



LAKEHEAD REGION
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY



2012 ANNUAL REPORT

*Conserve Today...
For A Better Tomorrow*



LAKEHEAD REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

BOARD MEMBERS:

Bill Bartley– Chairman/City of Thunder Bay
Donna Blunt- Vice-Chair/Municipality of Shuniah
Grant Arnold– Conmee Township
Ed Chambers– Dorion Township
Rick Kieri– Gillies Township
Ziggy Polkowski– Municipality of Neebing
Jim Vezina– O'Connor Township
Jim Byers– Municipality of Oliver-Paipoonge
Ken Boshcoff– City of Thunder Bay
Gary Murchison– City of Thunder Bay
Linda Rydholm– City of Thunder Bay

STAFF:

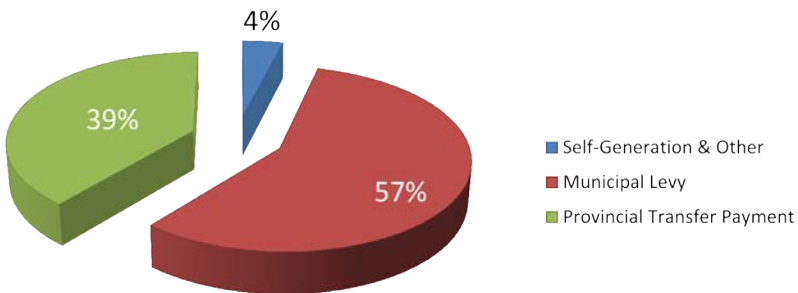
Mervi Henttonen– General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer
Tammy Cook– Watershed Manager
Ryne Gilliam– Field Operations Supervisor
Michelle Sixsmith– Water Resources Technologist
Ryan Mackett– Community Stewardship/Public Relations Officer
Norma Hunt– Financial Assistant
Melanie O'Riley– Administrative Assistant
Roman Augustyn– SWP GIS/Data Specialist
Scott Drebit– GIS Technician/Planner
Erin Moir– Environmental Education and Outreach Coordinator (Contract)
Vince Ponka– SWP Administrative Assistant (Contract)

Various seasonal, contract and intern positions are also filled as needed, on an annual basis.

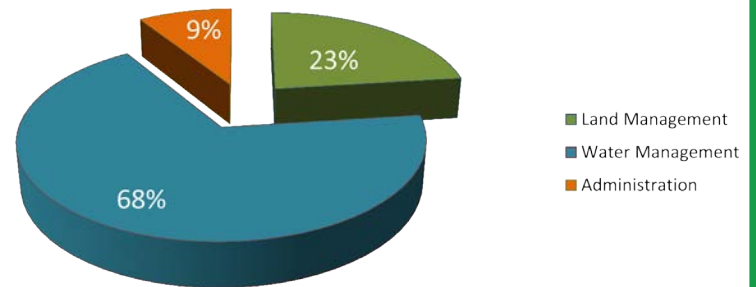
The LRCA's budgeted 2012 revenue and expenditures totaled approximately \$2,597,525.00. Revenue is derived from three primary sources: Provincial/Federal Government Grants, Municipal levies and self-generation (comprised of user fees, partnerships, donations and sponsorships). Source Water Protection activities are 100% Government funded. The LRCA gratefully acknowledges the support of clubs, agencies and businesses, the Lakehead Conservation Foundation and individuals making direct donations for making 2012 a successful year. The LRCA is a registered charity, capable of issuing charitable tax receipts.

2012 was a busy and exciting year, and it is important to note that the time donated by volunteers is not factored into our operating costs, although their time and expertise should be acknowledged in this Annual Report.

REVENUE



EXPENDITURES



AROUND THE WATERSHED

The Private Landowners Tree Seedling Assistance Program was a success in 2012, with a total of 213 orders received. This amounted to 22,373 tree seedlings being sold. As a result of the program, over 76,907 seedlings have been planted in the Lakehead Region Watershed since the program's inception in 2009. It will be offered in 2013, once again with the generous support of Hill's Greenhouses.

