

# 2022 Annual Report

St. Clair Region Conservation Authority



## A Message from Our Chair

It is my pleasure to present the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority's (SCRCA) Annual Report for 2022, which highlights another year of resiliency, creativity, and change. For two years, our organization, like all others, had to adapt to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the health and safety of our employees, board, and community. A welcomed return to normalcy was met in 2022. I want to thank our board and staff for their dedication to the organization during this unprecedented time, and for their seamless transition back to pre-pandemic operations.

The SCRCA experienced many successes throughout 2022. Our Conservation Areas continued to be a popular destination for local residents and visitors, and thanks to generous donors and grant programs, we were able to complete several upgrades to our most popular trail systems and amenities to enhance visitor experience. Our Planning and Regulations team continued to be busy with the issuance of close to 300 permits to support local development in the watershed.

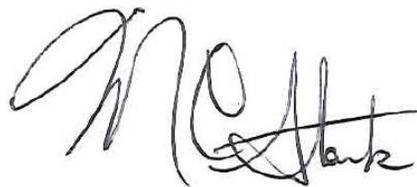
The continued trend of lowering Great Lakes water levels allowed us to more easily complete important shoreline protection work along the Lake Huron and St. Clair River shorelines to protect critical infrastructure from erosion and further prepare our region for the impacts of climate change.

We planted over 50,000 trees in 2022, rescued and released 2,800 at-risk turtle hatchlings back into their native habitat, and engaged and educated over 20,000 students thanks to offering both in-person and virtual program options.

And just this past fall, we approved our new Strategic Plan that outlines the SCRCA's strategic direction and objectives for the five-year period between 2023 and 2028.

As we look toward 2023, the resiliency of our organization will be vital as we adapt to legislative changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act*, passed by the Government of Ontario in November. Bill 23 – *The More Homes Built Faster Act*, has several components that may diminish our role in the review of development applications, among others. Despite adding our voice to the many opposing the legislation, we will continue to work with and foster a positive relationship with our provincial government to support development in Ontario, while protecting our environment.

I look forward to witnessing the future work of the SCRCA toward a healthy and sustainable natural environment. I would like to thank our board and staff for the privilege and support in leading our organization over the last year.



**Mike Stark**  
**Chair, Board of Directors**  
**St. Clair Region Conservation Authority**



## About Us

The St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (SCRCA) is one of Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities (CA) responsible for the conservation, restoration, and management of natural resources within its watershed. The St. Clair Region includes the Sydenham River watershed and smaller watersheds that drain directly into southern Lake Huron, the St. Clair River, and northeastern Lake St. Clair.

Our programs aim to 1) reduce the risk of life and property from flooding and erosion; 2) improve water quality; 3) promote habitat creation and stewardship; 4) provide outdoor recreation opportunities; 5) increase environmental awareness and literacy; and 6) monitor and protect our most vulnerable species. We achieve this in cooperation and partnership with our member municipalities, government agencies, Indigenous communities, community groups, local landowners, and businesses.

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## 2022 Board of Directors

### Township of Adelaide Metcalfe

Betty Ann MacKinnon

### Municipality of Brooke-Alvinston

Frank Nemcek

### Municipality of Chatham-Kent

Joe Faas, Aaron Hall

### Township of Dawn-Euphemia

Alan Broad

### Township of Enniskillen/Village of Oil Springs

Kevin Marriott

### Municipality of Lambton Shores

Lorie Scott

### Municipality of Middlesex Centre

Debbie Heffernan

### Town of Petrolia

Brad Loosley

### Town of Plympton-Wyoming

Tim Wilkins

### Village of Point Edward

Greg Grimes

### City of Sarnia

Terry Burrell, Bill Dennis, Mike Stark

### Municipality of Southwest Middlesex/ Village of Newbury

Diane Brewer

### Township of St. Clair

Pat Brown, Steve Miller

### Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc

John Brennan, Frank Kennes

### Township of Warwick

Jerry Westgate

## St. Clair by the Numbers



### Population

146,655



### Area

4,130 km<sup>2</sup>



### Landuse

81%  
Agricultural



### Trails

> 40 km



### Conservation Areas

15 (620 ha)



## Water Resources

Our water resources team oversees the SCRCA flood forecasting and warning program, and the maintenance and operation of flood control structures, including the W. Darcy McKeough Floodway. We work closely with local municipalities to protect public infrastructure through shoreline protection works. Our team also administers the Drinking Water Source Protection program for the St. Clair Region which protects municipal sources of drinking water from contamination. Lastly, our water resources department monitors and reports on Great Lakes water levels and conducts groundwater sampling on behalf of the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks.



Port Lambton Park

## Erosion Control Projects

The SCRCA works closely with shoreline municipalities to protect critical infrastructure from erosion caused by high water levels and extreme waves triggered by strong storm events. In 2022, \$680,000 in funding was secured through the provincial Water & Erosion Control Infrastructure Fund, in addition to multi-year funding provided by the federal Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund to support shoreline protection projects along the Lake Huron (Pine Street to Penhuron Avenue) and St. Clair River shorelines (Port Lambton Park Shoreline Restoration). Funding was also received from the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks to support these projects.

In partnership with the Township of St. Clair, shoreline protection along the St. Clair River at Port Lambton Park was completed in 2022. Armour stone was installed along a 240 metre stretch of shoreline to reduce the impact and severity of flooding and erosion.

## Flood Operations

Flooding is a natural process and while the Authority has done much to reduce the risk to life and property, some flooding in developed and undeveloped areas is still inevitable. As such, the SCRCA operates a flood warning program designed to warn municipalities of flood conditions. Through a network of 11 stream gauges, five snow sampling sites, ice monitoring, and meteorological data, our staff monitor ice and streamflow conditions, and issue bulletins should a flood be imminent.

