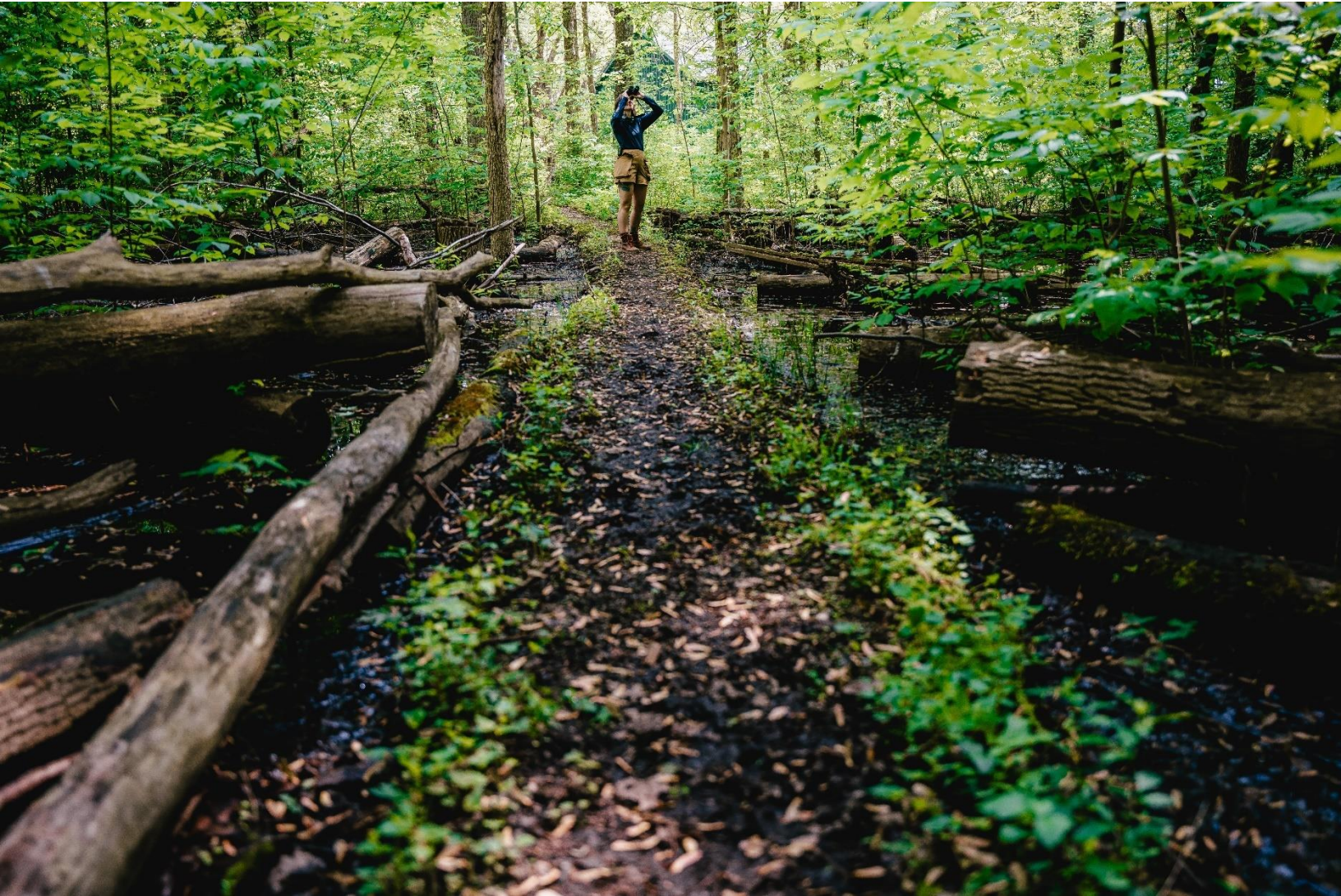




Conservation Lands Strategy



Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA)

Approved by:
Lower Valley Conservation Authority
Board of Directors

December, 19, 2024

Acknowledgements

The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA) acknowledges that the watershed is within the traditional territory of First Nations people who have longstanding relationships to the land, water and region of southwestern Ontario. We also acknowledge the local lower Thames River watershed communities of this area which include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, Munsee Delaware Nation, Delaware Nation, Caldwell Nation and Walpole Island First Nation. We acknowledge the first nations people within the villages, towns and cities of our communities. We value the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America). We are thankful for the opportunity to live, learn and share with mutual respect and appreciation.

Thanks

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of all those who participated in the development of the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority's Conservation Lands Strategy.

About this Report

References: Information that helped shape this Strategy were taken from the 2024 Watershed-Based Resource Management Strategy, the 2015 Strategic Objectives and Implementation Report and associated 2016-2021 Summary; the 1966 Lower Thames Valley Conservation Report Summary; and the 1963 Lower Thames Valley Conservation Report Land Forest; the 1983 Interim Watershed Plan; with sample documents referenced from Conservation Ontario and other Conservation Authorities.

Input: Input into the Strategy was provided and will continue to be provided by our member municipalities, community and municipal stakeholders, Indigenous watershed communities and LTVCA staff.

LTVCA Report Authors: Mark Peacock, P. Eng., CAO/Secretary-Treasurer; Genevieve Champagne BLA, Manager of Conservation Lands and Services Resource Planner.

Cover Page Image

CM Wilson Conservation Area: Staff Member; Alyssa Broeders Bird Watching on a Trail, Dudek Photography

Alternative Formats: If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact LTVCA at 519-354-7310 or admin@ltvca.ca.

