

Conservation Authorities have been mandated to complete a Conservation Lands Strategy by December 31, 2024 which is to summarize the following:

- Classification of all LRCA owned land into use categories.
- Mandatory and non-mandatory programs conducted on owned lands.
- Funding used to maintain and operate owned lands.
- Development of objectives to guide decision-making related to owned land.
- Process for periodic review and update of the Strategy.

The Conservation Lands Strategy will serve as a complimentary document to LRCA's Strategic Plan, that specifically relates to the lands owned and operated by the LRCA and the associated programs and services. The two documents encompass similar themes, focused on achieving goals and objectives that align with the LRCA's mandate. The Strategy will encompass the LRCA's vision to provide a healthy, safe, and sustainable Lakehead Watershed for future generations, with a mission to lead in the conservation and protection of the Lakehead Watershed. The Strategy will follow the same Strategic Plan pillars focusing on the four priorities: Conserve and Sustain, Protect and Support, Connect and Explore, and Govern and Enhance.



10 CONSERVATION AREAS:

CASCADES

(Thunder Bay)

HAZELWOOD LAKE

(Gorham)

SILVER HARBOUR

(Shuniah)

MILLS BLOCK

(Thunder Bay)

MACKENZIE POINT

(Shuniah)

MISSION ISLAND MARSH

(Thunder Bay)

CEDAR FALLS

(O'Connor)

LITTLE TROUT BAY

(Neebing)

HURKETT COVE

(Dorion)

WISHART

(Gorham)



LRCA OWNED LAND:

As of 2024, the LRCA owns 2,603 hectares of land. The lands owned by the LRCA offers a diversity of services in the watershed including recreation, water management, protection of natural heritage features, flood protection, erosion control and forest management.

LAND USE CATEGORIES

The properties owned by the LRCA fall in three land use categories as indicated within the Land Inventory:



CONSERVATION AREAS FOR PASSIVE RECREATION

Intended for passive recreation, accessible to the public (i.e., 10 Conservation Areas; 1550 hectares)



CONSERVATION AUTHORITY ADMINISTRATIVE AREA

LRCA's administration office and grounds (130 Conservation Road, Thunder Bay; 3.4 hectares)



MANAGEMENT AREA

Public accessibility varies or is completely restricted (e.g. Floodplain and Erosion Control Lands, Forest Management Property, Nature Reserves, Neebing-McIntyre Floodway, Hope and Memory Garden)



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

Conservation and management of lands owned by the Authority is considered a mandatory program per the *Conservation Authorities Act*. Passive recreation (i.e., trails, public access to recreational spaces, etc.) is a mandatory program area; however active recreation requiring direct support or supervision is not considered mandatory. Educational programming is conducted on LRCA land; however, under the non-mandatory LRCA education program. Stewardship programming is offered at the LRCA on private and public lands as a non-mandatory program. Stewardship programming on LRCA land is considered to be a mandatory program as it relates to managing LRCA owned land.

Both minor and major maintenance is conducted on LRCA owned land. An Asset Management Plan has been developed to plan for required funds and scheduling of required maintenance. Long-term funding strategies are employed to ensure adequate funds are on-hand when major maintenance is required. Routine maintenance is undertaken at all publicly open properties and the Office Administration Facility. Water quality monitoring is conducted at Hazelwood and Mission Island Marsh as part of the bathing beach program, where the beach facilities would be posted with a swimming advisory when warranted. Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) monitoring is conducted as a protective measure to better understand its presence in Conservation Areas (Mission Island, Silver Harbour, Hazelwood and Hurkett Cove). Studies and monitoring is on-going to document the natural heritage features on LRCA owned land.

The enforcement of Section 29 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* is a mandatory program under the Lands Program. Section 29 patrolling occurs at the Conservation Areas that are open to the public for passive recreation. Designated Provincial Offences Officers patrol the Conservation Area to encourage compliance with the *Conservation Authorities Act* R.S.O 1990, Part VII Enforcement and Offence, Section 30.1., and under the City of Thunder Bay Parking By-Law at Cascades and Mission Island Marsh Conservation Areas.

As of 2024, the Lands Program staff complement includes 3 full-time staff (Lands Manager, Environmental Planner and Field Operations Lead Hand) and one 33-week recurring contract position (Floodway Labourer). Additionally, four summer students are hired annually during the summer months.



