

# TOP 13 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

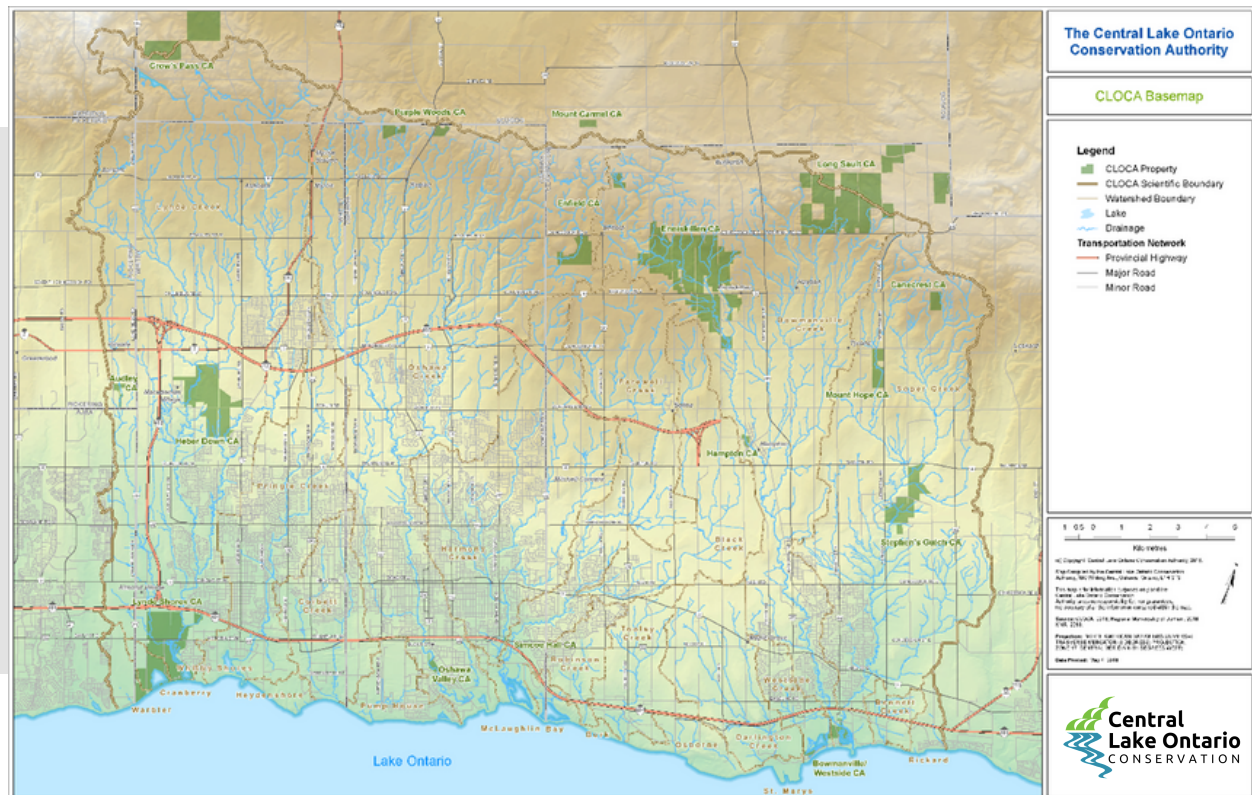


## 1 What are 'conservation lands'? Where are these conservation lands located in the Central Lake Ontario Conservation watershed?

Conservation lands include streams, wetlands, valleylands, woodlands, meadows, groundwater recharge/discharge areas, aquatic environments and other important wildlife habitat. Many ecologically significant features and functions are found on conservation lands across the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority (CLOCA) watershed. These conservation lands play a critical role in helping to sustain Durham Region's sensitive natural resources including water, aquatic, terrestrial and wildlife habitats and offer many opportunities to connect with the natural world through passive and active recreational and educational activities.

## 2 Why are conservation lands important?

Human health is intimately tied to the health of our environment. The effective management of conservation areas are important because they are the foundation for a healthy quality of life. Connecting people to the natural world creates many economic, ecological, socio-cultural, emotional and environmental benefits. Conservation lands have been acquired, protected, and restored in an effort to support CLOCA's primary mandate, which includes the protection, management, and restoration of the watershed's important natural resources. These conservation lands play a critical role in sustaining Durham Region's critical natural resources including water, aquatic, terrestrial and wildlife habitats, and in turn the environmental services provided by these natural assets. As a result, these lands are of critical importance for maintaining healthy watersheds.



### 3 Why is Central Lake Ontario Conservation developing a Conservation Lands Master Plan? Why now?

Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority has not undertaken a significant review of its conservation lands programming in more than 20 years. Since that time, Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority's conservation land holdings have more than double through successful land securement efforts; public use of conservation areas has increased dramatically, while new and different approaches to outdoor recreation and education have emerged; conservation area infrastructure requires new investments; significant population increases and subsequent pressures on our natural resources are expected in the Durham Region over the next decade and beyond.

Detailed management plans have been developed for CLOCA's core conservation areas and a Lands Securement Strategy was formalized in 2015. Extensive natural heritage restoration work has been unfolding along with the development of a more fulsome and diversified trail network and investments in new public use infrastructure.