Correct Citation: Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority, 2024, 'Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority Conservation Lands Strategy', Chatham, Ontario.

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Traditional Territory Acknowledgement

The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority acknowledges that the land on which the watershed is situated within is the traditional territory of First Nations people who have longstanding relationships to the land, water and region of southwestern Ontario. We also acknowledge the local lower Thames River watershed communities of this area which include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, Munsee Delaware Nation, Delaware Nation, Caldwell Nation and Walpole Island First Nation. We acknowledge the first nations people within the villages, towns and cities of our communities. We value the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America). We are thankful for the opportunity to live, learn and share with mutual respect and appreciation.

Through this Conservation Lands Strategy process, the LTVCA re-confirms our commitment to shared stewardship of natural resources and shared waters, and deep appreciation of Indigenous culture and history in the Lower Thames watershed.

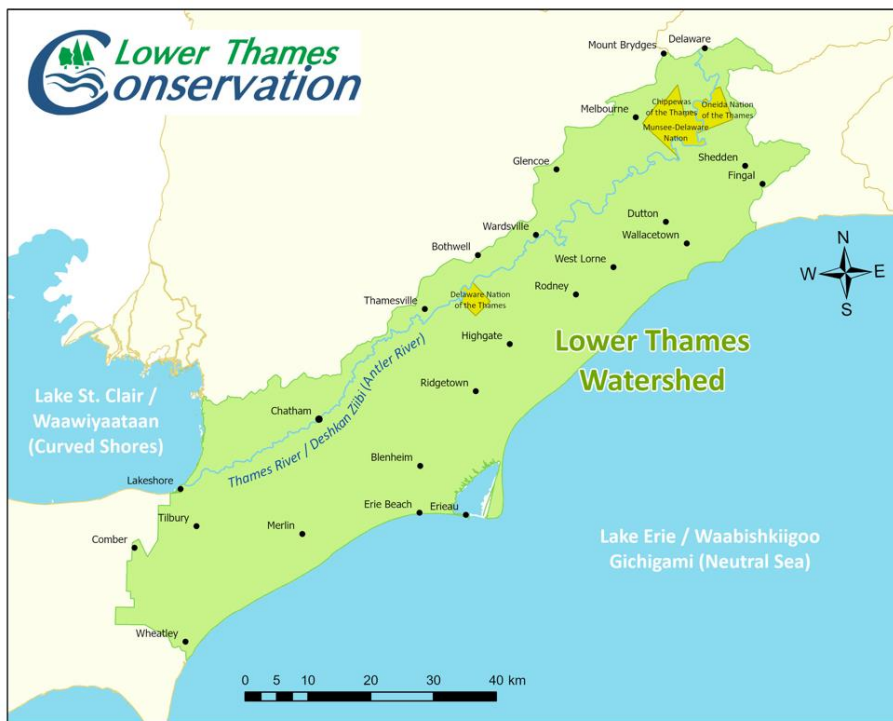


Figure 1: Map of the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority Watershed

A brief lesson of the language
Ojibwe means – canoe builders
Anishnaabe means – a person / a human
Gichigami (get-chi-goom-ee) – the Sea
Gichi (get-chi) – Big
Gami (goom-ee) – Liquid

Lake Erie would be called Waabishkiigoo (waa-bish-key-goo) Gichigami meaning Neutral Sea

Because Lake Erie would be a boundary for neighboring nations to trading/travel

Lake St. Clair translated would be Waawiyaataan (waa-we-ya-taan) – Curved shores

Resources available at <https://decolonialatlas.wordpress.com/>

1.0 Purpose & Introduction

1.1 Legislative Background:

The following document has been prepared based on requirements of the Conservation Authorities Act and its regulations. Proclaimed provisions within the Conservation Authorities Act and accompanying regulations establish requirements for Mandatory Programs and Services (see Section 21.1 of the Act and O. Reg. 686/21). Ontario Regulation 686/21 sets out the Mandatory Programs and Services which must be delivered by all Conservation Authorities (CAs) in Ontario. Section 10 of the regulation requires all Conservation Authorities to prepare a “Conservation Area Strategy” (“the Strategy”) as a required component of the “Conservation and Management of Lands” mandatory CA program and service area.

As defined under Ontario Regulation 688/21 of the Conservation Authorities Act, “conservation area” means land owned by an authority.

1.2 Purpose

This Conservation Lands Strategy has been developed to align with the recent changes to section 10(1) of Ontario Regulation 686/21 of the Conservation Authorities Act. This strategy will provide a clear set of objectives which will inform decision-making related to the management, acquisition and disposal of lands owned by the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA). Currently, the LTVCA has been operating under a number of Land Management and Conservation Area Management Plans.

1.3 Introduction

The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority is committed to the health and resiliency of the watershed and its residents. The LTVCA works in partnership with various municipalities, communities, groups and agencies to ensure that our community-based resource management strategies protect, enhance and sustain healthy watersheds while protecting the public from natural hazards. The LTVCA offers a wide variety of watershed programs and services from stewardship and restoration programs, to flood forecasting and hazard land management, water quality, agricultural programs, species at risk, environmental monitoring, source water protection, conservation areas, land management and community education programs.

The LTVCA is also a member of, and represented by, Conservation Ontario, which is a non-profit association. Conservation Ontario represents Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities, which are local watershed management agencies, mandated to ensure the conservation, restoration and responsible management of Ontario's water, land and natural habitats through programs that balance human, environmental and economic needs. Conservation Authorities are organized on a watershed basis.

