts.

The Communications Strategy is expected to be finalized by the end of the calendar year.

Next Steps:

- Incorporate feedback from management into the next draft.
- Engage relevant staff for input and alignment.
- Begin phased implementation of priority actions once finalized.

Social Media

Social media continues to be one of the primary communication tools for the LTVCA. In July, a long-form post was shared focusing on the administration office parking lot. The post addressed public interest and some negative perceptions surrounding the “landscaping” in the area. Its purpose was to educate the community on the value and importance of incorporating native plants into urban environments.



Events

We partnered with CKNature (formerly known as the Sydenham Field Naturalists) to host a Youth Day event at C.M. Wilson Conservation Area. The event aimed to support CKNature in growing their membership, while the LTVCA showcased the educational programs and rental space available at the C.M. Wilson Learning Centre. Approximately 75 people, including 40 children, attended the event. CKNature engaged participants by selling native plants, distributing nature-themed explorer packs, and leading guided hikes. Meanwhile, the LTVCA offered a variety of interactive activities, including a seed bomb station, a bug hotel nature craft, face painting, and programming in the Indigenous Classroom.



11.6.2) Education

The Education Team continues to work on program updates. Work is being completed to align programming with curriculum requirements and group interests. Teacher packages are also being updated, or created, in order to enhance visits and provide teachers with pre-visit support. These packages will include relevant terms, questions for their class to consider, and an activity, depending on the program.

Program offerings are also being consolidated on the LTVCA's new website. Curriculum information for all relevant age groups will be shared for similar programs, under a single program name, to help facilitate a more user-friendly experience and allow educators to make adaptations as necessary.

Western Lake Erie Student Summit

The LTVCA's educators will be collaborating with educators from Upper Thames River, St. Clair Region, Essex Region, Catfish Creek, and Kettle Creek Conservation Authorities on a multi-school, regional education initiative funded by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks. The program will focus on Western Lake Erie, with the theme "Connecting, Sharing, and Caring for Lake Erie." The initiative involves in-class learning, stewardship actions, and a student summit. The LTVCA has committed to providing programming to 4 classes in our region- we will be targeting high schools in Chatham for these opportunities. Our Indigenous Community Educators will also be providing support to the other conservation authorities by request.

Longwoods Road Conservation Area



Central Branch of the London Public Library's Program Room

Pre-booked programs have been taking place both on-site and on-the-road out of Longwoods Road Conservation Area throughout the summer. The team has visited 6 London Public Libraries and 1 Middlesex County Public Library over the last month and a half. Atlohsa's Mino Bimaadiziwin Program and Kingsway Academy have brought youth to site.

The recent water outage has resulted in changes to programming in early August.

C.M. Wilson Learning Centre

Since the summer began, C.M. Wilson educators have provided programming for the Rotary of Chatham Sunrise, the Bkejwanong Eco-Keepers, as well as St. Clair Catholic District School Board summer, Camp Migizi, CK Museum summer camps.

The team at C.M. Wilson has begun applying to various local grants with the goal of receiving funds to move forward with the LTVCA's summer camp plans in 2026.

Since early July, 42 surveys have been completed through outreach initiatives for the Safety Village revitalization plan, now titled "Roots & Renewal: A Naturalized Transformation of the Safety Village." Those surveys were completed by: community members at the Chatham Rib Fest, local Rotary Club members, and the Neuts Family. More outreach is being planned. The next segments of our community to be reached out to are members of our local First Nations as well as other core users of C.M. Wilson Conservation Area.

Chatham-Kent & Lambton Children's Water Festival

Planning for 2025's Chatham-Kent & Lambton's Children's Water Festival continues. Volunteers have been recruited for nearly all activities. There will be 5 new activities this year thanks to participation from the Walpole Island Heritage Centre, the LTVCA Phosphorus Reduction Team and GIS Technician, Reptilia London, as well as the Thames-Sydenham & Region Drinking Water Source Protection group.

Community Connections

In late June the Indigenous Community Educator at C.M. Wilson piloted our first Species at Risk Guided Painting Workshop. The format will be employed for future programs and workshops.