Annually, a Watershed Assessment of a local river or stream is conducted by staff. In 2012, the Whitefish River Watershed was studied. The watershed covers 594 square kilometres and spans: Municipalities of Oliver Paipoonge and Neebing; Townships of Gillies, O'Connor and Conmee; and Unorganized Townships of Adrian, Marks, Lybster, Fraleigh, Aldina, Strange and Jean. At the time of assessment, the Whitefish River Watershed was considered to be in good health. The full report can be accessed from the Authority website.

Hazelwood Lake Conservation Area did not have any beach advisory's posted in 2012. The last time a beach advisory was posted was in 2007.

As part of the Canada Ontario Agreement, a Climate Change Monitoring Project was initiated by a partnership between the Ministry of the Environment and five Conservation Authorities across the province. In 2012, the existing Neebing River Gauge site had additional equipment installed to begin monitoring turbidity, groundwater level and quality, surface water quality, air temperature and soil moisture. Stream level and precipitation, which have been monitored at the site since 1954, will continue to be monitored. The data will be used to monitor long term trends and changes over time.

In partnership with the Ministry of the Environment, the LRCA monitors nine wells throughout the watershed as part of the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network. In 2012, a new well was installed as part of the Neebing River Climate Change Monitoring station. The wells record groundwater levels every hour and are sampled for water quality once per year. Data is used to monitor the groundwater conditions in the area. The LRCA also monitors the water quality of five area watercourses: McVicar Creek, McIntyre River, Current River, Slate River and Neebing River. Water samples are collected and analyzed monthly at the Ministry of Environment laboratory during the ice free period. Data is used to monitor the long term water quality of the sampled streams.





EXPLORE

LAKEHEAD REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

One of the biggest, most noticeable changes the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority made during 2012 was the adoption of the "Explore" initiative. In an effort to re-brand and familiarize the community with the educational and recreational aspects of the LRCA, the original Gray Jay logo was re-appropriated for the new Explore brand. Under the Explore banner falls the LRCA's environmental education programming, community outreach, special events and recreational Conservation Areas. The hope is to have a clearly distinct brand at the LRCA that encompasses all things recreational and educational, while still being readily identifiable as part of the official Lakehead Region Conservation Authority Brand. To help with this re-branding, the LRCA launched a series of creative T-shirt designs that feature owls, turtles, beavers and herons on the front and the new Explore logo on the back. The shirts are sold for \$12.00, as a way to help spread the message of conservation and to unify and visually identify our supporters in the community. Explore-branded bandanas are also being utilized to help spread awareness of the LRCA. More examples of our Explore initiative will be available for purchase in 2013.

There were several fantastic events held by the LRCA in 2012, including Conservation Week at Hazelwood Lake Conservation Area. Conservation Week included a Wildflower Workshop and a Photography Workshop, as well as a live reptile show. Lake Superior Day at Mission Island Marsh Conservation Area was held in August, a Fall Mushroom Workshop in September, and the Annual Fall Waterfowl Viewing Day in October. Waterfowl Viewing Day is generously sponsored by Ontario Power Generation (OPG) and features the Thunder Bay Field Naturalists as guided hikes are conducted throughout Mission Island in order to educate the public about birds, birding and migratory patterns. Be sure to check the 2013 Calendar of Events (opposite page) as well as www.lakeheadca.com throughout the year for more information on some exciting new events coming in 2013.

Vandalism in Conservation Areas is still a growing concern. Graffiti and other damages were reported in several Conservation Areas including Silver Harbour, MacKenzie Point and Mission Island Marsh. A suspicious fire also destroyed the log cabin at Hazelwood Lake Conservation Area in September, which was being used for Environmental Education Programming and special events. Although a major setback, the destruction of the cabin does not threaten the LRCA Environmental Education Program.