Further information about Conservation Ontario, and the history of the CA's can be found here:

<https://conservationontario.ca/conservation-authorities/about-conservation-authorities>

The LTVCA holds approximately 704 hectares of land/natural areas, with 153 hectares under Forest Management Plans. The LTVCA has the responsibility to protect and conserve these natural areas to protect and increase the resiliency of the watershed and for future public enjoyment; this can include providing opportunities for habitat protection, research, recreation, and outdoor education. Protecting these areas help safeguard them from future development, the impacts of climate change and unnecessary human interactions.

There are many benefits of Conservation Lands including:

- Providing active and passive recreational use to the public
- Protecting significant water resources and contribute to improve water quality (headwaters, riparian lands, significant recharge and discharge areas)
- Protecting hazard lands and reduce flooding and soil erosion (floodplains, erosion of sensitive areas and valley lands)
- Protecting Provincially/ Regionally Significant Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI- Earth and Life Science)
- Providing protection to environmentally significant/sensitive lands (wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitat, significant vegetation communities and fish habitat)
- Contribute to biodiversity and the establishment of a Natural Heritage System which would include linkages and wildlife corridors for migration.

Overall, the conservation lands owned and operated by the LTVCA are not only used for active recreational use, they are protected to promote environmental awareness. The active recreational land use allows the LTVCA to demonstrate economic opportunities through campgrounds, sound agricultural land uses, innovative outdoor education, special events and progressive land stewardship.

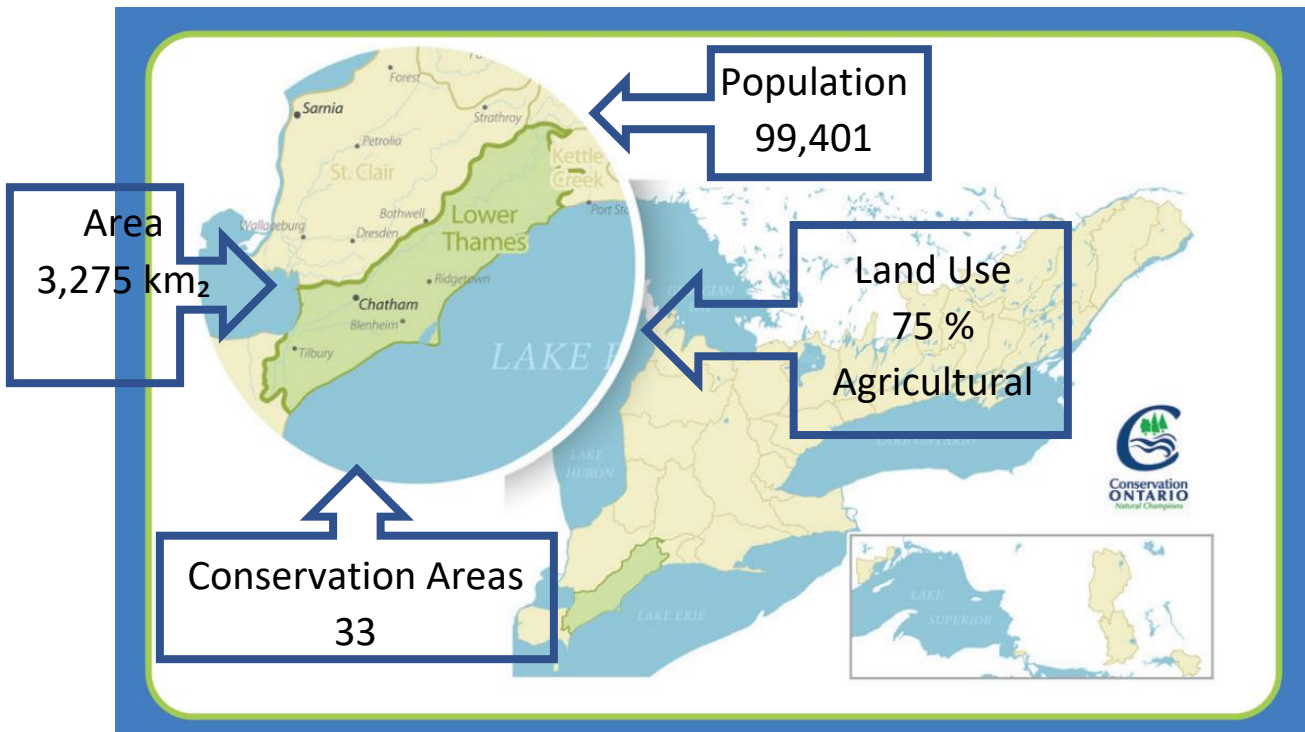


Figure 2: Map of the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority Watershed in relation to the other 36 Conservation Authorities with statistics.

2.0 History of the LTVCA Conservation Lands

The History of the Lower Thames Valley can be found in the Conservation Report 1966 (reference) summary that was completed by the Department of Energy and Resources Management for the Ontario Government. This document describes the Watershed in four categories of Land, Forest, Water and Recreation. The authors also provide recommendations for watershed improvement work within these categories. The Land, Forest and Water sections of the 1966 Conservation Report focus on the entire watershed while the Recreation section gets into potential Conservation Areas that the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority should investigate further for conservation area development. These recommendations created the resource management plan for the early Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority.

Considering the use of outdoor recreation amenities, the report notes that people tend to fit into five types of users. The aim is to balance an equality of service for all of these types.

- The Outdoor Re-creationist: uses the outdoors to enhance personal relationships with nature.
- Consumer: uses the facilities that are available
- The Spectator: uses the outdoors as the tourist and sightseer who passes through
- The Simulator: uses the outdoors to do the same things he would do at home but in different surroundings.
- The Relaxationist: uses the outdoors to find rest, companionship, and opportunity for escape from social relationships.

