



November LRCA Board Meeting

Lakehead Region Conservation Authority
130 Conservation Road/Microsoft Teams
2025-11-26 16:30 - 18:00 EST

Table of Contents

1. CALL TO ORDER

Declaration: "The Lakehead Region Conservation Authority respectfully acknowledges that the lands on which we live and work are the traditional lands of the Anishinabek Nation and the traditional territory of Fort William First Nation, signatory to the Robinson-Superior Treaty of 1850.

As partners in the conservation and protection of the Lakehead Watershed along with First Nations communities, the Métis Nation of Ontario, and other Indigenous peoples, the LRCA is committed to the common vision of a healthy, safe and sustainable Lakehead Watershed."

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

THAT: the Agenda is adopted as published.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING.....5

THAT: the Minutes of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority Ninth Regular Meeting held on October 29, 2025 be adopted as published.

THAT: the Minutes of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority's Special Meeting held on November 17, 2025 be adopted as published.

10-29-25 Minutes .pdf.....5

Special Board Meeting 11-17-25 Minutes.pdf.....10

5. IN-CAMERA AGENDA

THAT: we now go into Committee of the Whole (In-Camera) at _____ p.m.

THAT: we go into Open Meeting at _____ p.m.

THAT: the In-Camera Minutes of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority October 29, 2025 meeting be adopted as published.

6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

6.1. Proposed regional consolidation of conservation authorities and Bill 68

Schedule 3

With Respect to the posting by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks Environmental Registry Notice No. 025-1257 ("Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities"), proposing to reduce Ontario's 36 conservation authorities to 7 regional entities as part of a broader restructuring that would create a new Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency to provide centralized oversight and direction under the Conservation Authorities Act;

AND THAT under this proposal, the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA)

would be merged into a new "Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority" together with:

- Grey Sauble Conservation
- the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority
- the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority
- the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority
- the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority
- the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority

forming a single organization encompassing the eastern shores of Lake Huron, the southern shores of Georgian Bay, Lake Simcoe, and the western shores of Lake Superior in Northwestern Ontario;

AND THAT the LRCA Board acknowledges and supports the Province's goals of improved efficiency, consistency and fiscal prudence in conservation delivery,

AND THAT the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority is a self-sufficient entity that is accountable to its member municipalities;

financially resilient;

consistently processes permits in less than 7 days;

operates in the City of Thunder Bay that has exceeded their housing target by 143%;

has modern financial and IT processes that prioritize security and redundancy;

and is a locally recognized leader in the conservation and protection of the Lakehead Watershed;

AND THAT the Board further recognizes that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority is unique as it does not abut any other Conservation Authority and solely serves Northwestern Ontario communities that face vastly different climatic, hydrological, geographic and infrastructure realities, and would be disconnected to the proposed larger overarching administrative structure that is physically based 1,500 kilometres from the north with 72 other municipalities;

The Board finds that the proposed "Huron-Superior Region" configuration would :

Create a geographically vast and administratively complex entity, joining Northwestern Ontario with fast-growing Southern Ontario municipalities that are 1,300-1,500 kilometres apart with no shared watershed connection or economic alignment;

dilute local accountability and municipal partnership, contrary to the principle that decisions are best made at the local level;

generate substantial transition costs — including human-resources integration, governance restructuring, IT migration and policy harmonization, rebranding — that would divert resources from front-line service delivery and delay measurable outcomes, contrary to the Province's business-planning principles of value for money, cost containment and service continuity; and

risk greater uncertainty and delay for builders, developers and farmers, as local permitting offices and staff familiar with local conditions are replaced by distant regional structures, making it harder for applicants to obtain timely local advice, resolve issues or expedite housing and infrastructure approvals that support the Province's "Get It Done" agenda;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Board of Directors is opposed to the proposed "Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority" boundary configuration outlined in Environmental Registry Notice 025-1257;

AND THAT the Board recommends that the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority form the "Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority";

AND THAT further provincial evaluation is conducted with a more focused specific model as a geographically coherent, cost-effective and locally accountable alternative that advances the government's priorities of efficiency, red-tape reduction and timely housing delivery;

AND THAT the Ministry engage directly with affected municipalities of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, before finalizing any consolidation boundaries or legislative amendments;

AND THAT this resolution, with a letter from the Chair, be forwarded to the Environmental Registry of Ontario consultations and to:

- the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and his Opposition critics;
- local Members of Provincial Parliament;
- local Members of Parliament;
- the Association of Municipalities of Ontario;
- Conservation Ontario;
- All local municipalities; and
- All Conservation Authorities in Ontario.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

7.1. Arthur Shewchuk Memorial Bursary.....12

The 2024-2025 recipient of the Arthur Shewchuk Memorial Bursary was Destiny Eissner who is enrolled in the Bachelor of Engineering (Chemical) program.

Arthur Shewchuk Memorial Bursary.pdf.....	12
8. STAFF REPORTS	
8.1. WM-01-2025 Conservation Areas Water Quality Report 2025.....	19
THAT: the Staff Report WM-01-2025 be received AND FURTHER THAT the Conservation Area Water Monitoring Program will continue in 2026.	
WM-01-2025_Conservation Areas Water Quality Report 2025.pdf.....	19
8.2. 2025 Stewardship Program Project Summary.....	27
THAT: Staff Report STEW-02-2025 be received.	
STEW-02-2025_2025 Stewardship Program Project Summary.pdf.....	27
9. CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S REPORT	
9.1. Monthly Treasurer's Report.....	41
Monthly Financial Report October.pdf.....	41
9.2. Final 2026 Budget.....	42
Recorded Weighted Vote	
THAT: the 2026 Budget levy apportionment as outlined in Version 2.0 of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority Final Budget be approved AND FURTHER THAT a copy of the final budget will be provided to the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks and all Member Municipalities.	
Majority Vote:	
THAT: in 2026 the following will be appropriated from the following reserves: Operating Capital Reserve \$30,000; Vehicle and Equipment Reserve \$31,100; Conservation Area Major Maintenance Capital Reserve \$52,300; and Forest Management Reserve \$35,085.	
THAT: the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority adopts the 2026 Budget Document, Version 2.0 for a total budget of \$3,245,679.	
FIN-11-2025 Final 2026 Budget Version 2.pdf.....	42
9.3. 2026 Board of Directors Meeting Schedule.....	126
THAT: the 2026 Board of Directors Meeting schedule is approved.	
2026 LRCA Board Meeting Schuedule.pdf.....	126
10. PASSING OF ACCOUNTS.....	
THAT: having examined the accounts for the period October 1, 2025 to October 31, 2025 cheque #3690 to #3713 for \$143,101.97 and preauthorized payments of \$153,768.86 for a total of \$296,870.83, we approve their payment.	
Passing of Accounts October.pdf.....	127
11. REGULATORY ROLE	
Plan Review program comments and Section 28 permits issued since last meeting summaries.	
11.1. Plan Review Commenting Summary.....	128

Plan Input and Review Monthly Summary October & November 2025.pdf.....	128
11.2. Section 28 Permit Summary.....	130
November 2025 Permit Tracking Log.pdf.....	130
12. PROJECTS UPDATE	
 12.1. Communications Manager Projects Update.....	131
Communications Manager November 2025 Agenda Project Update.pdf.....	131
 12.2. Lands Manager Projects Update	
None.	

 12.3. Watershed Manager Projects Update.....	132
Watershed Manager November 2025 Agenda Project Update.pdf.....	132

13. NEW BUSINESS

14. NEXT MEETING

A Special Meeting will be held in December. Date to be confirmed at the meeting.

The following meeting will be held on January 28, 2026 at 4:30 p.m., which will be the Annual General Meeting and elections. Location will be off site due to planned renovations at the Administrative Office.

15. ADJOURNMENT

THAT: the time being _____ p.m. AND FURTHER THAT there being no further business we adjourn.



October LRCA Board Meeting
Lakehead Region Conservation Authority
October 29, 2025, at 4:30 PM
130 Conservation Road/Microsoft Teams

Members Present:

Albert Aiello, Grant Arnold, Robert Beatty, Donna Blunt, Rudy Buitenhuis, Dan Calvert, Trevor Giertuga, Sheelagh Hendrick, Greg Johnsen, Brian Kurikka, Jim Vezina

Also Present:

Tammy Cook, Chief Administrative Officer
Mark, Ambrose, Finance Manager
Ryne Gilliam, Lands Manager
Melissa Hughson, Watershed Manager
Melanie O'Riley, Administrative Clerk/Receptionist, recorder of minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

THAT: the Agenda be adopted as published.

Motion: #111/25

Motion moved by Greg Johnsen and motion seconded by Brian Kurikka. **CARRIED.**

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

None.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

THAT: the Minutes of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority Eighth Regular Meeting held on Wednesday, September 24, 2025 be adopted as published.

Motion: #112/25

Motion moved by Robert Beatty and motion seconded by Greg Johnsen. **CARRIED.**

5. IN-CAMERA AGENDA

THAT: we now go into Committee of the Whole (In-Camera) at 4:32 p.m.

Motion: #113/25

Motion moved by Greg Johnsen and motion seconded by Robert Beatty. **CARRIED.**

THAT: we go into Open Meeting at 4:44 p.m.

Motion: #114/25

Motion moved by Grant Arnold and motion seconded by Robert Beatty. **CARRIED.**

THAT: the In-Camera Minutes of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority September 24, 2025 meeting be adopted as published.

Motion: #115/25

Motion moved by Brian Kurikka and motion seconded by Jim Vezina. **CARRIED.**

*THAT: Staff Report FIN-10-2025 be received **AND FURTHER THAT** the 2026 Salary Grid be approved with an effective date of January 1, 2026.*

Motion: #116/25

Motion moved by Jim Vezina and motion seconded by Grant Arnold. **CARRIED.**

THAT: the Salary Grid be increased to account for cost-of-living increases on January 1st of the given year in the amount of 2.0% in 2027 and 2.0% in 2028.

Motion: #117/25

Motion moved by Sheelagh Hendrick and motion seconded by Albert Aiello. **CARRIED.**

6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

None.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

8. STAFF REPORTS

8.1. Multipurpose Room Renovation

Members reviewed and discussed Staff Report LM-10-2025 related to the Contract for the LRCA Administration Boardroom Renovation Project which recommended awarding the contract to RML Contracting Ltd.

THAT: the Contract for LRCA Administration Board Room Renovation Project be awarded to RML Contracting Ltd. at a cost of \$184,388.00 not including HST AND FURTHER THAT \$80,000.00 will be appropriated from the Operating Reserve to the project.

Motion: #118/25

Motion moved by Sheelagh Hendrick and motion seconded by Albert Aiello. **CARRIED.**

8.2. Floodway Diversion Channel Dredging Project

Members reviewed and discussed Staff Report NMFC-07-2025 related to the 2025 Neebing-McIntyre Floodway Diversion Channel Sediment Removal and Regrading project which was recommended to be awarded to PNI Contracting Ltd.

THAT: the 2025 Neebing-McIntyre Floodway Diversion Channel Sediment Removal and Regrading project be awarded to PNI Contracting Ltd. for the material, equipment and labour necessary to remove the accumulated sediment for a cost of \$373,695.00, not including HST as outlined in their Tender Form dated October 17, 2025.

Motion: #119/25

Motion moved by Albert Aiello and motion seconded by Sheelagh Hendrick. **CARRIED.**

9. CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

9.1. Monthly Treasurer's Report

Members were provided with the Monthly Treasurer's Report for September's Administration and Capital.

10. PASSING OF ACCOUNTS

THAT: having examined the accounts for the period August 1, 2025 to August 31, 2025 cheque #3637 to #3661 for \$109,814.06 and preauthorized payments of \$161,561.38 for a total of \$271,375.44, we approve their payment.

Motion: #120/25

Motion moved by Sheelagh Hendrick and motion seconded by Albert Aiello. **CARRIED.**

11. REGULATORY ROLE

Members were provided with the Plan Review program comments and Section 28 permits issued since last meeting.

12. PROJECTS UPDATE

12.1. Communications Manager Projects Update

It was noted that the Communications Manager, Environmental Planner and Planning Regulations Technician were attending the annual Conservation Areas Workshop on October 27-29.

It was noted that the LRCA hosted a Flint-Knapping and Archaeology Workshop. The workshop was co-hosted by Dr. Dave Norris of Woodland Heritage Northwest, Clarence Surette of Lakehead University, and Chris McEvoy of the LU Anthropology Department. Approximately 30 people participated.

It was noted that the annual Fall Migratory Birding Day was held on October 4th at Mission Island Marsh Conservation Area.

12.2. Lands Manager Projects Update

It was noted that the Mills Block Redevelopment Project was in progress.

It was noted that someone poured used motor oil and filters in the concrete vault washroom at Little Trout Bay Conservation Area. Cost of removal and disposal is expected to be approximately \$1800.00.