The LRCA is pleased to offer the Hazelwood Lake Nature Centre as a fantastic venue to be rented for weddings, meetings and other gatherings. Rental rates as well as availability can be confirmed through the official caterer, Ambiance Catering. They can be reached at (807) 926-2762. The picnic shelter at Hazelwood, as well as pavilions at our other Conservation Areas, are also available for rent. Five Areas also provide access to Lake Superior. Contact the LRCA for more information.

The LRCA is currently recruiting volunteers to help with various programming, events and projects, including education events, statistics and data gathering, and more. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact the LRCA.

CONSERVATION AREAS

Mission Island Marsh*
Cedar Falls
Cascades
MacKenzie Point*

Hazelwood Lake
Little Trout Bay*
Hurkett Cove*
Silver Harbour*

Admission to our Conservation Areas is only \$2.00 per vehicle, or show your Explore Card Annual Pass, available for only \$30.00 + HST. Explore Cards offer unlimited access to all seasonal and year-round Conservation Areas for one full year! Receive a durable, waterproof map with purchase.

Our Conservation Areas offer:

- *5 access points to Lake Superior; boat launches at Silver Harbour and Little Trout Bay
- Over 22 km of trails on over 2,500 hectares of Conservation Lands
- Picnic shelters, pavilions, interpretive panels, outdoor privies and barbecue grills (at certain Areas)

Our Conservation Areas receive over 100,000 day users annually. The LRCA pays property taxes for its Conservation Lands, and is required to carry liability insurance on those properties. Explore Card sales and \$2.00 admission fees help offset the costs of owning, operating and maintaining these beautiful Conservation Areas.

We would like to remind dog owners visiting our Conservation Areas that their pets must remain leashed at all times, and that they must pick up after their pets, as outlined in the LRCA's Conservation Areas Regulations, and pursuant to City of Thunder Bay By-Law #71-1978, as enforced by City of Thunder Bay Animal Services. Let's keep Conservation Areas safe, clean, and fun for everyone!

2013 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 7: LCF Fundraising Dinner & Auction; Da Vinci Centre

April 5-7: CLE Spring Home & Garden Show

May 12: Mother's Day Brunch; Hazelwood Lake Nature Centre

May 15: Tree Seedling Assistance Program; Pick-Up at Hill's Greenhouses

June 1: LCF Garden Party & Plant Sale; LRCA Office

June 6: Mission Island Marsh 25th Anniversary; Mission Island Marsh CA

June 9: Memorial Grove Dedication Ceremony

June 10-14: Conservation Week; Hazelwood Lake Conservation Area

July 10: Cascades Canine Night; Cascades Conservation Area

July 20: Silver Harbour Day; Silver Harbour Conservation Area

July 28: Little Trout Bay Day; Little Trout Bay Conservation Area

September 1-2: Hymers Fall Fair

September 22: Fall Mushroom Hike; Hazelwood Lake Conservation Area

October 5: Cascades Healthy Lifestyle Event; Cascades Conservation Area

October 9: Fall Evening Photo Workshop; Hazelwood Lake Conservation Area

October 12: Fall Waterfowl Viewing Day; Mission Island Marsh CA

Rural Health Fair: Date and Location to be determined.

***Please note: all events, dates, times and locations are subject to change. Visit www.lakeheadca.com regularly for more information and updates for these and other events.**



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

The Lakehead Region Conservation Authority's Environmental Education Programming started strong in 2011, and really began to hit its stride in 2012. LRCA Staff conducted interpretive programs dealing with subjects such as orienteering, biodiversity, insects, animal tracking, pond studies and many other interesting, informative topics. These programs are booked by interested teachers for their classes, and take place primarily at Hazelwood Lake Conservation Area; however programs also took place at Mission Island Marsh, Cascades and Hurkett Cove Conservation Areas, as well as Mills Block Forest.

The purpose of the LRCA's Environmental Education Programming is to reach as many students as possible in an effort to spread the message of conservation; to deliver quality, Ontario Curriculum-approved programming; to stress the importance of our natural environment; and to ignite an interest and deep appreciation for exploration. It is through exploring the natural world that today's youth will begin to fully understand the delicate balance of nature and learn to take care of that balance. Education program rates are \$5.00 per participant for a Living Classroom experience (Conservation Area field trip), or \$60.00 per hour (plus mileage) for an in-class presentation.