The C.M. Wilson Education Team attended the Chatham Rib Fest.

On July 28, 2025, the Indigenous Community Educators and Curator / Team Lead Education traveled to Crawford Lake to view the site and meet with Conservation Halton's Indigenous Education Coordinator. This was a wonderful opportunity to share ideas and connect. We look forward to members of their team visiting Ska-Nah-Doht once the Museum reopens.



Members of the LTVCA Education Team visit with the Indigenous Education Coordinator at Conservation Halton

The Curator / Team Lead Education will be participating in the Women’s Rural Resource Centre and Thames Valley District School Board’s Children’s Mental Wellbeing event in Strathroy on August 16, 2025.

The Indigenous Community Educator at Longwoods Road will be lending support that the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation Canoe Race fundraiser.

11.6.3) Ska-Nah-Doht Village and Museum

As of August 11, 2025 the Ska-Nah-Doht Village’s Facebook page has 4,030 Followers. The Instagram page for the Village has 758 Followers.

The Curator / Team Lead Education participated in a Website Navigation webinar on August 5, 2025. This learning will be employed on the new LTVCA website.

In the News



Tyler French in a Longhouse

On July 18th Ska-Nah-Doht welcomed a journalist on site to do an article featuring places to visit within Strathroy-Caradoc. Our very own Tyler French, Indigenous Community Educator at Longwoods, had a chance to sit down and chat about the past, current, and future history located within the Longwoods Road Conservation Area.

The article is being well received within Southwestern Ontario and the surrounding London area. The article has been showcased on the front page of three different local newspapers:

- [London Free Press](#)
- The Londoner
- [Strathroy Age Dispatch](#)

Re-Opening Plan

During the summer of 2024 the Curator initiated conversations with the London Children’s Museum (LCM) regarding the transfer of exhibit furniture to Ska-Nah-Doht Museum. Items were picked up by the Curator / Team Lead Education and Indigenous Community Educator at Longwoods in mid-July. The Curator / Team Lead Education estimates that the LTVCA obtained approximately \$30 000 worth of exhibit cases and programming materials through this exchange. Items received include:

- 3 large exhibit cases
- Sand table
- 2 small wooden tables and chairs
- Small picnic table
- Large bean bag chair
- Angled display piece with 8 flip panels
- 3 spinning tumbler display panel sets
- 8 foot flower display piece
- Exhibit fixtures like hinges, panels, and plexi glass
- 2 collapsible wagons
- 4 programming travel cases
- Hands-on programming items, like:
 - Bow and arrows
 - Therapy sand
 - Excavation pit items
 - Solar power
 - Pin wheels, slinkies, and frisbees
 - Art supplies

These items will be deployed at Ska-Nah-Doht Museum, with some programming items (and possible display pieces) being sent to C.M. Wilson Learning Centre. One small van load remains at the LCM to be picked-up.

New exhibits continue to be developed. Space use options, and accessibility are currently being considered now that our full inventory of resources are known. It is anticipated that installation will begin in the following weeks.

Village and Log Cabins

The Education Team have been working on some minor repairs and restoration at the Village. This work will continue into the fall. Additional large work is required, including repairs to the palisade and longhouses.

The Curator / Team Lead Education will continue to look for grant opportunities to help cover the cost of repairs at the Village and Heritage Log Cabins.

A community clean-up / work day centred around the Village and Heritage Log Cabins, similar to the Spring Clean-Ups held in 2022 and 2023 may be planned for the fall. The team will plan to implement similar events in the spring and fall each year at Longwoods as well as C.M. Wilson going forward.

11.7) Wheatley Two Creeks Association June 5, 2025 Minutes

Minutes of regular meeting held on June 5 2025 at Two Creeks

Attendance: Bruce & Marj Jackson, Gerry Soulliere, Pauline Sample, Mike Diesbourg, Lorna Bell, Stephan Logan, Roger Dundas, Vicki & Erin Haley, Elisabeth Pocantos, Joe Pinsonneault, Rick Taves, Lee & Linda Pearce.

Agenda: Moved by Roger, sec. by Phil agenda be accepted as outlined (Carried).

