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Cataraqui to 2020: Executive Summary

The Conservation Authorities Act, enacted in 1946, provides the CRCA with a unique, watershed-based mandate to conserve and manage natural resources across its jurisdiction. The Authority has important roles as a trustee for the environment, as an advocate for the public open spaces, and as a manager of its natural resources.

The CRCA has a long, well-documented history of strategic planning. Factors such as municipal and provincial downsizing, changing demographics, more frequent severe climatic events resulted in this reevaluation of our long-term directions. This plan, Cataraqui to 2020, will be used by staff and members of the Authority as a guide to establish priorities for programs over the next 20 year period.

To focus efforts through times characterized by a challenging fiscal climate and organizational upheavals, three general overriding themes continue to be important in the Authority’s work: Research, Leadership and Coordination, and Education. Our Vision Statement provides a view of the future for all staff, members, and residents.

Our vision is that the natural environment of the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority watersheds will be conserved, that degraded natural resources will be restored, that our regional diversity will be valued by the watershed residents, and that the public will understand the role that everyone needs to play in resource management and resource enjoyment.

The Authority is associated with many other groups and agencies to achieve a range of mutually supportive objectives. Overall, goals describe general, long-term purposes, and following each of the six listed, are the key objectives which the Authority will strive to meet. These goals have been adapted from those approved by Conservation Ontario, and similarly, the order is not intended to suggest ranking.

Goal A: To conserve CRCA’s water resources, including the safeguarding, management and restoration of rivers, lakes and streams, and to work cooperatively with our partners to protect the water cycle.

- Produce watershed management plans for our major watersheds to help ensure their long-term health.
- Develop with other groups a coordinated approach to managing water quantity.
- Cooperate with agencies on research to maintain or improve the quality of surface water and groundwater resources.
- Provide technical advice to municipalities in implementing storm water management.

Goal B: To implement policies that will protect life and property from natural hazards such as flooding and erosion.

- Implement preventive policies for lands which may be subject to natural hazards.

Goal C: To conserve woodlands, wetlands and natural habitat.

- Protect significant natural heritage features through planning policies and procedures.
To cooperate with other partner agencies to fulfill terms of agreement to review impact of development proposals on fish habitat.

**Goal D: To facilitate protection of natural resources in order to conserve, restore, develop or manage them.**

- Implement a land management program reflecting the different types of properties under CRCA ownership.
- Enhance the Authority's technical advisory program to member municipalities and the public to protect or enhance natural areas and functions.

**Goal E: To provide opportunities for the public to learn from the public open spaces within the jurisdiction, and to respect the local natural environment.**

- Promote a range of conservation education opportunities for watershed residents.
- Promote our role and message to watershed residents, member municipalities, and partner agencies.

**Goal F: To operate an efficient and financially sound organization that provides excellent service to the community; promotes best environmental practices; and that offers a healthy, positive and nurturing workplace environment for staff, members and volunteers.**

- Maintain a positive image in the community.
- Make customer service a top priority in all work areas.
- Maximize the efficient use of time and resources to avoid waste.
- Demonstrate leadership in environmental design as well as energy and materials conservation.
- Foster the health, safety, morale and career development of our staff.
- Maintain up-to-date corporate policies.
- Maintain internal capacity in support services such as accounting, communications, document management, geomatics and information technology.
- Manage capital assets in a long-term, sustainable way.

*Cataract to 2020* outlines an ambitious program for the Authority. Changing priorities, or unforeseen needs on the part of member municipalities can result in changes to priorities as envisioned in this document, or in the addition of tasks to those outlined. Implementation of the plan, as proposed through a *work plan*, will ensure prudent use of available resources by complementing the plans of other agencies, community groups and citizens working within the watershed.

*Cataract to 2020* is designed as a long-range plan for 20 years, with renewed direction through regular work plans, to focus efforts of the Authority where priorities have shifted or staff need to assess new circumstances.
Introduction

Our lives depend on a clean, healthy environment. We face numerous environmental issues, including environmental degradation, competing development pressures, cottage development, loss of open space, and questionable water quality. The mandate of Conservation Authorities is given by the Ontario Legislature. The Conservation Authorities Act states in Section 20(1):

**The objects of an authority are to establish and undertake, in the area over which it has jurisdiction, a program designed to further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources other than gas, oil, coal and minerals.**

For the Authority to act wisely, and in a coordinated fashion, we must set goals, and outline how to achieve them to ensure adherence to them within the watershed and to inform other bodies, interested parties and the public of the Authority’s policies and the basis of them.

Why a Conservation Authority?

