



August 2024

WATERSHED STRATEGY SUMMARY

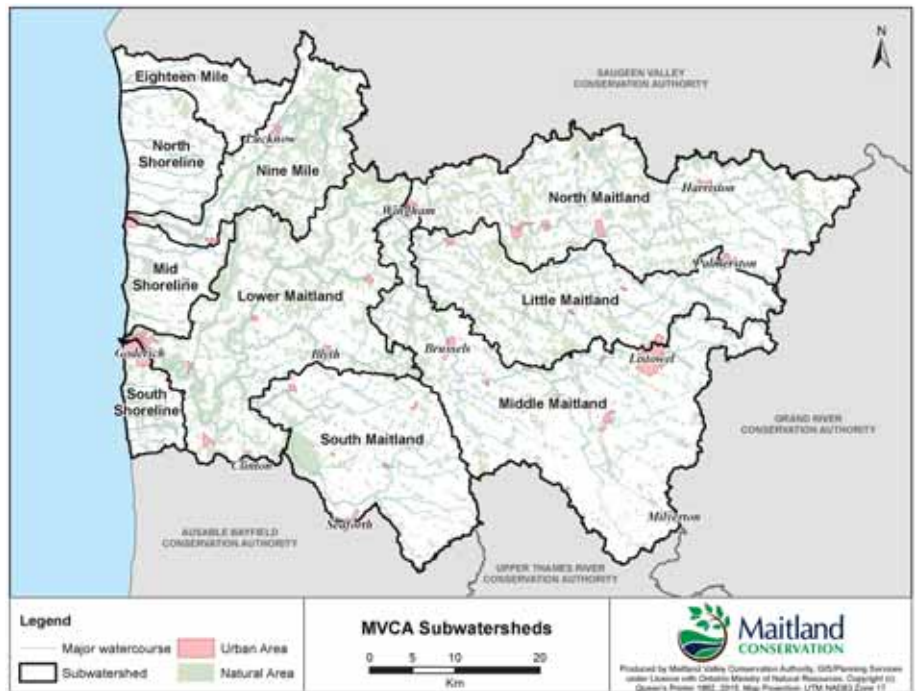


BACKGROUND

Conservation Authorities are required to submit a watershed strategy to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) by December 31, 2024.

The watershed strategy developed by Maitland Conservation is based on our 2024 - 2026 work plan. This newsletter is a summary of the key activities that Maitland Conservation will be undertaking over the next three years.

The full watershed strategy includes an overview of how the watershed has changed over the past 200 years. This information provides some context for our current services and programs. The complete document is available on our website (mvca.on.ca) or by emailing maitland@mvca.on.ca.



OUR VISION

We're working for a healthy environment.

Our Mission

To provide leadership to protect and enhance water, forests and soils.

WORK PLAN OBJECTIVES

The 2024 - 2026 work plan focuses on the following objectives:

1. Helping our member municipalities reduce the potential for loss of life, property damage and social disruption in flood and erosion prone areas.
2. Assisting member municipalities and landowners to develop and implement soil and water conservation systems that help keep soil and nutrients on the land and out of watercourses and Lake Huron.
3. Ensure that the management of our conservation areas sets high standards of conservation practices and are safe for the public to use.
4. Develop a stable financial base so we can help our member municipalities to develop a healthy, resilient, and prosperous watershed.



Photo by Cory Bilyea

Maitland Conservation Members Tour at Naftel's Creek C. A. , 2024.



Maitland Conservation Members Tour, 2024

CORPORATE SERVICES - STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Corporate Services is responsible for the leadership, governance, administration, and financial management of Maitland Conservation.

1. **Program and Services Agreement:** Renew the Program and Services agreement with member municipalities by June 2026.
2. **First Nations and Metis Communities:** Engage with First Nations and Metis Councils to determine if they have an interest in working with Maitland Conservation in any program areas.
3. **Healthy Lake Huron:** Advocate for continued provincial and federal support for the Healthy Lake Huron collaborative.
4. **Healthy Watersheds, People and Wildlife:** Champion the need for this approach to be incorporated into the terms of reference for the Healthy Lake Huron initiative.
5. **Carbon Footprint Initiative (CFI):** Encourage the leaders of the CFI to expand the framework for the initiative to include more aspects of sustainability.
6. **Asset Management Plan:** Develop an asset management strategy for essential equipment and infrastructure.



Maitland Conservation Members, 2024

FLOOD & EROSION SAFETY SERVICES STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The focus of Flood and Erosion Safety Services (FESS) is to ensure that both Maitland Conservation and our member municipalities with flood and/or erosion prone areas are prepared to deal with the increasing probability of major flooding, shoreline erosion, bluff collapse and gully erosion.