Importantly, the development of a new Strategic Plan for CLOCA recognizes the importance of promoting the enjoyment and safety of conservation lands by improving enforcement, land management and land use infrastructure. In addition, the Region of Durham is developing a new Regional Official Plan. That work has just commenced and will be establishing the future development of our communities to support future growth (population, infrastructure and economic) while protecting the environment and addressing important issues including climate change. Many of the municipalities across the CLOCA watershed have identified open space and recreational needs based on anticipated growth and integration of this work with CLOCA's conservation lands planning is important in providing a fulsome assessment.

For all of these reasons, the time is right to develop a comprehensive Master Plan for Central Lake Ontario Conservation's conservation lands.

### 4 What is a Conservation Lands Master Plan?

A Conservation Lands Master Plan is a comprehensive and strategic document created to protect, conserve and restore the valuable ecological features and functions associated with CLOCA's conservation lands, while guiding the current and potential future public uses of these lands. Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority's Conservation Lands Master Plan is intended

to provide a vision of what is possible within the Central Lake Ontario Conservation watershed and motivate partners and supporters to assist CLOCA in realizing that vision. The Master Plan that is in development will guide the management and use of CLOCA's conservation land holdings until 2041.

## 5 Why is a Conservation Lands Master Plan important for Central Lake Ontario Conservation?

A Conservation Lands Master Plan will help us to:

- identify a clear and agreed-upon set of goals for our conservation areas and conservation land holdings;
- streamline and focus decision making;
- allow human and fiscal resources to be accurately and appropriately aligned with identified priorities;
- develop a forward-looking and forward-thinking vision for our conservation lands; and,
- ensure that our conservation lands continue to meet the needs of our watershed and community.

## 6 What is the scope of Central Lake Ontario Conservation's Conservation Lands Master Plan?

The Conservation Lands Master Plan covers all conservation lands under the jurisdiction of CLOCA. Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority has been protecting areas of natural significance within its jurisdiction through direct ownership for many years. Today, CLOCA owns more than 2,700 hectares of conservation lands that protect significant wetlands, valleylands, forests, meadows, groundwater resources, aquatic environments and other important wildlife habitat.

## 7 How does Central Lake Ontario Conservation acquire land? Where has it traditionally focused its land acquisition efforts?

Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority uses a number of approaches to acquire lands that require protection in order to maintain natural biodiversity in the landscape:

- **Purchase** – Working with funding partners, such as the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation, the Regional Municipality of Durham and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, CLOCA will secure key properties by purchasing them at fair market value from willing landowners.
- **Conservation Easement** – Easements are voluntary legal agreements conveyed between the property owner and the conservation organization to protect significant features of the property. The terms of the easement are registered on title and provide a tool for the Conservation Authority to protect significant features on a property without owning it.
- **Donation** – Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority will accept donations of key properties from individuals or estates. Charitable receipts can be provided to the donor. Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority has traditionally focused its land acquisition efforts in three primary areas:

1. The Oak Ridges Moraine (important for its groundwater recharge and discharge functions and for its large unfragmented forested areas)
2. The Iroquois Beach area (important for its groundwater recharge and discharge functions, significant cedar swamp wetlands and minimally disturbed valley lands)
3. Lake Ontario shoreline (important for its watershed outlet zones and provincially significant coastal marshes)

## **8 What is the process for developing the Conservation Lands Master Plan?**

The Master Plan process will occur in several phases that consist of compiling background material and research, holding public information and engagement sessions, developing the vision, goal and objectives as well as the management recommendations. Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority will be looking to community members and organizations, government agencies and industry throughout the process to help develop guide the Master Plan.

## **9 What is the timeframe for developing the Conservation Lands Master Plan? When will it be finalized?**

The Conservation Lands Master Plan is being completed over a number of years with multiple phases. The process is being led by a Steering Committee consisting of CLOCA staff. A consultant was retained to assist staff in developing consultation process and initial phases of the Conservation Lands Master Plan. Based on the current work plan for this project, the Conservation Lands Master Plan is expected to be presented to the CLOCA Board of Directors in late 2021.

## **10 What happens once the Master Plan is approved?**

The Conservation Lands Master Plan, once developed, will be used to make informed decisions. It will be used by the CLOCA Board of Directors to make decisions about priorities, and it will be used by staff as a tool to focus resources—staff and fiscal resources—in alignment with those priorities.

## **11 How did Central Lake Ontario Conservation ensure that all interested members of the watershed community and stakeholder groups have an opportunity to contribute to the creation of the Master Plan?**

We developed a robust engagement strategy to ensure that any interested community members and stakeholder groups could share their ideas:

- We had developed an online survey to allow watershed residents to share their views.
- We placed drop-boxes and comment cards at the front desk of each Municipal Office and in many libraries and community centres in our watershed jurisdiction.
- We hosted Public Meetings to share our progress and to allow our watershed residents to share their ideas with us. Details regarding these meetings were distributed and were posted on CLOCA's website.

## **12 Is Central Lake Ontario Conservation working with the watershed municipalities to develop the Master Plan?**

Yes, the Region of Durham and the area Municipalities are important partners in conservation. Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority is working closely with municipal staff to ensure that the municipalities are solidly engaged in the development of the Master Plan from the outset.

**13 I still have more questions.  
Who can I contact for more  
information about Central  
Lake Ontario Conservation's  
Conservation Lands Master  
Plan?**

If you would like more information or wish to speak with a CLOCA staff member, please contact:

Jamie Davidson, Director, Watershed  
Planning and Natural Heritage  
Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority  
100 Whiting Avenue, Oshawa ON L1H 3T3  
Phone: 905-579-0411, ext. 114  
Fax: 905-579-0994  
Email: [jdavidson@cloca.com](mailto:jdavidson@cloca.com)