The Conservation Authorities Act, enacted in 1946, established Conservation Authorities as local agencies, for the management of natural resources. Their geographic jurisdictions are watershed-based ecological systems. The legislation gives the Authority a broad mandate (see Appendix A). Combining local and provincial concerns for the wise use of natural resources in Ontario, Conservation Authorities make a positive contribution to resource management in Ontario — one that is sensitive to local needs, and undertaken in a manner that satisfies needs that cannot be met as effectively otherwise. As an agency with a local identity extending beyond political boundaries, and which serves its client municipalities, the Conservation Authority has important roles as a trustee for the environment, as an advocate for the public open spaces, and as a manager of its natural resources.

The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA)

Each Conservation Authority is different, reflecting local circumstances and priorities. For the CRCA, the organizing committee’s leaflet published in 1963 outlined the following:

“If it is possible to reduce an Authority’s aims to one phrase, it would be to encourage, by aid and example, the efficient utilization of the area’s resources for the profit, education and recreation of its people. So complex is the interdependence of water, soil, forest and wildlife that the carrying out of this mandate brings it into many fields: 1) land use, land improvement and forestry, 2) control of water levels and flows and 3) education and recreation.”

The jurisdiction of the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) is large, encompassing 3506 square kilometres, ten major drainage basins, all or part of 11 municipalities, and over 250 km of Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River shoreline. Reaching from Hay Bay in the west to Brockville in the east, and from Newboro in the north to the Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River shoreline, the watershed has a very diverse collection of land forms and land uses. It is also a

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major land trustee, holding more than 4000 hectares or just over 1 per cent of the area within the watershed.

Why a Strategic Plan?
Planning is important. A strategic plan provides a long-term direction to guide the Conservation Authority. From the 1968 Conservation Report which made recommendations to guide the Authority in developing its conservation program, to the 1983 Interim Watershed Plan, and then to the 1993 Conservation Strategy which most recently set out the CRCA's strategic plan, we have recognized an ongoing need for strategic planning to focus our efforts on the matters of greatest importance.

Currently, factors such as a changing political structure, changing demographics, more frequent severe climatic events, and new opportunities in technology point to the need for a review of future directions. In addition to the increased stresses upon our natural resources, more limited staff and financial resources mean that efforts need to be focused to deliver optimum results. The Authority is associated with many other groups and agencies to achieve a range of mutually supportive objectives.

The Conservation Authority's strategic plan will be used by staff and members of the Authority as a guide to establish priorities for programs, over the next 20 year period. It will help provide direction to staff, which in turn, will help to complement the management efforts of associated agencies. Implementation of the plan, as proposed through a work plan will ensure prudent use of available resources by complementing the plans of other agencies, community groups and citizens working within the watershed.

To appropriately focus our efforts through times characterized by a challenging fiscal climate, and organization upheavals, there are three general areas of interest: Research, Leadership and Coordination, and Education.

Research, specifically the collection of basic resource data, and its analysis and implications for policy direction, must be one of our highest priorities because information on which to base policy, plans and actions is often lacking, incomplete or outdated. Research includes the collection of the resource data that are needed to improve our ability to make informed decisions and recommendations. The Authority needs data relating to the wide range of natural resources. Concern has been expressed about the quality of surface and groundwater. The Conservation Authority is concerned that our groundwater may not be widely recognized as the crucial resource that it is, and feels that research into protection of its quantity and quality is vital. Another focus of our research efforts must be on natural heritage areas. Not only must these areas be identified, but also means of protection must be implemented. The Authority will also focus research efforts on water use and water conservation.

Research is the collection and analysis of information. By itself, research is of limited use. We must assess that information, and apply it in managing our natural resources. There is also an obligation to make the information available — both to use it for internal purposes and to make it available to others or to reform their understanding and action. Helping others to better understand the natural environment is a more effective way of achieving objectives of mutual interest than by coercion through direction and regulation. Also, sharing of information should lead to clearer understanding and therefore better decisions. This may involve the use of new mapping tools and
the development of new techniques, and would be done in cooperation with other government and non-government agencies.

A lack of coordination and leadership in assessing and managing our natural resources often results in duplication of effort, lack of direction, confusion about who does what, and in missed opportunities. This is an area where the Conservation Authority raises the profile of environmental issues, and often plays a positive role because of our watershed-based jurisdiction that crosses numerous political boundaries. We can make a positive contribution in the resource management field because we have the flexibility and willingness to work with a wide range of agencies or individuals within our jurisdiction, and the staff members often facilitate equitable solutions to environmental problems.

This concern underlies all aspects of our strategic plan because it is recognized that most initiatives will not be undertaken alone, but will be carried out in cooperation with one or more of the groups with whom we work. The Conservation Authority may assume a leadership or coordinating role in some instances, while in others it may take a participatory role.