The five types of bulletins the SCRCA issues include:

1. **Normal Conditions** – no flood conditions exist
2. **Shoreline Conditions Statement**
  - Water Safety – watercourses could post a danger due to high water levels, wave action, and erosion – flooding not expected
  - Flood Outlook – early notice of the potential for flooding along shorelines
3. **Watershed Conditions Statement**
  - Water Safety – watercourses could post a danger due to fast flows and unstable banks – flooding not expected
  - Flood Outlook – early notice of the potential for flooding
4. **Flood Watch** – potential for flooding in some municipalities
5. **Flood Warning** – flooding is imminent or occurring

The Authority also monitors watershed conditions using Low Water Indicators to determine whether we are in a drought. Under drought conditions, the Authority meets with the Low Water Response Committee to issue a Level I, II, or III Low Water Condition. No Low Water Conditions were issued in 2022.

## Drinking Water Source Protection

Residents living in the SCRCA watershed are protected from significant drinking water threats through the administration of the Thames-Sydenham and Region Source Water Protection Plan. The SCRCA houses a Risk Management Official/Inspector who works with local communities, industries, and municipalities to ensure risks to drinking water are identified and mitigated. All initially identified significant threats that were identified in 2014 have been mitigated through negotiated Risk Management Plans. Annual inspections continue in the Lambton and Chatham-Kent region for existing managed threats with ongoing review and screening for any potential new threats.

## Groundwater Monitoring

In an effort to better understand Ontario's groundwater resources, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks implemented the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network to monitor water quality and quantity in local wells. The Network is a cooperative effort of the Conservation Authorities in Ontario, on behalf of the Ministry. The SCRCA monitors nine groundwater wells for water levels and eight groundwater wells for water quality as part of this program. The data gathered are reported in the Authority's Watershed Report Card, released every five years.

## 2022 Flood Bulletins

### SHORELINE CONDITIONS

Water Safety - 0  
Flood Outlook - 1  
Combined Water Safety/Flood Outlook - 1

### WATERSHED CONDITIONS

Water Safety - 2  
Flood Outlook - 2  
Combined Water Safety/Flood Outlook - 4

### FLOOD WATCH - 2

### FLOOD WARNING - 0

## Planning and Regulations

As a watershed management agency acting under the *Conservation Authorities Act*, the SCRCA is responsible for ensuring that development is directed outside of areas prone to flooding and erosion. Under *Ontario Regulation 171/06, "Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses"*, staff review permit applications for development within these areas to ensure that the proposed development will not result in future risk to lives or property. In addition, the SCRCA assists our member municipalities with review of development applications under the *Planning Act* to ensure that development adheres to the natural hazard and natural heritage policies identified in the Provincial Policy Statement.

### Bill 23 - More Homes Built Faster Act

On November 28th, the Government of Ontario passed the *More Homes Built Faster Act* (Bill 23) which outlines several legislative changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act* and *Planning Act* to expedite development and address the provincial housing shortage.

Specifically, the *More Homes Built Faster Act* (Bill 23) proposes to:

1. Prohibit municipalities from entering into agreements with their local Conservation Authority for comment and review of development and land use planning applications from an environmental and natural heritage perspective.\*
2. Exempt select development from requiring a permit under the *Conservation Authorities Act* where *Planning Act* approvals are in place.
3. Remove "conservation of lands" and "pollution" as considerations in permit decisions.
4. Freeze Conservation Authority development fees.\*
5. Require Conservation Authorities to examine whether lands they own are suitable for development.

Conservation Authorities will still be involved in the review of *Planning Act* applications as it pertains to Natural Hazard features and Source Water Protection as well as reviewing and permitting development under Ontario Regulation 171/06. Landowners should still continue to contact the Conservation Authority prior to any development within a regulated area.

\* On December 28, 2022, the Government of Ontario sent a letter to all Municipalities and Conservation Authorities informing them that the Province passed Ontario Regulation 596/22. This regulation changes the review and commenting services that Conservation Authorities may provide to Municipalities, and also freezes Conservation Authority development fees, effective January 1, 2023. The regulation for 2, 3, and 5 above has not been passed to date, and as such the SCRCA remains business as usual.

## Planning Activity 2022

Inquiries	125
Active Files	248
Application Types (Note: Active files may have multiple applications)	316
Minor Variances	34
Severances	60
Site Plan	38
Subdivision/Condominium	59
Zoning By-law	81
Official Plan	44
Files with Natural Heritage	32%