Minutes: Moved by Phil, sec. by Lorna minutes be accepted as read (Carried).

Mem. Groves: 4 small trees need to be planted in the fall.

Prop. & Equip.: Joe has mowed all the trails. We are waiting for a grant and permit to complete removal and replacement of the Willow culvert and bridge. The pavilion and wedding chapel have been rented a few times. We have received \$5000.00 from the Wheatley Swans. The bike group have been mowing and improving their trails. Elisabeth proposed enlarging the dance floor, no decision has been made. The area around the sidewalk to the pavilion needs to be recontoured to avoid flooding.

Concerts: We may rent out the stage along with the pavilion in the future, price to be determined.

Financial Report: Submitted by Roger. Account balance as of May 1 2025 was \$34,868.46. Account balance as of May 31 2025 was \$40,903.97. Moved by Roger, sec. by Joe report be accepted as given.

Correspondence: None.

Old Business: None.

New Business: Elisabeth Pocantos has been elected to replace Ken Hatt.

Adjournment: Roger moved for adjournment at 7:47pm.

Phil Humphries, secretary.

11.8) Wheatley Two Creeks Association July 3, 2025 Minutes

Minutes of regular meeting held on July 3 2025 at Two Creeks.

Attendance: Mark & Linda Peacock, Lee & Linda Pearce, Bruce & Marj Jackson, Pauline Sample, Lorna Bell, Mike Diesbourg, Sheilah Marans, Gerry Soulliere, Joe Dama, Roger Dundas, Joe Pinsonneault, Rick Taves, Elisabeth Pocantos.

Agenda: Moved by Lorna, sec. by Rick agenda be accepted as outlined (Carried).

Minutes: Moved by Phil, sec. by Mike minutes be accepted as read (Carried).

Mem. Groves: Nothing to report.

Prop. & Equip.: The St. John Baptists want to rent our pavilion next June for 2 days. The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority will be holding the 5th Annual Cultivating Conservation Tour on Sept. 5 2025 starting and ending at Two Creeks. The cost to double the size of the dance pad and also pour a pad for Brien Cobby would be \$5100.00 plus HST. Joe moved and Elisabeth sec. (Carried). L.T.V.C.A. will start work on getting approval for the Willow culvert replacement. The small pavilion will be rented on July 20. We will remove several of the trees and stumps on the hill in front of the stage to improve sightlines.

Concerts: We had the highest profit so far this year for the last concert in June.

Financial Report: Submitted by Roger. Account balance as of June 1 2025 was \$40,903.97. Account balance as of June 30 2025 was \$45,552.87. Moved by Roger, sec. by Elisabeth report be accepted as given (Carried).

Correspondence: None.

Old Business: None.

New Business: Sheilah, along with Ricks assistance proposed finding ways of getting new sponsors and also thanking the ones we have.

Adjournment: Roger moved for adjournment at 7:45pm.

Phil Humphries, secretary.

12. Correspondence

12.1) Transition of Conservation Authority Program from the Ministry of Natural Resources to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Ministry of the Environment,
Conservation and Parks

Conservation and Source
Protection Branch

3rd Floor
40 St. Clair Ave. West
Toronto ON M4V 1M2

Ministère de l'Environnement, de la
Protection de la nature et des Parcs

Direction de la protection de la nature et
des sources

3^e étage
40, avenue St. Clair Ouest
Toronto (Ontario) M4V 1M2



June 27, 2025

MEMORANDUM TO: Conservation Authority General Managers or Chief Administrative Officers, Conservation Authority Partners and Interested Parties

FROM: Kirsten Service, Director Conservation & Source Protection Branch, MECP

RE: Transition of Conservation Authority Program from the Ministry of Natural Resources to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Good morning,

I am writing to advise you that the responsibility for the province's conservation authority program has now transitioned from the Minister of Natural Resources to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) through Orders in Council. Moving forward, the Minister of Natural Resources no longer has legislative duties or functions under the *Conservation Authorities Act* but retains leadership for natural hazard management policy and operations.