**Education**

Education is another area of cooperative endeavour. The Authority sees a need to increase awareness, understanding and appreciation of natural resources. Staff educate the public about stewardship of our natural resources, and how interconnected our various resources are. Individuals and private groups can play a significant role in the protection of our natural resources, because what is done locally will have a cumulative effect, and can contribute to a global improvement of our natural resources. The Authority shall attempt to provide the facilities and opportunities for educational purposes, so that this need can be met. We shall continue to offer conservation, education and other stewardship programs in cooperation with local school boards, environmental organizations and others.

Education is seen by the Authority as a multifaceted activity. Much of it involves providing general information to the public at large, and ranges widely from enhancing public understanding and knowledge of the natural environment to activities focused on particular topics such as woodlot and beaver management. Methods will include publications and public information advertisements. Some also involves making heritage lands more accessible by ownership of land and providing trails, washrooms and information kits.

One aspect of public programs is the more narrowly defined activities done in cooperation with school boards for classroom related programs. The arrangements vary from formal contracts at Gould Lake Conservation Area to Authority delivery of programs at the Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area and Mac Johnson Wildlife Area. Education is needed to ensure that understanding and motivation or support for basic concepts of environmental protection will continue so that our natural resources will be preserved for future generations. Advocating the development of appropriate policies to deal with our changing world and with specific areas of concern is crucial to consistent and appropriate watershed management.

**Principles of Conservation**

The principles underlying *Cataraqui to 2020* are:
An *ecological approach* explains the interdependence within our natural world, and deals with the connectivity of issues relating to the use of land and water. This approach is fundamental to healthy watersheds, and forms the foundation for planning within our watershed.

*Sustainable development* is a use or development that can be sustained by the environment without significantly impairing its natural values. Sustainable development is development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (The World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

We need to *educate* our watershed residents about the importance of stewardship of land and water resources, and how they contribute to our quality of life.

*Stewardship of land*, where individuals, partners and corporations understand and protect the natural resources on the lands under their control, should be encouraged and promoted.

In our important role as an *advocate for the environment*, we will partner with others to attain our vision for the watershed.

**Vision Statement**

The *Vision* of the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority is intended to provide a view of the future. If our Vision is fully achieved, future generations may be able to experience a higher quality of life. Therefore, one of the most important things that the Authority envisions, is a watershed with environmentally aware and involved participants—with a greater commitment to good stewardship. To this end, education is fundamental.

The Authority will also strengthen its association with other agencies effective in service delivery, as well as with citizens, community groups, and corporations. With a watershed based jurisdiction, we have a unique opportunity to cross political boundaries, just as natural resources cross these man-made limits.

*Our vision is that the natural environment of the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority watersheds will be conserved, that degraded natural resources will be restored, that our regional diversity will be valued by the watershed residents, and that the public will understand the role that everyone needs to play in resource management and resource enjoyment.*

**Cataraqui to 2020: Goals, Objectives and Priorities**

The goals, objectives and priorities detailed in the following pages are the planned actions, or programs to be implemented in the next 20 years to ultimately fulfill the Vision of the Conservation Authority. The order in which they are presented does not convey any ranking. Nor are the groupings independent of one another. These goals, which have been adapted from those guiding the 36 Conservation Authorities making up Conservation Ontario, describe general long-term purposes. It is recognized that they may not be entirely achievable within the life span of this plan, and that one of the keys to the success of meeting these priorities will be in building our partnerships and the level of cooperation with, and facilitation between other groups, public bodies and the community.

**Goal A: Safeguarding Water Resources**
To conserve CRCA's water resources, including the safeguarding, management and restoration of rivers, lakes and streams, and to work cooperatively with our partners to protect the water cycle.

The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority provides advice to all levels of government concerned with the responsible management of CRCA’s water resources, for advocating protection of rivers, lakes and streams, as well as for awareness of, and respect for the water cycle. In order to protect our water resources, there are five important water-related elements.

- **Watershed Management Planning**

To provide for proper management of resources and to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated approach, we need to develop environmentally sound watershed management plans using an ecological approach. Since the CRCA jurisdiction now includes a total of ten watersheds, including the Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River shoreline, the long-term objective is to carry out individual basin studies, based on natural watershed boundaries.

To prepare and implement watershed management plans for all ten basins, integrating the fragmented approach to resource management that presently exists.

To develop and apply plan input policies that are consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, as amended.

- **Water Quantity**

Our water quantity strategies focus on addressing the amount of water in various areas of the watershed, including areas where high waters or flooding potential is a concern. The CRCA owns and manages ten water control structures in the watershed. There are many structures operated by others, and this complexity of control is a challenge to the management of water in the area. Recognizing the predicted incidence of severe climatic events, the Authority has improved its forecasting and warning system, and has initiated low flow studies in critical areas.