12.3. Watershed Manager Projects Update

It was noted that Lake Superior's water level continues to be below average.

It was noted that the CAO, Watershed Manager, Development Regulations Officer and the Planning and Regulations Technician attended the Planning Workshop hosted by the Ministry of

Municipal Affairs and Housing in Thunder Bay. The workshop included a presentation by Tammy Cook, CAO, regarding LRCA's Plan Review Program.

It was noted that the five-year Memorandum of Understanding's (MOU) regarding the Plan Review program with all member municipalities will expire at the end of 2025. Updated Mou's have been sent out for execution by each council.

It was noted that Staff attended, presented and participated in the 3rd Annual Northwest Climate Gathering held on October 18, 2025.

It was noted that the Stewardship Team's Seeds for Conservation Program grew 35 species and 12,232 plants at the LRCA office in 2025. Of the 12,232 plants grown, 8,273 were planted in various locations throughout the city and 3,959 plants were overwintered.

13. NEW BUSINESS

It was noted that the Office will be closed January 2, 2025.

It was noted that the LRCA received a WSIB rebate of \$21,991.63.

14. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on November 26, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.

15. ADJOURNMENT

THAT: the time being 5:10 p.m. AND FURTHER THAT there being no further business we adjourn.

Motion: #121/25

Motion moved by Sheelagh Hendrick and motion seconded by Albert Aiello. **CARRIED.**

Chair

Chief Administrative Officer



Special LRCA Board Meeting
Lakehead Region Conservation Authority
November 17, 2025, at 4:30 PM
130 Conservation Road/Microsoft Teams

Members Present:

Albert Aiello, Grant Arnold, Robert Beatty, Donna Blunt, Rudy Buitenhuis, Dan Calvert, Greg Johnsen, Brian Kurikka, Jim Vezina

Members Present Virtually:

Trevor Giertuga

Members Not Present:

Sheelagh Hendrick

Also Present:

Tammy Cook, Chief Administrative Officer
Mark, Ambrose, Finance Manager
Ryne Gilliam, Lands Manager
Melissa Hughson, Watershed Manager
Ryan Mackett, Communications Manager
Melanie O'Riley, Administrative Clerk/Receptionist, recorder of minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

THAT: the Agenda be adopted as published.

Motion: #122/25

Motion moved by Brian Kurikka and motion seconded by Robert Beatty. **CARRIED.**

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

None.

4. CORRESPONDENCE

4.1. Consultation on the proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities

Members received correspondence related to the proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities as outlined in Environmental Registry of Ontario posting ERO #025-1257 – Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities.

5. CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

5.1. Review of proposed regional consolidation of conservation authorities and Bill 68 Schedule 3

The CAO provided a presentation outlining Environmental Registry of Ontario posting ERO #025-1257 – Proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities and Bill 68, Plan to Protect Ontario (Budget Measures), 2025 (No.2), Schedule 3 related to the proposed Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency.

Members reviewed and discussed the proposed changes after the presentation. Further discussion on the matter and a resolution will be brought forward at the next meeting for consideration.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on November 26, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.

7. ADJOURNMENT

THAT: the time being 6:05 p.m. AND FURTHER THAT there being no further business we adjourn.

Motion: #123/25

Motion moved by Jim Vezina and motion seconded by Grant Arnold. **CARRIED.**

Chair

Chief Administrative Officer

November 1, 2025

Tammy Cook
Lakehead Region Conservation Authority
130 Conservation Road; PO Box 10427
Thunder Bay ON P7B 6T8

Dear Tammy,

We are pleased to present your personalized **2024-2025** endowed financial statement for your review. I want to take a moment to express **our heartfelt gratitude for your commitment** to our students, which has not only made a significant financial impact but has also supported students achieving their dreams through uniquely accessible pathways to entry, student support programs and extensive opportunities for experiential learning and research.

Your endowed fund is more than just financial assistance; it represents an investment in the future of our students. **Thanks to your generosity**, talented and deserving students now have the opportunity to focus on their academic goals without the burden of financial concerns.

The stories we hear from students who have benefited from your funds are heartwarming. They speak of the transformative power of education and **the impact you have made** in supporting their lives and dreams.

For your additional information, we have also included a printed copy of the 2024-2025 Lakehead University Endowment Fund Donor Impact Report which can be accessed by scanning this QR code or is also located, in digital format, at lakeheadu.ca/alumni/giving/endowment-report.



Thank you once again for your philanthropic support. Your generosity helps to ensure our students are equipped to contribute meaningfully to their communities and the world beyond for many years to come.

Warmest regards,



Michael den Haan
Vice President, University Advancement
Lakehead University

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Tara Monteith, Coordinator, Donor Experience at stewardship.er@lakeheadu.ca or alternatively, by phone at 807-343-8010 Ext 8198.

FINANCIAL REPORT

For the Fiscal Year Ended April 30, 2025

Arthur Shewchuk Memorial Bursary

Awarded on the basis of need to a deserving student, entering Lakehead University, who permanently resides in one of the participating municipalities of the Conservation Authority, namely: Thunder Bay, Oliver, O'Connor, Neebing, Shuniah, Paipoonge, Conmee, Gillies or Dorion. The student will be entering the field of Biology, Geography, Forestry or Engineering.

Endowment Capital Account

Opening Balance (May 1, 2024):	\$9,483.81
New Contributions:	\$0.00
Economic Increase (CPI):	\$227.00
Transfer To/From Stabilization Account:	\$0.00
Closing Balance (April 30, 2025):	\$9,710.81

Stabilization Account

Balance at April 30, 2025:	\$243.00
----------------------------	----------

Spend Account

Opening Balance (May 1, 2024):	\$20.00
Annual Spending Allocation	\$331.00
Award Top Up Contributions:	\$0.00
Less: Disbursement to 2024-25 Recipient(s)	(\$320.00)
Transfer To/From Stabilization Account:	\$300.00
Closing Balance (April 30, 2025)	\$331.00

Total Endowed Funds (April 30, 2025)	\$10,284.81
---	--------------------

Your 2024-25 Student Recipient(s):

Destiny Eissner

Bachelor of Engineering (Chemical)

Report Definitions

Endowment Capital Account

The total of all capital contributions made to an endowment, including charitable donations, government matching contributions plus annual inflation adjustments.

Economic Increase (CPI)

An addition to the capital account of an endowment calculated based on the annual rate of increase of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Canada.

Stabilization Account

A reserve for the surplus net investment return to assist in maintaining the stability of the annual spending allocations. The stabilization account will not exceed 3 times the current year's spending allocation.

Transfer to/from Stabilization Account

Annually any excess amount not required to maintain the stabilization account limit is then capitalized to the endowment capital account.

Spend Account

The amount that is available to be spent in support of the purpose of the endowment fund. The account includes the annual spending allocations and cash contributions intended for expenditure.

Spending Allocation

The actual amount allocated to the spending account on an annual basis, as determined by the spending rate established by the Board of Governors and any specific direction from the donor.

Award Top-Up Contribution

The amount a donor voluntarily provides in advance of the start of the academic year to ensure that there will be sufficient funds to meet the spending allocation for their specific award.

Disbursement to Recipient

The amount disbursed to the successful eligible student(s).



Lakehead
UNIVERSITY

955 Oliver Road | Thunder Bay, Ontario | P7B 5E1 | (807) 343-8110
500 University Ave. | Orillia, Ontario | L3V 0B9 | (705) 330-4008
lakeheadu.ca

For more information, please contact:

Tara Monteith

Coordinator, Donor Experience

(807) 343-8010 Ext 8198

tara.monteith@lakeheadu.ca

Meghan Hanbury

Associate Director, Annual Giving
and Student Aid

(807) 343-8010 Ext. 8910

mhanbury@lakeheadu.ca

ENDOWMENT DONOR FUND IMPACT REPORT 2024-2025



LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY
ENDOWMENT FUND

Highlights of Fiscal

\$62.4
million

Value of Lakehead University
Endowments at April 30, 2025

\$1.45
million

Total Endowment
Disbursements

792

Number of
Endowed Funds

955

Number of Students
Receiving Endowed Funds

Endowment Overview

Lakehead University Endowments are philanthropic gifts, government contributions, annual inflation adjustments and other sources of income intended to support the university in perpetuity. Funds are invested in a diversified portfolio of assets designed to maximize long-term risk-adjusted returns and provide stable annual payouts to support donor-specified priorities. Each year, distributions from the fund support scholarships, awards and bursaries; research chairs; and a diverse range of donor-supported university programs.

Management & Oversight

The University's Board of Governors Finance and Operations Committee maintains oversight responsibility for all Endowment assets, recommends the policy asset mix, and develops ancillary policies as necessary. Each year, the total Endowment Fund disbursement amount is established by the university to maintain the value of the endowment pool over time and the Board of Governors establishes the annual spending rate.

Lakehead University employs a variety of external investment managers with areas of specialization across a range of strategies, with a careful emphasis on risk management, as well as a long-term focus.

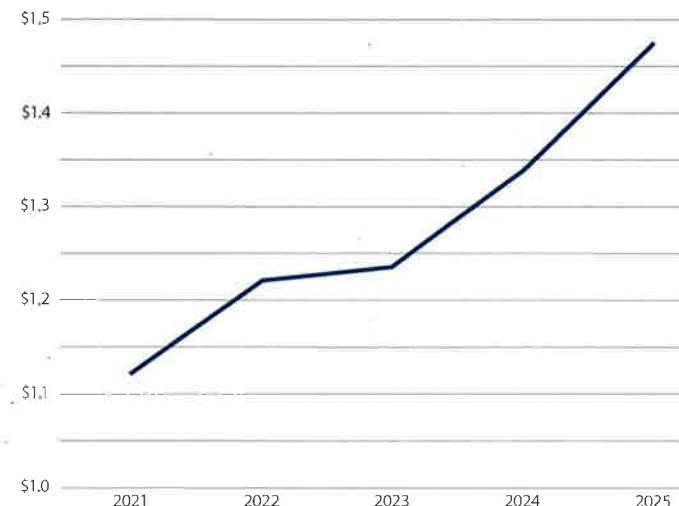
The Vice-President of Administration and Finance reviews the endowment management policy every two years in order to determine whether changes are necessary.

Responsible Investing

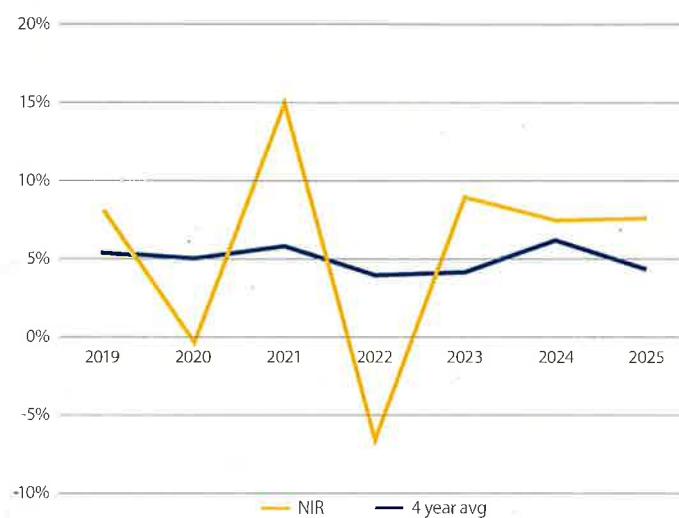
The Lakehead University Endowment Fund is managed in accordance with the Responsible Investing Policy, as approved by the Board of Governors, and is committed to Responsible Investing pursued through the consideration of environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors as set out in the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment (UNPRI). The university expects all professional external fund managers to incorporate ESG factors into the selection and management of their portfolios.

Historically, the Lakehead University Endowment Fund has performed well because we take a prudent approach to investing.

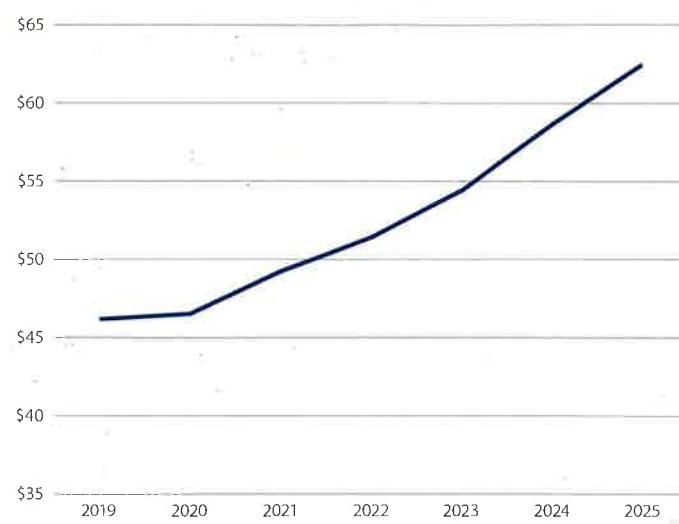
Endowment Disbursements (Millions)



Net Investment Return



Value of Endowments (Millions)



Supporting the Leaders of Tomorrow

**Haily**

Indigenous STEM Access Program (Engineering)
Recipient of the Alumni Association of Lakehead University Indigenous Access Program Bursary

**Iria**

HBArts (Political Science) Pre-Law Degree Program
Recipient of the Carlotta and Vittorio Del Bianco Memorial Scholarship

**Qingshan**

HBS (Forestry) Degree Program
Recipient of the Betty Coates LU 30th Anniversary Bursary

**Mehmet**

HBC (Business Administration) Degree Transfer Program (Orillia)
Recipient of the Intepe-Langpeter Bursary

“Your commitment to fostering success within the Indigenous community is truly inspiring. With your help, I am motivated to continue pursuing my educational goals with passion and dedication.”

