

Central Lake Ontario Conservation

Strategic Plan 2016-2020



*Central
Lake Ontario
Conservation*

100 Whiting Avenue
Oshawa, Ontario,
Canada L1H 3T3

p: 905-579-0411
f: 905-579-0994
mail@cloca.com
www.cloca.com

Joint Message from the CAO & Chair of the Board of Directors

On behalf of the members of the Central Lake Ontario Conservation (CLOCA) Board of Directors and staff, we are pleased to present our new Strategic Plan for 2016-2020. The continued evolution of CLOCA and indeed, the evolution of our watershed, is supported by our renewed vision and mission and guided by our governing principles and our corporate goals and objectives.

This plan has been informed by our watershed community and we wish to thank all who participated. Your assistance has been invaluable in allowing us to define our future direction. This Plan identifies five (5) goals with specific outcomes and strategic actions to guide our staff and our Board.

This document reflects our commitment to action and is directive in its approach and action-oriented in its focus. It will be used on an on-going basis to identify priorities and direct the allocation of our staff and fiscal resources. As an organization, we will be guided by the actions contained herein. This Plan will be our guidepost to the future and we will, on an annual basis, monitor our progress and report on our results.

What you will also see in the pages of this document is a Plan that speaks uniquely to the Central Lake Ontario Conservation watershed and to our organization. There is no doubt that some parts of the watershed have undergone dramatic transformation over the years as urban growth continues and as newcomers find reason to settle here. Our landscape will continue to change over time. We will use our scientific knowledge of our watershed's natural resources to respond to this change and support a safer, healthier and sustainable watershed.

Current research points to the connections between our own human health and the health of our environment. From our perspective, a robust and resilient watershed supports strong ecological connections, biodiversity, reduction of risks associated with flooding and natural hazards, offers a solid foundation for community vitality and an exceptional quality of life. If, as Les Milbraith once said so eloquently '*nature bats last*', we need to put the watershed first. Our commitment is to protect, preserve and enhance the features and functions of the watershed that will ensure our communities are safe and sustainable. We can't do it alone and so we invite you to play an active role in building a sustainable watershed and in turn, a sustainable future.



Chris Darling
Chief Administrative Officer



Don Mitchell
Chair, Board of Directors



Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*)

Our Watershed

Since 1958, Central Lake Ontario Conservation (CLOCA) has had a mandate to promote the conservation, restoration, responsible management, protection and enhancement of our watershed. We carry out these responsibilities in partnership with The Regional Municipality of Durham, Cities of Oshawa and Pickering, Towns of Ajax and Whitby, Municipality of Clarington and the Townships of Scugog and Uxbridge – the Provincial and Federal governments and many community partners and stakeholders.

What is ‘a watershed’ or specifically CLOCA’s watershed you might ask, and why is managing it so important? A watershed is the total area of land drained by a primary creek, river or lake. Melting snow and rainwater drain into this common body of water and like tree branches, smaller streams or tributaries are connected and drain into the larger system, eventually forming one main trunk. The water, land, air and climate within that watershed are all linked and contribute to creating an ecosystem, one that includes people. The CLOCA watershed is an area of 627 square kilometres, drained by eighteen (18) watersheds, as shown in this map of our jurisdiction. Your health and watershed health are inseparable. Homes, businesses, farms, forests, wetlands, streams, hamlets, towns and cities are all an integral part of the watershed, and our collective actions or our “living and lifestyles” can have both positive and negative impacts on its health. When a watershed is healthy, we all benefit and it is easily

measured. Life for many species is sustained, we have green spaces to enjoy, beaches are clean, water is drinkable, swimmable and fishable, and the effects of flooding and erosion are mitigated and reduced.

At CLOCA, our job is to work with others toward healthy watersheds ensuring positive and sustainable improvements for our communities. We are committed to sharing the message - *“that the health of our watershed matters and moreover supporting a watershed that is resilient, healthy and sustainable requires the efforts of many.”* Through this Strategic Plan, we are reaffirming our commitment to put the watershed first and encourage others to do the same. The actions contained in this document are designed to inspire ecologically informed decisions and develop an enhanced understanding about the watershed and about CLOCA specifically.



Our Strategic Goals & Actions

As Central Lake Ontario Conservation looks to the future, we will build on the many successes we have achieved in our 57-year history. We will, at the same time, be inspired by our new strategic direction. Five goals have emerged through the strategic planning process, representing our priorities for the next 5 years.



- **Communicate, educate & inspire**
- **Leaders in integrated watershed management**
- **Operate responsibly & sustainably**
- **Collaborate & partner**
- **Advance watershed science & knowledge**

These goals are described in more detail in the following pages. These are further defined by strategic actions that are required to achieve our vision, mission and goals.



Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)

Goal **1** : **Communicate, Educate & Inspire**

**strategic
actions**

OUR FOCUS:

To share our watershed story, to inspire our community to be watershed champions and to take action for real change.