To coordinate an approach to the management and use of water including the operation of water control structures across the jurisdiction.

To work with other agencies to monitor streamflow and develop water budgets in the watershed, and implement remedial measures where water quantity problems are identified.

To maintain flood/drought forecasting and warning capabilities, and to assist our member municipalities in preparing emergency response plans.

- **Water Quality**

The CRCA and the Ministry of the Environment conduct a surface water sampling program limited to selected streams across the jurisdiction. Standard water quality parameters are examined, and used to assess the status of water quality in these parts of the watershed. We must remember that streams are a part of a system of water, which flow into and out of the numerous lakes in our region. Initiatives by senior levels of government influence the extent of sampling and the Authority's involvement.

To assist in monitoring surface water quality in the watershed, in cooperation with other agencies, and to identify areas of water quality concern and information deficiencies.
To protect and enhance water quality through promotion of proper stormwater management, plan input and review, stewardship, education, demonstration, and conservation services, such as erosion control, forestry, and wildlife habitat improvement.

- **Groundwater**
  
The CRCA is working with the Ministry of the Environment and member municipalities to assess the quantity and quality of groundwater resources within the watershed, recognizing that this is an area where knowledge of the resource is most needed. Part of our message about the water cycle relates to the important link between ground and surface water resources, and what people can do to protect these resources.

  To work with other agencies, including adjacent Conservation Authorities, to assess the groundwater resources in the watershed, particularly the relationship between surface and groundwater.

  To promote research into the ways in which the quality and quantity of groundwater supplies can be sustained, protected and enhanced.

  To protect and enhance the groundwater recharge and discharge areas through use of techniques such as management guidelines, plan input and review, forest management, conservation services, acquisition, conservation easements, development standards, and promotion of effective stewardship.

- **Urban and Rural Stormwater**

  The CRCA has a role in the management of both the quality and quantity of urban and rural stormwater. Stormwater concerns are a large part of the review process for proposed changes in land use across the jurisdiction. The Authority has initiated or promoted Master Drainage Plans in critical areas.

  To provide technical advice and develop and apply policies for urban and rural stormwater management suitable for the jurisdiction in cooperation with other agencies, and member municipalities.

**Goal B: Protecting Against Natural Hazards**

To implement policies that will protect life and property from natural hazards such as flooding and erosion.

Conservation Authorities play an important role in protecting life and property from natural hazards including flood and erosion control as well as developing programs to minimize the impact of natural disasters.

- **Floodplains and Hazard Lands**

  The CRCA is concerned about the protection of natural shorelines and river corridors. Floodplains exist in river valleys, on lakes and along coastal areas. We regard floodplains as an integral part of a water body’s space — an area that is occupied infrequently, but naturally. The Authority has mapped substantial areas within the watershed to identify areas where floodplains exist. Fill line mapping has also identified hazard land areas that require recognition. In addition,
the Conservation Authority helps to ensure that the provincial policies related to flooding, erosion and dynamic beaches are implemented.

To identify floodplain areas or hazard lands within the CRCA watershed by undertaking floodplain and fill line mapping.

To protect natural hazard areas and to prevent new development in areas which are subject to natural hazards on shoreline properties and watercourses.

To reduce flood risk to existing development located in floodplains by using techniques such as flood forecasting and warning, plan input and review, structural measures, acquisition of land, protection of wetland and forested areas and by means of regulations.

To coordinate the provision of information to member municipalities, land owners and developers concerning floodplain and fill line mapping.

**Goal C: Stewardship of Our Natural Heritage**

*To conserve woodlands, wetlands and natural habitat.*

What we do on land is reflected in our water, and consequently, Conservation Authorities develop programs that maintain lands that contribute to the water cycle, including a sustainable and accountable agriculture, tourism and woodland industries. In addition, Conservation Authorities are actively involved in the protection of open space, aquatic and natural habitat protection and restoration, and shoreline issues.

- **Natural Heritage**

The protection of provincially significant wetlands and areas of natural and scientific interest (ANSIs) has been a long-standing concern of the CRCA. The Provincial Policy Statement requires that a wider range of natural heritage features be recognized and protected in planning documents to include not only the wetlands, but also forested areas, valleylands, and areas of outstanding natural beauty. Several such areas are recognized through acquisition of lands, and are reflected in current planning documents. The CRCA believes that the diversity of our lakes, forests, stream and river valleys, and special views should also be recognized and conserved. Improving our knowledge and understanding of these resources is one of the greatest concerns that must be addressed.

To undertake or update research on natural heritage features within the CRCA watershed, and to map these features in cooperation with private landowners.

To encourage and assist landowners and municipalities to identify and protect such natural heritage features, including areas of wildlife habitat, special natural landscapes or vistas, and forested lands recognizing that the natural heritage provincial policies do not limit the ability of agricultural uses to continue.