Considering the highly developed urban and agricultural land use of the LTVCA watershed, residents often travel outside the urban areas to seek recreation along shore lines and park lands. Local land acquisition should be considered to offer a wide variety of functions locally, on a year-round basis.

At the time of the 1966 Conservation Report there was limited to no Conservation Areas, limited provincial and national parks within the region and the only city at that time was Chatham which held any significant recreation areas within the urban setting. The limited recreation available at this time did not reflect the outdoor heritage of Canada and the beauty and appeal of a natural, and wild setting for which Canada is know. There was a growing awareness among the community that better local natural recreation opportunities were needed.

Five separate conservation areas within the LTVCA Watershed were defined after careful study and were suggested based on three factors which included; accessibility, distribution and topography. Of the areas suggested, the LTVCA has secured conservation areas in and around the proposed suggested zones.

<u>1966 Proposed Conservation Areas</u>	<u>Actual Secured Conservation Areas</u>
Jeannettes Creek Conservation Area	Lighthouse Conservation Area
	Courey Conservation Area
	Merlin Conservation Area
Tecumseh Memorial Conservation Area	Administration Building
	Colbourne Street
	Diversion Channel
	C.M. Wilson Conservation Area

Big Bend Conservation Area	Big Bend Conservation Area
	Mosa Forest Conservation Area (Skunks Misery)
	E.M. Warwick Conservation Area
	W.H. Feasby Conservation Area
Muncey Conservation Area	Dutton-Dunwich Conservation Area
	Ekfrid Forest
Mount Brydges Conservation Area	Longwoods Road Conservation Area
	Millstream & Janes Bush Conservation Area
	Delaware Conservation Area
	Sharon’s Creek Conservation Area

The LTVCA has acquired other properties outside of these five suggested areas; bringing the wild and natural experience closer to many other communities throughout the watershed as the population grew and expanded.

Although the original Conservation Report provided a good foundation for land acquisition and management in the Lower Thames watershed, it is time to reconsider its recommendations. Access to Conservation Areas for growing communities within the Lower Thames watershed must be considered and strategies devised to continue provision of relevant and needed services.

2.1 Historical and Cultural Values

The LTVCA works to preserve the historical and cultural resources throughout the watershed. The Conservation Authority owns historically recognized parcels of land, objects, places and infrastructure. Conservation of these cultural resources can involve restoration, rehabilitation or preservation. The LTVCA provides educational and cultural heritage programming and services through its outdoor education programs. Additionally, the historical and cultural aspects of the Thames River is recognised through a Canadian Heritage River designation, and the Lighthouse within the Community of Lighthouse Cove is over 200 years old and is one of the three oldest on the Great Lakes. The LTVCA will continue to work towards restoration, rehabilitation or preservation of these assets.

2.2 Indigenous Knowledge

Indigenous knowledge and values are important for Conservation Authorities as this knowledge and these values lead to respect and an understanding of responsibility for the environment. The LTVCA partners with Indigenous Nations in projects emphasizing mutual learning and sharing, and building relationships based on trust and respect. The LTVCA will work towards a holistic approach when considering environmental conservation and human well being. Additionally, the LTVCA will collaborate with multiple stakeholders to develop those approaches. The LTVCA is adaptable and flexible in addressing the needs of Indigenous partners when managing its lands.

3.0 Authorities Mission, Vision and Objectives

3.1 Our Vision

The LTVCA for a balanced and Healthy Watershed.

3.2 Our Mission

Leading by example in environmental protection in partnership with the community.

3.3 Our Core Value

Respect, Integrity, Commitment, Objectivity and Collaboration.

4.0 Aligning with the LTVCA Strategic Plan

Guiding the LTVCA through the Conservation Land Strategy is the LTVCA Watershed Based Resource Management Strategy 2024-2029 (WBRMS). This document forms the overall strategic planning document for the Conservation Authority. The WBRMS provides the following guiding objectives for the management and development of Conservation Lands:

4.1 Objectives through Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds



- Watershed Restoration required to increase biodiversity, habitat connectivity and natural cover
- Develop a Climate Change Action Plan to build resilience to our conservation areas and infrastructure.

4.2 Objectives through Connecting People to Nature



- Provide equitable access to our conservation areas across the watershed
- Increase awareness of the value of good watershed stewardship
- Creating more access to greenspaces, which enrich our communities, and strengthen cultural connections and heritage appreciation
- Provide quality educational, stewardship and volunteer opportunities to the public
- Support Indigenous engagement and public learning so people can see nature, and be informed by Tradition Knowledge

4.3 Objectives through Partner of Choice



- Strengthen and increase collaboration with community stakeholders
- Strengthen Indigenous engagement and relationships

5.0 Land Acquisition and Disposal Policy

5.1 Land Acquisition Policy

The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA) does not currently actively seek out properties to purchase however, the LTVCA does secure lands located within its jurisdiction, on a parcel-by-parcel basis to increase the Conservation Land base and to contribute to its vision and goals. Land securement includes, but is not limited to, agreements with willing landowners, donations and land bequests, land trading, fee simple purchases (often using donated/granted funds), and any other means of holding rights on land such as leasing, restrictive covenants, land use agreements and easements.

When protecting environmentally significant lands, the preferred method is holding title to the land. Use of the other land securement methods will be considered on a case by case basis with direction and approval by the Board of the Directors. For more information please refer to the LTVCA Land Acquisition Policy and Land Securement Agreement.