The following statistics are representative of the work being done by LRCA Staff in the area of environmental education:

- During the 2011/12 school year, the LRCA reached 496 students through our Environmental Education Program
- Approximately 24 classes from 7 schools booked the LRCA for programming during the 2011/12 school year
- The 2012 LRCA Spring Water Awareness Program and Arbour Day programming reached an additional 1,707 students from 8 different schools
- The 2012 Children's Water Festival reached over 600 additional grade 3 and 4 students



PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are one of the ways which enable the LRCA to accomplish many valuable projects in the watershed. Ontario Power Generation is a generous supporter of the LRCA. Plans are in place to further expand upon the Mission Marsh Learning Trails in 2013, with plans for the installation of an interpretive panel, as well as a special Learning Trails education event to be held at Mission Island Marsh Conservation Area. In 2012, OPG pledged support toward the Lakehead Children's Water Festival, Arbour Week, Fall Waterfowl Viewing Day and Mission Marsh's viewing scopes. These contributions are greatly appreciated.

The LRCA was a successful recipient of the TD Friends of the Environment Fund in 2012, which was used to purchase equipment for environmental education programming. Also, Union Gas has become a major sponsor of the Lakehead Children's Water Festival with their substantial donation to the program.

The Thunder Bay Field Naturalists is another organization that assists the LRCA by lending their considerable expertise through assisting with Fall Waterfowl Viewing Day. Members of the Dorion's Canyon Country Birding Festival organizing committee regularly assist LRCA Staff with identifying bird species found in our Conservation Areas. Dr. Leonard Hutchison of Lakehead University also assisted with the LRCA's Fall Mushroom Workshop.



LAKEHEAD CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

The Lakehead Conservation Foundation (LCF) raises funds for the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, specifically for the LRCA's Environmental Education programming. The funds are raised through several events held during the year, including the Garden Party Plant & Yard Sale and the Annual Fundraising Dinner & Auction.

The 2012 Fundraising Dinner & Auction was held on February 9, 2012 and raised over \$24,000.00. Tickets for the 2013 Fundraising Dinner & Auction, to be held on February 8, 2013, are on sale now. Contact the Authority office for your tickets as soon as possible, as they sell out each year.

LCF Member Mary Provenzano presented Authority Chairman Bill Bartley with a cheque for \$25,000.00 for the LRCA Environmental Education Program at this year's annual LCF cheque presentation. (Pictured at right.)

If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering or becoming a Foundation Member, contact the LCF at (807) 345-2377.



LCF BOARD MEMBERS:



- Phil Jarvis- President
- Garry Maxwell- Vice-President
- Melody Lundstrom- Secretary
- Nicole Gagnon- Treasurer
- Shelly Brown
- Doug Guinn
- Darlene Guinn
- Marlene Jarvis
- Richard Longtin
- John Palko
- Mary Provenzano
- Paul Straiton



PLANNING & REGULATION

The LRCA is responsible to develop and maintain programs that will protect life and property from natural hazards such as riverine flooding and erosion and to conserve and enhance natural resources. In this effort, Ontario Regulation 180/06 regulates development in areas where the control of flooding, erosion, pollution or conservation of land may be affected.

The LRCA has had a Level II agreement with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and Ontario Great Lakes Area (OGLA) since 1998. The LRCA is responsible for the initial evaluation of proposed projects to determine if the work would result in a harmful alteration or disruption or any destruction of fish habitat. If you are planning on doing any type of work near a lake, river, stream or wetland within the LRCA Area of Jurisdiction, a permit from the LRCA may be required.

As of December 2012, a total of 64 permits were issued. Permits are issued by the LRCA Board, which meets once a month. Property owners are advised to submit applications as early as possible to allow for adequate evaluation and permit processing time. Contact us for more information.

