



Strategic Plan

Focused Future 2014



**Lake Simcoe Region
conservation authority**



The Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority

“It’s often been said that the conservation authority movement in Ontario is unique on this continent, perhaps the world. One of the principles underlying the strength and success of the movement has been the emphasis on community initiative. The conservation movement has been a movement of, by and for the people.”

– Dr. A.H. Richardson, *Conservation by the People* 1941

The Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority is one of the earliest and most enduring collaborative partnerships for the protection and restoration of the Lake Simcoe watershed. Established in 1951 on the heels of the Provincial Conservation Authorities Act of 1946, with a mandate to manage natural resources and initiate local improvement programs, our focus in these early years was in the Holland River Valley and southern region of the watershed.

60 years later, our conservation partnership has grown to include the participation of 20 upper, single and lower tier municipalities throughout the entire watershed. Today, we continue to follow the three core principles that make conservation authorities unique – watershed jurisdiction, local decision-making and funding partnerships.

Our governance model has proven to be an effective framework for government and community partners to make collective and informed decisions that benefit the present and future health of the Lake Simcoe Watershed.

Restoring and protecting our lake and watershed involves the entire community of stakeholders – residents, businesses, agriculturists, institutions, governments, and our Conservation Foundation – and we have a long and proud history as accomplished Integrated Watershed Management (IWM) practitioners.

Our work, founded on four pillars of integrated watershed management – science and research, protection and restoration, education and engagement and leadership and support – is the basis of our shared success, and the cornerstones for our hopeful future.

LSRCA’s decades of commitment and achievements gained international recognition in 2009 when we received the International RiverFoundation’s prestigious Thies International Riverprize. This prize, awarded for exemplary watershed management, is the symbol of LSRCA’s proud past and focused future, shared with our entire Lake Simcoe conservation community.

The Lake Simcoe Watershed...

Is a vibrant and diverse habitat and a precious source of water. It's also a centre for tourism, recreation, industry and agriculture. Our lives and that of its animals, fish, birds and plants rely on its health. A healthy watershed supports sustainable communities. Because human activity greatly affects the Lake Simcoe watershed, competing interests need to be constantly monitored and attuned to nature's delicate balance.

The Lake Simcoe watershed sweeps across 3,400 square kilometres and 20 municipal borders, from the Oak Ridges Moraine in the south to the Oro Moraine in the north, through York and Durham regions, Simcoe County, and the cities of Kawartha Lakes, Barrie and Orillia. The lake itself covers about 20 per cent of the total area.

Our Vision... *A Watershed For Life*

A Watershed for Life can mean different things to different people. But it means everything to the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority. It means our human *lifestyle*. It means the watershed's *life-giving* qualities. And it means the *lifeline* and *lifetime* of the watershed habitat itself.

Our Mission...

To provide leadership in the protection and restoration of the environmental health and quality of Lake Simcoe and its watershed with our community, municipal and other government partners.

We envision *life* where all communities thrive alongside nature's healthy beauty and diversity.

We envision *life* where the health and well-being of wildlife, plants, fish and people is nurtured and protected.

We envision *life* where the Lake Simcoe Watershed, its land, water and shorelines, are protected through responsible, sustainable and ecologically sound development.

We envision *life* where citizens, governments and businesses work together to protect our environment for today and future generations.

We envision *life* where generations from now, our descendants will still enjoy swimming and fishing in Lake Simcoe and protecting it will be a natural part of their lives.



Core Values

We value ... people and partners

We strive for ... quality customer service, innovative leadership and business excellence



Navigating Our Future

As an organization with the primary responsibility of safeguarding our lake and watershed, the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority strives to balance community needs with the watershed's ecological needs.

Our 60 year commitment to watershed management and municipal, community and other government partnerships has realized significant environmental, social and economic benefits in the watershed, but there are still many opportunities for continued improvements ahead.

In 2010 an environmental scan conducted by our umbrella organization Conservation Ontario, points to a new era of business challenges in watershed management. Watershed managers are facing the difficult challenges of: **Economic uncertainty. Climate change. Population growth. Pollution. Loss of habitat. Invasive species. Water quantity and quality stresses.**

Added to these global and provincial challenges are the unique demands within our Lake Simcoe watershed.