To use cooperative mechanisms such as conservation easements, management agreements, education through demonstration, plan review comments, fostering of stewardship by private individuals and groups of landowners, conservation organizations, and land acquisition to protect natural heritage features within the watershed and enhance biodiversity within these areas.
To develop and conserve, in cooperation with other agencies and groups, natural corridors linking open space areas.

To secure/conserve areas in a natural state for nature appreciation and for their intrinsic value, in cooperation with other agencies and groups.

- **Fish Habitat Protection**

The Conservation Authority has an agreement with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to review all in-water development proposals on the shores of Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River, as well as on all inland lakes and smaller rivers. The Authority can change this level of responsibility, if desired.

To continue working with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, to determine what impact individual development proposals have on fish habitat.

To continue cooperating with municipalities and agencies to improve the fish habitat information base across the jurisdiction, and provide information when enforcement issues need to be addressed.

To promote fish habitat enhancement projects.

**Goal D: Managing Our Natural Resources**

*To facilitate protection of resources within the jurisdiction in order to conserve, restore, develop or manage them.*

Conservation Authorities provide opportunities for our citizens to appreciate the value of our natural environment and the many economic and social benefits of protecting this environment. For over 50 years, Conservation Authorities have worked cooperatively with local municipalities and partner agencies to ensure access to Ontario’s greenspace for tourism and recreation.

- **Managing CRCA Properties**

The CRCA recognizes the importance of managing its different types of properties in different, appropriate ways. Some Authority land holdings are primarily for such purposes as recreation or forestry, and nearly all are important for more than one function.

To develop management plans, master plans, or user policies that recognize the natural, cultural, and historic values of the Conservation Authority properties.

To demonstrate sound and sustainable resource management techniques and practices on Conservation Authority lands.

To undertake resource inventories on new properties that may be acquired, and to update existing inventories, as feasible.

To inform our watershed residents about the various functions of Authority properties, and the role that they can have in maintaining and improving these areas.

To develop a property acquisition and disposal policy explaining Authority priorities to help focus these efforts, and to help the public understand these issues.
To assess existing outdoor recreational facilities in the watershed and determine the Conservation Authority's role in providing additional outdoor recreational opportunities with a conservation focus.

To continue supporting development of a regional trails network to provide links between CRCA properties and other open spaces across the area.

- **Conservation Services**

  The Conservation Authority currently offers a range of Conservation Services, to landowners, groups, agencies and municipalities. These include technical advice on a wide variety of resource management topics, as well as forestry services for which the Authority has established programs.

  To promote our role in providing technical advice on conservation services throughout the watershed, and to continue coordinating with community groups and municipalities in the provision of conservation services programs.

  To deliver enhanced seedling and large stock forestry programs across the jurisdiction.

  To continue to provide educational demonstration projects showing sound and sustainable resource conservation techniques in order to better focus our efforts.

  To act as a repository for data to facilitate our technical services function.

  To promote research and development of new techniques of resource conservation, in cooperation with other agencies and organizations.

**Goal E: Education and Encouraging Public Involvement**

To provide opportunities for the public to learn from the public open spaces within the jurisdiction, and to respect the local natural environment.

The CRCA's dedicated professional staff and committed volunteers develop and deliver ongoing programs to ensure health of natural environments within our communities.

- **Community Relations and Education**

  The CRCA has an active public relations and conservation education program. Staff members face opportunities and challenges in adapting our forms of communication.

  To provide information about the Authority to municipalities, agencies, the media and the public.

  To focus the Authority's education efforts on stewardship of the natural environment through coordination with school boards and other community groups.

  To improve communications and working relationships with other resource management agencies, member municipalities, special interest groups, educational bodies, the private business sector, and members of the public.

  To promote our role and message to watershed residents, municipal clients and our associates.

  To continue working with our volunteer organizations, including the Conservation Authority Foundation, in order to promote the Authority and to build support to achieve common objectives.

  To make information about the natural environment widely available.
Goal F: Service Organization

To operate an efficient and financially sound organization that provides excellent service to the community; promotes best environmental practices; and that offers a healthy, positive and nurturing workplace environment for staff, members and volunteers.

The CRCA added this sixth goal to the Strategy in 2009 as it was preparing a four-year work plan. The goal communicates how the Conservation Authority needs to work efficiently and effectively, and also in a thoughtful and caring manner, to ensure positive outcomes for local people and the environment.

Maintain a positive image in the community.
Make customer service a top priority in all work areas.
Maximize the efficient use of time and resources to avoid waste.
Demonstrate leadership in environmental design as well as energy and materials conservation.
Foster the health, safety, morale and career development of our staff.
Maintain up-to-date corporate policies.
Maintain internal capacity in support services such as accounting, communications, document management, geomatics and information technology.
Manage capital assets in a long-term, sustainable way.