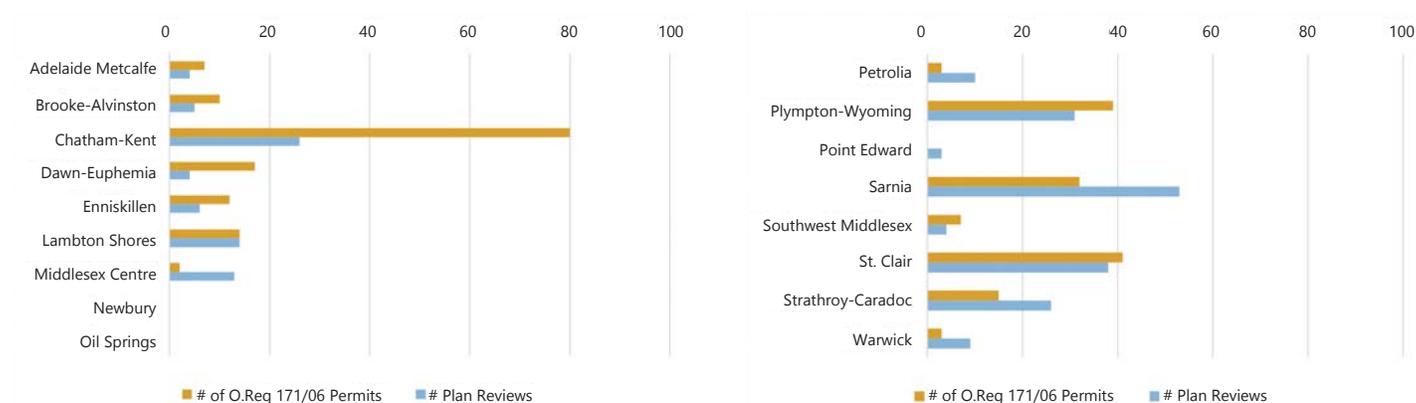
## Regulations Activity 2022

Legal Inquiries	49
Permits Issued under Ontario Regulation 171/06	282
Inquiries under Ontario Regulation 171/06	475
Compliance/Enforcement Matters under Ontario Regulation 171/06	44
Hearings	0

## Drainage Act and Section 28 Regulations Team (DART) Protocol Activity 2022

Total Drainage Projects Reviewed	122
Standard Compliance Requirements (SCRs) Issued	92

## 2022 Planning and Regulations Activity by Municipality



A close-up photograph of a small, brownish-green Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle hatchling resting on a wet, mossy rock. The turtle's head is turned slightly to the right, showing its eye and a small, pointed snout. The background is a blurred green, suggesting a natural aquatic habitat.

Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle  
Hatchling

## Biological Monitoring

The Sydenham River, located within the St. Clair Region, is recognized provincially, nationally, and even internationally for its biodiversity. SCRCA biologists work with government agencies and non-profit organizations to monitor populations of local aquatic and terrestrial species (including Species at Risk) throughout the Sydenham River watershed and the smaller watersheds that make up the St. Clair Region. Staff also collect important data (e.g., water quality, benthic invertebrates) to assess the health of local habitats and overall watershed health. This data is used by both the SCRCA and our partners to help guide policy development, prioritize research efforts, and implement rehabilitation and protection measures.

## Water Quality Monitoring

Every year, the SCRCA monitors local water quality through the chemical analysis of surface water samples collected from 21 sites throughout the watershed and the collection and identification of bottom-dwelling biological indicators (benthic invertebrates) from 14 sites. In 2022, 455 surface water samples were collected and analyzed for nutrients, *E. coli*, and metals between the months of May and November, in addition to 30 benthic invertebrate samples. Water quality data is shared with partner agencies and organizations and reported on in our Watershed Report Card, released every five years.

## Fish Monitoring

The Sydenham River is home to at least 82 of the 129 native freshwater fish species found in Ontario – of which many are threatened by habitat loss, pollution, and invasive species. The SCRCA monitors fish communities in local watercourses to obtain important information on species distribution to help guide policy development and research efforts. The 2022 fish monitoring season saw the collection, identification, and release of 4,294 fish from 17 sites.

A close-up photograph of a Northern Sunfish, showing its head and upper body. The fish has a brownish-gold body with a prominent black spot on its side, just behind the dorsal fin. The scales have a shimmering, iridescent quality. The background is a blurred, reddish-brown color.

Northern Sunfish

## Freshwater Mussel Monitoring

No other river in Canada has greater freshwater mussel diversity than the Sydenham River. Thirty-four of the 41 mussel species native to Ontario have been historically found in the North and/or East Branch of the Sydenham River. With funding from the Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk, the SCRCA assisted the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada in surveying long-term index sites under the Unionid Monitoring and Biodiversity Observation network to further gain knowledge on the distribution and diversity of freshwater mussels. Over the course of the study, 3,682 individual mussels were recorded, representing 30 different species. Of these 1,223 individual mussels were one of ten Species at Risk recorded in 2022.

## Captive Hatch and Release Turtle Program

The St. Clair Region watershed is home to six of eight different species of turtle found in Ontario – all of which are considered Species at Risk. The SCRCA's Captive Hatch and Release program aims to increase turtle hatchling survivorship by eliminating threats to turtle eggs posed by nest predation, shoreline development, and human activities. Efforts focus on the collection and incubation of eggs laid by the Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle – an endangered species at imminent risk of extinction. The 2022 program saw the rescue of another record-breaking number of turtle eggs. In total, 3,242 eggs

were collected from at-risk nests throughout the watershed and 2,809 turtle hatchlings were released back into the wild.

In 2022, the SCRCA Biology team launched their first ever Species at Risk (SAR) Open Art and Colouring Contest. An amazing digital piece was submitted that featured many of the aquatic animals found in the Sydenham River. Merchandise showcasing this piece of artwork is now available for purchase with all proceeds going to support important SAR-related programs in the St. Clair Region.