Along the 50 kilometers of the Lake Huron shoreline, based on 2023 values, there is \$750 million of assessed property located in areas subject to shoreline, gully, or bluff erosion. The value of at-risk development on the shoreline has roughly tripled since last assessed in 2012. It is expected that at-risk development in urban flood damage centers has also tripled, which would bring the value to approximately \$500 million.



Gully erosion, Bluewater Beach



Lake Huron bluff erosion



Harriston, June 2017

- 1) Ice Management Plan:** Develop an ice management plan for areas prone to ice jamming.
- 2) Asset Management Plan for Flood and Erosion Control Structures:** Develop an asset management for the Goderich Bluffs Stabilization Structure, McGuffin Gully Erosion Control Project and the Listowel Flood Control Structures. This plan will outline measures that need to be undertaken to operate, maintain, repair and decommission the control works.
- 3) Drought Monitoring Plan:** Identify when river levels are reaching critical levels and initiate communications in accordance with Ontario's Low Water Response guidelines.
- 4) Natural Hazards Outreach and Education Plan:** Outline areas where natural hazards are located, the risks associated with these hazards

and how they may be impacted by climate change. The plan will also outline how the risks will be managed and promote public awareness of riverine and shoreline natural hazards.

- 5) Flood Forecast Monitoring Network Equipment:** Undertake measures to extend the life of our current telemetry equipment (data delivery system) and identify a suitable replacement.
- 6) Lucknow Floodplain Mapping:** Update mapping in partnership with the Municipality of Huron-Kinloss.
- 7) Flood Hazard Mapping:** Update mapping along the Maitland and Nine Mile Rivers outside of the villages and towns. This mapping will identify natural hazard areas within the river valley for the Maitland and Nine Mile rivers.



Gauging station, North Maitland River, 2024

8. LAKE HURON SHORELINE PROCESSES & NATURAL HAZARDS ADAPTATION STRATEGY

This project will:

- Develop strategies to maintain and improve natural shoreline processes within the littoral cell that forms the beaches along the Lake Huron shoreline and reduce exposure to the risks of flooding and erosion.
- Identify how to re-establish the flow of sand to the beaches located south of the Goderich Harbour. This will restore natural sediment supplies and increase the resiliency of the area when lake levels fluctuate.



Goderich Bluffs Stabilization Project



Listowel Conduit



Low water levels, Lower Maitland River, 2012

CONSERVATION AREAS SERVICES STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Conservation Areas Services is responsible for:

- The management, development, and protection of significant natural resource lands and features on Authority property.
- The management of infrastructure.
- Maintenance and management of the Authority's motor pool and equipment services.



1. **Conservation Lands Strategy and Inventory:** Complete by December 31, 2024, as required by the MNRF. This strategy will outline key management and operational objectives to ensure our conservation lands remain protected and allow for compatible recreational public use. The strategy will also provide guidance on land acquisitions and dispositions.
2. **Conservation Areas Infrastructure:** Maintain, decommission, and develop priority Conservation Areas infrastructure based on the needs and resources of the Authority.
3. **Best Management Conservation Practices:** Implement on Authority owned lands to ensure we lead by example in the protection and restoration of environmental resources.
4. **Maintenance of Conservation Areas:** Ensure that Conservation Areas are maintained to allow for safe public use. Property inspections will identify hazards such as dead trees, trail surface issues and signage needs.
5. **Carbon Footprint Strategy:** Implement Maitland Conservation's carbon footprint strategy to reduce the organization's use of fossil fuels.



WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP SERVICES STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The focus of Watershed Stewardship Services is to assist landowners and municipalities to:

- Restore the health of rivers, wetlands, and forests.
- Implement rural stormwater management systems.
- Improve soil health and implement soil conservation projects.

Maitland Conservation provides technical advice, project planning and assistance with funding applications.



Cover crop



Garvey Glenn watershed



Mature stream buffer, 2021



Middle Maitland River, 2023

- 1. Restoration Projects:** Promote and implement projects that will restore the health and resiliency of rivers, wetlands and forest ecosystems. This includes projects such as fragile land retirement, stream buffering, rural stormwater management, wetlands, barrier removals and cover crops.
- 2. Restoration Science:** Incorporate a greater understanding of ecosystem restoration principles and climate change science to ensure stewardship approaches have the most benefit and highest chance of success. For example, are there certain tree species we should be planting in lieu of others, which will fare better with the changing climate?
- 3. Pro Active Stewardship:** Build capacity to deliver pro-active stewardship in priority areas including the Middle Maitland watershed and North Shore sub-basins. Source external funds to support restoration projects and staffing to implement these projects.
- 4. Healthy Lake Huron Priorities:** Implement the priorities outlined Healthy Lake Huron work plan including improving soil health, rural stormwater management and buffering watercourses. Assist the steering committee to develop the 5-year work plan for 2025-2029.