Ways and Means to Implementation

Cataraqui to 2020 outlines an ambitious program for the Authority. Recognizing the staffing and funding constraints is important. To successfully implement the strategies planned during the life of this strategic plan may require more staff and more funds. As financial and other resources, public expectations, and the activities of related agencies with complementary programs change, the Authority’s mixture of activities will change. Also, as grants have been drastically reduced over the last ten years, capital projects have almost vanished from the budget. Future changes to the structure and funding of Conservation Authorities could create further challenges in our ability to implement Cataraqui to 2020. In order to focus the Authority's attention and monetary resources in these specific directions, we need to set out our new strategies to help identify projects which are a priority for the next five years.

Conservation Authorities are remarkably flexible in adapting a program to fill a need and they generally respond fairly quickly to local needs and funding availability. Changing priorities, or unforeseen needs on the part of member municipalities can result in changes to priorities as envisioned in this implementation section, or in the addition of tasks to those outlined. A work plan must be developed by members and staff that examines the human and financial resources of the CRCA., recognizing that the key ways whereby the CRCA does its job are through Research, Leadership and Coordination, and Education.

With updated research, staff can collectively improve their ability to make informed recommendations, which should result in more environmentally-friendly decisions. Research efforts also need to be focused on better understanding of the water cycle and the general interconnectedness of the components of our natural resources.
The concerns of better leadership and coordination form the basis of our strategic plan because we recognize that most initiatives will be undertaken in cooperation with one or more of our partners. Sometimes, the Conservation Authority assumes a leadership role in these efforts, and sometimes we play facilitating or participatory roles.

The Authority sees a continuing need for the improved education in understanding and appreciating natural resources, and our role as stewards of our natural resources. Individuals and private groups play important roles in protecting natural resources, because increasingly, people understand that they can contribute to global protection of our natural resources. Supplying information to others so they can improve their decision is also effective in terms of cost and long term benefits. The Authority shall also continues to offer a wide range of programs in cooperation with local school boards, and other environmental organizations.

Clearly, there is an interdependence between these three elements. Our goals and priorities are related and depend on other steps occurring. Often, our efforts are affected by external forces, both natural and the action of related public bodies. Strategies set out in Cataraqui to 2020 have been broken down into categories for ease of reference. Many of them cannot be entirely successful without others being completed. For example, certain fundamentals are necessary, such as acquiring particular resource data, and continued facilitation with agencies. Only then are successive steps possible, such as development of policy, and the application of those policies. Many ongoing programs will continue so that while staff collect and analyze data, we will continue to carry out our community relations programs. And while we continue our role of promoting integrated resource management, we will continue to provide information and recommendations to our member municipalities regarding natural resources.

Much of the Authority’s mandate is carried out in conjunction with others, whether by explicit cooperation, or by persuasion, or by changing the way others act. In the long run it is far better, more efficient, and more effective to persuade others to modify their behaviour than by direct intervention. One of the Conservation Authority strengths is their knowledge of the locality, its needs and circumstances. Also because it is local, it can respond more quickly and with simpler less bureaucratic procedures to adopt a public policy to address the unique need of a particular place, circumstance and people. Not only is it locally accessible, it is accountable locally, not in some remote capital.

This Strategic Plan and You

Cataraqui to 2020 is designed as a long-range plan for 20 years. As such, a regular review of the plan is necessary to assess its successes and limitations, and to redirect the efforts of the Authority where our priorities have shifted or staff need to assess new circumstances. We know that we must constantly direct our effort where it has the greatest benefit.

In today's world it is more difficult than ever to know how to act locally while thinking globally. Cataraqui to 2020 is a document that will give the Conservation Authority direction in setting its programs at the local level. Next in this process is to develop a work plan. But to a great extent, our strategic thinking needs to be supported by residents, agencies, and corporations.

Careful and wise stewardship of individual land holdings, from the small suburban home lot to large institutional, industrial or rural land holdings of vast hectares, is something that will benefit future generations, and is an ethic that can be instilled in our own children and grandchildren.
Conservation of our water resources can be practised by the individual farmer, the apartment dweller, industry, and urban and rural landowners.