Species at Risk Merchandise



## 2022 Highlights



### Fish Monitoring

**47** different fish species

**1** invasive species

Round Goby

**2** Species at Risk

Northern Sunfish

Blackstripe Topminnow



### Mussel Monitoring

**Species at Risk**

Kidneyshell

Mapleleaf

Northern Riffleshell

Purple Wartyback

Rainbow

Rayed Bean

Round Pigtoe

Threehorn Wartyback

Fawnsfoot

Snuffbox



### Turtle Program

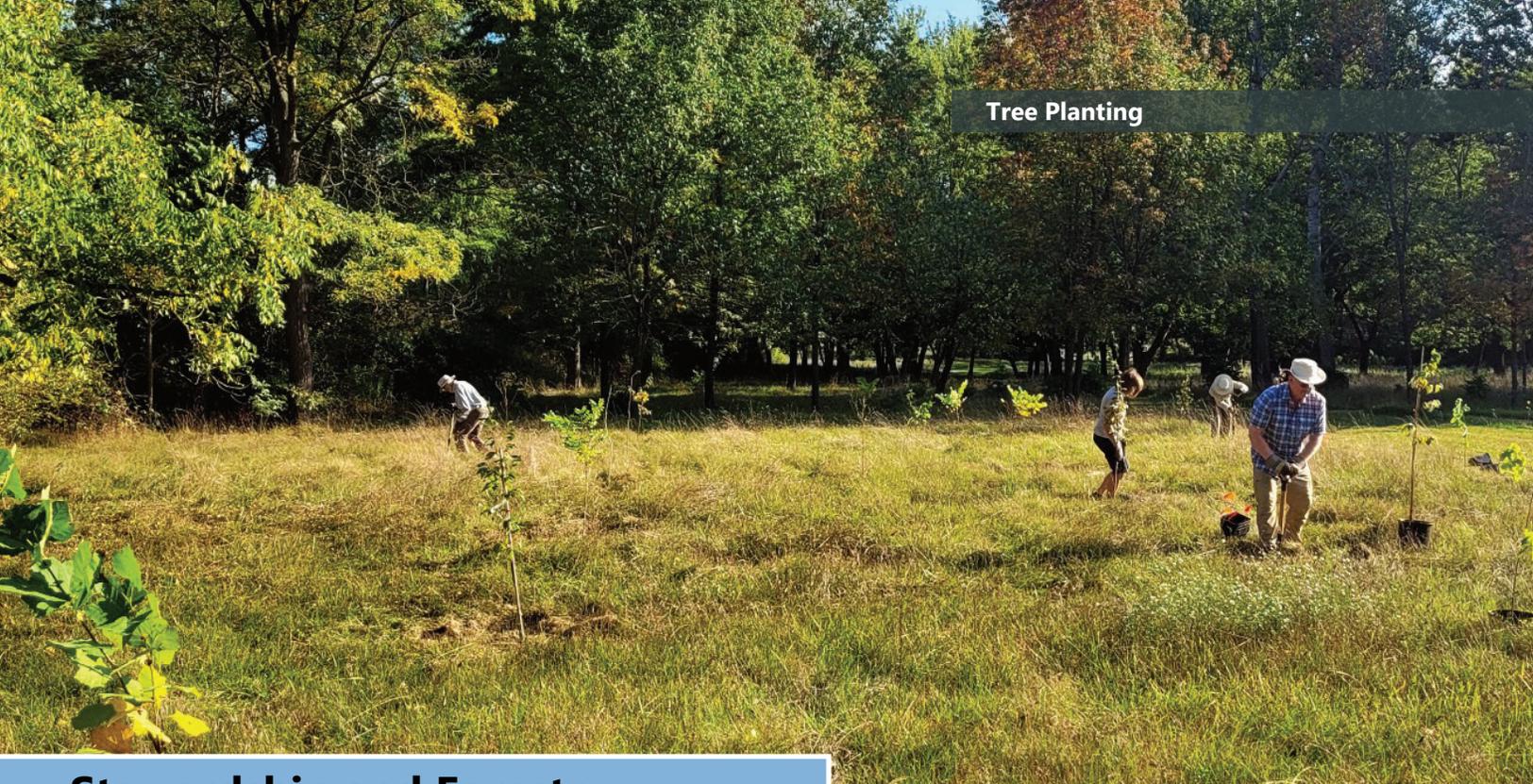
**1,467** Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtles

**689** Snapping Turtles

**643** Northern Map Turtles

**6** Midland Painted Turtles

**4** Spotted Turtles



## Stewardship and Forestry

The SCRCA promotes and supports activities that will create healthy watersheds and improve local water quality and soil health. Conservation Authority staff achieve this by providing educational opportunities, technical advice, and financial assistance to local landowners interested in establishing Best Management Practices (BMPs) and stewardship projects on their properties, such as tree planting and wetland creation. The SCRCA also offers several forestry services to promote sustainable woodlot practices.

### Environmental Stewardship

Environmental stewardship projects are completed annually throughout the St. Clair Region watershed to improve and protect rural water quality and soil health. SCRCA staff actively seek grants to provide funding to support the efforts of local landowners. In 2022, \$266,285 in grant funding was secured to support 36 projects, with participating landowners contributing an additional \$35,964. In total, 27 hectares of agricultural land (valued at approximately \$660,000) were taken out of production by local landowners to allow for the implementation of stewardship projects.



### 2022 Stewardship Projects

- 25 tree planting projects (23 hectares)**
- 8 wetland projects (4 hectares)**
- 1 erosion control projects**
- 2 cover crop projects (600 hectares)**

## Tree Planting

The SCRCA had another successful tree planting year in 2022, with 53,630 seedlings and 1,273 large-stock trees planted throughout the St. Clair Region watershed. A total of 45,930 tree seedlings were planted by SCRCA staff on 25 properties. Large-stock trees and the remaining 7,700 seedling trees were provided to 98 local landowners and 2 municipalities for plantations, windbreaks, and roadside plantings, among others.

### Tree Seed Collection

Every fall, SCRCA staff collect seeds from native trees throughout the watershed. These seeds grow into trees that will be used in future afforestation projects in the SCRCA region to ensure the trees produced are genetically adapted to our local growing conditions. Weather conditions in the spring and fall limited seed collection efforts in 2022 with only black walnut seeds gathered (1,260 litres). The reduced diversity of seeds obtained in 2022 will affect what tree stock is available for 2024, 2025, and 2026 afforestation projects.