Focused Future 2014 positions us to deal with the challenges of the future. Provincial legislation and new and existing programs at the municipal and federal levels are creating opportunities to strengthen and enhance the work of the LSRCA. Strategically, the following business drivers will significantly influence our planning over the next four years:

- Continuation of activities under the Lake Simcoe Protection Act (2008) and Plan (2009)
- Creation of new partnerships and funding opportunities
- Replacement of financial investment in our Landowner Environmental Assistance Program (LEAP) as the Federal Lake Simcoe Clean-Up Fund comes to an end
- Reorientation of our education programs to align with economic pressures and our expanding multicultural communities
- Transition of the Ontario Drinking Water Source Protection program from policy planning to implementation

2011 – 2014 Directions

LSRCA's strategic goals for the protection and restoration of Lake Simcoe and its surrounding watershed are framed by our four pillars of Integrated Watershed Management.

It is imperative that our approach is integrated, because everything we depend on to survive is interconnected. The very nature of our existence makes us reliant on the ecology of our local environment, the success of our economy and the behaviours of our society.

Simply stated, Integrated Watershed Management (IWM) is the evolving process of managing human activities and natural resources.

The principles of Integrated Watershed Management allow LRSCA to concurrently tackle competing interests, address a variety of issues and make sound plans for the future. By taking an integrated approach to the way we research, protect, restore and educate, we are able to continue to improve the health of Lake Simcoe and the surrounding watershed, safeguard water quality and quantity and preserve the natural hydrological, biological and chemical functions of our ecosystems.

When harmonized with our conservation vision, our mission, goals, strategies and outcomes will continue to support superb water and resource management and help us to realize our vision of *A Watershed For Life*.



Science & Research



GOAL: Respond and adapt to watershed pressures through advanced science and research.

STRATEGY	TARGET / OUTCOME
Lead and support science-based decision making and collaboration through an Integrated Watershed Management approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subwatershed Management Plans, including implementation and monitoring strategies, will be completed for the entire Lake Simcoe watershed Priority areas for ecosystem restoration will be identified Policies and strategies for watershed development will be informed by watershed science Enhanced partnerships and collaborations with post-secondary institutions, government partners, and other private and public stakeholders will advance our work
Establish LSRCA as the scientific data, knowledge and reporting centre for the Lake Simcoe watershed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watershed conditions, improvements and trends will be monitored, reported and forecasted Emerging threats to watershed health will be identified and evaluated Impacts of climate change in the Lake Simcoe region will be defined Service excellence will be achieved through the accessibility of complete, accurate, timely and user-friendly scientific information
Research and test emerging watershed management science and technologies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New technologies and best management practices will be explored, tested and evaluated for effectiveness in the Lake Simcoe watershed Knowledge and technology will be transferred to regional, provincial, national and international practitioners
Establish LSRCA's role and responsibilities as provincial drinking water source protection transitions to implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source Protection Plans will be completed for the South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe region Appropriate implementation activities will be formally integrated with LSRCA watershed management programs Enhanced partnership funding will support LSRCA's operational role and responsibilities

Protection & Restoration



GOAL: Protect and restore the watershed to support healthy communities.

STRATEGY	TARGET / OUTCOME
Lead improvements to the natural heritage system within the watershed based on science, practical application and demonstrated successes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restoration projects and landowner engagement in community-based stewardship programs will advance science-based restoration targets Priority recommendations identified within subwatershed plans will be implemented in partnership with watershed communities An additional 500-750 hectares of ecologically sensitive lands will be secured
Prevent environmental damage and safeguard people, property and infrastructure from flooding and erosion hazards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New development and projects will be assessed and enforced ensuring compliance with legislation, regulations, plans and policies Flood forecasting and warning systems will provide the delivery of complete, accurate and timely information and will support municipal emergency response services Hazard lands will be identified across the entire Lake Simcoe watershed Government partners will be encouraged to adapt legislation and policy directions to meet watershed needs
Provide communities with opportunities to learn, use and enjoy the natural features of our watershed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New management plans will be completed for 3 Conservation Areas New management statements will be developed for 4 Conservation Areas Best management practices, signage and programming will enhance learning opportunities on LSRCA-owned lands New amenities and trails will increase community access and enjoyment of LSRCA lands and natural features of our watershed

Education & Engagement



GOAL: Generate support, commitment and action for a healthy watershed.

