



2026
-
2035

CENTRAL LAKE ONTARIO CONSERVATION AUTHORITY'S

STRATEGIC PLAN

Our Path Towards Healthier Watersheds
for Today and Tomorrow



Strategic Plan 2026 to 2035

Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority (CLOCA) presents an update to our Strategic Plan for the 10 years from 2026 to 2036. Our updated Strategic Plan provides direction over the next 10 years to help guide our efforts in protecting people and property from natural hazards, conserving and restoring natural heritage, striving for excellence in our operations, and connecting people to nature, while considering the needs and interests of our watershed communities.

We recognize that CLOCA's watershed faces increasing challenges, including climate change, population growth, invasive species, and growing demand for access to natural and recreational areas. But with the right strategies in place, we are ready to meet emerging issues with purpose and commitment.

Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority'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. We have been protecting areas of natural significance within our jurisdiction for over 60 years. Today, CLOCA owns and manages over 2,900 hectares of conservation lands. These lands are critically important in achieving healthy watersheds and climate change resiliency, protecting residents from natural hazards (flooding, erosion), offering visitors the opportunity to connect with nature, protecting significant wetlands, groundwater resources, valley lands and important wildlife habitats, as well as sensitive natural features, including the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Lake Ontario Shoreline.

Under the *Conservation Authorities Act*, Conservation Authorities must deliver the following mandatory programs and services:

- ✓ Mitigation of the risk of natural hazards (flood, erosion, dynamic beaches)
- ✓ Management of CLOCA-owned lands
- ✓ Drinking Water Source Protection
- ✓ Groundwater and stream monitoring (water quality and quantity)
- ✓ Delivery of Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy and Conservation Area Strategy



About Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority

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 (see map on page 3). Our 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 Authority provides a wide variety of science-based watershed management programs and services, delivered in partnership with our municipal partners, local landowners, environmental agencies, and all levels of government. Our 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.

Our Strategic Plan reflects our core values and priorities to achieve healthy watersheds for today and tomorrow.



CLOCA's Jurisdiction



What is a watershed?

The entire area of land that drains into a specific creek, river or lake.

Vision

Healthy watersheds for today and tomorrow.

Mission

Advancing integrated watershed health through engagement, science and conservation.

Core Values

Times change and priorities shift, but there is a set of timeless principles – **our core values** – that individually and collectively define who we are and the way we want to deliver service. As an organization, we are committed to the following six compass directions:



1 Conservation

We are committed to protecting, preserving, and enhancing the watershed in all our actions. We are conservation advocates, land stewards and trusted advisors, promoting science-based watershed management and working with others to improve watershed health and public safety.

2 Resilience

We excel when faced with changes and challenges by being prepared, adaptable and solution-oriented.

3 Innovation

We value innovation and knowledge. We strive to see differently and think creatively, to foster new ideas and offer better services and programs for our watershed community.

4 Excellence

We strive to consistently provide the highest standard of customer service, along with the highest standard of care for our watershed.

5 Collaboration

We are team players, committed to building relationships with our partners and achieving remarkable results across the watershed. We are collaborators and partners of choice, and we encourage others to be watershed champions.

6 Leadership

We are passionate and dedicated to the work that we do. We are ethical, accountable, transparent, inclusive, and committed to inspiring others to value the critical role that healthy watersheds play in sustaining our quality of life. We lead by example and inspire others to do the same.

GOAL 1

Improve Watershed Health and Resilience



Lynde Shores Conservation Area Wetland Interspersion Restoration, June 2025



Crow's Pass Conservation Area. Photo courtesy of M. Breems

Key Objectives

- ✓ Improve understanding of watershed ecosystem and its response to human and natural environmental stressors, to support evidence-based decision making.
- ✓ Secure and grow the network of regionally protected greenspace and Conservation Authority land holdings.
- ✓ Maintain and implement integrated watershed plans and other action plans to guide land use planning, protection, restoration, and stewardship initiatives.
- ✓ Collaborate with partners to reduce the impact of environmental stressors and improve community health and climate resilience.

GOAL 2

Protect People and Property from Flooding and Erosion Hazards



King Street, Oshawa flooding, July 2016

Key Objectives

- ✓ Increase capacity to predict flood events and flood-vulnerable areas, and improve flood event warning systems and communication.
- ✓ Provide timely and expert technical advice and land use tools and resources to our partner municipalities.
- ✓ Improve understanding of natural hazards and to inform risk management actions to aid regulation, administration, and compliance.
- ✓ Avoid or mitigate potential risk to people and property from natural hazards and support resilient development and community revitalization that is safe.