Staff supporting the important work of administering this portfolio and delivering on the government's priorities for conservation authorities will be moving to a newly created section named the Conservation Authorities Section within the Conservation and Source Protection Branch in MECP's Land and Water Division.

Stakeholders can continue to reach out to ministry staff as they have done in the past on conservation authority matters via ca.office@ontario.ca.

We thank you for your ongoing support during this time of transition. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K Service".

Kirsten Service, Director
Conservation and Source Protection Branch
Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks

12.2) Ontario Taking Action to Make Conservation Authorities More Effective

NEWS RELEASE

Ontario Taking Action to Make Conservation Authorities More Effective

Province appoints Burlington Chief Administrative Officer Hassaan Basit as first-ever Chief Conservation Executive

June 27, 2025

Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks

TORONTO — Ontario is taking action to enhance the effectiveness of the province's conservation authorities, which will create consistency, reduce costs and drive faster outcomes for the communities they serve. These changes will support the government's commitment to protect Ontario's economy by speeding up critical infrastructure and housing development, while safeguarding the environment. To lead these efforts, Hassaan Basit, a well-respected and non-partisan leader with deep experience with local conservation authorities, will serve in a newly created role as the Chief Conservation Executive, effective August 4, 2025.

"Our government recognizes the vital role that Ontario's conservation authorities play in watershed management and protecting communities from natural hazards," said Todd McCarthy, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. "I am looking forward to leading our government's efforts to bring common sense conservation principles to the role of conservation authorities and this newly created role under Hassaan's leadership will support these efforts across the province."

Since 2019, Ontario has been working to improve the operations of conservation authorities to better ensure they have the required tools to protect the communities they serve, through legislative and regulatory changes that have significantly improved governance, oversight, transparency and accountability of conservation authorities, while streamlining decision-making processes.

"I'm honoured to join the Province of Ontario at this pivotal moment for conservation," said Hassaan Basit, newly appointed Chief Conservation Executive. "Over my 20 years in the conservation sector, I've learned that effective flood protection is not just about safeguarding the environment — it's about enabling prosperous, sustainable communities. Conservation authorities were created to strike that balance, and they have worked for decades to protect people and property while supporting economic prosperity. As we move forward, modernization is essential to ensure they remain focused, effective, and ready to meet Ontario's growing needs — whether it's mitigating flood risks, enabling housing supply or supporting long-term resilience."

Mr. Basit is currently the Chief Administrative Officer for the City of Burlington. Prior to this, Mr. Basit was President and CEO of Conservation Halton, where he led initiatives in flood risk management, environmental restoration, sustainable development, and outdoor recreation.

During this time, Mr. Basit also chaired a provincial working group that advised government on the implementation of key changes to improve the ability of conservation authorities to protect Ontario's water, land and natural resources. He holds an Executive MBA in Digital Transformation and a Governance Certification from McMaster University, a Master of Science in Science Communication from Queen's University Belfast, and a Bachelor of Science in Biology and Political Science from the University of Toronto.

QUICK FACTS

- Ontario is served by 36 conservation authorities.
- In Ontario, conservation authorities develop and deliver local, watershed-based resource management programs on behalf of the province and municipalities, including programs aimed at preventing floods and other natural hazards, drinking water source protection and surface water and groundwater monitoring programs.
- Conservation authorities in Ontario were established in 1946 by the Conservation Authorities Act.
- Conservation authorities play a role in reviewing development applications near or within hazardous lands.

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The City of Burlington's Chief Administrative Officer Hassaan Basit has been appointed to serve as Ontario's Chief Conservation Executive, starting Aug. 4, 2025 (Photo Courtesy of the City of Burlington).

12.3) Orders in Council: 863/2025: MECP Presiding over Conservation Authorities and 862/2025: Appointment of Hassaan Basit as Deputy Minister and Chief Conservation Executive (Cabinet Office) effective August 4, 2025

From: Angela Coleman <acoleman@conservationontario.ca>

Sent: July 14, 2025 10:19 AM

Subject: Orders in Council: 863/2025: MECP Presiding over Conservation Authorities and 862/2025: Appointment of Hassaan Basit as Deputy Minister and Chief Conservation Executive (Cabinet Office) effective August 4, 2025

Good morning,

Please see the links below for two Orders in Council (MECP as the Ministry to preside over Conservation Authorities and appointment of the Chief Conservation Executive).