OBJECTIVES:

- **Get the Word Out** - To ensure that more people know about CLOCA, what we do and who we are
- **Take Action** - To encourage others to put watershed health first in thought and action

Get The Word Out:

- Develop strategic marketing/advertising initiatives to improve the visibility of CLOCA and public understanding and awareness of our programs and services including:
 - o Communicating key messages about the value for service that CLOCA offers and our accomplishments;
 - o Improving the use of social media to build a broader base of support and to reach a diverse audience;
 - o Co-marketing with other watershed partners;
 - o Showcasing our programs, projects, practices and results to foster innovation across our watershed;
- Recognize and celebrate environmental achievements of volunteers, partners and their milestones and successes.

Take Action:

- Assess community-based needs and identify opportunities for expanded conservation education and programming to meet the needs of an evolving, diverse and dynamic watershed community;
- Continue to offer innovative educational programs to inform and raise awareness of the value of a healthy watershed by:
 - o Collaborating with schools, teachers and School Boards to identify and act on opportunities to integrate watershed-based education into a variety of curricula;
 - o Supporting new environmental learning experiences and providing tools for children, youth, adults, families and seniors, to encourage informed decision making and behaviour.

Goal 2 : Leaders in Integrated Watershed Management



strategic actions

OUR FOCUS:

To improve watershed health and in turn, our quality of life.

OBJECTIVES:

- **Keep It Safe** - Protection of people, place and property from natural hazards
- **Make It Better** - A healthier and more resilient watershed
- **Improve The Process** - More integrated service delivery and continuous improvement

Keep It Safe:

- Continue to ensure that municipal planning decisions and CLOCA permit approvals keep people, property and public infrastructure safe from natural hazards;
- Enhance flood forecasting warning and protection tools;
- In partnership with municipalities, commit to prioritizing, managing and reducing risk associated with natural hazards;
- Enhance the enjoyment and safety of conservation areas by improving enforcement, land management and public use infrastructure.

Make It Better:

- Work with watershed partners to further implement science-based watershed plans and related management plans to protect, restore and enhance watershed health;
- Continue to develop new plans and initiatives to protect surface and groundwater quality and quantity;
- Continue to implement a land protection and acquisition strategy to capitalize on assets, protect watershed health and improve public access;
- Continue to monitor, manage and evaluate the health of our natural resources and implement management actions where and when necessary;

- Identify appropriate opportunities for enhanced use/revitalization/optimal use of Conservation Authority owned facilities;
- Continue to improve conservation areas by building capacity for land management and by investing in innovative public use infrastructure as appropriate;
- Develop a CLOCA Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy.

Improve The Process:

- Continue to innovate and improve effectiveness of the planning and permitting approvals process including:
 - o Developing and implementing formal agreements with watershed municipalities to identify service level expectations and deliverables;
 - o Identifying and implementing opportunities to make the planning and permitting process more 'user friendly' and easier to navigate.
- Continue to develop best management practices as well as green building standards for new development and work with municipal partners to encourage implementation;
- Collaborate with partners to monitor and find solutions to current and future issues affecting our watershed (e.g. management of excess soil).

Goal 3 : Operate Responsibly & Sustainably



strategic actions

OUR FOCUS:

To be known as an exceptionally well-run and well-managed, financially sustainable, transparent organization.

OBJECTIVES:

- **Be Financially Secure** - Build financial sustainability and certainty for the long term
- **Be More Effective & Efficient** - Improve operational efficiency and effectiveness
- **Be Resilient & Adaptable** - Enhance organizational capacity and resilience

Be Financially Secure:

- Explore opportunities to maximize efficiency of service delivery;
- Develop innovative revenue generation initiatives from both public and private sectors;
- Pursue new business models to assist in funding costs associated with conservation area operation;
- Maintain the fee schedule in collaboration with municipal and key watershed partners;
- Investigate opportunities to improve the effectiveness of the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Fund to support fundraising and community engagement.

Be More Efficient And Effective:

- Review decision-making policies and tools with a view to improve efficiency and effectiveness;
- Modernize data management and accessibility to offer

- more products to the public via the CLOCA website;
- Work with municipal partners to strengthen collaboration and enhance the use of new technologies in development application and approvals processing.

Be Resilient & Adaptable:

- Continue to identify additional opportunities to share resources and services with watershed municipal partners and adjacent Conservation Authorities;
- Establish a corporate culture, processes, policies and practices that support innovative thinking, staff recruitment and retention, information and knowledge transfer, staff training, professional development and successional planning.

Goal 4 : Collaborate & Partner

strategic actions

OUR FOCUS:

To promote a stronger culture of collaboration and partnership across the watershed.

OBJECTIVES:

- **Strengthen Existing Partnerships** - To ensure collaborative efforts continue to evolve to meet the needs of our partners
- **Build New Alliances and Create Connections** - Encourage innovation to secure new community partnerships to garner watershed champions

Strengthen Existing Partnerships:

- Strengthen existing partnerships with watershed stakeholders, industries and groups to support greater linkages with Conservation Authority lines of business;
- Establish new approaches for meaningful engagement with municipal staff and elected officials;
- Complete a municipal staff training needs assessment and deliver technical workshops on a range of watershed specific issues (e.g. Low Impact Development (LID's), stormwater);
- Continue to partner with community-based and government organizations to enhance watershed health and function through research and support for restoration and stewardship initiatives.