The LTVCA Land Acquisition Policy States:

1. Land should be donated but under certain situations could be purchased
2. Acquired land shall fit into our Land Classification criteria, which will provide either: recreational opportunities or ecological significance
3. Acquired land must be large enough or significant enough to fit into a tax relief program such as: MFTIP, CLTIP, etc.
3. Donated land should have a management fund which accompanies the donation which is used to pay taxes, maintenance of buildings, etc.
4. When possible, legal, zoning, planning and appraisal costs should be assumed by the donor
5. If there is no management fund; there should be an avenue to collect revenue from the property i.e. farm land to rent, woodlot to manage for timber
6. When possible, lands that provide a linkage, corridor or are adjacent to other natural areas, will be priority parcels for acquisition
7. Lands that contain species at risk will be priority parcels for acquisition
8. Lands that are identified with the LTVCA or Municipal Natural Heritage strategies will be priority parcels for acquisition
9. Lands that are already identified as: a) Area of Natural Scientific Interest; b) Carolinian Canada site; c) Great Lakes Conservation Blueprint for Biodiversity priority site; d) Provincially Significant Wetlands and Significant Coastal Wetlands; e) Important Bird Area; f) RAMSAR site; g) Natural Heritage designation under the (2005) Provincial Policy Statement; h) World Heritage Site; i) UNESCO Biosphere Reserve site; j) Significant Woodlands; k) Significant Wildlife / SAR Habitat; l) Significant Valleylands; will be priority parcels for acquisition

5.2 Land Disposal Policy

The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority will retain all properties that meet one or more criteria listed in the Land Acquisition Policy. In some instances, properties acquired by or donated historically to the

LTVCA may not meet the needs and objectives of the Authority. In these instances, the Authority may look to dispose of these surplus lands.

6.0 Method of Classifying LTVCA Lands

The LTVCA owns and manages over 30 properties across its watershed. Property use ranges from high to low with full service campgrounds, day use facilities and nature reserves. A full review of each property that looks at parameters such as: taxes, maintenance costs, liabilities, visitor use, areas of potential income, are all factors that will guide property classification.

In the past, each property was classified into one of the following 4 categories.

- a. High Use- staff present year round, facilities, charge for services Ex. C.M. Wilson CA
- b. Medium Use- medium traffic levels, no staff, but public invited to use trails, facilities, and signage present. Ex. Devereux CA
- c. Passive Recreation Use- trails and signage. Ex. Rowsom CA
- d. Nature Reserve- not advertised, no signage, set aside as ecological reserve. Ex. Courey Islands

The difference between Medium Use and Passive Use areas has been determined to be insignificant. Additionally, it has been found that the management of lands used to house administrative staff, with limited environmental use, should constitute an additional category. Based on this, the following categories will be used in this document:

New Categories – Used in this document	Old Categories
Active Use	High Use
Passive Use	Medium Use, Passive
Nature Reserve	Nature Reserve
Administrative Areas	Part of High Use

7.0 Mandatory and Non-Mandatory Programs on LTVCA Lands

Mandatory and non-mandatory programs on LTVCA Lands are described and this section. Additionally, details of how these services are financed are provided. Mandatory or required components are described in the following regulation:

Ontario regulation 686/21 MANDATORY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES states:

Required components (Mandatory Components)

- 9. (1) Programs and services provided by an authority with respect to the conservation and management of lands under subparagraph 1 ii of subsection 21.1 (1) of the Act shall include the following:
 - 1. A conservation area strategy, prepared on or before December 31, 2024 for all lands owned or controlled by the authority, including any interests in land registered on title, that meets the requirements set out in section 10.
 - 2. Where the authority considers it advisable to achieve the objectives referred to in paragraph 1 of subsection 10 (1),

- i. programs and services to secure the authority’s interests in its lands that include measures for fencing, signage, patrolling and any other measures to prevent unlawful entry on the authority’s land and to protect the authority from exposure to liability under the Occupiers’ Liability Act,
 - ii. programs and services to maintain any facilities, trails or other amenities that support public access and recreational activities in conservation areas and that can be provided without the direct support or supervision of staff employed by the authority or by another person or body,
 - iii. programs and services to enable the authority, in its capacity as an owner of land, to make applications or comment on matters under the Planning Act,
 - iv. programs and services to conserve, protect, rehabilitate, establish, and manage natural heritage located within the lands owned or controlled by the authority,
 - v. programs and services to plant trees on lands owned or controlled by the authority, excluding commercial logging, and
 - vi. the development of one or more policies governing land acquisitions and land dispositions.
3. A land inventory, prepared on or before December 31, 2024, that meets the requirements set out in section 11.
4. Programs and services to ensure that the authority carries out its duties, functions and responsibilities to administer regulations made under section 29 of the Act.

(2) For greater certainty, programs and services with respect to the conservation and management of lands under subparagraph 1 ii of subsection 21.1 (1) of the Act do not apply to any lands where the authority has no legal interest in the lands registered on title and the authority has entered into an agreement with another person or body to manage the lands on the person’s or body’s behalf.

From the above regulation it is noted that non-mandatory programming at a conservation area are these services that are recreational activities in conservation areas that are provided with the direct support or supervision of staff employed by the authority or by another person or body. Funding of non-mandatory programs is from fees, land rental, grant programs and municipal levy. It is noted that non-mandatory programs often create demand for mandatory programs. Visitors who participate in active programming often come back to conservation areas for passive recreation use.

8.0 Guidelines for Conservation Land Management

8.1 Location and Classification of Conservation Areas

The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority has 10-member Municipalities and is divided into two jurisdictions; the Eastern District and the Western District.