“Receiving these funds is a tremendous support but also a source of motivation, reinforcing my commitment to academic excellence and my future aspirations. Your contribution makes a meaningful difference in the lives of students like me, allowing us to pursue our academic and professional goals with greater confidence.”

“This incredible contribution has truly transformed my life, allowing me to dive deeper into my studies without the weight of financial worries holding me back. Receiving this bursary is not just a financial relief; it ignites my passion for academic excellence and inspires me to reach new heights!”

“Your contribution is not only a lifeline for students like me but also a powerful reminder that we are not alone in our journey. It inspires us to dream bigger, aim higher, and work harder to achieve our goals.”

Lakehead Secures Top Spot in Maclean's Rankings



your impact on the Lakehead University Community

THUNDER BAY | ORILLIA | LAKEHEAD-GEORGIAN PARTNERSHIP

7,481 AND **1,829**
Undergraduate Students Graduate Students

13%

of Domestic
Undergraduate Students
identify as Indigenous

41%

of Domestic Undergraduate
Students have received
OSAP (financial aid)

54%

of Domestic Undergraduate
Students are from rural,
northern or remote areas

94%

of Graduates are
employed within 6 months
of graduation

2,299

International Students
representing 96 countries

52%

Domestic Undergraduate
Students are the first in their
family to attend university

100%

of Domestic Undergraduate
Students have the
opportunity to participate in
experiential learning

90%

of Graduates who are
employed are using the skills
they developed at Lakehead

Establishing Student Awards

At Lakehead University, your support is vital to our students' success.

- Scholarships, bursaries and awards assist students in achieving their educational goals.
- Students know that they are part of a supportive university community.
- Awards recognize hard work and perseverance, and give students the confidence to excel at their studies.

For further information, please contact:

Meghan Hanbury

Associate Director,
Annual Giving and Student Aid

T: 807-343-8010 Ext. 8910
E: meghan.hanbury@lakeheadu.ca



Lakehead
UNIVERSITY

40

Follow Lakehead at:



955 Oliver Road | **Thunder Bay**, Ontario | P7B 5E1 | (807) 343-8110
500 University Ave. | **Orillia**, Ontario | L3V 0B9 | (705) 330-4008
Toll-Free 1 (800) 465-3959
facebook.com/lakeheadu.ca | twitter.com/mylakehead

lakeheadu.ca



PROGRAM AREA	WATERSHED MONITORING	REPORT NO.	WM-01-2025
DATE PREPARED	November 10, 2025	FILE NO.	
MEETING DATE	November 26, 2025		
SUBJECT	Conservation Area Water Quality Monitoring Report 2025		

RECOMMENDATION

Suggested Resolution:

“THAT: the Staff Report WM-01-2025 be received AND FURTHER THAT the Conservation Area Water Monitoring Program will continue in 2026.”

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN (2023 – 2027)

Connect & Explore:

- *Manage recreational areas for current and future generations through robust land management, efficient maintenance programs, and reinvestment in the land.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) monitors water quality at four conservation areas: Hazelwood Lake, Hurkett Cove, Mission Island Marsh, and Silver Harbour. *E. coli* levels are monitored at Hazelwood Lake and Mission Island Marsh under the Thunder Bay District Health Unit’s Bathing Beach Program. Cyanobacteria and algae blooms are monitored at all four sites, with the assistance of Blue Green Labs to conduct microbiology assessments.

In 2025, Mission Island Marsh experienced exceedances over >1,000 counts of *E. coli* per 100 milliliters of water between August 25 and September 2, 2025. Additional sampling was conducted under the direction of the Thunder Bay District Health Unit until concentrations returned to acceptable levels on September 10, 2025. The LRCA issued an advisory to alert swimmers and waterfront visitors of elevated *E. coli* levels, which remained in effect for 17 days. The *E. coli* test results for Hazelwood Lake were within acceptable levels (\leq 200 counts of *E. coli* per 100 milliliters of water) for the entire season. As a result, there were no beach advisories posted at Hazelwood Lake for the summer of 2025 for *E. coli* exceedances.

The LRCA continued the cyanobacteria monitoring program in 2025 as a protective measure to better understand the presence of cyanobacteria at Hazelwood, Hurkett, Mission Island and Silver Harbour Conservation Areas. During the 2025 cyanobacteria monitoring season, from July 14 to August 12, 2025, at least one genus of cyanobacteria was identified at all selected sample locations; however, the Eurofins Algal Toxin (*Microcystins*) Recreational Water Test Strips Kit tests did not exceed the Health Canada Recreational Guidelines of 10 $\mu\text{g/L}$.

On September 24, 2025, LRCA staff observed a large cyanobacteria bloom along the entire beach shoreline at Hazelwood Lake, extending several meters into the bay. The LRCA issued a beach advisory and installed Thunder Bay District Health Unit signage the same day. Initially set for 14 days, the advisory was extended after the bloom reappeared on October 3, remaining in place for a total of 24 days.

DISCUSSION

The Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) monitors water quality at four conservation areas: Hazelwood Lake, Hurkett Cove, Mission Island Marsh, and Silver Harbour. *E. coli* levels are monitored at Hazelwood Lake and Mission Island Marsh under the Thunder Bay District Health Unit's Bathing Beach Program. Cyanobacteria and algae blooms are monitored at all four sites, with the assistance of Blue Green Labs to conduct microbiology assessments.

Hazelwood Lake *E. coli* levels were well below the PWQO criterion of 200 counts per 100 millilitres (mL) of water for the entire sampling season. The highest geometric mean of the year was 14 counts per 100 millilitres of water, which occurred on August 19, 2024. Historical data from Hazelwood Lake suggests a slight improvement in water quality over time.

Since 1994, the Hazelwood Lake beach has exceeded the *E. coli* criterion during four sampling years. Exceedances occurred once in both 1998 (138.78 counts/100 mL) and 1999 (97.36 counts/100 mL). In 2006, the criterion was exceeded five times, leading to a beach closure from July 28 to August 16, with levels over 103 counts/100 mL. This was linked to a large flock of Canada Geese, low water levels, and warm temperatures. In 2007, exceedances occurred twice—on July 9 (486.63 counts/100 mL) and August 27 (271.81 counts/100 mL). At Mission Island Marsh, *E. coli* levels approached the criterion throughout the sampling season but did not exceed. All samples were less than 200 counts per 100 mL, the geometric mean for the sample set, unlike 2023. The highest geometric mean of the year occurred on June 4, 2024, with 78 counts per 100 mL of water.

In 2025, Mission Island Marsh exceeded the applicable *E. coli* criterion, reaching levels exceeding 1,000 colony-forming units per 100 millilitres. As instructed by the TBDHU, the LRCA issued a 17-day advisory from August 25 to September 10. This represents the highest values recorded since the LRCA began routine monitoring at Mission Island Marsh. Elevated *E. coli* concentrations observed during this period may be linked to the effluent spill that occurred at the Thunder Bay Pulp and Paper Mill on August 20, 2025. The facility reported an accidental release of partially treated effluent, which likely contributed to the temporary increase in *E. coli* levels detected downstream. The event underscores the potential influence of industrial discharges on local water quality and highlights the importance of ongoing monitoring and rapid response protocols following such incidents.

Since 1994, Mission Marsh has exceeded the applicable *E. coli* criterion during three sampling periods. In 1998, the applicable *E. coli* criterion was exceeded once on August 5 (119.07 counts per 100 millilitres). In 1999, the applicable criterion was exceeded twice: July 6 (126.17 counts per 100 millilitres), and July 8 (158.22 counts per 100 millilitres). In 2008, the applicable criterion was exceeded once on August 18 (373.31 counts per 100 millilitres), resulting in a closure from

August 19 to August 21, 2008. All other analyzed samples at Mission Marsh from 1994 to 2024 were within acceptable levels of *E. coli* (no sampling was undertaken between 2009 to 2021).

Beginning in 2021, the LRCA has been taking progressive steps to further understand and analyze cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) within the conservation areas where visitors recreate in open water. Cyanobacteria blooms have been observed and documented in Hazelwood Lake, initially in 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and again in 2025. During July and August 2025, the LRCA conducted weekly testing, using Algal Toxin Test Strips and a microscope analysis of samples to understand the phytoplankton community at the four conservation areas. The results of the Algal Toxin Test Strips indicated that the total concentration for *Microcystins* was below the Canadian Recreational Water Quality Guideline (10 parts per billion) for all sites for the five-week testing period. The test results do not indicate the absence of *Microcystins*, rather that the concentrations are too low to be considered toxic or result in a Harmful Algae Bloom (HAB).

Various genera of cyanobacteria were observed and recorded across all sample locations selected for water quality monitoring in 2025. As noted in previous years and again in 2025, the range of cyanobacteria observed during this project includes *Woronichinia*, *Dolichospermum*, *Microcystis*, *Aphanizomenon flos-aquae*, and *Merismopedia*. All of these cyanobacteria have been documented to produce cyanotoxins, including Microcystin-LR, anatoxin-a, and other toxic secondary metabolites. While *Microcystins* are regarded as the most prevalent and significant of the cyanotoxins, it's important to monitor for other known cyanotoxins produced by the genus of cyanobacteria observed, as they too can also produce harmful health effects.

On September 24, 2025, LRCA staff observed and sampled a cyanobacteria bloom at the Hazelwood Lake Conservation Area beach, which extended across the entire shoreline of the beach and several meters out into the bay. LRCA staff sampled the bloom using the sampling kits provided by the Ministry's Lab, which were delivered to MECP's Environmental Compliance Officer on the same day as the observation. The Ministry's lab determined that the sample was indicative of a blue-green algae bloom. The LRCA promptly issued a beach advisory and installed signage provided by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) on the same day the bloom was observed. The advisory was initially set to remain in effect for 14 days, as recommended by the TBDHU. However, following continued observations of the bloom on October 3, 2025, the LRCA extended the advisory period, maintaining the signage for a total of 24 days.

In 2024, the LRCA received funding from TC Energy and TD Friends of the Environment to rehabilitate the Hazelwood Lake Shoreline. In 2025, the LRCA Stewardship Team carried out shoreline plantings, and newly established "No Mow" zones are an initiative aimed at reducing nutrient runoff that may contribute to bloom events. Continued monitoring will evaluate the effectiveness of this approach as a remediation strategy for cyanobacteria blooms.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Water quality analysis is conducted by the Ministry of Health laboratory under the Thunder Bay District Health Unit's Bathing Beach Program.

The LRCA secured funding from MECP to conduct a cyanobacteria education and outreach project, which encompassed funding for 2025's cyanobacteria monitoring program. The total

cost associated with the cyanobacteria monitoring in 2025 was \$2,970.78, including: the purchase of the Abraxis Microcystins Recreational Water Test Kit (20 tests) (\$1,017.16); and consultant costs for Blue Green Labs for materials, microscopy work, analysis (20 hours), presentations (4 hours), and report writing (\$1,953.62 total). The LRCA has re-applied to MEPC's Canadian-Ontario Agreement (COA) for additional funding to carry out the monitoring and sampling program in 2026.

CONCLUSION

The LRCA aims to provide Conservation Areas that are healthy and safe for recreation. The program allows visitors to the Conservation Areas to make educated decisions about the risk of harm to their health due to *E. coli* or cyanobacteria when choosing to recreate in the water.

All analyzed samples for Hazelwood Lake were within acceptable levels for *E. coli* for the 2025 bathing beach season. Mission Island Marsh recorded an *E. coli* exceedance, surpassing 1,000 colony-forming units per 100 millilitres, which may have been linked to the effluent spill that occurred the week prior to sampling.

The LRCA Cyanobacteria Monitoring Project represents one of the few ongoing phytoplankton monitoring programs in this region of Ontario. While various genera of cyanobacteria were observed and recorded across the sample locations, the Hazelwood Lake Conservation Area was the only location that received a report of a bloom and required a closure in 2025. The project has generated valuable data contributing to the limited knowledge base on cyanobacteria, diatoms, and other algal species within the Thunder Bay area.