[Order in Council 863/2025 \(MECP Ministry presiding over Conservation Authorities\)](#)

- [Order in Council 862/2025 \(Appointment of Hassaan Basit as Deputy Minister and Chief Conservation Executive \(Cabinet Office\) – effective August 4, 2025\).](#)

Please see Appendix A and B of the OIC that transfers the CA Act to the purview of MECP, as well as all duties, functions and responsibilities previously transferred to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry **now** to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

A flag/reminder that section 36.1 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* allows the Minister to delegate “**any of his or her powers or duties under this Act to an employee in the Ministry specified in the delegation, other than the power to make a regulation under this Act**”.

We will continue to review potential delegation of authorities to the newly appointed position.

Best,
Angela



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Learn about the health of Ontario's watersheds at watershedcheckup.ca.

Ontario's professional planners launch guide for climate adaptation

by Sean Meyer, Municipal World
in Environment, Planning, Sustainability

July, 2025



C

Climate change has been recognized as a key consideration in land use planning. This is why the Ontario Professional Planners Institute has partnered with others in creation of the Climate Change Adaptation Practice Guide. Photo: OPPI

Communities across Ontario are experiencing the impacts of climate change. Rising temperatures, shifting precipitation patterns, and more frequent extreme weather events are affecting built, ecological, cultural, and socio-economic systems.

Land use and community planning play a critical role in advancing climate adaptation and building resilience in ways that reflect local needs and priorities. Climate change has been recognized as a key consideration in land use planning and policy development at both the provincial and regional levels.

With this current reality in mind, the Ontario Professional Planners Institute ([OPPI](#)) partnered with the Climate Risk Institute ([CRI](#)) and the Ontario Resource Centre for Climate Adaptation ([ORCCA](#)) to create the [Climate Change Adaptation Practice Guide](#).

The guide explores climate change adaptation through a range of innovative planning tools and interventions designed to reduce risks posed by climate-related hazards. It highlights 12 planning interventions that can help mitigate climate risks and strengthen community resilience.

Planning Focus for Climate Action

Zahra Jaffer, a planner and communications designer with Dillon Consulting Limited, worked on the creation of the guide. Jaffer said the guide was generally targeted toward planners and those who are working in planning-adjacent fields.

Whether they work for municipalities, conservation authorities, think tanks, consulting firms, developers, or not-for-profits, the idea was to help make real the kinds of things that planners often see in policy and policy-related statements and regulations.

The hope, Jaffer added, was the guide would show that there are a whole variety of different ways municipalities can tackle key things, such as increasing numbers of storm events, extreme heat, and other situations creating a significant impact on people and the environment.

That said, it doesn't necessarily have to cost hundreds of millions of dollars. While the cost of adaptation can be really high, there are a lot of other things that municipalities can be doing across that spectrum that don't cost large amounts of money but can have a significant impact.

But even when they do, Jaffer points out there are often other considerations.

When it comes to the cost of adaptation, it can be – Jaffer said – anywhere between three to 25 times better to invest in adaptation than to allow things to happen and then invest in recovery on the other side.

"A guide like this, it doesn't make the mathematical case as clear as some of the other kinds of documents that are out there," Jaffer said. "What it does do is allow those who are involved and interested in the field of adaptation to see the wide range of opportunities, get some inspiration from it, and hopefully begin to think of that network of people who are working on adaptation in a broader sense as well."

Adaptation for All Sizes

The development of the practice guide involved several key steps, with contributions from multiple partners and an advisory group. OPPI, CRI, and ORCCA each played an active role, providing professional insights and expertise throughout the process.

From high-level strategies like official plans to more targeted tools such as urban design guidelines, this guide equips planners with knowledge and practical approaches to address climate impacts, including flooding, extreme heat, drought, and wildfire. Interventions are supported by real-world case stories demonstrating how Ontario communities have successfully leveraged these tools to enhance climate resilience.