The Western District is comprised of Chatham-Kent, Lakeshore and Leamington. The Eastern District is comprised of West Elgin, Dutton-Dunwich, Southold, London, Middlesex Centre, Strathroy-Caradoc and Southwest Middlesex. The LTVCA owns and maintains 33 conservation areas and lands ranging from administrative, active recreation, passive recreation and management areas.

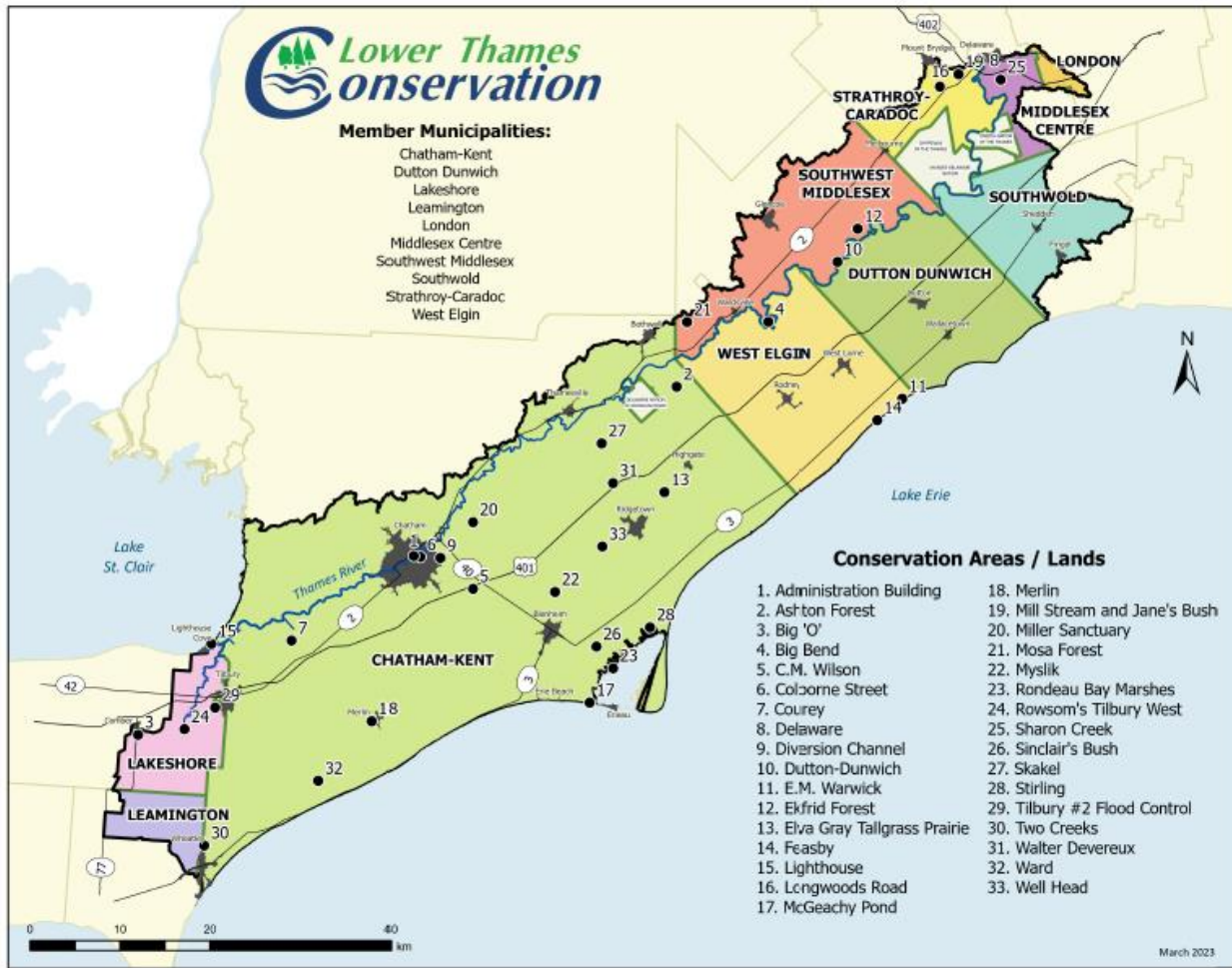


Figure 3: Map of the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority Watershed with all Conservation Areas/Lands

It is the responsibility of all users of public lands to undertake their activities in an ecologically sound and socially responsible manner and to accept risks associated with such activities. Users should be aware of other activities that may be occurring within that area concurrently and should use the site at their own discretion. Conservation areas have an influence on the community they are located within, and the promotion of the conservation areas may be seen through social media, events, publications which would in turn encourage a higher public use.

The LTVCA Conservation Areas are classified as follows:

<u>Administration</u>	<u>Active Recreation</u>	<u>Passive Recreation</u>	<u>Nature Reserve</u>
Administration Building	C.M. Wilson *	Big O	Ashton Forest
	Longwoods Road *	Delaware	Colborne
		Dutton- Dunwich	Courey
		Lighthouse *	Diversion Channel
		McGeachy Pond	Ekfrid Forest
		Merlin	Elva Gray Tallgrass Prairie
		Millstream*	W.H. Feasby
		Janes Bush	

		Mosa Forest	Miller Sanctuary
		Rondeau Bay Marshes	Myslik
		Rowsom's Tilbury West	Skakel**
		Sharon's Creek	Stirling
		Sinclair's Bush	Tilbury #2 Flood Control
		Two Creeks	Ward
		Walter Devereux**	Well Head
		Big Bend**	
		E.M. Warwick	

* Property has a rental house on the property.

