

WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY WATERSHEDS CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES AND THE CITY OF LONDON



Don Pearson, Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority
Elizabeth VanHooren, Kettle Creek Conservation Authority
Ian Wilcox, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
 (Councillors Hopkins and Zaifman serve on CA Boards)

Conservation Authorities:

1. Protect life and property from **flooding and erosion**.
2. Protect and enhance **water quality**.
3. Manage and expand **natural areas**.
4. Provide outdoor **recreation and education opportunities**.



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Founding Principles:

1. Local initiative and governance.
2. Watershed jurisdiction.
3. Cost shared programs.

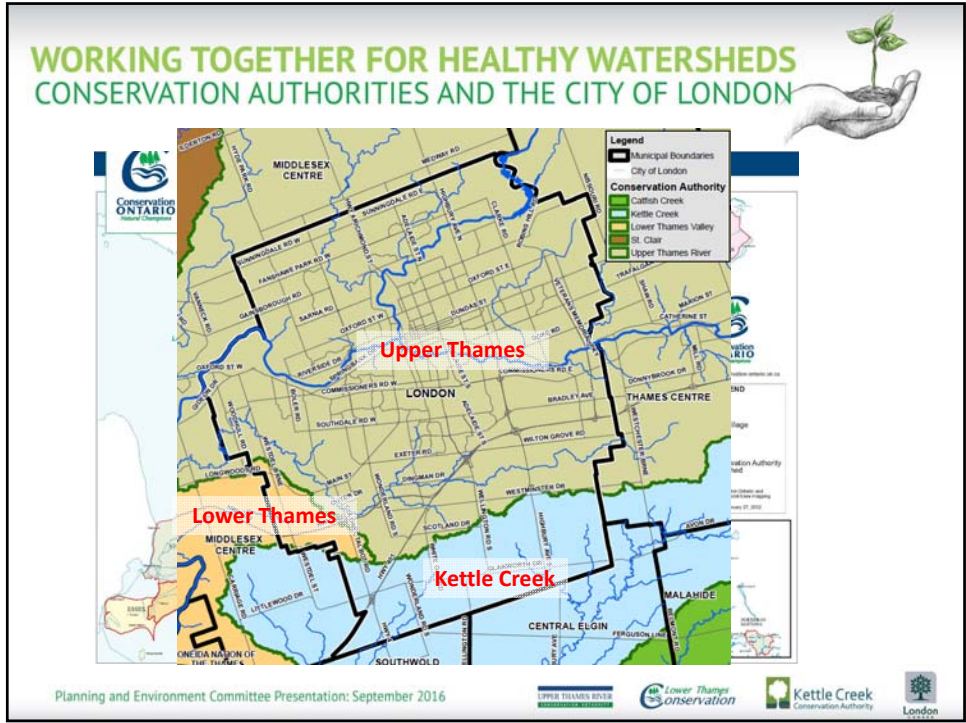


Successful 70 year history of working with 34 partner municipalities for effective watershed management .



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Accomplishments: Protection from Flooding

London is at significant risk
 (public safety, infrastructure, business interruption, nuisance)



The Coves 1937

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Conservation Authority Role:

1. **Protect existing development** (e.g., Fanshawe Dam, West London Dyke, flood forecasting and warning.)
2. **Responsible future growth** through hazard avoidance: updated flood modelling and regulation limits, climate change preparedness.
3. Flood control responsibility has been delegated to CAs by the Province but links directly to municipal OPs, zoning by-laws and building permits.
4. Most contentious program...
5. **The system works** and is a source of global envy. Consider Calgary...



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Accomplishments: Water Quality

Improve Water Quality

1. Thames River has recently been targeted for a **40% reduction in phosphorus loading**.
2. All three CAs deliver monitoring and stewardship programs and develop **innovative ways** to improve water quality, including reducing phosphorus.
3. Water quality has improved dramatically since the 1970's but has **plateaued** in the last 15 years despite community efforts.

Stewardship in 2015

- More than 200 water quality improvement projects implemented on private land
- Valued at more than \$2M



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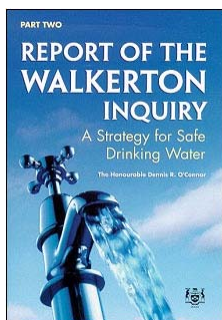
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Accomplishments: Water Quality

Source Water Protection Plan Approval

- Conservation Authority led process.
- Upper Thames, Lower Thames and St. Clair worked together as a Region. KCCA worked with other Lake Erie Authorities.



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Water Management Plan

- Identify and address water **quantity** management issues.
- Improve water **quality** of the Thames River and reduce the river's impact on Lake St. Clair, the Detroit River and Lake Erie.
- Strengthen community connections with the Thames River.
- Understand Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK).
- Strengthen collaborations among water managers.



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Accomplishments: Natural Areas

Tree Planting

Collectively planted **255,000** trees in 2016 .

Note: *Percent natural land cover is no longer increasing. Community planting efforts are simply maintaining the status quo.*



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Environmentally Significant Area Management:

- Trail development and public access
- Invasive Species
- Encroachment
- Enforcement



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Accomplishments: Outdoor Recreation/ Education

- Eight regional campgrounds including Fanshawe Conservation Area.
- Dozens of day use parks.
- Nearly 20, 000 acres of land owned.
- Trails, day use facilities, boating.
- Newly evolving curriculum based education programs.
- **~1 million visitors/year and growing**



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Funding

Collective annual budget approaching **\$20 M**

- Municipal levy ~ 34% of revenue
- Typically leverage the municipal investment at a minimum of 2:1

Capital assets valued at well over **\$100 million**



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Future?

- 1. UTRCA Environmental Targets Strategic Plan:**
 - Commitment to achieve measurable and visible environmental improvements that will require a doubling of effort.
- 2. Planning and Regulations Capacity Issues :**
 - number of reviews, complexity, violations, challenges, shorter review times, communications.
- 3. Phosphorus Targets and Work with Senior Government**
- 4. 2017 Watershed Report Cards**
- 5. On-going capital investment and upgrades- Green Infrastructure**





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Questions?






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