Funds and personnel permitting, bacteriological water quality and cyanobacteria monitoring should be continued in the summer of 2026. To better capture the bloom events occurring in late August and early September, sampling dates should be on a bi-weekly basis. It also recommended that the LRCA continue to participate in education and outreach regarding cyanobacteria to encourage community members to reduce nutrient loading in the Lakehead Watershed.

BACKGROUND

Since 1994, the LRCA has annually monitored the water quality of the beach waters at the Hazelwood Lake Conservation Area. In 2022, the monitoring program was expanded to include Mission Island Marsh Conservation Area after monitoring had ceased in 2008. Sampling at the beach area was previously discontinued after it was classified as a 'non-bathing beach' due to low usage of the water for swimming/bathing purposes. An increase in non-bathing activities and the expansion of the program to test for other water quality parameters warranted the return of the monitoring program to Mission Island Marsh Conservation Area in 2022.

The main contaminant of concern at bathing beaches is *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*). *E. coli* is naturally found in the intestines of humans and warm-blooded animals. Unlike other bacteria in this family, *E. coli* does not usually occur naturally on plants or in soil and water. The inability of *E. coli* to grow in water, combined with its short survival time in water environments, means that detecting *E. coli* in a water system is a good indicator of recent fecal contamination. These bacteria can

cause irritation of the skin and eyes when contact is made and can cause serious illness when ingested. When *E. coli* criterion is exceeded, a Beach Advisory is posted at the facility.

Emerging reports of cyanobacteria, also referred to as blue-green algae, heightened the need for monitoring at conservation areas where visitors recreate in open water. These microscopic plant-like organisms are naturally found within natural streams, rivers, and lakes. Blooms occur when the populations rise rapidly, creating a large floating mass that can be bluish-green, brown, red, or yellow. Changes in cyanobacteria populations can be an indicator of water quality issues. Cyanobacteria can produce a range of cyanotoxins and variants of these cyanotoxins, which can have different negative health effects. Exposure is often related to recreational activities within a water system. Exposure to cyanotoxins during recreational activity can result in hay fever-like symptoms, skin rashes, respiratory issues, and gastrointestinal distress. When blue-green algae is suspected, the Spills Action Centre is contacted.

REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED

Executive Summary, Conservation Area Water Quality Monitoring, 2025.

A copy of the full report will circulate at the meeting and can be made available electronically.

PREPARED BY: Michelle Willow, Environmental Planner

REVIEWED BY: Ryne Gilliam, Lands Manager

THIS REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY:  Tammy Cook Chief Administrative Officer	DATE: November 19, 2025
--	----------------------------



LAKEHEAD REGION
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Conservation Area Water Quality Monitoring

2025

PREPARED BY:

Michelle Willows (Environmental Planner)
Jaidyn Brown (Environmental Technician)

NOTE: This report is copyright protected. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transcribed, in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior permission. The Lakehead Region Conservation Authority produced this report. The Lakehead Region Conservation Authority and its employees do not assume any legal liability for its contents.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Water quality sampling of the bathing beach at Hazelwood Lake Conservation Area and non-bathing beach at Mission Island Marsh Conservation Area was undertaken by the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) throughout the summer of 2025. Collected water samples were analyzed by the Public Health Ontario laboratory for *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) bacterial concentrations and compared to the bathing beach criterion published in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC), Operational Approaches for Recreational Water Guideline, 2018. Additionally, the LRCA has continued the Cyanobacteria Monitoring Program in 2025 as a protective measure to better understand the presence of cyanobacteria within four Conservation Areas. In 2025, cyanobacteria monitoring, sampling, and cyanotoxin testing were conducted weekly as part of the Beach Bathing Program from July 14 to August 12, 2025. The Conservation Areas selected for assessment include Hazelwood Lake, Hurkett Cove, Mission Island Marsh, and Silver Harbour.

In 2025, Mission Island Marsh experienced exceedances over >1000 counts of *E. coli* per 100 milliliters of water between August 25 and September 2, 2025. Additional sampling was conducted under the direction of the Thunder Bay District Health Unit. *E. coli* until concentrations returned to acceptable levels on September 10, 2025. The LRCA issued an advisory to alert swimmers and waterfront visitors of elevated *E. coli* levels, which remained in effect for 17 days. Previously, Hazelwood Lake beach had swimming advisories posted in 1998, 1999, 2006, and 2007. In 2025, the *E. coli* test results for Hazelwood Lake were within acceptable levels (≤ 200 counts of *E. coli* per 100 milliliters of water) for the entire season. As a result, there were no beach advisories posted at Hazelwood Lake for the summer of 2025 for *E. coli* exceedances.

Field parameters, which included water temperature, turbidity, pH, dissolved oxygen, and conductivity, were measured as additional indicators of water quality. Testing of these field parameters began in 2005. The water quality parameters for all four sites were within the acceptable criterion for the Provincial Water Quality Objectives (PWQO). Testing of field parameters should be continued as part of the Conservation Area Water Quality Monitoring Program in succeeding years to help clarify normal ranges and trends for both the monitored Conservation Areas.

During the 2025 cyanobacteria monitoring season, at least one genus of cyanobacteria was found at all selected sample locations. The observable trend for all sites over the month was an increase in the dominance of cyanobacteria in the phytoplankton community in September. However, the Eurofins Algal Toxin (*Microcystins*) Recreational Water Test Strips Kit tests did not exceed the Health Canada Recreational Guidelines of 10 µg/L. The microbiology analysis of the samples revealed that the most common freshwater diatoms were *Asterionella*, *Tabellaria*, and centric diatoms. Of the observed

cyanobacteria, the most abundant was *Dolichospermum* followed by *Woronichinia* and *Mycrocystis*. *Dolichospermum* is recognized as a producer of the cyanotoxin Microcystin-LR and compounds in the Anatoxin-a group.

On September 24, 2025, LRCA staff observed a large cyanobacteria bloom along the entire beach shoreline, extending several meters into the bay. Samples were collected and analyzed by the Ministry's laboratory, confirming the presence of blue-green algae. Toxin analysis showed total *Microcystins* at 6.60 µg/L—above the Ontario Drinking Water Standard (1.5 µg/L) but below Health Canada's recreational water guideline (10 µg/L). The LRCA issued a beach advisory and installed Thunder Bay District Health Unit signage the same day. Initially set for 14 days, the advisory was extended after the bloom reappeared on October 3, remaining in place for a total of 24 days.

Funds and personnel permitted, bacteriological water quality and cyanobacteria monitoring should continue in the summer of 2026. It is recommended that in 2026, sampling dates should be on a bi-weekly basis, in an effort to extend sampling into September, when blooms have been previously observed. Should a cyanobacteria bloom be encountered during sampling activities, LRCA staff will report to the Spills Action Centre by phone as mandated by the Ministry.



PROGRAM AREA	STEWARDSHIP	REPORT NO.	STEW-02-2025
DATE PREPARED	November 20, 2025	FILE NO.	
MEETING DATE	November 26, 2025		
SUBJECT	2025 Stewardship Program Project Summary		

RECOMMENDATION

Suggested Resolution:

"THAT: Staff Report STEW-02-2025 be received."

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Links to the Strategic Plan (2023-2027):

Conserve and Sustain:

- *Engage stakeholders, the environmental community, and our watershed residents in a collective effort to protect, restore, and enhance our local environment through stewardship programs, strategies, and best management and sustainable practices.*
- *Collaborate and partner with agencies and community organizations to take action in the protection of natural habitats and ecosystems, share decision-making, and address emerging issues that impact the health and sustainability of the Lakehead watershed.*

Protect and Support:

- *Continue maintaining and enhancing flood control infrastructure in an effort to minimize the impacts of riverine flooding, erosion, and sedimentation.*
- *Prioritize and promote the protection and management of natural hazards, wetlands and natural heritage features within the LRCA Area of Jurisdiction.*
- *Promote and implement programs to alleviate the impacts of climate change, habitat degradation, and threats to biodiversity.*

Connect and Explore:

- *Engage diverse stakeholders through effective communications, outreach, and education initiatives.*
- *Grow partnership, collaborations and relationship with new and existing partners who share the LRCA's Vision and Mission.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The LRCA's stewardship projects and programs have been steadily growing since 2020. Twelve habitat restoration projects have been completed since then, and an additional ten stewardship projects are ongoing. No municipal levy has been used, and external funding from the municipal, provincial, and federal governments alongside industry and private grants provided \$1,638,463.45 to support LRCA's stewardship projects and programs from 2020 to 2026. Projections for 2026 from confirmed and anticipated funding sources total \$342,665.39 and includes materials, contractor expenses, and staff wages to execute habitat restoration and ecological monitoring in the Lakehead Watershed.

Thanks to the success of funding programs, Stewardship has supported one full time role for the past 5.5 years, and a second position since 2024. The Watershed Stewardship Technician was hired in 2020 and became a full-time permanent position in 2024, with a title change to Watershed Biologist. The Watershed Stewardship Technician Intern position was filled Spring 2024, thanks to funding from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation. The Watershed Stewardship Technician position became full time permanent in Spring 2025, secured by the success of the Seeds for Conservation program. In May 2025, a Stewardship Technician summer student position was hired on an 18-week contract thanks to funding from the Northwestern Ontario Innovation Centre Youth Effect Program. The position was extended until the end of November, and will become an 8-month seasonal recurring position in 2026.

In 2025, staff and volunteers have planted over 11,025 native trees, shrubs and perennials through Stewardship programs and projects, plus an additional 9,650 trees through the Tree Seedling Program. Plants have restored riparian habitat, shoreline, and wetland with funding from the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP), the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), Parks Canada, Invasive Species Centre, and others. Of these 11,025 native plants, 8,000 were grown by LRCA's Seeds for Conservation program. In 2024, over 12,000 native plants were added to the Lakehead Watershed through stewardship initiatives. In 2023 and 2022, 5,000 native plants were planted annually along with 20 total kilograms of native seed sown and 5 hectares of riparian and shoreline habitat restored. In 2021, 2,250 plants were installed.

Stewardship projects that are ongoing in 2026 include the Floodway Habitat Corridor project along the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway, Waterfront Shoreline Habitat Restoration along Lake Superior, Boulevard Wetland, the Shoreline Protection Program for private landowners, the Regional Phragmites Collaboration, Hurkett Cove Invasive Narrow-leaved Cattail Monitoring, McVicar Creek Riparian Restoration, LRCA Office Rain Garden, Seeds for Conservation and the Tree Seedling Program.

DISCUSSION

In 2020, the LRCA hired a full-time Watershed Stewardship Technician to develop and implement a new Stewardship Program. The goal of the program is to promote watershed stewardship in the community and restore wildlife habitat, particularly along shorelines and riparian

ecosystems. The program is also increasing ecological monitoring and environmental stewardship activity in Conservation Areas and LRCA land holdings. Examples include shoreline restoration at Mission Island Marsh, invasive species management and riparian rehabilitation along the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway, species at risk monitoring for black ash and snapping turtles on LRCA-owned land, Provincially Significant Wetland evaluations of LRCA-owned land, Invasive Cattail monitoring and management in Hurkett Cove Conservation Area, fen and shoreline restoration at Hazelwood Lake Conservation Area, and other related projects.

In 2024, LRCA's Seeds for Conservation program officially launched. The program sustainably harvests seeds native to Northwestern Ontario from LRCA Conservation Areas for use in ongoing stewardship initiatives. Seed has been shared with the City of Thunder Bay, the Ontario Native Women's Association, and Whispers from the North Native Plants. Plants raised from seed collected have also been provided to Fort William First Nation, EcoSuperior, Lakehead University, Confederation College, and the general public. In 2024, \$35,741 was generated in plant sales and Seeds for Conservation was awarded the Inspiration Award at the Conservation Areas Workshop in October. The second year of the program generated \$46,919.16 in sales revenue, and an additional \$30,374.10 in grants and donations (a grant of \$30,000 from Thunder Bay Rotary). Revenue generated through Seeds for Conservation directly supports the Watershed Stewardship Technician position.

The following provides a summary of the stewardship projects and programs that have been completed in 2025 or are ongoing. The projects are divided into Category 1 and 3 projects, see the summary table attached.

1. CATEGORY 1: Mandatory Programs and Services – Stewardship Projects on LRCA-owned land

2021 to 2028 – Wildlife Habitat Restoration along the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway Corridor

An ECCC and MECP funded project. The project involves the restoration of riparian habitat along the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway in the Thunder Bay Area of Concern. The long-term goal of the Floodway Habitat Corridor is to create a functioning riparian buffer along the entire Floodway Corridor, while creating ecologically diverse wildlife habitat and a vibrant greenspace for pollinators, birds, and wildflowers to thrive. The Floodway Corridor envisions restored riparian and meadow habitat along 5 kilometres of urban waterway. In collaboration with community partners, LRCA will reestablish a shoreline buffer by planting indigenous vegetation that offers unique ecosystem services such as: deeper rooting systems to anchor the bank in place; competition with invasive and non-native species; food, shelter, and nesting grounds for wildlife and waterfowl; and community awareness regarding climate change and wildlife habitat. Three sites were restored from 2021-2022, a fourth was completed in 2023 targeting management of invasive Tatarian Honeysuckle and Narrowleaf Cattail. In 2024, a fifth site was restored along the diversion channel. Two additional sites at Waterford Street and Balmoral Street were rehabilitated in 2025 along with ongoing maintenance of existing sites. In 2026, an eighth site will be restored.