** Property has a farm lease associated with the property.

Information regarding each Conservation Area and the activities provided at each location can be found in our ***Explore LTVCA Conservation Areas Guide Book***.

8.2 Leased Conservation Lands

In some instances, Conservation Areas are subject to a long or short-term lease agreement between the LTVCA and an individual, a corporation, or a municipality. Through the terms of the lease agreement, the Lessee is typically responsible for the management of these lands, however, these lands may still include public access and active recreation opportunities. Examples of these agreements include agricultural lands, the Chatham Leaf and Yard Waste Facility and the Wolfe Creek BMX track, Wheatley Two Creeks Association.

8.3 Conservation Areas- Active Recreation

Conservation Areas-Active Recreation refers to lands which provide natural habitat protection and/or flood/erosion protection while remaining accessible and open to the public. These lands are well promoted and may contain managed trail networks, parking lots, signage, and facilities. The Authority may actively encourage and facilitate active recreation and have staffed buildings. Typically, these lands include fee for parking, camping, rentals, and/or education. The lands are distinguished from passive recreation lands by the level of development and the intensity of use.

These properties are identified as Category 3 under Ontario Regulation 686/21 of the Conservation Authorities Act for Mandatory Programs and Services. Category 3 programs and services are those that the conservation authority determines are advisable to provide, to further the purposes of the Act. These lands provide active recreation in the form of seasonal and transient campsites and outdoor education opportunities. Additional facilities and programs are on site to serve the needs of visitors to these properties. Financing for these lands is provided through the revenue generated on the property (i.e., camping fees, day-use fees, education program fees, and donations). Funding for these lands is also provided from the member municipalities (municipal levy) through Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) or agreements.

8.4 Conservation Areas- Passive Recreation

Conservation Areas-Passive recreation refers to lands which provide habitat protection and/or flood/erosion protection while permitting public access on a passive basis. These lands include signage, trails, parking lots, and may have facilities such as washrooms or pavilions. These lands typically are not staffed, but rather visited by staff for maintenance and inspection.

These properties are identified as Category 2 under Ontario Regulation 686/21 of the Conservation Authorities Act for Mandatory Programs and Services. Funding for these lands is provided from member municipalities (municipal levy) through a Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) or agreements.

8.5 Nature Reserves

Nature Reserves refer to lands where public access is prohibited and/or are generally not managed for public access. These lands may serve as resource management areas, agricultural fields, and potential flood lands. These areas typically do not have facilities and/or parking lots. Trail networks, if existing, are simple, minimal, and/or unmaintained. The Trail networks within management areas are for staff personnel only in order to review and manage the property.

These properties are identified as Category 1 under Ontario Regulation 686/21 of the Conservation Authorities Act for Mandatory Programs and Services, which are lands owned or controlled by the Authority for conservation and management. Funding for these lands is provided from member municipalities through municipal levy. The Diversion Channel and the 5th Street Dam is funded annually by the Municipality of Chatham-Kent through a special levy and occasionally by the Province through the Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure funding program (WECl) (for capital projects).

8.6 Administration Areas

The LTVCA has one property that falls under Administration Areas. The Chatham Administration building for the LTVCA Conservation Authority; this building is the main administration building and houses the majority of office-based staff.

The Chatham Administration building property falls under Category 1 under Ontario Regulation 686/21 of the Conservation Authorities Act for Mandatory Programs and Services.

Additional staff are located at the Burwell House at the Longwoods Road Conservation Area and the C.M. Wilson Learning Centre. Education staff are located at the Longwoods Road Resource Centre and the C. M. Wilson Learning Centre. Conservation Land staff are located at the Longwoods Road Conservation Area Workshop and the C.M. Wilson Conservation Area Workshop.

8.7 Principles Used to Manage the Conservation Areas

The following general principles are used to manage conservation areas in the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority jurisdiction:

- Conservation Areas are demonstrations of naturalized areas to the public.
- Conservation Area activities may be limited should it be deemed that natural resources are being affected by the scale of human use of the area.
- Maintenance and development of roads, access routes and trails will be planned and performed by staff.

- Archaeological sites associated with past human activities, endeavours or events (including surface artifacts, subsurface attributes) shall be protected from disturbance whenever possible.
- Identified species at risk and their habitat should be mapped and protected from possible disruption by other land uses wherever possible.
- Property boundary fences/markers will be maintained or implemented as needed.
- Conservation and Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program properties will be maintained consistent with their approved management plans.
- Staff may need to manage nuisance wildlife in Conservation Areas.
- Properties are open to research activities relating to natural resource conservation with appropriate restrictions which will be outlined in an agreement between the Authority and researcher.
- Controls in the form of access restrictions such as signage, gates and land use plans may be used to define or limit public use of ecologically sensitive portions of area or for safety concerns.
- The use of remote-controlled vehicles of any kind (e.g. land, air, or watercraft, including drones) are not allowed on Authority property without LTVCA permission.
- Any special event that will require exclusive use or closure of an area to the general public shall require a Facility Rental Permit and a fee based on the Conservation Areas Fee Schedule.
- Hunting may be allowed on CA lands if approved by Conservation Area Staff and has been identified in the conservation area management plans.
- Farming and farm demonstrations may be permitted on specific pre-approved conservation area lands.
- Filming permits are required for conservation area lands and must be approved prior to filming taking place.

8.8 General Rules for Conservation Areas

Note: more specific rules are defined in literature provided to users.