WATERSHED HEALTH - MONITORING, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Watershed Health - Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting is responsible for:

- Evaluating the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems within the Maitland and Nine Mile River watersheds.
- Identifying threats to these ecosystems.
- Providing recommendations to service areas and partners.



Forest Health Assessment



Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network



North Maitland River, 2024

1. Long Term Data Collection:

Continue to collect long-term data on water quantity and quality for rivers and groundwater in partnership with the Province of Ontario.

2. Forest Health

Communications:

Communicate the results of the forest health assessment to decision makers, land managers and woodlot owners. Information on the health of forests will help them make informed decisions and help us to design effective stewardship services.

3. Aquatic Ecosystem Health:

Assess the physical processes, channel structure and biology of local rivers and streams to determine their health. Healthy rivers and streams not only contribute to the health of people and wildlife but are

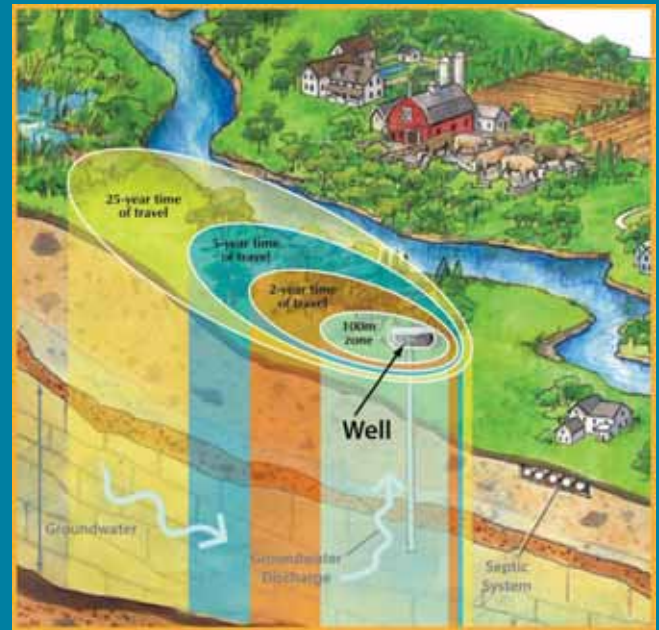
also the foundation for tourism and recreation in the watershed.

4. **Citizen Science:** Expand citizen science programs to help fill gaps in knowledge about the health of local rivers and forests.

5. **Science Advisory Committees:** Collaborate with experts and stakeholders to establish science advisory committees for aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. Science advisory committees will help guide our assessments to ensure indicators, collection methods and analysis are appropriate. These committees will also assist Maitland Conservation in identifying how to improve services and outcomes.

DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Amendments to the Maitland Valley Source Protection Plan and associated assessment report, to incorporate regulatory changes. Technical assessment completed for new and expanding drinking water systems. This includes 2024 updates to wellhead protection areas for the Lucknow and Century Heights municipal water supply systems, plus anticipated updates to the Minto systems.
2. Implementation of Source Protection Plan policies where applicable and review local applications and planning proposals in vulnerable areas to meet the annual reporting requirements and ensure source protection is considered in the development application.
3. Issue confirmation notices to municipalities for new or altered drinking water systems and new wells for Harriston and Palmerston drinking water systems to meet the requirements of the Clean Water Act O. Reg. 287/07 and ensure the source for new municipal wells or intakes are protected.
4. Review technical information received regarding changes in vulnerable areas for source water, to determine if Source Protection Plans should be revised. This ensures that changes on the landscape, such as new transport pathways in wellhead protection areas (WHPA) and Intake Protection Zone (IPZ), are incorporated in source protection documents.



Cross section of wellhead protection area



REVIEW & UPDATE OF WATERSHED STRATEGY

The watershed strategy will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect changes in resources and priorities as well as to ensure that we are always planning three years ahead.

The watershed strategy will be circulated to our member municipalities to obtain their comments. It will also be posted on Maitland Conservation's website (mvca.on.ca) for public review and comment.

QUESTIONS?

Get in touch with Maitland Conservation at:

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[e] maitland@mvca.on.ca

VIEW THE FULL STRATEGY AT:
mvca.on.ca



Maitland
CONSERVATION