Progress: *Completed* – Seven sites restored with native shrubs and perennials, invasive species removed, habitat structures and signage installed. In 2025, just over 2,100 plants were installed along the Floodway. These plants mainly found homes at Waterford Street, the Neebing Weir, and Balmoral Rd. *Ongoing* – In 2026, an additional site will be restored thanks to funding from the Canada Water Agency (ECCC). Engagement with schools and collaboration with LRCA's Education Coordinator to deliver programming related to restoration and climate change, including field trips, is ongoing.

2025 to 2028 – Floodway Habitat Corridor: Indigenous Community Garden

Contributions from the Canada Water Agency will facilitate collaboration with the local Indigenous community to create a riparian habitat garden along the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway as a space for reflection and healing. The site neighbours the Hope & Memory property on LRCA-owned land. Improvements to water quality, shoreline stabilization, wildlife habitat and relationship building are all anticipated outcomes of the project.

Progress: *Completed* – Consultation with Indigenous partners has begun, including discussions with Elder Cindy Crowe, the Indigenous Friendship Centre, Fort William First Nation, Dennis Franklin Cromarty, and other project partners. The garden site was also prepped in Fall 2025, with sod removed and four paths installed signifying the four directions. *Ongoing* – Seed collection for 2026 plantings is currently underway, along with continued consultation on design and events.

2024 to 2025 – Snapping Turtle Monitoring along the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway

In the spring of 2024, surveys were conducted during the months of May and June to assess the use of the Neebing River and diversion channel by Snapping Turtles (*Chelydra serpentina*), a species at risk in Ontario. Snapping Turtles are designated by the Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario (COSSARO) as a species of Special Concern. Due to increasing reports of Snapping Turtle sightings from the Neebing Weir to the pedestrian bridge across the diversion channel to Chapples Golf Course, further investigation was carried out. Recommendations to mitigate impacts to Snapping Turtles were incorporated into the Floodway Operation and Maintenance protocol in anticipation of the planned dredging at the Diversion Channel Lip in Fall 2025.

Progress: *Completed* – Spring 2024 Snapping Turtle monitoring program. One Snapping Turtle was observed emerging from the diversion channel and walking across Chapples Golf Course to a pond. No evidence of nesting was observed in the diversion channel. Report on monitoring program incorporated recommendations on timing of dredging into the Floodway Operation and Maintenance Plan. *Ongoing* – Additional surveys were carried out in Fall 2025, prior to the start of dredging, and will be completed as needed going forward.

2024 to 2025 – Hazelwood Lake Shoreline Naturalization

Shoreline surrounding the Hazelwood Lake beach was revegetated in 2025 to address ongoing cyanobacteria blooms and harmful, nuisance algae at Hazelwood Lake. Seeds for Conservation

harvested seeds for this project in the fall of 2024, thanks to successful funding from TD Friends of the Environment and TC Energy. Native shrubs and perennials along the water's edge will filter runoff entering the lake while offering nearshore shading and temperature regulation. Reestablishment of fen habitat, historically present at the beach location, will help improve water quality and mediate nearshore water temperatures.

Progress: *Completed* – Fall 2024 seed collection and Spring 2025 cultivation of native plants for installation in Fall 2025. A no-mow zone was established in Spring 2025 to allow the targeted area to naturally revegetate, and 1,031 plugs and 1 gallons were planted into the naturalized area in the fall. *Ongoing* – Education and outreach with classroom students, and maintenance and monitoring of the site.

2025 – LRCA Office Rain Garden

Thanks to funding from TC Energy and in-kind contributions from Lockstone Yard and Patio Centre and Seeds for Conservation, the LRCA Rain Garden was installed in September, 2025. Around 500 native plants were installed, all grown by Seeds for Conservation using locally collected seed. Rain gardens manage stormwater runoff, improve water quality, and create habitat for birds and pollinators. A memorial bench honouring Roman Augustyn was installed. Bird dots were added to two LRCA Administrative Office windows to reduce bird collisions and strikes in the new bird-friendly rain garden area.

Progress: *Completed* – Rain Garden installed, approximately 150 square metres in September, 2025 to collect and filter runoff from the LRCA Administrative Office roof. Over 500 native plants installed, all raised through Seeds for Conservation. *Ongoing* – Additional plants will be added in 2026 to fill in the naturalized area and create a robust site for future Seeds for Conservation seed collection.

Seeds for Conservation

The Seeds for Conservation program offers native perennials grown from seed sustainably harvested by staff from LRCA Conservation Areas. The plants are grown in the LRCA Greenhouse by the Watershed Stewardship Technician and seasonal staff. With insufficient access to Northwestern Ontario native species through local nurseries, LRCA's Seeds for Conservation program provides regionally adapted seed and plants for habitat restoration projects, pollinator gardens, rain gardens, and more. It is used by LRCA and community partners such as Fort William First Nation, Ontario Native Women's Association, the City of Thunder Bay, EcoSuperior, Lakehead University and Confederation College. In-person native plant sales and sales through the LRCA webstore have generated additional revenue for this program. This is a new initiative at LRCA and is a great support to the growing stewardship program.

Progress: *Completed* – LRCA raised over 12,000 plants from locally-harvested seed through Seeds for Conservation in 2025, using the LRCA Greenhouse and new plant staging yard at the LRCA Administrative Office; 8,000 of the plants raised were planted at habitat restoration sites restored by the LRCA Stewardship Team in the Lakehead Watershed. Capacity nearly tripled from 2024 thanks to the addition of seasonal staff and added efficiencies in greenhouse processes; in

2024, 4,500 native plants were raised through Seeds for Conservation. *Ongoing* – The initiative will continue into 2026, applying lessons learned and supplying stewardship projects and the public with regionally appropriate native plants. Sales projections for 2026 total \$45,000.

2. CATEGORY 3: Non-Mandatory Programs – Stewardship Projects on municipal land, carried out with local partners

2020 to 2025 – Fisherman’s Park West Wildlife Habitat and Shoreline Restoration

With funding from the Thunder Bay District Stewardship Council, City of Thunder Bay, MECP, and ECCC, the LRCA will continue to restore wildlife habitat, rehabilitate the Lake Superior shoreline, recreate coastal wetlands, and provide passive recreation opportunities at Fisherman’s Park West. The goal of the project is to restore the park by returning the area to a more natural condition by planting trees, shrubs, and perennials that are native to our region. Invasive species management of five different invasive species is ongoing at this site. The naturalization of this area will provide valuable breeding grounds, shelter, and forage for migratory waterfowl, birds, and pollinators, while also creating a space where the public can explore and enjoy the beautiful natural landscape. This project included student engagement with respect to climate change adaptation by re-naturalizing urban areas. In 2024, efforts focused on expanding the meadow habitat with over 3,700 plants installed by volunteers. Ongoing management of invasive species occurred in 2025 along with plant additions to the coastal wetland.

Progress: *Completed* – Ongoing site maintenance and invasive species management. Over 200 plants purchased through Seeds for Conservation by the City of Thunder were installed to augment the coastal wetland restoration site. *Ongoing* – Design and installation of educational signage at the new viewing platform. Continued invasive species management. Funding is pending for 2026 to add vegetation to the meadow and coastal wetland habitats.

2022 to 2025 – Waterfront Shoreline Habitat Restoration

An ECCC and MECP funded project, in partnership with City of Thunder Bay. The Waterfront Shoreline Habitat Restoration project is re-creating wildlife habitat and a vegetative buffer along the Lake Superior shoreline. The project area spans Marina Park Drive from the mouth of McVicar Creek to Richardson Park (at Richardson’s grain terminal). Approximately 400 native trees, shrubs, and perennials were installed in 2024. The restoration and plantings have been coordinated with the City’s new Waterfront Trail lookout at the end of Marina Park Drive. In Spring 2025, the LRCA hosted a clean-up and planting event with volunteers at the Thunder Bay Rotary’s International Trails Day celebrations.

Progress: *Completed* – On-the-ground restoration completed with volunteers on International Trail Day, June 1, 2024 and June 7, 2025. *Ongoing* – Continued maintenance in 2026 pending successful funding through MECP or the City of Thunder Bay.

2022 to 2025 – Boulevard Lake Shoreline Naturalization

An ECCC funded project, in partnership with City of Thunder Bay. The Boulevard Lake Naturalization project will introduce a vegetative buffer to filter runoff, incorporate low impact

development techniques to catch runoff, and address concerns regarding an outflow into Boulevard Lake. Youth from the nearby school, St Ignatius High School, have participated directly in the project by conducting benthic invertebrate analyses in the nearshore project area spring and fall through the duration of the project. A catchment basin to capture and filter runoff from the new Jumpstart Playground was vegetated and additional plants were installed along the shoreline.

Progress: *Completed* – The retaining wall along Boulevard Lake has been removed, a 3:1 slope restored, and over 500 native species planted along the shoreline to enhance the buffer between recreational areas and aquatic environment. *Ongoing* – An engineered wetland was installed in 2024 to complement restoration efforts achieved by this project. Pending funding from MECP, the site will continue to be maintained by LRCA staff in 2026.

2024 to 2025 – Boulevard Lake Wetland

A 3-hectare engineered wetland was installed along the shoreline of Boulevard Lake in 2024, thanks to funding through MECP's Wetland Conservation Partner Program and the City of Thunder Bay. This stormwater management project will address water quality concerns in Boulevard Lake by redirecting the flow of three storm drains into a wetland, offering filtration of runoff prior to entering the lake. The wetland habitat will also provide terrestrial and aquatic habitat for fish, birds, amphibians, and pollinators. Benthic analyses from the “Boulevard Lake Shoreline Naturalization” project, alongside an electrofishing survey in August will help assess the impact of this restoration. Over 5,000 native plants installed this fall will offer natural filtration and ecosystem services. Special thanks to Confederation College, Lakehead University, and La Verendrye high school students, along with Enbridge Gas volunteers for successfully getting all the plants in the ground!

Progress: *Completed* – Approximately 5,300 native plants installed in the Boulevard Lake Wetland, of which around 3,300 were grown and supplied by Seeds for Conservation. *Ongoing* – Educational signage for the site and bird nest boxes were installed in 2025, and a volunteer event with La Verendrye students to add live stakes along the shoreline was completed in the spring. The site will continue to be stewarded in 2026 pending funding from MECP.

3. CATEGORY 3: Non-Mandatory Programs – Superior Stewards

2020 to 2025 – Superior Stewards Program

The Superior Stewards program offers online resources, available on the LRCA's Stewardship webpage, to watershed residents to learn the best ways to naturalize their property, implement low impact development, and plant more native trees and shrubs. Webpages under the Superior Stewards program include shoreline naturalization, managing stormwater, invasive species, habitat enhancement, and LRCA stewardship. In 2025, stewardship content has been updated to reflect relevant project information and resources. The Superior Stewards volunteer email list has grown to over 300 contacts of on-call volunteers, and has been transferred to an outlook contact group.

Progress: *Completed* – Streamlined Stewardship webpage and launched the new Superior Stewards online resources on April 1, 2021. *Ongoing* – Updates to the Stewardship section of the webpage will be incorporated into LRCA's new website.

2020 to 2025 – Shoreline Protection Program within the Thunder Bay Area of Concern (AOC)

A MNR funded project. LRCA has developed the Shoreline Protection Program to address fish and wildlife related beneficial use impairments within the Thunder Bay Area of Concern. The program is a shoreline assessment and educational stewardship program that supports private landowners in planting native vegetation to enhance shoreline and riparian zones, rehabilitate and maintain healthy shoreline habitat, provide erosion protection, and improve water quality. The rehabilitation of the Lake Superior shoreline at Mission Island Marsh Conservation Area was also included as part of the program in 2021. 2024 was the final year of the original agreement; however, the LRCA was pleased to receive additional funding to carry out the program in Fall 2025.

Progress: *Completed* – Through the Shoreline Protection Program, 9,210 square metres of shoreline was restored with over 5,000 plants installed. The LRCA consulted with 43 landowners to restore the shoreline on their property. *Ongoing* – The Watershed Biologist is pursuing funding opportunities to continue this program in the future.