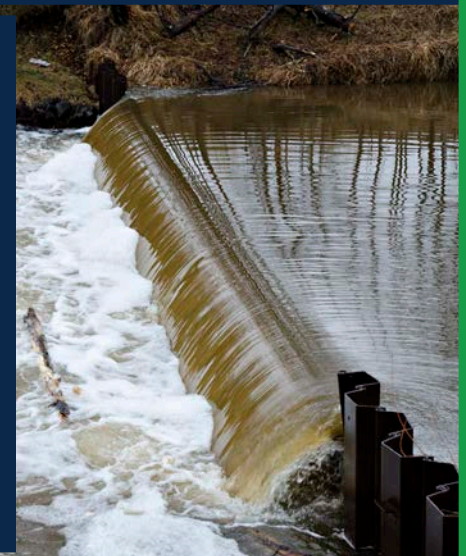
As part of its delegated responsibility, the LRCA reviews all Planning Act applications on behalf of its Member Municipalities to provide comments related to natural hazards. In 2012, comments were provided on 163 Planning Act applications (as of December 2012).

FLOOD FORECASTING & WATER LEVEL MONITORING

The LRCA monitors daily watershed conditions which help provide advance warning of high water levels, and in times of drought, low water levels. Depending on the severity of the weather and how high the water levels are, a Watershed Conditions Statement (Water Safety or Flood Outlook), Flood Watch or Flood Warning is issued to our Member Municipalities, emergency staff and the local media. During 2012, two Flood Outlook Statements, five Flood Watch and five Flood Warning Messages were issued during two separate rainfall events.

The LRCA also conducts snow surveys between November and May. Snow depth and weight (water content) are collected and forwarded to the MNR's Surface Water Monitoring Centre as part of the Flood Forecasting Program.

The Low Water Condition declared on October 14, 2011 continued until June 6, 2012 when it was officially undeclared within the LRCA Area of Jurisdiction. A Level I Low Water Condition was re-declared on October 16, 2012. A Low Water condition is declared when received precipitation and streamflow fall below specified criteria based on averages for the given months throughout the year.



NEEBING-MCINTYRE FLOODWAY

During the May 2012 rainfall event the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway diverted flow for seven days. The Neebing River rose approximately 4.37 metres (14.3 feet) over the rainfall event as recorded at the Neebing River gauge station located behind the Arthur Street Marketplace. Based on the recorded flow at the gauge station, the Neebing River approached 100 year return period flows, while most of the other watersheds in the area experienced 5 to 10 year return period flows. The May rainfall event was very localized, tracking from the west through the Township of Conmee and Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge into the City of Thunder Bay.

The Diversion Structure limited the flow down the lower Neebing River by diverting the excess flow down the Diversion Channel to the widened deepened Floodway Channel which outlets into Lake Superior. During the event the Floodway operated as designed and the riverine flood waters were confined within the lower Neebing River and Floodway Channel. Residents along the lower Neebing River (below the Diversion Structure) and Intercity area were protected from surficial riverine flooding.

The entrance to the Diversion Channel adjacent to the Diversion Structure at Ford Street required dredging to remove deposited sediment that was left behind after the May heavy rainfall event. Approximately 3,300 cubic metres of sediment was removed from the Diversion Channel to ensure that the Floodway will continue to divert as designed.