- Conservation areas are open and available daily from dawn until dusk unless otherwise posted.
- Overnight camping is only permitted at C.M Wilson Conservation Area, Longwoods Road Conservation Area, Big Bend Conservation Area and E.M Warwick Conservation Area. Camping is to be booked through Let's Camp or through the Administrative Office, it is a fee for service and only permitted on regulated camping sites.
- Dogs (pets) are required to be on leash at all times. 'Stoop and scoop' and removal of waste is required.
- Licensed fishing activities are allowed provided they follow Provincial regulations and are not endangering other users of the property.
- Wedding Ceremonies/Special Events will be allowed on site in accordance with rental permits and payment per the Conservation Area Fee Schedule.
- Visitors to these areas should ***'take only memories and leave only footprints.'***
- Garbage facilities may not be available at all sites, it is highly encouraged that all activities exercise ***'pack in and pack out'*** and take all garbage with them.

8.9 Prohibited Activities

The following activities are prohibited on Conservation Area lands (outside of campsites which are governed by specific camping rules):

- Open Fires
- Drug and Alcohol Consumption
- Off leash pets
- Public Nudity
- Indecent Acts
- Bow Fishing
- Target Practice
- Unauthorized Horseback Riding
- Discharge of Firearms (outside of specific permitted use) including Airsoft Guns/ Paintball
- Unauthorized Hunting/Trapping
- Unauthorized camping/trailers
- Unauthorized motorized vehicles
- Creation of new trails/ structures for mountain bikes
- Unauthorized use of drones
- Littering or dumping of foreign material
- Unauthorized placement of signs
- Unauthorized damage or removal of flora or fauna

8.10 Species at Risk, Invasive Species and Stewardship Programs

The Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority currently has a Species at Risk (SAR) team along with a Stewardship team. Species at Risk and Invasive Species are identified through studies conducted on conservation authority properties. The compiled information is then mapped and documented for staff's knowledge. This information can then be shared with government agencies; based on data sharing agreements. The information studied and collected through our SAR and Stewardship Teams can then be tabulated and documented into Ecological Land Classification documents. This background information is fundamental to properly manage natural systems and is contained in Conservation Area specific Management Plans. The work completed for this planning is supported through signed MOU's with each Member Municipality, however, funding is often also provided through grant funding, donation or special levy.

9.0 Revenue and Expenses

Revenues generated through the use of Conservation Lands are through a paid parking program located at C.M. Wilson Conservation Area, Longwoods Road Conservation Area and Sharon's Creek Conservation Area. Revenues are also generated through seasonal campsites at C.M. Wilson and Big Bend, transient camping at C.M. Wilson and Big Bend, and group camping at Longwoods Road and E.M. Warwick. The Authority is committed to utilizing the parking and camping fees to offset operating expenses for the Conservation Areas to enhance the public experience. This may include provision of portable washrooms on seasonally active recreation sites, snow plowing, grass cutting, hazard tree removal, trail repairs, signage and maintenance of access roads and parking areas.

The general maintenance and LTVCA staff time is allocated from revenues and the levy provided by our member Municipalities.

Capital improvements (trail surfacing, shelters, bridges, boardwalks, camping facilities) are funded through special levies, grants, donations, reserves, revenues from the paid parking and camping programs and municipal levy.

10.0 Implementation - Measurable Achievements

Staff have developed a Conservation Area Strategy that includes realistic and measurable achievements broken down into an implementation chart. The chart below gives an outline of the objectives the LTVCA would like to achieve over the 5-year term. The chart lays out the framework for who within the Conservation Authority would maintain ownership of ensuring these objectives are met, the measurement of success, the implementation initiatives, budget implications and the Strategic Plan Connection.

9.1 Implementation Chart

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Ownership</u>	<u>Measurement</u>	<u>Initiatives</u>	<u>Budget Implications</u>	<u>Strategic Connection</u>
1.	Review and Update Land Acquisition and Land Disposal Policy	CA Land Manager	Completed up to date Policy	Year 2- Review Year 3- Board Approval	Staff time	Partner of Choice
2.	Create Ecological Land Classifications for the CA Lands	SAR Team	Annually completing a number of ELCs based on funding available	Year 1 to 5- completing at least 1 ELC per year based on available funding available for staff time	Staff time Fuel, Equipment, In-kind for Gants	Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds
3.	Create CA specific Conservation Management Plans	CA Land Manager, SAR Team, Lands Team	Annually completing a Land Management Plan per CA	Year 1 to 5- completing at least 1 Land Management Plan per year based on available funding and data	Staff time	Healthy and Climate Resilient Watersheds
4.	Provide equitable access to CA Lands	Communication Team	Distribution of CA Land Passes	Year 1-5 Annually provide a number of passes to each Municipality to host in their libraries Work with DEI groups	Staff time No revenue generated through the donation	Connecting People to Nature
5.	Review assets annually and update/repair infrastructure	Lands Staff	Asset management plan implementation	Year 1-5 Annually review and update/ repair infrastructure – annual work planning	Staff time Cost per asset updated/repared	Organizational Excellence
6.	Land Acquisition	Lands Staff	Acquire lands close to growing communities to provide access to nature	Continue to work with community to have lands donated in these areas	Staff time, lawyer fees, survey acquisition costs	Connecting People to Nature
7.	Hunting	Lands Staff	Hunting considered in Conservation Area Management Plans	Management Plans	Staff time	Connecting People to Nature

11.0 Conservation Lands Strategy Review

To ensure this document remains current, a review of the Strategy will be conducted every 5 years. The Strategy will be updated, and public consultation requested when major changes are made to the overall objectives and goals of the Authority, or when new land is acquired. If the Strategy is deemed to be current and accurate, the Board of Directors may approve the Strategy as is for the next 5-year cycle. If updates are necessary, the Board of Directors will determine whether public consultation is required as part of the update process.