## Lambton County Woodlands Conservation By-Law

Since 2011, the SCRCA has partnered with the County of Lambton and has provided professional forestry services in administering the County of Lambton Woodlands Conservation By-Law. The By-law aims to encourage good forestry practices among County woodland owners to ensure sustainable harvesting and maintenance. While enforcement of the by-law can occur for unauthorized woodland removals, etc. the SCRCA also implements an educational component to engage landowners on the environmental and social benefits of woodlands and best management practices to promote the preservation of tree cover within the County.

## Soil Health Conference - January 2022

Funded in part by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the SCRCA organized a virtual Soil Health Conference that brought local farmers together to knowledge share and learn about best management practices that can build healthy and sustainable soils. Over 100 people participated in the conference that featured 18 speakers including Certified Crop Advisors, representatives from OMAFRA and the SCRCA, soil experts, and champion farmers. Ninety-three percent of the participants reported that they were better equipped with new knowledge and ideas to improve soil health on their farms after attending the conference.



Featuring:

- MIKE BELAN  
LAMBTON COUNTY FARMER  
@mikebelan3
- ADAM HAYES  
SOIL RESOURCE GROUP  
@adamohayes
- PATRICK VERKLEY  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY FARMER  
@pverkley
- BEN ROSSER  
OMAFRA CORN SPECIALIST

St. Clair Conservation Authority



## Conservation Areas

Research has shown that spending time in nature has many positive effects on both mental and physical health. The SCRCA owns and maintains 15 Conservation Areas that span a total of 620 hectares throughout the watershed. Visitors can enjoy numerous recreational activities that include hiking along our over 40 km of trails, camping at our three regional campgrounds, fishing, and bird watching. In addition, the SCRCA manages seven natural areas for Lambton County.

Camping at the Authority’s three regional campgrounds returned to normal operations after two years of capacity and activity restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Traditional campground events and activities resumed thanks to a dedicated group of volunteers. Campers and visitors to the A.W. Campbell, Lorne C. Henderson, and Warwick Conservation Areas were once again treated to a variety of events and activities such as Canada Day fireworks, fishing derbies, and family-friendly activities. The SCRCA campgrounds brought in over \$1.4M in gross revenue in 2022.

## Busy Year for Upgrades

Thanks to a number of government grants, local funding streams, and donations, several upgrades were completed throughout 2022 to improve accessibility and visitor experience at seven Conservation Areas in the SCRCA watershed. In total, over 3.8 km of trails were upgraded to stone-dust material, 400 m of boardwalk were replaced, gravel pads were added to 59 transient campsites, and parking lot improvements were completed at two day-use properties.

Stone-dust Trail Upgrades



## Bruce Alan “Al” Bycraft Memorial Bridge

A long-awaited bridge replacement was completed at Coldstream Conservation Area in October 2022 thanks to the fundraising efforts of the Enviro-Friends of Coldstream community group and a generous donation by the Poplar Hill Lions. The new bridge serves as a memorial for Bruce Alan “Al” Bycraft, a long-time member of the Enviro-Friends community group and advocate for the Conservation Area.



Bruce Alan “Al” Bycraft Memorial Bridge



## Lambton Woodlot Analysis

## GIS and IT

Our Geographic Information System (GIS) and Information Technology (IT) experts provide essential support services to all SCRCA departments and programs. In addition to maintaining important technological infrastructure (i.e., computers, servers), our GIS and IT staff create, update, and manipulate geographic data into a form that other departments and programs can easily comprehend and utilize. Our GIS/IT staff also research and investigate new and exciting technologies to improve efficiencies within the Authority.

### 2022 GIS and IT Highlights

#### GIS Project Highlights

- Lambton Woodlot Assessment Project
- Implemented an enterprise GIS that is integrated throughout the organization to allow all staff to use spatial data to meet their needs.
- Implemented a new mobile data collection app for all departments.
- Commenced the GIS component of a Species at Risk (SAR) Threats Assessment – acquired data, analyzed, and mapped aquatic SAR threats in the Sydenham River basin.
- Updated trail maps for four Conservation Areas (Clark Wright, Strathroy, Coldstream, and Wawanosh Wetland Conservation Areas).

#### IT Project Highlights

- Implementation of Asset Management and Work Order Management software to facilitate long-term capital planning in coordination with Corporate Services.
- Installed enhanced security to enable office connectivity for remote workers.

#### New Mobile Data Collection Abilities and Enhanced Workflow

Conservation Lands staff, in coordination with the GIS department, used a new system for hazard tree inspections on SCRCA properties. The app allows staff to identify hazard trees in the field and facilitates enhanced tracking of work orders to address these trees. The app records the date, time, and location of each hazard tree and shares this information with Conservation Area staff and contractors. A GIS map showing the locations of all hazard trees and their status is updated in real-time to coordinate work orders and removal progress. The app allows workers to locate, remove, and document all activities which become part of the hazard inspection summary and risk assessment. The new system is in use by all departments and is expected to enhance data collection and workflow.



## Education and Outreach

Education is an important part of shaping tomorrow's environmental leaders and teaching communities about local conservation efforts. Our conservation education program offers a variety of hands-on, curriculum-based, indoor, and outdoor programs geared towards both elementary and secondary school students. Local media outlets and social media are utilized to enhance and expand conservation awareness throughout the St. Clair Region watershed and beyond. Additionally, staff organize and attend local events to introduce communities to the SCRCA, what we do, and how we can assist them in becoming more environmentally minded in their everyday lives.

### Conservation Education

Conservation education programs were in high demand in 2022. The SCRCA continued to offer virtual (e.g., Live-stream with a Naturalist, Webinar-style) and schoolyard (Nature in Your Neighbourhood) programs, in addition to traditional field trips to accommodate the changing environment of education delivery in the region. Because of this, over 20,000 students were engaged throughout the watershed.