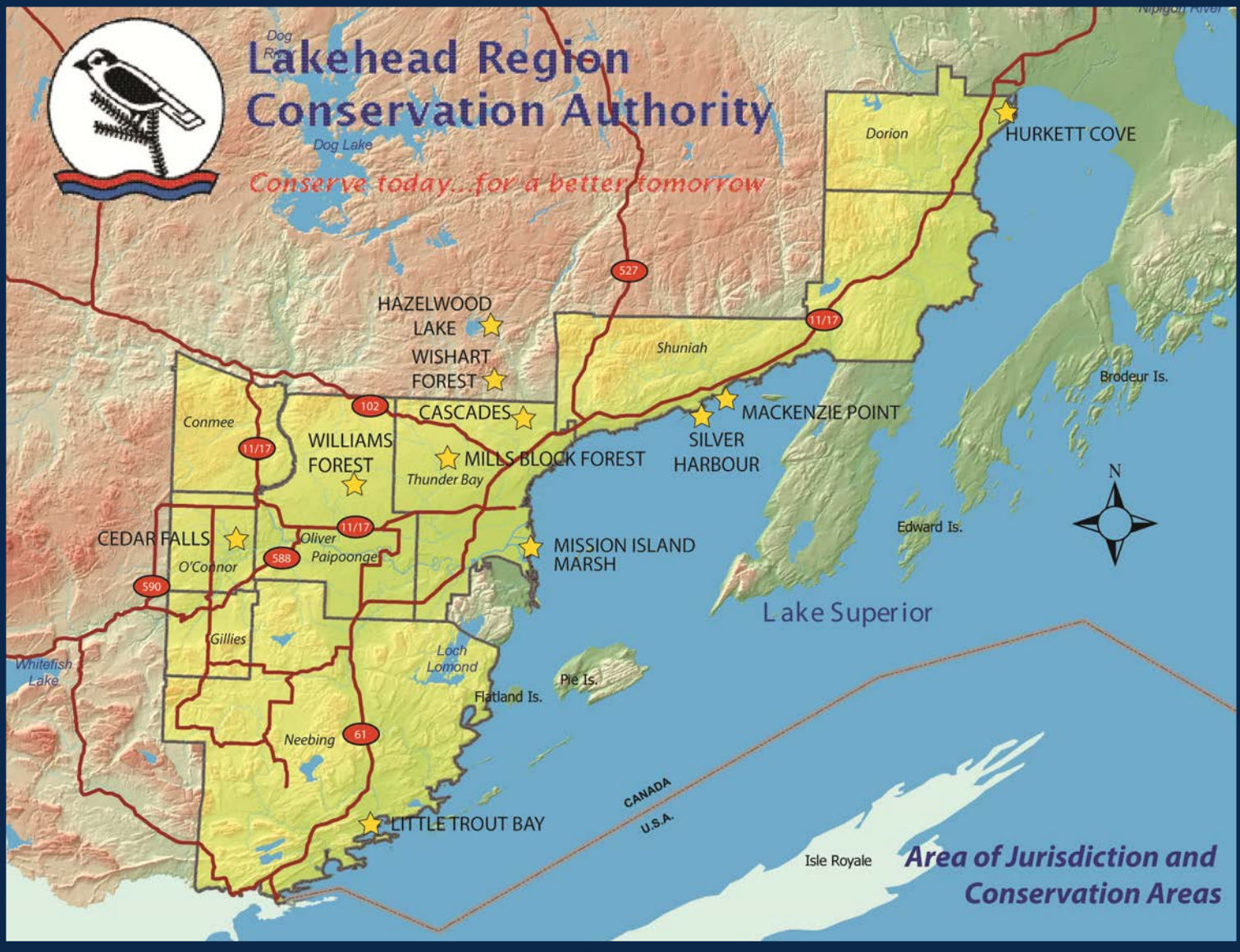
During 2012 phase two of a three phase maintenance dredging project was conducted on the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway. The section of Floodway between the Island Drive Bridge and Lake Superior had approximately 13,000 cubic metres of accumulated sediment dredged from the channel bottom. The maintenance dredging was required to restore the channel back to the original design profile to ensure that the Floodway continues to protect the Intercity area from flooding up to the design level of the Regional Storm, as it has for the past 28 years. The final phase of the maintenance dredging is scheduled for 2013, subject to funding.



Lakehead Region Conservation Authority

Dog Lake

Conserve today...for a better tomorrow



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www.lakeheadca.com | info@lakeheadca.com

E-mail us to sign up for our E-Newsletter, released every two months. It contains valuable information about the LRCA, our Conservation Areas, special events and so much more!

ESTABLISHED 1954



The Lakehead Region Conservation Authority is a member of Conservation Ontario, which represents the 36 Ontario Conservation Authorities.

