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Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority's SMART Watersheds Project to Create Technology Ecosystem

OSHAWA, ON, Wednesday, July 29, 2020 — Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority (CLOCA) is excited to announce their *SMART Watersheds* Project, funded with the generous support of the [RBC Tech for Nature](#) program. Their \$60,000 investment provides CLOCA with state-of-the-art technological tools to obtain detailed data required to assist CLOCA to ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the watersheds within their jurisdiction.

The *SMART Watersheds* Project (*SMART*) is designed to create a technology ecosystem, to enhance environmental monitoring activities with more frequent data collection, analysis, and advanced data management. In addition to the technology, the SMART engages community volunteers, elementary and high school students in using this new technology in their local watershed. Participants will receive training and access to data collection technology to add to CLOCA's *SMART* database. This additional support helps to create an engaged constituency that understands and contributes to improving watershed knowledge.

Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority currently captures information on a variety of environmental health indicators, across land and water resources in their watershed jurisdiction. Further analysis of this data informs CLOCA's understanding of overall ecosystem health and watershed function, and identifies areas of concern including poor water quality or flood-vulnerable communities. Additional data collection positions CLOCA to better respond to issues and opportunities, improving their modeling and prediction efforts today and most certainly in the future as wetter, wilder and warmer weather is predicted across their jurisdiction. This data will help contribute to adaptation and mitigation efforts, to address climate change, provide effective flood warning and forecasting information to the community, and ensure CLOCA's [Integrated Watershed Monitoring Program](#) guides the implementation of their watershed management plans.

"We're excited to be working with Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority to tackle one of the most pressing issues of our time – climate change," said Valerie Chort, Vice-President, Corporate Citizenship, RBC. "Using our more-than-money approach, we will leverage the assets in our ecosystem to proactively bring together charitable partners, along with the required experts, to build the type of multi-partner coalitions that are needed to address and solve our shared environmental challenges."

To-date, CLOCA has purchased a variety of real-time and hands-on monitoring equipment for deployment in local creeks, schools and libraries to better understand weather, water quality and quantity in local creek systems. Some of the data will be transmitted wirelessly, as often as every 60 seconds. A live-streaming camera will provide CLOCA and their municipal partners with imagery of two of their creeks, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Some monitoring efforts will require hands-on efforts, including water quality sampling (performed by volunteers of *SMART*). All the data input automatically or manually, will be entered into an accessible *SMART Watersheds* Project Portal. The *SMART* Portal will provide CLOCA staff, participating students and community volunteers, partners and stakeholders with an interactive database to support climate change inquiries on a watershed scale. Users will be able to utilize this data to facilitate visualization of future scenarios, create mapping and allow manipulation to answer specific inquiries, as well as help with more accurate modeling, statistical reporting and analysis.

For additional information on CLOCA's *SMART Watersheds* Project, please contact Patricia Lowe, Director, Community Engagement, CLOCA at plowe@cloca.com

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About Central Lake Ontario Conservation (CLOCA)

Central Lake Ontario Conservation (CLOCA) is a local, community-based, environmental organization and one of 36 Conservation Authorities responsible for managing watershed resources across Ontario. Established in 1958, CLOCA's jurisdiction is based on the watershed boundaries of four major watercourses and 18 minor watercourses draining an area of over 639 square kilometres. Central Lake Ontario Conservation's watershed stretches from the municipal boundaries of Ajax/Pickering to Clarington, and north from Lake Ontario to the crest of the Oak Ridges Moraine.

Central Lake Ontario Conservation provides a wide variety of science-based watershed management programs and services, delivered in partnership with their municipal partners, local landowners, environmental agencies and all levels of government. Central Lake Ontario Conservation's municipal partners include the Region of Durham, the cities of Oshawa and Pickering, the towns of Ajax and Whitby, the Municipality of Clarington, and the townships of Scugog and Uxbridge.