2024 to 2025 – Culvert and Cyanobacteria Shoreline Protection Program

The Cyanobacteria education and outreach project, funded by MECP, intends to increase public understanding and address knowledge gaps regarding cyanobacteria, harmful algal blooms, and nuisance algal blooms. Habitat restoration activities will also be carried out: landowner consultation and design plans, and native trees, shrubs and perennials will be available to landowners for installation along the shorelines of affected lakes. Further, the funding will contribute to ongoing monitoring efforts on selected LRCA-owned properties. This combined funding also includes assessment of flood vulnerabilities in the Municipality of Neebing. The municipality has an estimated 680 centerline culverts, 171 of which are associated with watercourses under local jurisdiction. Many of these culverts are perched, creating barriers that disrupt connectivity between tributaries and Lake Superior. The project will identify and assess these culverts, prioritizing those that need it for future remediation.

Progress: *Completed* – An information session to the general public was hosted in March 2025, along with a media release in the spring and three additional presentations to campers associations over the summer. Eleven sites experiencing blue-green algae concerns were restored in Spring 2026, with individualized consultation, planting plans, and native plants provided through the program. The educational campaign for both sub-projects have resulted in 7 posts to the LRCA's Facebook and Instagram social media platforms. *Ongoing* – Over 60 culverts have been assessed thus far from 224 culverts identified from existing datasets with potential impacts to fish passage.

Tree Seedling Program

The Tree Seedling Program offers private landowners in the Lakehead Watershed a place to purchase tree seedlings. The program is a partnership between LRCA and Hill's Greenhouse. The Tree Seedling Program distributed over 9,650 white spruce, black spruce and jack pine tree seedlings in 2025, with profits generously donated by Hill's Greenhouse back to LRCA's Nature Interpretive programming. In 2025, LRCA Staff spent a day transplanting tree seedlings at Hill's Greenhouse to secure 2-year-old tree seedlings for the 2026 program.

Progress: *Ongoing* – The program will continue in 2026.

4. CATEGORY 1 (on LRCA-owned land) and 3 – Invasive Species

2022-2026 – Thunder Bay Regional Phragmites Collaboration

Development of a strategic framework to tackle invasive phragmites in Thunder Bay and surrounding areas, generously funded by MNR and the Invasive Species Centre. LRCA has engaged key stakeholders to inform the current status of invasive phragmites in the region, develop an integrated long-term plan for its management, and collaborate on its removal. The formation of a Thunder Bay Regional Phragmites Collaboration has established the foundation needed for continued collaboration, and combines resources, knowledge, and enthusiasm to effectively manage Invasive Phragmites in the region.

Progress: *Ongoing* – In 2025, 13 new stands of Invasive Phragmites were treated by LRCA and partners, with management carried out by Haveman Brothers Forestry Inc. An additional 16 stands received retreatment. Since 2022, 36 stands covering a total of 11,773 square metres has been eradicated. By-annual meetings with the Thunder Bay Regional Phragmites Collaborative will continue into 2026. Projections from the Invasive Species Centre estimate \$65,000 in available funding for the Thunder Bay Regional Phragmites Collaboration in 2026.

2024 to 2026 – Invasive Cattail Management at Hurkett Cove

Hurkett Cove is known for its intrinsic natural beauty consisting of lacustrine and riverine marshes and swamps along the Black Bay shore. The location has been assessed as a Provincially Significant Wetland and is a known migratory bird stopover site, attracting over 200 different species annually. The ecological implications of Narrowleaf Cattail are numerous as it eliminates viable habitat, reduces diversity, and influences hydrology. This is particularly concerning as it could outcompete existing Northern Wild Rice (*Zizania palustris*) which is an essential food source for migratory and resident birds. Wild Rice is also a species of cultural significance and is uncommon in the region. The project is the first phase of a larger objective for addressing Narrowleaf Cattail within Hurkett Cove. The intent is to locate and map stands of Narrowleaf Cattail and Wild Rice within Hurkett Cove to better understand the spread and species interactions. Initial mapping and monitoring will support planning for future treatment methodologies and eradication of the species within the bay. Additionally ecological data is being collected and background literature compiled to support future recommendations. In 2025, Phase II of the project was proposed to funders at Parks Canada, and is pending confirmation.

Progress: *Completed* – Invasive Narrowleaf Cattail was mapped in Hurkett Cove late summer 2023. In 2024, Wild Rice was mapped to compare to the spread of Cattail. Aquatic and benthic surveys, along with Autonomous Recording Unit installation for bird and amphibian observations have also been completed. In 2025, a trial management site was undertaken, with approximately 450 square metres of Invasive Cattail removed. Vegetation quadrats were completed in three different habitats to monitor changes in species composition pre- and post-management. *Ongoing* – Data interpretation and a summary report is in progress, and will include best management practices for the invasive species. Pending successful funding from Parks Canada, the monitoring and management project will continue for three additional years.

2025 to 2026 – Mapping Black Ash to Monitor for Emerald Ash Borer Expansion in the North

A microgrant from the Invasive Species Centre totaling \$3,500 was received in 2025 to begin Black Ash surveys at targeted LRCA Conservation Areas. Black Ash is an endangered species under threat by the invasive Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) beetle. Surveys identified and mapped black ash populations in three Conservation Areas, and assessed the health of the trees. This will allow for future monitoring as EAB continues to spread. In 2024, 80% of the City of Thunder Bay's EAB traps were positive for EAB; however, EAB damage has only been observed at one LRCA Conservation Area.

Progress: *Completed* – Black Ash mapping at Cedar Falls Conservation Area, Mill's Block Conservation Area, and Jim Jessimen Nature Reserve. *Ongoing* – Cascades Conservation Area has been prioritized for Black Ash surveys given a known stand along the Current River. A summary report will be compiled over the winter months.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

LRCA staff have been successful in obtaining external funding from the municipal, provincial, and federal governments, as well as private donors, industry, and commercial operations, to support LRCA's stewardship projects and programs, including wages for a full time Watershed Biologist, a full time Watershed Stewardship Technician, and a contract Seasonal Stewardship Technician. The total external funding provided for stewardship projects from 2020 to 2026 is \$1,638,463.45. An additional \$188,000.00 is pending successful funding in 2026. Over \$150,000 is confirmed in funding for 2026, for a total Stewardship budget next year of \$342,665.39. Staff will continue to apply for funding to sustain this program.

CONCLUSION

The LRCA's stewardship projects and programs have been progressing very well. LRCA staff have been successful in developing meaningful partnerships with key stakeholders to promote watershed stewardship in the community and restore shorelines and riparian ecosystems within the LRCA's area of jurisdiction. The stewardship program carries out effective environmental action in the Lakehead Watershed and is positively contributing to climate change resiliency, habitat creation, and supporting biodiversity within the community and in LRCA Conservation Areas.

BACKGROUND

Under the guidance and direction of the Watershed Manager, the Watershed Stewardship Technician was hired in 2020 to develop and implement the LRCA's stewardship projects and programs. The stewardship program now supports three positions: the Watershed Biologist, Watershed Stewardship Technician, and Seasonal Stewardship Technician raising landowner awareness of riparian and shoreline stewardship principles and implementing ecological restoration in the Lakehead Watershed. Stewardship and habitat restoration projects range from terrestrial and aquatic plantings, invasive plant species removal, green infrastructure techniques, species-at-risk habitat enhancement and protection, general habitat enhancement, and pollinator habitat creation.

REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED

- Table 1 – Inventory of Programs - LRCA Stewardship
- Map – LRCA Stewardship Projects
- Floodway Habitat Corridor – Stewardship Project Sites

PREPARED BY: Jessie McFadden, Watershed Biologist

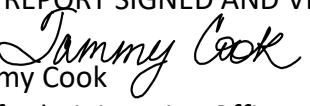
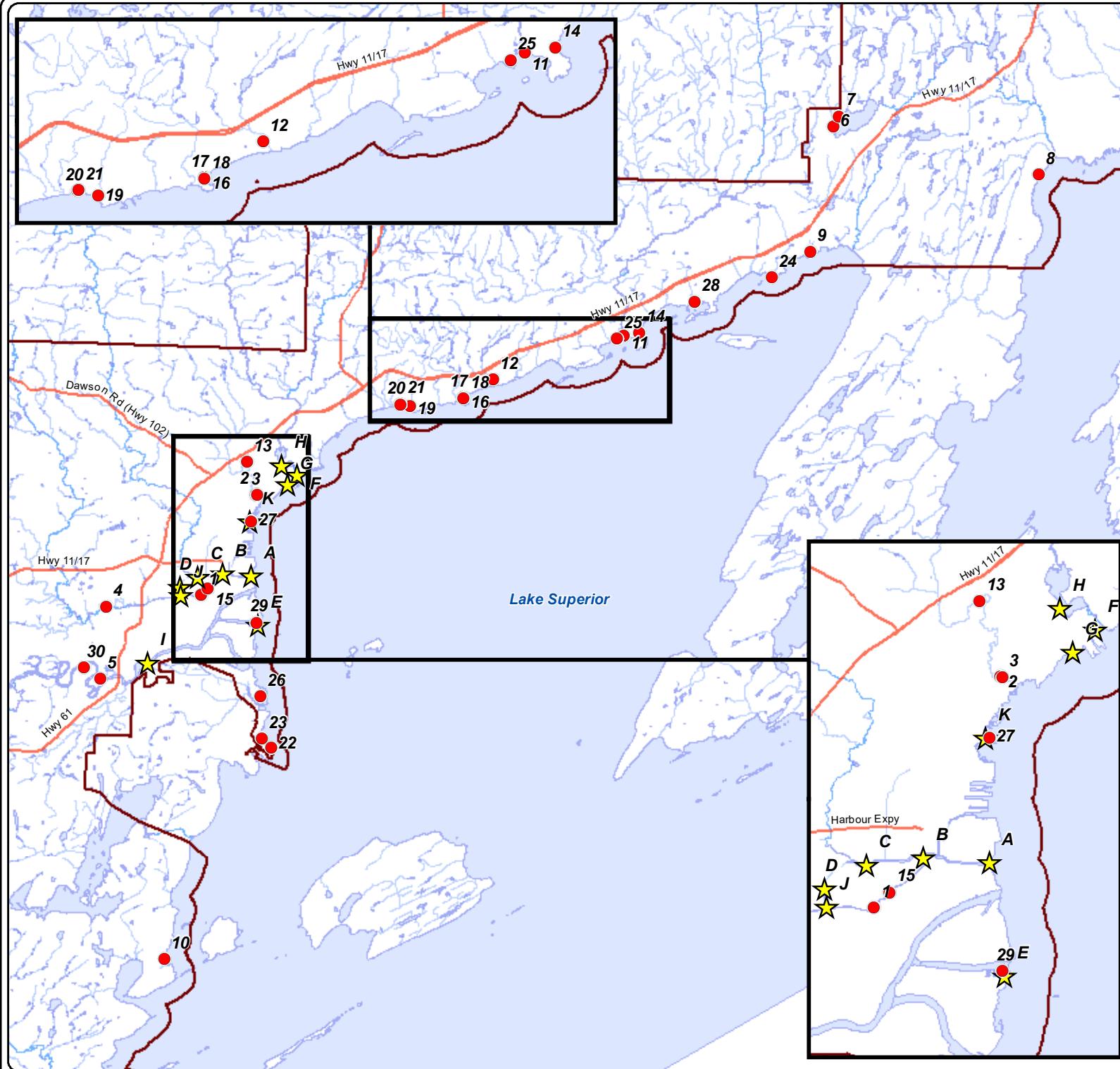
THIS REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY:  Tammy Cook Chief Administrative Officer	DATE: November 20, 2025
---	----------------------------