The importance of the individual, of your role in seeing these priorities met, is critical to our success. Each of us can help to protect our environment at the local level, in our own environment.
APPENDIX A - POWERS OF CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES

Sections of the Conservation Authorities Act set out how the objects shall be achieved. The provisions most relevant to Cataract to 2020 found in Section 21 state:

For the purposes of accomplishing its objects, an authority has power,

a) to study and investigate the watershed and to determine a program whereby the natural resources of the watershed may be conserved, restored, developed and managed;

b) for any purpose necessary to any project under consideration or undertaken by the authority, to enter into and upon any land and survey and take levels of it and make such borings or sink such trial pits as the authority considers necessary;

c) to acquire by purchase, lease or otherwise and to expropriate any land that it may require, and, subject to subsection (2) to sell, lease or otherwise dispose of land so acquired;

d) despite subsection (2) to lease for a term of five years or less land acquired by the authority;

e) to purchase or acquire any personal property that it may require and sell or otherwise deal therewith;

f) to enter into agreements for the purchase of materials, employment of labour and other purposes as may be necessary for the due carrying out of any project;

g) to enter into agreements with owners of private lands to facilitate the due carrying out of any project;

h) to determine the proportion of the total benefit afforded to all the participating municipalities that is afforded to each of them;

i) to erect works and structures and create reservoirs by the construction of dams or otherwise;

j) to control the flow of surface waters in order to prevent floods or pollution or to reduce the adverse effects thereof;

k) to alter the course of any river, canal, brook, stream or watercourse, and divert or alter, as well temporarily as permanently, the course of any river, stream, road, street or way, or raise or sink its level in order to carry it over or under, on the level of or by the side of any work built or to be built by the authority, and to divert or alter the position of any water-pipe, gas-pipe, sewer, drain or any telegraph, telephone or electric wire or pole;

l) to use lands that are owned or controlled by the authority for purposes, not inconsistent with its objects, as it considers proper;

m) to use lands owned or controlled by the authority for park or other recreational purposes, and to erect, or permit to be erected, building, booths and facilities for such purposes and to make charges for admission thereto and the use thereof;
m.1) to charge fees for services approved by the Minister;
n) to collaborate and enter into agreements with ministries and agencies of government, municipal councils and local boards and other organizations;
o) to plant and produce trees on Crown lands with the consent of the Minister, and on other lands with the consent of the owner, for any purpose;
p) to cause research to be done;
q) generally to do all such acts as are necessary for the due carrying out of any project.
APPENDIX B - DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are intended to be used in conjunction with the *Cataraqui to 2020* text.

*Areas of Natural or Scientific Interest (ANSI):* means areas of land and water containing natural landscapes or features that have been identified as having life science or earth science values related to protection, scientific study, or education.

*Basin Study:* A study consisting of the collection of data pertaining to one basin. This information would normally be used for the preparation of a watershed management plan.

*Conservation:* Wise use. This phrase is not intended to be restricted narrowly to preservation or to management, but may include either or both.

*Conservation Services:* Refers to all services that the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority provides to private and municipal landowners.

*Cumulative Impacts:* Long-term impacts that increase by successive additions, although such additions might be minor individually.

*Community Relations:* A broad concept is intended, including public relations, information, education, promotions and fundraising.

*Diversity:* Intended to include both the maintenance of different plant and animal types, as well as the genetic differences that are important in sustaining viable populations of any species.

*Ecological Approach to Land-Use Planning:* An ecological approach to land-use planning simply means taking a holistic approach to managing human activities, rather than traditional, piecemeal management.

*Education:* In the broadest sense, education is used to mean more than formal education. As well as repeated instruction on a particular theme, we intend that this term include the provision of information, and increased public awareness.

*Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs):* These are areas that have been evaluated as Class I through IV wetlands (based on the Environment Canada and Ministry of Natural Resources Evaluation System for southern Ontario), or have been identified as Areas of Scientific Interest.

*Fish:* Means fish, shellfish, crustaceans, and marine animals, as all stages of their life cycles.

*Fish Habitat:* Means the spawning grounds and nursery, rearing, food supply, and migration areas on which fish depend directly or indirectly in order to carry out their life processes.

*Floodplain:* The area, usually low lands, adjoining a watercourse, and which has been or may be subject to flooding hazards.

*Flooding Hazards:* Means the inundation, under the conditions specified below, of areas adjacent to a shoreline or a river or stream system and not ordinarily covered by water:

a) Along the shoreline of the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River System and large inland lakes, the flooding hazard limit is based on the 100 year flood level plus an allowance for wave uprush and other water related hazards.
b) Along river and stream systems, the flooding hazard limit is the greater of:

1. the flood resulting from the rainfall actually experienced during a major storm such as the Hurricane Hazel storm (1954) or the Timmins Storm (1961), transposed over a specific watershed and combined with the local conditions, where evidence suggests that the storm event could have potentially occurred over watersheds in the general area;

2. the hundred year flood; or

3. a flood which is greater that 1) or 2) which was actually experienced in a particular watershed or portion thereof as a result of ice jams and which has been approved as the standard for that specific area by the Minister of Natural Resources.

Goals: The general, long-term purposes to which the Authority aspires.