Build New Alliances and Create Connections:

- Identify opportunities and secure resources to establish new non-traditional partnerships including partners who may have resources to share and a desire to optimize the use of these resources through collaboration;
- Explore and identify opportunities for capacity building with partner agencies, by considering reciprocal staff exchanges and secondments;
- Identify opportunities to encourage more community involvement and to engage those who are not currently connected to the watershed by:
 - o Enhance our Volunteer Network to cultivate and expand the current database of stewards and watershed champions;
 - o Consider the creation of a CLOCA Watershed Roundtable/Advisory Panel with diverse stakeholders to provide advice and guidance on watershed-related issues;
 - o Expand community events and family-focused learning.



Goal 5 : Advance Watershed Science and Knowledge

strategic actions

OUR FOCUS:

To be the respected and trusted source of environmental knowledge and relevant scientific information for the watershed.

OBJECTIVES:

- **Get the Answers** - To improve understanding of complex environmental issues
- **Share the Knowledge** - To make data and knowledge more available

Get The Answers:

- Support and enhance data collection, monitoring and research to fill current knowledge gaps, including gaps related to climate change;
- Support monitoring of mitigation and adaptation efforts to understand progress and share lessons learned;
- Explore opportunities to understand the ecological value of our watershed's goods and services;
- Invest in information technologies, modelling and innovative tools to improve the scientific understanding of current and the future state of natural resources within our watershed;
- Explore opportunities to advance citizen science to undertake monitoring.

Share The Knowledge:

- Identify and share knowledge, data, science and practices for community partners to use in their efforts to protect and enhance the watershed, inspiring positive actions and outcomes;
- Increase knowledge of the CLOCA data warehouse, tools and capacity and broaden access to these resources;
- Make information available to the general public in a format that is easy to access and understand;
- Identify additional opportunities to share knowledge and information with partner organizations and adjacent Conservation Authorities, (including the use of citizen science and application of new technologies);
- Continue to use science to develop and implement watershed and related management plans.



The 12th Annual Earth Day Community Tree Planting Event in 2015



Swamp Milkweed
(Asclepias incarnata)

Implementation : **Our Commitment to Action**

At Central Lake Ontario Conservation (CLOCA), we have always been committed to action and this Strategic Plan provides a more formalized framework in which to align the delivery of our existing and emerging programs and services. We will use this document as our guidepost and compass for the future. This document will act as the foundation for budget development and operational planning and we will allocate both human and fiscal resources in alignment with the strategic priorities contained herein. Our intention moving forward will be to realize these key strategic actions by developing detailed work plans and performance criteria to measure outcomes.

While this document highlights a number of strategic imperatives for CLOCA, we will continue to work with our partners and community-based organizations to realize our priorities. We will, at the same time, be committed to monitoring and reporting on our progress and we will share our collective results with our watershed community. Annual reporting will be part of our ongoing commitment to action and our results will be presented to our Board and published on our website so that all of our watershed community can see the progress being made.

Our Strategic Plan points the way to a healthier watershed for today and tomorrow. We look forward to taking that journey with you. Follow our progress at www.cloca.com.

Our Corporate Focus : Vision, Mission & Values

VISION

Healthy watersheds for today and tomorrow.

MISSION

Advancing watershed health through engagement, science and conservation.

OUR 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 in which we deliver service. As an organization, we are committed to the following five compass directions:

Conservation

In all of our actions, we are committed to protecting, preserving and enhancing the watershed. 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.

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 the watershed community.

Excellence

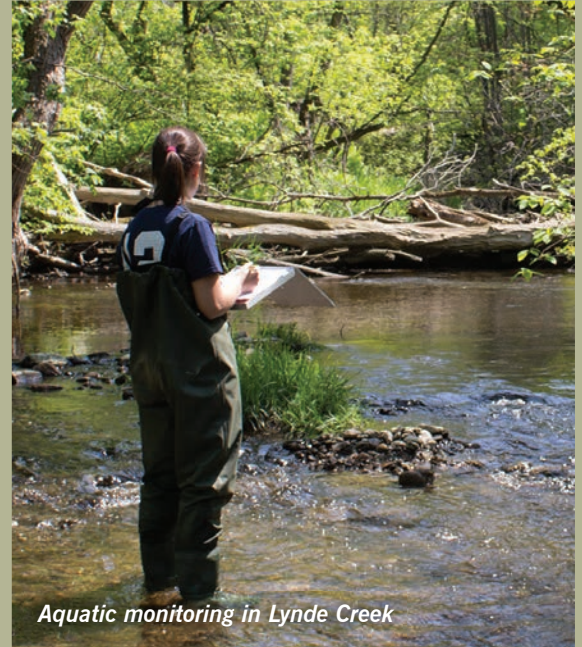
We strive to consistently provide the highest standard of customer service, along with the highest standard of care for our watershed.

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.

Leadership

We are passionate and dedicated to the work that we do. We are ethical, responsible 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.



Aquatic monitoring in Lynde Creek



www.cloca.com