GOAL 3

Manage Conservation Areas to Improve Ecological Health and Nature-based Visitor Experience

Springtime hike at Heber Down Conservation Area.



Key Objectives

- ✓ Identify appropriate opportunities for enhanced use/revitalization/optimal use of Conservation Areas and facilities.
- ✓ Enhance the ecological integrity of Conservation Areas.
- ✓ Provide safe and high-quality nature-based experiences that contribute to mental and physical well-being.
- ✓ Design, implement, and manage Conservation Area infrastructure that respects the environment.

Hand-feeding songbirds (Black-capped Chickadee) at Lynde Shores Conservation Area.
Photo courtesy of Ang Tek Gie Photography.



GOAL 4

Inspiring Action for Nature through Engagement and Education







Back2Nature Program, Enniskillen Conservation Area. This Program was offered through a partnership with the Welcome Centre Immigrant Services to a group of newcomers to Canada.



Durham Children's Watershed Festival, an annual event held at Camp Samac, Oshawa.

Key Objectives

-  Foster environmental awareness, appreciation, and action by connecting the community with nature through educational programs.
-  Promote student participation in outdoor programming to educate future generations on the importance of watershed health and to make connections that foster a stewardship ethic.
-  Inspire and support community stewardship action within our watershed through volunteer opportunities offered.
-  Provide programs that respond to and reflect a diverse community.

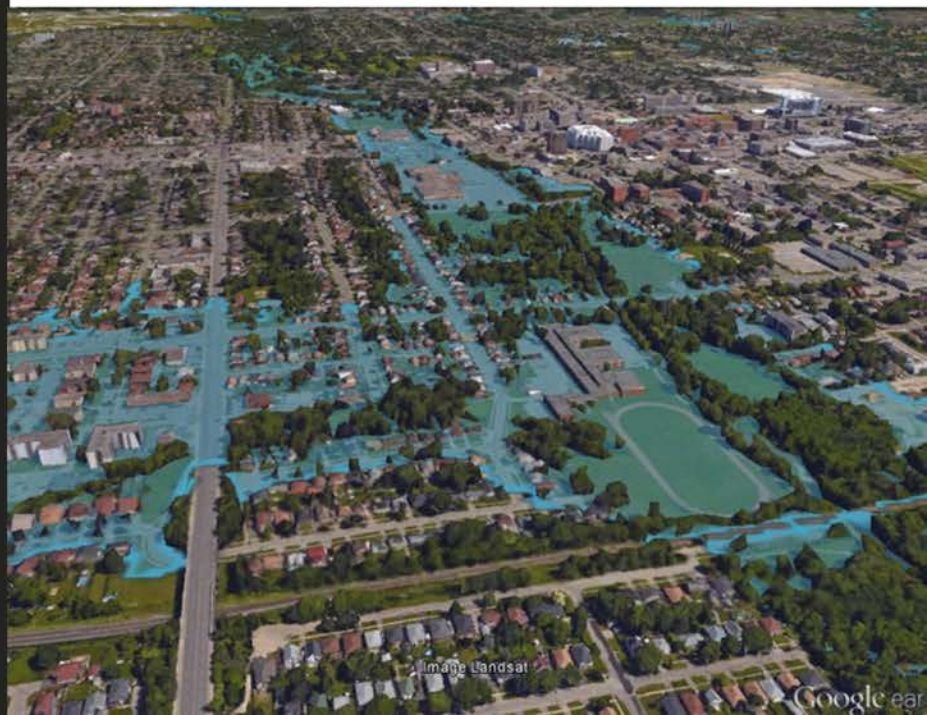
GOAL 5

Demonstrate Business Excellence through Effective Customer Service, Engaged Employees and Innovation

Key Objectives

- ✓ Provide efficient, effective, sustainable, and client-focused programs and services.
- ✓ Support watershed health through positive Indigenous and community relations and partnerships.
- ✓ Engage employees with measurable, continuous improvement outcomes
- ✓ Foster a strong culture of leadership and collaboration, and continue to strive for diversity, equity and inclusiveness.
- ✓ Continue to modernize data and mapping management resources and services to support stakeholder and corporate priorities

Cranberry Marsh floodplain.



*Railway Trail, Heber Down Conservation Area.
Photo courtesy of Nusayba Sultana.*

Healthy watersheds for today and tomorrow.