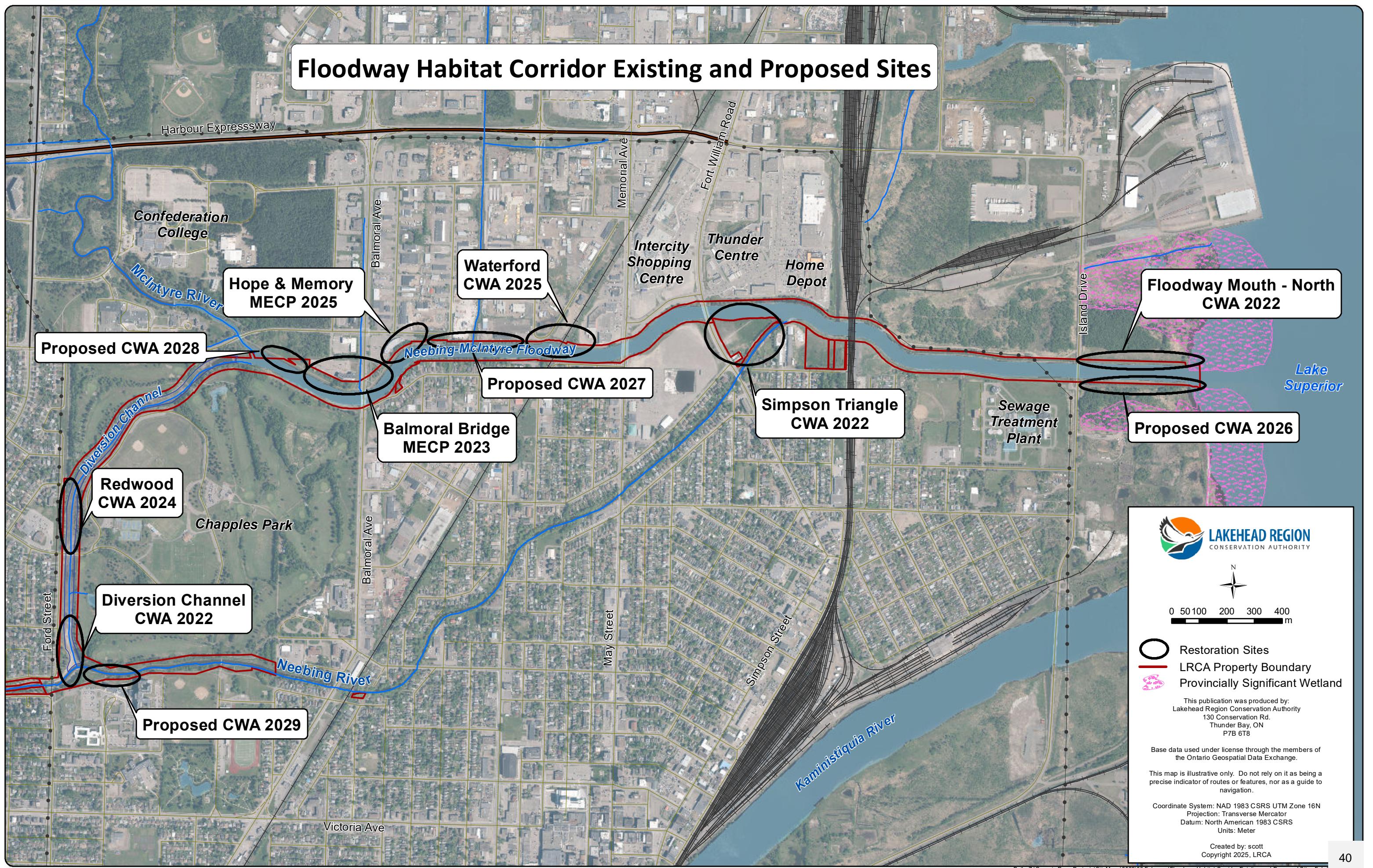


Table 1 – Inventory of Programs - LRCA Stewardship

(COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH RELATED TO RISK OF NATURAL HAZARDS	LAND MANAGEMENT	STEWARDSHIP
CATEGORY 1: Mandatory Programs & Services	CATEGORY 1: Mandatory Programs & Services	CATEGORY 3: Non-Mandatory Programs
1. Stewardship projects on LRCA-owned land <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neebing-McIntyre Floodway-related stewardship projects, education programs, and community volunteer events• Superior Stewards online webpage and resources for landowners; how to steward land to lower risk to natural hazards on private property	2. Stewardship projects on municipal land, carried out with local partners <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mission Island Marsh Conservation Area shoreline restoration• Neebing-McIntyre Floodway stewardship• Stewardship and land inventories in Conservation Areas• Seeds for Conservation• Hazelwood Lake Shoreline Naturalization	3. Superior Stewards <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restoration projects on public lands with community partners (City of Thunder Bay and Fort William First Nation)
	4. Invasive Species <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hurkett Cove invasive Narrowleaf Cattail mapping and BMP• Neebing-McIntyre Floodway invasive species management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invasive species management at restoration project sites• Thunder Bay Regional Phragmites Collaboration

LRCA Stewardship


Floodway Habitat Corridor Existing and Proposed Sites



2025 TREASURER'S REPORT MONTHLY EXPENSES					
	2025 BUDGET	October	TOTAL TO DATE	BALANCE REMAINING	
REVENUE					
Provincial Grants	316,923	-	290,044	26,879	
Municipal Levy	1,913,993	-	1,913,993	-	
Self Generated	684,785	73,621	674,897	9,888	
Other Revenue	1,659,262	27,104	405,799	1,253,463	
TOTAL REVENUE	4,574,963	100,725	3,284,733	1,290,230	
EXPENSES					
Category 1 Mandatory Programs and Services					
Corporate Services	895,324	91,842	790,444	104,880	
Risk of Natural Hazards	2,085,099	132,514	684,270	1,400,829	
Conservation and Management of Lands owned and controlled by the Authority	1,044,201	47,947	563,223	480,978	
Source Water Protection	55,883	5,374	65,489	- 9,606	
Other Programs and Services	22,104	5,864	17,168	4,936	
Total Category 1 Mandatory Programs and Services	4,102,611	283,541	2,120,593	1,982,018	
Category 2 Non-Mandatory Programs and Services at the Request of a Municipality					
Mapping Services	18,527	260	5,352	13,175	
Total Category 2 Non-Mandatory Programs and Services at the Request of a Municipality	18,527	260	5,352	13,175	
Category 3 Non-Mandatory Programs and Services					
Education	99,481	10,062	57,015	42,466	
Stewardship	354,344	38,835	290,035	64,309	
Total Category 3 Non-Mandatory Programs and Services	453,825	48,897	347,051	106,774	
Total All Expenses	4,574,963	332,698	2,472,997	2,101,966	



PROGRAM AREA	FINANCE	REPORT NO.	FIN-11-2025
DATE PREPARED	November 19, 2025	FILE NO.	
MEETING DATE	November 26, 2025		
SUBJECT	Final 2026 Budget, Version 2.0		

RECOMMENDATION

Suggested Resolution

Recorded Weighted Vote

“THAT: the 2026 Budget levy apportionment as outlined in Version 2.0 of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority Final Budget be approved AND FURTHER THAT a copy of the final budget will be provided to the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks and all Member Municipalities.”

Majority Vote:

“THAT: in 2026 the following will be appropriated from the following reserves: Operating Capital Reserve \$30,000; Vehicle and Equipment Reserve \$31,100; Conservation Area Major Maintenance Capital Reserve \$52,300; and Forest Management Reserve \$35,085.”

“THAT: the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority adopts the 2026 Budget Document, Version 2.0 for a total budget of \$3,245,679. “

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN (2023-2027)

Govern and Enhance:

- Continue to commit to accountable and transparent organizational governance.*
- Find and implement efficiencies and streamline processes across all program areas.*
- Maintain a stable model of financial resiliency based on capacity, capabilities, and public expectations by maximizing new funding opportunities, fundraising and self-generated revenue.*
- Build organizational capacity to provide new and developing program areas.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2026 Draft Budget has been set at \$3,245,679 which all Member Municipalities pay \$1,183,882. The 2026 budget contains a 3.50% increase to levy-all compared to 2025. The Final Budget Summary will be provided to Member Municipalities and posted on the Governance section of the LRCA website as required. The levy-all values remain at the levels presented in the August Draft Budget. The City of Thunder Bay sole-benefitting levy and all proposed allocations

to reserves have been removed from the final budget, pending the outcome of the proposed regional consolidation of Conservation Authorities.

DISCUSSION

The 2026 Draft Budget document contains details for the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority's (LRCA) 2026 planned operations and capital activity. The 2026 Draft Budget has been set at \$3,245,679 which all Member Municipalities pay \$1,183,882. The 2026 budget contains a 3.50% increase to levy-all compared to 2025. No changes have been made to the levy-all from the August Draft Budget; however, the total budget has increased due to additional projects added related to successful funding applications. Additionally, the City of Thunder Bay sole-benefitting levy and reserve appropriates have been removed from the budget, pending the outcome of the proposed regional consolidation of Conservation Authorities.

It is noted that at the time of budget preparation confirmation had not been received that the long-standing provincial Section 39 Transfer Payment was forthcoming in 2026 from the province. For budget purposes, it has been assumed it will be provided. If funding does not materialize, staff will come back to the Board with a revised budget, including the use of reserve funds from the Operating Capital Category.

The budget results in a 3.50 % increase in levy-all in 2026 compared to 2025. The 2026 budget requires a 3.50% increase to maintain its current level of service, which is below the current cost-of-living increases.

Financial pressures anticipated in 2026 include: potential increases to insurance costs, increased cost for salaries and benefits; and increased costs of goods and services.

Programs have been categorized into three mandated categories including:

- Category 1: Mandatory Programs and Services
- Category 2: Non-Mandatory Programs and Services at the request of a Municipality
- Category 3: Non-Mandatory Programs and Services

Highlights of the 2026 Budget expenditures include:

- Continuation of the annual programming including:
- Plan Review,
- Development Regulations,
- Flood Forecasting and Warning,
- Operation and maintenance of LRCA owned properties,
- Stewardship, and
- Education programming.
- Capital improvements at the Conservation Areas:
 - Replace two concrete vault toilets with one at the Hazelwood beach area.
 - Repairs to the privy at Mission Island

- Repairs to asphalt cracks in the trail and parking lot and paint lines at Mission Island
- Decommission old parking lot at Mills Block

Other items:

- Office plumbing repair,
- Garage storage units,
- Continuation of wayfinding signage installation using new designs in Conservation Areas,
- Update of Asset Management Plan,
- 10-year update of Forest Management Plans, and
- Design/construction of Urban Conservation Area (LRCA Administration Office location).

Overall, the 2026 Budget reflects the short-term objectives of the Authority and considers long-term requirements to ensure the LRCA can provide sustainable benefits to the watershed residents.

The full 2026 Budget Explanatory Document and the Budget Summary are attached along with the Budget Checklist. As mandated, the budget summary will be posted on the website and circulated to all Member Municipalities, along with the offer to attend a Council meeting if requested.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2026 Draft Budget has been set at \$3,245,679 with all Member Municipalities paying levy - all of \$1,183,882, apportioned per the Current Value Assessment. The 2026 budget contains a 3.50% increase to levy-all compared to 2025. City of Thunder Bay sole-benefitting levy and reserve and deferred fund appropriations have been paused in this budget and will be reassessed after the full details of the regional consolidation of conservation authorities is known.

CONCLUSION

Phase Three of the budget approval process provides the Final 2026 Budget, Version 2.0 for Board consideration and approval.

BACKGROUND

O. Reg. 402/22: Budget and Apportionment specifies that the 2024 budget and all subsequent budgets must adhere to this regulation. It provides details on the budget process and municipal apportionment methods for levying participating municipalities and includes revocation of the previous regulations that governed municipal levies (O. Reg. 670/00 and O. Reg. 139/96).

The 2025 Draft Budget Version 1.0 was presented to the Board on August 28, 2024, and was approved for consultation (Res. #91/24). The Draft Budget was circulated to all Member Municipalities on August 29, 2024. All Member Municipalities were notified of the date of the meeting to approve the final budget on October 30 and were provided with the Draft Budget Summary. Staff attended the City of Thunder Bay's Executive Management Team Operation Budget Meeting on November 1, 2024, and presented the Draft Budget.

REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED

2026 Final Budget Summary, Version 2.0
2026 Final Budget, November, Version 2.0
Budget Summary Checklist

PREPARED BY:

Tammy Cook, CAO

THIS REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY:	DATE:
 Tammy Cook Chief Administrative Officer	November 20, 2025

2026 LRCA Draft Budget Summary

2026 Draft Budget	
3.50% Levy-All increase compared to 2025	
Total Levy	
Levy-All	\$1,183,882 (36.48%)
Total Provincial Grant Revenue	\$376,753(11.61%)
Total Federal Grant Revenue	\$390,981(12.05%)
Total Donation Revenue	\$31,000(0.96%)
Total Other Grants	\$53,161(1.64%)
Self-Generated Revenue	\$623,356(19.21%)
Deferred/Surplus	\$455,061(15.13%)
Reserve Appropriations	\$131,485(4%)
Total Budget	\$3,245,679

** Section 39 Transfer Payment unconfirmed for 2026

2026 Total Levy-All Compared to 2025						
Municipality	2025 CVA %	2025 Levy \$	2026 CVA %	2026 Levy \$	\$ Change	% Change
Thunder Bay	85.66	979,814	85.62	1,013,626	33,812	3.45
Conmee	0.45	5,147	0.44	5,204	57	1.20
Dorion	0.29	3,318	0.29	3,433	115	3.49
Gillies	0.25	2,860	0.25	2,960	100	3.51
Neebing	2.26	25,853	2.25	26,638	785	3.04
O'Connor	0.48	5,490	0.48	5,684	194	3.51
Oliver Paipoonge	5.63	64,399	5.69	67,363	2,964	4.60
Shuniah	4.99	56,964	4.98	58,959	1,994	3.50
	100	1,143,845	100	1,183,866	40,021	3.50

*CVA – Current Value Assessment

2026 Sole-Benefitting Levy Compared to 2025						
Municipality	2023	2024	2025	2026	2025 vs 2026 \$ Change	2025 vs 2026 % Change
Thunder Bay	716,497	744,916	770,138	0	(770,138)	*

*Due to uncertainty related to potential CA regional consolidation, sole-benefitting levy paused in 2026.