Like Jaffer, Lisa Prime, director of sustainability with architecture firm Diamond Schmitt, was heavily involved in the creation of the guide.

Prime said creation of the guide wasn't necessarily done for large municipalities with significant funding and highly focused staff. Rather, she said, it was created for smaller municipalities, perhaps those with less resources, so as to show them best practices and reveal how others have done it.

After all, she said, a lot of municipalities benefit from being able to see examples they can relate to.

"Change management is a really important part of growth and planning for municipalities going forward," Prime said. "It's not just because of climate change but because of growth and all sorts of different reference points in how communities are changing and urbanizing. And the more we urbanize, the more important it is to build in resiliency."

Planners Best Practices

The guide includes four main sections to help planners understand and apply planning interventions to foster more climate resilient communities:

- *Climate change and planning* – This section relates planning practices to climate change adaptation and identifies the legislative framework and enabling policies for adaptation planning in Ontario.

- *Climate hazards and adaptation planning* – This section provides an overview of key climate hazards worsened by climate change and related adaptation planning measures that can be considered to manage associated risks.
- *Planning interventions supporting climate adaptation* – This section provides an overview of specific interventions planners can use to advance adaptation, including case studies that illustrate how these interventions have been successfully implemented across Ontario.
- *Resource guide* – This section includes a curated collection of resources intended to support planners in applying the information in this guide.

Prime said, when it comes down to it, every planner really is a climate planner – a sustainability planner. And that was the lens that she came from with this project.

All municipalities need to be thinking about these things, Prime said, and about the integration of infrastructure and how to make communities more livable.

“We’ve set out policy examples; we’ve set out actual on the ground project example. So, it’s very much a pick and choose,” she said. “I think part of what it does is to help share that here are the issues and here’s some of the solutions, and how can we have meaningful conversations to start to move the bar.”

An Evidence-Based Approach

Jaffer said the hope for the guide is that it becomes a “conversation starter.” That the guide is something people will take back with them to have conversations with their colleagues, with their councils, and with their communities around what kinds of interventions are worth investing in.

Because at the end of the day, she said, it is about long-term thinking and taking an evidence-based approach to planning. If municipalities are going to address climate change, Jaffer said they need to have some level of facts at their disposal. They need to undertake some kind of assessment and gain an understanding of how climate change is manifesting in their community.

Trying to say that every single municipality should be doing X, Y, or Z is a disservice to the people in those communities, Jaffer said. Fundamentally, she added, that element of an evidence-based approach is critical. And that, Jaffer said, is what this guide is trying to drive home.

"It has to be evidence-based, and it should really be informed from an equity point of view by the people who are in your community and how they're differentially impacted by climate change," Jaffer said. "You're really not going to make progress until you have something that you're measuring and measuring against, and making meaningful adaptation comes from taking an evidence-based approach. Otherwise, everything just seems out of reach."

From Making Plans to Taking Action

Prime acknowledged that too often municipal plans for taking action can get left sitting on a shelf.

Even if a given council doesn't want to embrace climate change as two words that go together – and sometimes, she said, they don't – then focus on evidence and focus on solutions.

There are change processes that can improve livability and the cost in a community that is impacted by climate events. The financial impacts can happen either personally or to the municipality.

And climate change can be viewed from that perspective. There's an impact on the municipality's budget. There's an impact on the community. There are events that happen, so municipal officials need to put them together and create some solutions and call it a strong community.

"I have no problem with the two words, just to be clear. But I'm just trying to help speak to, frankly, some that aren't that interested," Prime said. "You've got to move beyond that and think about livability and what we need when we look at infrastructure for growth in our communities." MW

★ Municipal World Executive and Essentials Plus Members: You might also be interested in Marieke Cloutier's article: [New database reveals the current state of climate action in Canadian municipalities](#).

Sean Meyer is digital content editor for Municipal World.

12.5) Researchers detect blue-green algae toxin in Lake Erie earlier than ever before

Windsor

Researchers detect blue-green algae toxin in Lake Erie earlier than ever before

But the levels are low, according to the Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab

CBC News - Posted: Jun 21, 2025 4:00 AM EDT | Last Updated: June 21



Blue-green algae stinks, contains toxins and chokes off life in the lake. (Courtesy Essex Region Conservation Authority)

Researchers at the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab say they have detected a harmful toxin produced by blue-green algae earlier in the year than ever before in Lake Erie.