Spring Water Awareness Program

### 2022 Conservation Education by the Numbers

**640 students**

**Nature in Your Neighbourhood**

**340 students**

**Live-stream with a Naturalist**

**5,450 students**

**Webinar-style Programs**

**4,196 students**

**Field trips to Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area**

**10,204 students**

**Sponsored Programs**

## Communications

### Social Media



**2,377 Followers**  
**205 Posts**



**221 Tweets**  
**250 Retweets**  
**900 Followers**  
**2,972 Engagements** (clicks, retweets, replies, follows, and likes)

### Media Relations

**32 media releases**  
**1,465 news article mentions**

### Website

**154,000 website views**

## Using Video to Expand Outreach in the Watershed and Beyond

With outreach opportunities limited during the COVID-19 pandemic, SCRCA staff had to pivot their efforts toward reaching local communities using virtual methods. These efforts continued in 2022 with the production of educational videos and appearances on the local cable TV show "Learn with Ranger Em".

## Recovery Efforts for the Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle

Funded by the Government of Ontario and released in March 2022, the "Recovery Efforts for the Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle" video introduces viewers to the federally and provincially endangered Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle and the work the SCRCA does to protect and support this species. The video has been viewed over 300 times and serves as an important educational tool to advocate for the SCRCA's Captive Hatch and Release Program and to educate the local community on what they can do to help recover turtle populations.

## Learn with Ranger Em Television Series

"Learn with Ranger Em" is a bi-weekly television show that airs on Rogers TV. Ranger Em is an environmental educator and communicator who teaches viewers about all things nature. Several SCRCA programs and projects were featured on the series throughout the year including the Authority's mussel monitoring program, Captive Hatch and Release turtle program, and community projects such as dune grass restoration along Lake Huron.

**SCRCA Events 2022**

**Soil Health Conference**  
Virtual

**Sydenham River Canoe and Kayak Race**  
Dawn-Euphemia

**Soil Health and Beneficial Insects**  
Virtual

**Bio Strip Till Tailgate Tour Series**  
All Over Ontario

*\*Partnership with Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)*

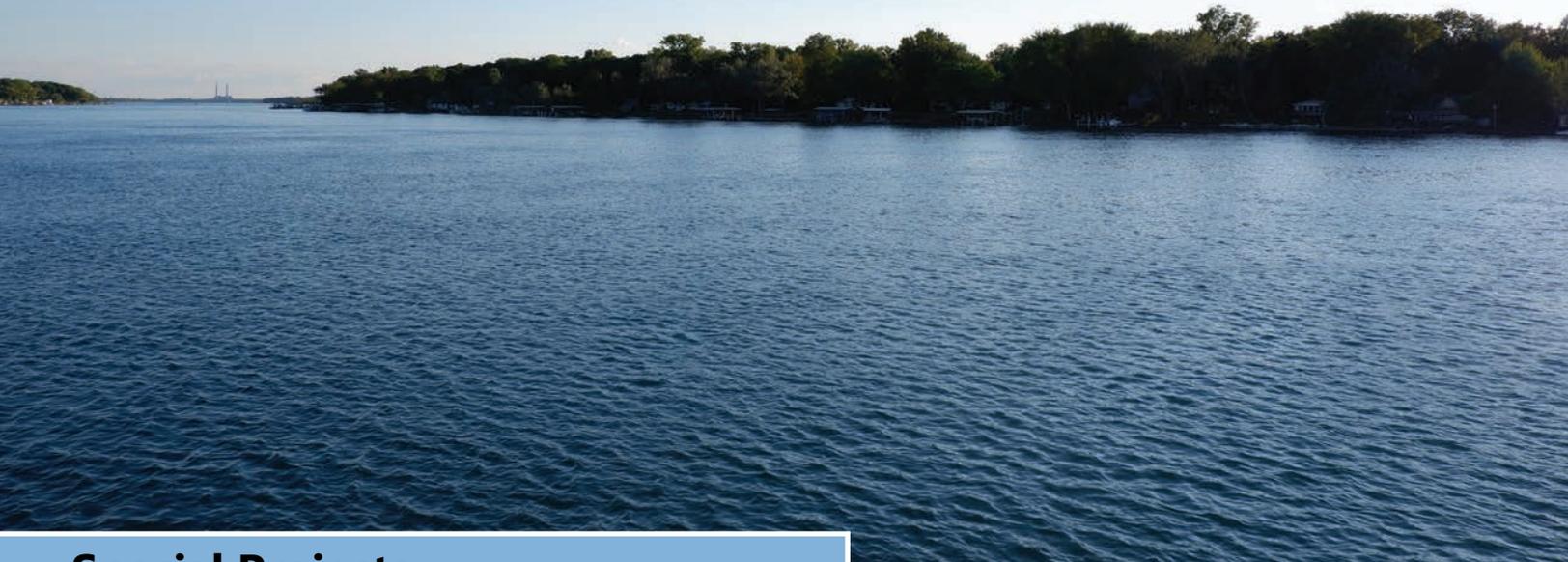
**Ipperwash Beach Shoreline Clean-up**  
Lambton Shores

**A Geocaching Adventure**  
Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area  
Petrolia

**National Tree Day**  
Coldstream Conservation Area  
Middlesex Centre

**AgriSuite Workshop**  
Warwick





## Special Projects

### Healthy Lake Huron

To improve water quality and promote clean beaches along the southeast shores of Lake Huron, the Healthy Lake Huron (HLH) program was launched in 2011. Since then, the SCRCA has partnered with all levels of government, local health units, other Conservation Authorities (CAs), and community groups to retain nutrients on land and reduce the risk of harmful algal blooms between Sarnia and Tobermory. In 2022, the HLH team continued to run a social media campaign called #PieceofthePuzzle to connect communities with the lake and highlight the role we play in keeping Lake Huron healthy. Highlights of the 2022 campaign included a YouTube video series showcasing several important topics about living along the shore of Lake Huron and a series of posts leading up to Love Your Greats Day on August 13<sup>th</sup> to celebrate Lake Huron.