Groundwater: The water contained within the ground that supplies wells and springs, and that helps sustain our surface waters.

Hazardous Lands*: means property or lands that could be unsafe for development due to naturally occurring processes, generally considered to include the furthest landward limit of the flooding, erosion or dynamic beach hazard limits.

Land Owner: An owner of title to land, which includes limited rights to use that land. Land ownership does not imply the right to alter it in any way desired, however, as all land is ultimately held of the Crown.

Management: The judicious use of various means to accomplish a specific end.

Natural Heritage features and areas*: Means features and areas, such as significant wetlands, fish habitat, significant woodlands south and east of the Canadian Shield, significant valleylands south and east of the Canadian Shield, significant portions of the habitat or endangered and threatened species, significant wildlife habitat, and significant areas of natural and scientific interest, which are important for their environmental and social values as a legacy of the natural landscapes of an area.

Objectives: Results that can be measured.

Open Space: Lands that are retained in an open, green state. These lands may or may not be maintained as natural areas, but could include Conservation Areas, municipal parks, or green belts along stream or river corridors.

Partner Agencies: Other government agencies that share common concerns with the Authority. These may include, but are not limited to the following: the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Rural Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Training, Environment Canada - Canadian Parks Service, the St. Lawrence Parks Commission, all Health Units and School Boards, as well as cottage associations, Ducks Unlimited, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Kingston Field Naturalists.

Participants: To include watershed residents, tourists, corporations, interest groups, the development industry, and the general public. It is important to stress that there are non-residents using the watershed whom we want to reach as well.
Plan Input and Review: A two-part Authority program, which involves the Authority identifying any concerns and make recommendations to the municipality or the developer before the proposal is actually made. Review of proposals to change land use (such as severance applications, minor variances, zoning by-law and official plan amendments, and applications for subdivision) provides an opportunity for the Authority to identify concerns and make recommendations to its member municipalities. Both parts of the program are important, and the Authority’s involvement at the draft stage helps to speed processing and ensure acceptable applications at the later official review stage.

Priorities: The planned actions, measures, or programs to achieve a desired end.

Public: This term is intended to include all residents of the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority, but also the tourists, the summer residents, and the other travellers and visitors to the area.

Regional Diversity: refers to physiographic and social aspects of our regional diversity.

Representative Features: These may include varied features of the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority watershed, primarily natural but may include cultural, that are representative of the watershed as a whole. They might include such things as a broad area of Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Forest.

Resources: This term is used to mean a natural value in a very broad sense. By this we mean that the lands and forests, the waters and animals, are not simply a commodity, but are a basic element of life. They are of economic value, but they are just as importantly of intrinsic value to the quality of life within the watershed. As well, we include an area’s attributes as part of its resources: scenic views, forested lands, and other attributes of an area are considered to be resources.

Stewardship: The individual or group's responsibility to manage their property with proper regard to the rights and common natural heritage of others, including the Crown, and to the fundamental value of the natural ecosystem.

Sustainable Use/Development: Means a use or development that can be sustained by the environment without significantly impairing its natural values. Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Threatened Species*: Means any native species that is at risk of becoming endangered through all or a portion of its Ontario range if the limiting factors are not reversed.

Unique Features: These may include varied features (natural or cultural) of the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority watershed that are of particular interest. Such features may include a meteor crater, or a historical site or structure.

Valleylands*: Means a natural area that occurs in a valley or other landform depression that has water flowing through or standing for some period of the year.

Vision: Our Vision, as expressed in our Vision Statement, is a future-oriented statement, intended to describe our watershed as we would like it to be in 20 years.

Watercourse: Refers to flowing water, though not necessarily continuous, within a channel possessing bed and banks that usually discharges into some other stream or body of water.
Watershed: This term has two meanings in the Conservation Strategy. The first meaning is that of all lands drained by a river or stream and its tributaries, and defined by a height of land; in other words, a basin. The second meaning is that of jurisdiction. Conservation Authority watersheds often include more than one true watershed: that of the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority includes 9 major watersheds.

Watershed Management Plan: A management plan for one basin or watershed.

Wave Uprush*: Means the rush of water up onto a shoreline or structure following the breaking of a wave; the limit of wave uprush is the point of furthest landward rush of water onto the shoreline.

Wetlands*: Means lands that are seasonally or permanently covered by shallow water, as well as lands where the water table is close to or at the surface. In either case the presence of abundant water has caused the formation of hydric soils and has favoured the dominance of either hydrophytic plants or water tolerant plants. The four major types of wetlands are swamps, marshes, bogs and fens. Periodically soaked or wet lands being used for agricultural purposes which no longer exhibit wetland characteristics are not considered to be wetlands for the purposes of this definition.

*Provincial Policy Statement, Revised February 1, 1997