Water tests taken on April 28 showed levels of 0.12 parts per billion of microcystin.

But Reagan Errera, a NOAA research ecologist, suggested the finding isn't a cause for immediate alarm.

"It's almost like the pre-hurricane season warnings that we do," Errera said.

"It's 'Hey, hurricane season hasn't started yet, but you should start to prepare. Get your lights. Get your water.' ... This is the same kind of thing. We want to let people know, 'Hey, we're starting to get hits. We want you to know so that you can prepare for the summer upcoming.'"

Microcystins can produce allergic reactions such as skin rashes, eye irritations, respiratory symptoms and in some cases gastroenteritis, liver and kidney failure or death, according to information on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website.

Toxin levels very low

They can also kill livestock and pets that drink affected waters.

But the toxin levels detected by NOAA are not high enough to trigger water treatment measures at nearby drinking water facilities or warnings against swimming or taking pets into an area of the lake, the administration said in a news release.

Errera advised people to simply prepare for the presence of the toxin by keeping an eye on the agency's website and avoiding places with high concentrations of it.

NOAA typically samples water around Maumee Bay and Sandusky Bay, where problems show up earlier than they do around Windsor-Essex, said Katie Stammler, the water quality scientist at the Essex Region Conservation Authority.



Reagan Errera is a research ecologist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab. (Heather Kitching/CBC)

Currently, NOAA's readings are very low – just slightly above the minimum threshold for detection, she said.

"What it tells us, and what we've been seeing over the last several years, is that the season seems to be starting earlier and lasting longer," she said.

"And that can be due to climate change and changes in our weather pattern, so we did have some wetter weather that might have brought the nutrients out into Lake Erie a bit earlier."

The earlier detection of microcystin means that water operators at Enwin, which operates the City of Windsor's water system on behalf of the Windsor Utilities Commission, will monitor their treatment process more closely and adjust as necessary, said Robert Spagnuolo, the utility's chief operating officer for water.

However, the Windsor Utilities Commission draws surface water from the Detroit River, which flows from Lake St. Clair, Spagnuolo said.

"Since Lake Erie is downstream from our intake, it won't directly impact our water intake," he added.

Provincial standards for drinking water systems

A spokesperson for the Ontario Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks told CBC in an email that the ministry requires operators of all municipal drinking water systems that use surface water as their source to monitor, sample and report harmful algal blooms.

"These requirements provide assurance that drinking water quality is being monitored and appropriate actions are taken when a blue-green algal bloom occurs," Gary Wheeler said.

Enwin has a harmful algal bloom monitoring, reporting and sampling plan (HAB plan) that outlines the monitoring, reporting and sampling requirements once a bloom is identified in Lake St. Clair and/or the Detroit River, Spagnuolo said.

He also noted that Enwin's treatment process includes ozonation, which helps destroy algal cells and break down algal toxins; and the utility has also recently installed a HAB monitoring device on its water intake to alert operators when algae levels are increasing.

Errera said she can't yet say why the toxin appeared in Lake Erie so early this year.

Blue green algae generally enjoy warmer waters, she said.

But this year's temperatures on Lake Erie have been similar to those of last year, and there was more ice this year.

The bacteria also compete well for nutrients and are good at drawing carbon from the water, Errera said.

The lab is currently researching whether carbon dioxide levels might be impacting their number.

In addition, other organisms find blue-green algae unappealing as a food source, making it easier for the algae to thrive, she added.

The algae are increasing their presence across the globe, sometimes in places they've never been seen before, Errera said.

Some of that may be due to increases in temperature.

But she said bacteria are a natural part of the ecosystem, and it's normal for things to "get out of whack a lot of times, and one tends to dominate over the other."

"So this isn't something new," she said.

"We've seen this historically. Even... if we look back in the paleo record, we see cyanobacteria blooms."

13. Other Business

14. Adjournment