#### Ipperwash Dune Grass Planting

SCRCA staff worked with the Municipality of Lambton Shores and the Lake Huron Coastal Centre to transplant dune grasses along Ipperwash Beach to protect the shoreline from erosion.



Ipperwash Dune Grass

### Sydenham River Aquatic Species at Risk Threat Inventory

Through funding from the Habitat Stewardship Program for Aquatic Species at Risk, the SCRCA is completing a Threat Inventory for aquatic species at risk in the Sydenham River. The Sydenham River supports a wide diversity of plants and animals, has been identified as one of 13 freshwater Key Biodiversity Areas in Canada, and contains critical habitat that is important to the persistence of globally threatened species. For this project, the SCRCA is synthesizing data on local threats to the aquatic environment that can be used to direct stewardship and recovery efforts.

## Sydenham River Watershed Phosphorus Management Plan

Through funding provided by Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks, the SCRCA has been coordinating the development of a phosphorus management plan for the Sydenham River to reduce excess loading of this nutrient to waterways, which contributes to degraded local water quality and algal blooms in Lake Erie. The objective of this program is to work with local stakeholders to identify sources of phosphorus, determine best-value solutions, and develop an outreach strategy.



### Yellow Fish Road

The Yellow Fish Road™ program was developed by Trout Unlimited Canada to remind Canadians that water that enters storm drains is not treated and that these drains are connected to our streams, lakes, and rivers. As an outreach initiative through the Sydenham River Phosphorus Management Plan, the SCRCA worked with five elementary classes to deliver the program. Over 100 students helped raise awareness among their communities by painting yellow fish next to 226 storm drains and distributing informational fish-shaped door hangers to 650 homes in the Sydenham watershed, reminding people that only rain should go down the drain.

## Lambton County Phragmites Partnership and West Nile Control Program

Through funding provided by Lambton County, the SCRCA has assumed the coordinator role for the Lambton County Phragmites Partnership to increase local awareness of the threat of invasive Phragmites and support the implementation of eradication measures to reduce its spread. The SCRCA was also contracted by Lambton Public Health to treat catch basins as part of the West Nile Control Program. In 2022, 16,500 catch basins were treated three times during the summer with a larval growth regulator to prevent mosquito larvae from developing into adult insects throughout the County of Lambton and in a separate agreement, catch basins owned by Aamjiwnaang First Nation. Efficacy tests conducted 15 days after treatment averaged 80% to 85% effective at controlling adult mosquito emergence.

## St. Clair River Area of Concern

The St. Clair River was identified as an Area of Concern (AOC) in 1987 due to a lengthy history of urban and industrial development. For over 30 years, the local community, Indigenous Peoples, and government have been working together to improve local water quality and aquatic habitat to remove the river from the list of Great Lakes AOCs. On January 20, 2022, the Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI) related to Restrictions on Drinking Water Consumption or Taste and Odour Problems entered the process to be redesignated to a not impaired status based on the outcome of a BUI assessment report. Engagement of stakeholders and Indigenous communities on the recommendation commenced in 2022 and remains underway. To assist in gathering information on the consumption of fish from the St. Clair River by recreational and sports anglers, a community survey was developed in 2021 and closed in December 2022. Over 170 responses were received. A summary of the survey will be completed in 2023. Development of a new work plan for the St. Clair River Area of Concern commenced that will guide the actions needed between 2022 and 2027 to be able to re-designate the remaining BUIs. Lastly, 2022 saw members of the Binational Public Advisory Council gather aboard the Duc d'Orleans to celebrate four milestones in the restoration of the St. Clair River – the re-designation of four BUIs to Not Impaired on the Canadian side of the St. Clair River.

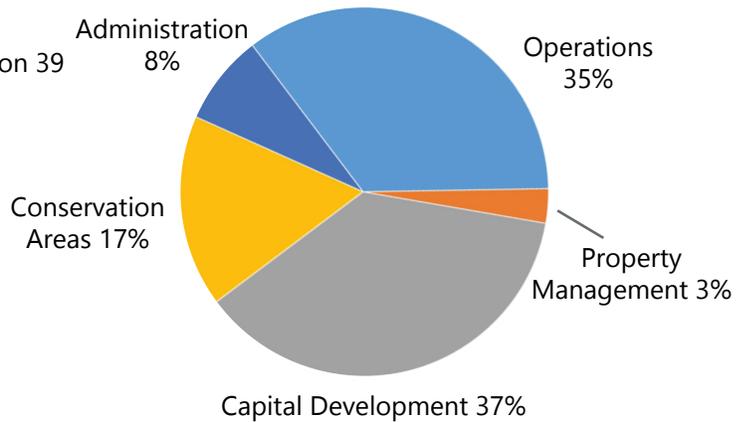
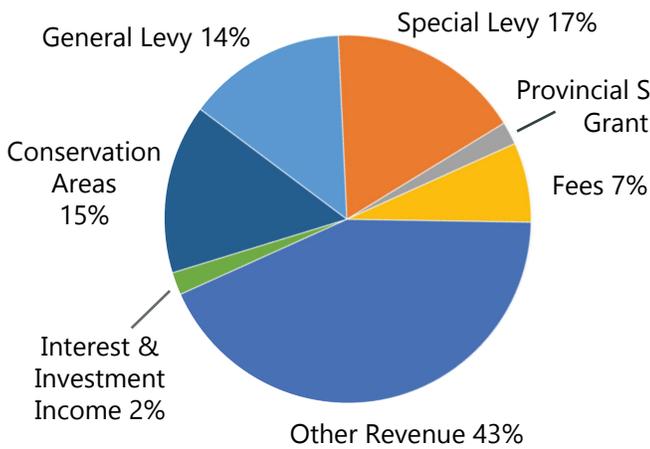


## Administration

The administration and finance team at the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority plays an integral role in fostering a positive and safe workplace for all Authority employees and managing the Authority budget. Our team continuously updates and improves SCRCA policies to achieve business excellence and sustainability while maintaining a positive corporate atmosphere.

