Conservation through Integrated Watershed Management: Key Legislative and Policy Turning Points since 1992

A.D. Latornell Conservation Symposium, Nov 20, 2013
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Overview

- Integrated Watershed Mgmt (IWM) Approach
- Current Delivery of IWM – CA Program links
- Legislative & Policy Foundation for IWM: Overview of Chronology and Turning Points for the past 20 years
- Specific Highlights and looking to the future
- The Ideal Future for Conservation
Integrated Watershed Management: Advancing Linked Agendas and Mandates

Source Water Protection

Biodiversity Conservation

Fish Habitat Management

Water Quality/Quantity Management

Agricultural Drains

Natural Heritage Systems

Natural Infrastructure

Infrastructure Management

Growth Management

Land Use Planning & Management

Groundwater Surface Water Interactions

Aquatic Ecosystems Management

Natural Hazards Management
Delivering Integrated Watershed Management – CA Programs

- Watershed/Sub-watershed/Shoreline Planning
- Water Quality/Quantity Monitoring & Modeling
- Drought/Flood - Mgmt & Response
- Regulation of Development, Interference with Wetlands, and Alterations to Watercourses
- Natural Heritage and Forestry
- Source Protection
- Technical Input & Review – Land Use Planning
- Watershed Stewardship
- Communications, Education & Recreation
Legislative Context – the Foundation for Watershed Management - Turning Points

- Conservation Authorities Act 1998; S.28 Reg’ns 2004
- Walkerton Inquiry 2000; Clean Water Act 2006
- Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan 2002
- Greenbelt Plan 2005
- Places to Grow Act 2005; Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan 2006
- Lake Simcoe Protection Act 2008; Lake Simcoe Plan 2009
- Climate Ready: Ontario’s Adaptation Strategy/Action Plan 2010
- Federal Fisheries Act 1990s No Net Loss Fish Habitat Policy to 2012/3 Amendments
Planning Act 1996

Establishes the rules of municipal land use planning in Ontario and Section 3, the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) establishes provincial interests that must be taken into account in local decision-making.
2005 supports coordinated, integrated and comprehensive approaches (s. 1.2.1) and using the watershed “as the ecologically meaningful scale for planning” to “protect, improve or restore the quality and quantity of water” (s. 2.2, subsection 2.2.1).

DRAFT 2012 continued support with possible additional emphasis on green infrastructure and stormwater management.
Red Tape Reduction (Bill 25)

Section 28 Regulatory Authority to be defined through a “Content Regulation” (Ontario Regulation 97/04) for all:
- development (as related to the control of flooding, erosion, conservation of land, pollution, or dynamic beaches);
- interference with wetlands; and,
- alterations to shorelines and watercourses.
Section 28 Regulations 2004-2006

Development, Interference and Alteration Regulations
“...resource development and land-use planning sectors,...simply too many regulatory bodies with overlapping mandates ... In addition to our comprehensive review of all 630 provincial agencies, boards and commissions, we would ensure decisions made by regulatory bodies like the CAs are based on verifiable science, not ideology, and appealable to the OMB.”

Path to Prosperity An Agenda for Growth - PC Party
“I want to emphasize that a comprehensive approach is needed and should be adopted by the province. Source protection plans should be a subset of broader watershed plans”

Justice Dennis O’Connor
Clean Water Act 2006

Protects the quality and quantity of existing and future sources of drinking water by eliminating or managing threats and stresses in vulnerable areas such as around municipal wellheads, municipal water intake pipes, recharge areas and vulnerable aquifers.
Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan 2002

Provides land use and resource management planning direction on how to protect the Moraine's ecological and hydrological features and functions.
Greenbelt Plan 2005

Identifies where urbanization should not occur; to provide permanent protection to the agricultural land base and the ecological features and functions occurring on this landscape.
Places to Grow Act 2005
Greater Golden Horseshoe
Growth Plan 2006

To develop growth plans in any part of Ontario reflecting the needs, strengths and opportunities of the communities involved, and promoting growth that balances the needs of the economy with the environment.
Lake Simcoe Protection Act 2008
Lake Simcoe Protection Plan 2009

To protect and restore the ecological health of the Lake Simcoe watershed
Upcoming Turning Point?

Provincial Plan Reviews in 2015
Climate Ready: Ontario’s Adaptation Plan and Strategy 2010

- **Expert Panel on Climate Change Adaptation** (2009) recommended to the Ontario Government a more integrated watershed-based approach to managing Ontario’s water resources.

- **Climate Ready: Ontario’s Adaptation Plan and Strategy 2011 – 2014** identifies a need for increased resilience of municipal stormwater systems in light of climate change induced alterations to rainfall intensities and storm patterns.
Federal Fisheries Act 2012

Regulates and thus helps to protect fish, the habitats that sustain them, and the fisheries that depend on fishes and their habitats.
• 13 provincial ministries are responsible for implementing actions

• Geographic scope includes all of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River drainage basins in Ontario
Goals - Ontario’s Great Lakes Strategy

- Engaging and empowering communities
- Protecting water for human and ecological health
- Improving wetlands, beaches and coastal areas
- Protecting habitats and species
- Enhancing understanding and adaptation – science related to existing and emerging stressors, such as climate change
- Ensuring environmentally sustainable economic opportunities and innovation
Proposed Great Lakes Protection Act 2013

• to protect and restore the ecological health of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence River Basin

• to create opportunities for individuals and communities to become involved in the protection and restoration of the ecological health of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence River Basin
Ideal Future for Conservation

Explicit support for Integrated Watershed Management
- Integrating the disciplines and mandates;
- Creating a common scientific and policy view