FUNDING:

During the annual budget process, costs associated with the operation and maintenance of LRCA owned land are estimated for the year. Expenses related to land management include: property taxes, staff wages and benefits, regular and major maintenance, equipment, vehicle, garbage removal, plowing, health and safety, tree removals, structural inspection, training, monitoring supplies, outhouse rentals, tools, etc. As a private landowner, the LRCA pays property taxes to the Municipality/Township in which the land resides. The Asset Management Plan provides guidance on scheduling required maintenance and the estimate life span of assets.

Levy collected from the Member Municipalities funds the majority of the costs associated with the Lands Program. The LRCA's self-generated funds used to partially fund the Lands Program and comes from the collection of parking fees/day use fees, Explore Card Sales and fees charged for the public to hold a wedding or rent a picnic shelter.

The Land Management Programs offered by the LRCA are funded by both municipal levy, external funding and self-generated funds. Table 1 outlines the funding type used for each of the Land Management Categories. The LRCA participates in the Conservation of Land Tax Incentive Program (CLTIP) and the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP) where applicable.

LAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM AREAS	FUNDING TYPE					
	LEVY-ALL	LEVY-SOLE BENEFITING (City of Thunder Bay)	PROVINCIAL FUNDING	FEDERAL FUNDING	OTHER GRANTS & DONATIONS**	SELF-GENERATED (Fees)

CATEGORY 1 - Mandatory Programs

Neebing-McIntyre Floodway		X	*WECI projects			
Victor Street Erosion - City Lands		X	*WECI projects			
Conservation Areas	X				X	X
Section 29 Regulations	X					
Other Owned Land						
• Admin. Office	X					
• Nature Reserves	X					
• Floodplain & Erosion Lands	X					X
• Forest Management Land	X					X

CATEGORY 2 - Non-Mandatory at the request of a Municipality

No Programs

CATEGORY 3 - Non-Mandatory Programs and Services

Environmental Education					X	X
Nature Interpretive Programming					X	X

*WECI – Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure Funding (used for major maintenance)





**When available, funding applications are submitted for special projects on LRCA land





OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of the Conservation Lands Strategy provide high-level context and guidance and direction for actions related to the lands owned or controlled by the LRCA. Aligning with the LRCA's Five-Year Strategic Plan, the objectives focus on four pillars relating to the programs and services provided by the LRCA. Objectives may vary for each parcel dependent on the land use category, specifically if they are Conservation Areas open to the public for passive recreation.

STRATEGIC PLAN PILLAR	OBJECTIVE
CONSERVE & SUSTAIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the Stewardship of the Lakehead Watershed by leading by example on all LRCA owned land. Assess and Monitor LRCA owned land to understand the current status of natural heritage and natural hazards and to monitor for emerging issues and trends. Create and maintain Land Management Policies, Procedures and Plans to promote a consistent level of management on all LRCA owned lands. 
PROTECT & SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the Integrity of the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway. Protect People from Natural Hazards by owning undevelopable land. Utilize users of LRCA land to aid in identifying issues on LRCA owned land. Consider climate change, impacts to habitat and threats to biodiversity during the planning of any updates or new development on LRCA Land. Solicit Public Input on the operation of Conservation Areas and projects on LRCA land. 
CONNECT & EXPLORE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase Accessibility in Conservation Areas when feasible. Advertise and Promote Conservation Areas. Provide Educational Programming on LRCA Owned Land. Increase available amenities at Conservation Areas utilizing partnerships with other organizations. Enhance User Experience at Conservation Areas. Maintain and enhance amenities provided. Provide adequate signage at Conservation Areas. 
GOVERN & ENHANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase Compliance to Rules and Regulations. Reduce Liability. Maintain a long-term financial plan to maintain the assets on LRCA owned lands. Increase Revenue Generation. Reduce Costs to Operate Lands. 



STRATEGY REVIEW AND UPDATES:

The Conservation Lands Strategy will be reviewed and updated every five years or sooner if conditions warrant. Updates to the Strategy will align with the LRCA's Five-Year Strategic Plan. Changes to the Strategy will be at the discretion of the Board of Directors and approved by resolution. Stakeholders and the public will be consulted as considered advisable during the periodic review and update process for the Strategy.

FULL STRATEGY AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW ONLINE AT WWW.LAKEHEADCA.COM/GOVERNANCE/PUBLIC-CONSULTATION

WWW.LAKEHEADCA.COM

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