**2022 Revenues – \$9,736,833\***

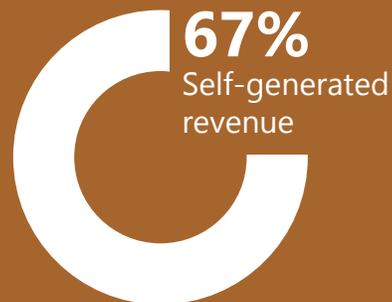
**2022 Expenditures – \$9,565,639\***



*\*unaudited*

Over **\$4 million** in funding secured by the SCRCA from 35 organizations, contracts, and/or government funding streams (2022-2023 fiscal year).

**\$9.40 per person**  
Cost of SCRCA programs and services supported by municipal levy per person in the SCRCA watershed.



# Our Staff

## Administration Office

Kandyce Affleck, Lands Technician (Jan - Apr)  
Laura Biancolin, Planner (Jan - Jul)  
Donna Blue, Manager of Communications  
Shelby Campbell, GIS Project Technician (Dec)  
Erin Carroll, Director of Biology (Jan - Sep)  
Vitra Chodha, Environmental Planner (Oct - Dec)  
Stephen Clark, Risk Management Official/Inspector  
Emily De Cloet, Water Resources Specialist  
Melissa Deisley, Director of Planning and Regulations  
Nicole Drumm, Special Projects Technician  
Chris Durand, Manager of IT/GIS  
Emily Febrey, Stewardship Communications Technician  
Ashley Fletcher, Administrative Assistant/Board Coordinator  
Sarah Hodgkiss, Manager of Planning and Natural Heritage (Jan - Oct)  
Sarah Hume, Payroll and Accounting Clerk (Jan - May)  
Kate Jamieson, Payroll and Accounting Clerk (Jun - Dec)  
Chunning Li, Director of Corporate Services (Jul - Dec)  
Emily Millette, Species at Risk Field Technician (Apr - Dec)  
Mike Moroney, Project Manager (Jan - Mar), St. Clair River RAP Coordinator (May - Dec)  
Rashida Naznin, Engineering Technician  
Krista Nicolson, Species at Risk Technician  
Kelsey Oatman, Planning and Regulations Clerk (Feb - Dec)  
Craig Paterson, Conservation Biologist (Jan - Sep), Acting Manager of Biology (Oct - Dec)  
Tim Payne, Manager of Forestry  
Ken Phillips, General Manager  
Natasha Pozega, St. Clair River RAP Coordinator (Jan - Mar)  
Tracy Prince, Director of Finance (Jan)  
Girish Sankar, Director of Water Resources  
Alison Seidler, GIS Specialist  
Jeff Sharp, Conservation Services Specialist

Steve Shaw, Manager of Conservation Services  
Kelli Smith, Watershed Biologist (Jan - Jun), Conservation Lands Specialist (Jul - Dec)  
Sarah Snetsinger, Watershed Health Technician (Jan - Aug), Watershed Biologist (Sep - Dec)  
Jessica Van Zwol, Healthy Watershed Specialist  
Jeff Vlasman, Regulations Officer  
Meagan Weber, Planning and Regulations Clerk (Jan - Feb), Regulations Officer (Mar - Dec)  
Greg Wilcox, Manager of Conservation Areas

## Drinking Water Source Protection

John Campbell, Senior Information Management Analyst  
Deb Kirk, Administrative Assistant

## Field Offices

### McKeough Floodway

Shane White, Maintenance Foreman, McKeough Floodway

### A.W. Campbell Conservation Area

Don Skinner, Superintendent  
Maryanne Nieuwenhuizen, Assistant Superintendent

### Lorne C. Henderson Conservation Area

Terry Barrie, Superintendent  
Luke Derks, Assistant Superintendent  
Melissa Levi, Conservation Education Coordinator  
Myra Spiller, Conservation Education/Community Partnership Technician

### Warwick Conservation Area

Glenn Baxter, Superintendent  
Derek Thompson, Assistant Superintendent

### McLean Conservation Lands

Scott O'Brien, Superintendent

## 2023-2028 Strategic Plan

Throughout the summer of 2022, SCRCA staff and Directors initiated a review of the Authority's strategic plan to update the organization's strategic direction and objectives for the five-year period between 2023 and 2028. Through consultation with staff, board members, municipalities, and local residents, the plan re-enforces and strengthens the SCRCA's four overarching goals to ensure the Authority maintains and improves upon past successes while also adapting and prioritizing future activities to best serve our municipalities, communities, and environment.

### GOAL 1

Strengthen and Raise the Profile of the SCRCA through Business Excellence

### GOAL 2

Develop and Maintain Programs that will Protect Life and Property from Natural Hazards such as Flooding and Erosion

### GOAL 3

Protect, Manage, and Restore our Natural Systems including Woodlands, Wetlands, Waterways, and Lakes

### GOAL 4

Provide Recreation and Education Opportunities for the Public to Enjoy and Learn from our Natural Environment



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