STRATEGY	TARGET / OUTCOME
Attract, inspire and motivate watershed partners and communities to support and participate in the work of LSRCA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of who LSRCA is and what it does will increase • Innovative and creative marketing activities will meet the needs of the corporation • Complete, accurate and timely communication and marketing information and services will be delivered
Provide our communities with knowledge, skills and opportunities to improve the health of the Lake Simcoe watershed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watershed science, knowledge and expertise will be available in ways that are meaningful and relevant to our many audiences • School-based educational programming will be redesigned, be financially sustainable and will engage 10,000 – 15,000 students annually • Creative community-based learning and engagement opportunities will be enhanced to increase commitment and action
Strengthen community connections and relationships to support and advance education and engagement activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New collaborations will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of LSRCA's communication, education and community relations programs • New communication technology, such as social media, will build relationships with new audiences

Leadership & Support



GOAL: Achieve organizational success through leadership, innovation and program support.

STRATEGY	TARGET / OUTCOME
Lead strategic directions, build partnerships and guide operational activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategic Plan 2011-2014 will be achieved • Operating policies and procedures will reflect transparency, accessibility, and accountability, and compliance with regulatory bodies • LSRCA's long term, operational role in the delivery of provincial Lake Simcoe Protection Plan initiatives will be established • The relationship with the Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation will be strengthened • Service excellence will be achieved through the corporate commitment to client service delivery
Invest in our staff and human resources programs to meet current and future organizational needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR planning, recruitment, performance management and training will result in a staff complement able to meet the changing needs of the organization • Compliance with health and safety legislation, programs and policies for staff and public served will be achieved • Leadership skills within the organization will be strengthened
Provide information management systems and services that enable timely and reliable access to information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost effective business applications and solutions will be developed and implemented • Network resources and systems software will reflect current technology • Data and information will continue to be protected and archived for future use
Utilize sound budget management and fiscal planning practices for financial integrity and accountability of partnership funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A structured budget process, supported by guidance documents, tools and training, will enable the effective and efficient engagement of all LSRCA budget holders • Internal control procedures and financial policies will reflect appropriate financial practices and contribute to financial integrity • Expected financial outcomes will be achieved, year over year • Pro-active financial planning and action will advance LSRCA's financial sustainability objectives

The Lake Simcoe Watershed

The Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority Board of Directors is made up of representatives from the following municipalities:

- York Region (At Large)
- York Region (Aurora)
- York Region (East Gwillimbury)
- York Region (Georgina)
- York Region (King)
- York Region (Newmarket)
- York Region (Whitchurch-Stouffville)
- Durham Region (Scugog)
- Durham Region (Brock)
- Durham Region (Uxbridge)
- City of Kawartha Lakes
- Town of Innisfil
- Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury
- Town of New Tecumseth
- City of Barrie
- City of Barrie (Citizen Representative)
- Township of Oro-Medonte
- Township of Ramara
- City of Orillia (Ex-Officio)



Lake Simcoe Watershed Facts

- The earliest known name for the lake was Ouentironk (oo-ent-er-onk) the Huron word meaning “beautiful water” - Early European settlers called it Lake Toronto
- John Graves Simcoe, the first Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, renamed it Lake Simcoe in 1793 in memory of his father, Captain John Simcoe of the Royal Navy
- Lake Simcoe’s bays were named for his father’s naval colleagues – Rear Admiral Richard Kempenfelt and Captain James Cook
- Lake Simcoe is the 6th largest lake in Southern Ontario – only the 5 Great Lakes are bigger
- The Lake generates over \$200 million annually for the local economy – 80% of this is attributed to ice fishing, making Lake Simcoe the ice fishing capital of Canada
- 18 major river systems (which include, streams, creeks and tributaries) flow into Lake Simcoe
- If you walked all the river and stream channels in the watershed, you would travel 4,225 kilometres
- Your shortest hike along a watercourse would be 68 kilometres and your longest hike would be 766 kilometres along the Beaver River
- Almost 400,000 people live in the watershed
- The lake provides a safe source of drinking water for seven municipalities
- The watershed is home to about 75 species of fish, with over 50 in the lake alone
- About 40% of the watershed is comprised of valuable agricultural industries





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