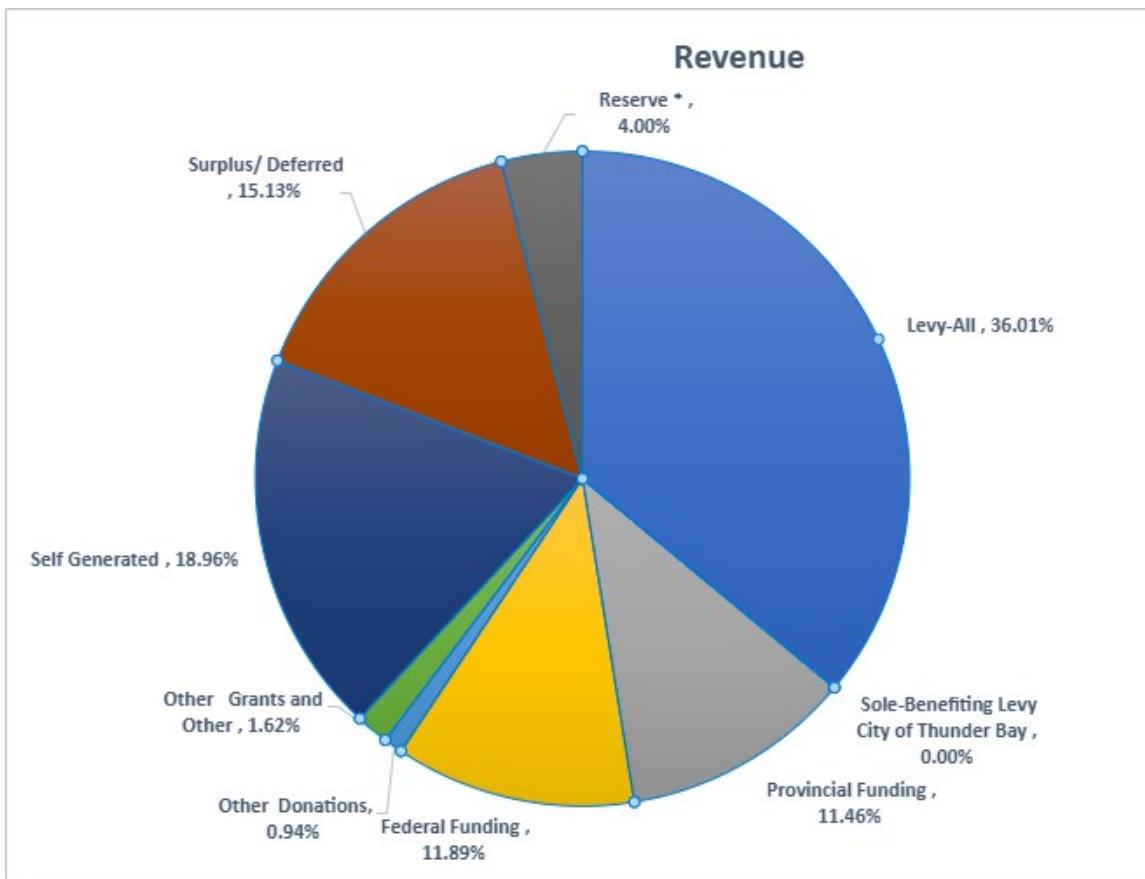
2026 Total Levy Compared to 2025						
City portion of Levy-All + City Sole-Benefitting Levy						
Municipality	2023	2024	2025	2026	2025 vs 2026 \$ Change	2025 vs 2026 % Change
Thunder Bay	1,641,731	1,697,120	1,749,951	1,013,626	(736,326)	(42.08%)

2026 LRCA Draft Budget Summary

2026 Budget Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levy-all increase 2026 versus 2025 = 3.50% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2025 increase – 3.08% • Minimal to no increases are feasible in the short term but are not realistic for the long-term operation of the LRCA. • Provincial funding anticipated to be provided in 2026 (included as revenue in budget) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 39 Transfer Payment - \$150,940 • Source Water Protection Transfer Payment - \$77,313 • Other One-Time Grants - \$148,500

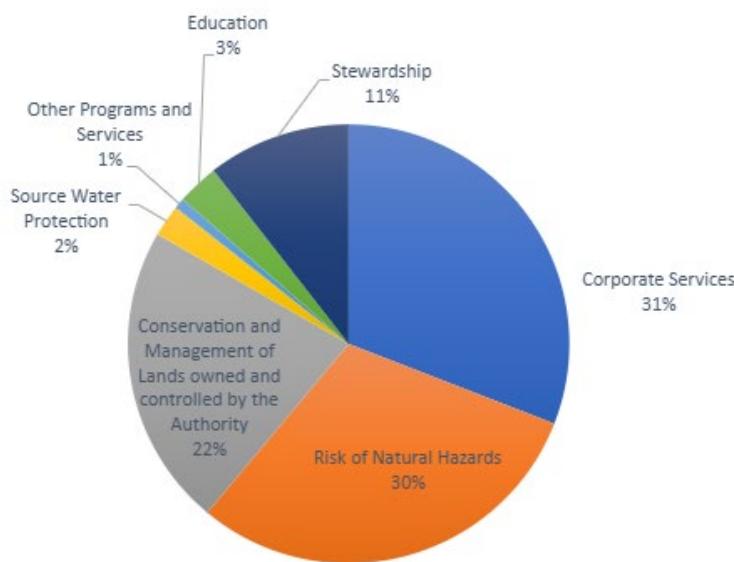
2026 Budget Highlights
<p>Highlights of the 2026 Budget expenditures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of annual programming including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan Review, • Development Regulations, • Watershed monitoring, • Flood Forecasting and Warning, • Operation and maintenance of LRCA owned properties, • Stewardship (no levy), and • Education programming (no levy). • Capital improvements at the Conservation Areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace two concrete vault toilets with one at the Hazelwood beach area. • Repairs to the privy at Mission Island. • Repairs to asphalt cracks in the trail and parking lot and paint lines at Mission Island. • Decommission old parking lot at Mills Block. • Other items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office plumbing repair. • Garage storage units. • Continuation of wayfinding signage installation using new designs in Conservation Areas. • Update of Asset Management Plan. • 10-year update of Forest Management Plans. • Design/construction of Urban Conservation Area (LRCA Administration Office location). • Planned Reserve withdrawals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration - \$30,000 • Vehicle and Equipment - \$31,100 • Forest Management - \$35,085 • Conservation Area Capital - \$52,300

2026 LRCA Draft Budget Summary



2026 LRCA Draft Budget Summary

Expenditures



2026 LRCA Draft Budget Summary





LAKEHEAD REGION
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

2026 Budget

November 26, 2025
Version 2.0

PREPARED BY:
Tammy Cook, CAO
Mark Ambrose, Finance Manager

VERSION		Approval Date	RESOLUTION #
2026 Version 1.0	Draft Budget for consultation	August 27, 2025	99/25
2026 Version 2.0	Levy		
	Reserve Withdrawals		
	Budget Document	November 26, 2025	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2026 Budget document contains details for the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority's (LRCA) planned operations and capital activity. The 2026 total Budget is \$3,245,679 which includes a total levy of \$1,183,882.

It is noted that at the time of budget preparation confirmation had not been received that the long-standing provincial Section 39 Transfer Payment was forthcoming in 2026/2027 from the province. For budget purposes, it has been assumed it will be provided. If funding does not materialize, staff will come back to the Board with a revised budget, including the use of Reserve Funds from the Operating Capital Category. It is noted that notification of provincial funding is consistently late.

Between draft approval and final budget approval, the Province announced the proposed regional consolidation of the 36 Conservation Authorities into 7 regions, with the LRCA grouped in the Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority. If approved the consolidation would result in the amalgamation of all reserves, assets and debt. Due to the unknowns at the time of budget approval, it is recommended to not appropriate any funds in to reserves in 2026 and to advise the City of Thunder Bay to appropriate the planned sole-benefitting levy into a City Reserve for future work on the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway, Victor Street Erosion work and floodplain mapping maintenance. Future budgets will be part of a regional budget, beginning in 2027.

The budget results in a 3.50% increase in levy-all in 2026 compared to 2025. The 2026 budget requires a 3.50% increase in order to maintain its current level of service, which is at current cost-of-living increases.

Financial pressures anticipated in 2026 include: Salaries and Wage increases; increase in fuel costs; and increased costs of goods and services due to inflation.

Programs have been categorized into three mandated categories including:

- Category 1: Mandatory Programs and Services
- Category 2: Non-Mandatory Programs and Services at the request of a Municipality
- Category 3: Non-Mandatory Programs and Services

Highlights of the 2026 Budget expenditures include:

- Continuation of the annual programming including:
 - Plan Review,
 - Development Regulations,
 - Flood Forecasting and Warning,
 - Operation and maintenance of LRCA owned properties,
 - Stewardship, and

- Education programming.
- Capital improvements at the Conservation Areas:
 - Replace two concrete vault toilets with one at the Hazelwood beach area.
 - Repairs to the privy at Mission Island
 - Repairs to asphalt cracks in the trail and parking lot and paint lines at Mission Island
 - Decommission old parking lot at Mills Block
- Other items:
 - Office plumbing repair
 - Garage storage units
 - Continuation of wayfinding signage installation using new designs in Conservation Areas
 - Update of Asset Management Plan
 - 10-year update of Forest Management Plans
 - Design/construction of Urban Conservation Area (LRCA Administration Office location).

Opportunities considered to raise and use self-generated revenue to fund the authority's operations:

- User fees (i.e., permit and plan review fees, education fees, inquiry fees)
- Explore Card/pay and display units/coin boxes – parking/day use fee at Conservation Areas
- Sales of native plants
- External funding will be continually sought throughout the year.

The Watershed Biologist, Watershed Stewardship Technician and Education Coordinator positions will continue using non-levy funds for non-mandatory programs.

The total Budget Levy is summarized in Appendix A including the amount applicable to each Member Municipality. Appendix B outlines the cost for each Member Municipality based on per resident, per household and \$100,000 of assessed value.

Overall, the 2026 Budget reflects the short-term objectives of the Authority and considers long-term requirements to ensure the LRCA can provide sustainable benefits to the watershed residents, while meeting the Authority's legislative responsibilities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	7
2	BACKGROUND	8
2.1	Mandate.....	8
2.1.1	Purpose	9
2.1.2	Founding Principles.....	9
2.1.3	Objects of an Authority.....	9
2.2	Organization Details.....	9
2.2.1	Area of Jurisdiction	9
2.2.2	Board of Directors/Members.....	10
	Agricultural Representative	10
2.2.3	Staff Complement.....	11
2.2.4	Conservation and Management of Land	11
	Conservation Areas	12
	Other Land Owned by the LRCA	12
2.2.5	Watershed Monitoring	13
2.3	Sources of Funding.....	13
2.3.1	Grant Revenue	15
2.3.1.1	Provincial Section 39 Transfer Payment	15
2.3.1.2	Source Water Protection Funding.....	16
2.3.1.3	Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure Funding	16
2.3.2	Municipal Levy	17
2.3.2.1	Levy – All.....	17
2.3.2.2	Sole- Benefitting Levy.....	17
2.4	Modified Current Value Assessment (MCVA).....	17
2.5	Budget Approval Process	17
2.5.1	O. Reg. 402/22: Budget and Apportionment.....	18
2.5.2	Budget Approval Methods.....	19
2.6	Asset Management Plan	21
2.7	Reserve Policy	21
2.8	Purchasing Policy	21
2.9	Lakehead Conservation Foundation	22
2.10	CONSERVATION ONTARIO.....	22
2.11	Programs and Services.....	22
2.11.1	Category 1 – Mandatory Programs and services.....	23
2.11.2	Category 2 – Non-Mandatory Programs and services at the request of a municipality.....	24
2.11.3	Category 3 – Non-MANDATORY Programs and SERVICES.....	25
2.11.4	Corporate Services	27
3	2026 BUDGET.....	28
	BuDgeted Revenue	28

Consideration of opportunities to raise and use self-generated revenue	30
Budgeted Expenditures.....	31
Administration	33
Community Relations.....	34
Vehicle and Equipment Program	35
Information technology management.....	36
Corporate GIS.....	36
3.1 Category 1: Mandatory programs and services.....	37
3.1.1 Risk of Natural Hazards.....	37
Floodplain Mapping	37
Technical Studies	38
CommUnciations and Outreach.....	39
Flood Forecasting and Warning	39
Drought and Low Water Response	40
Infrastructure: Neebing-McIntyre Floodway	41
Infrastructure: Victor Street Erosion	43
Review of Proposals under an Act	44
Plan Review Comments	45
Administering and Enforcing the Act (Section 28 Development Regulations). 46	
3.1.2 Conservation and Management of Lands owned and controlled by the LRCA	
47	
Conservation Areas	47
Administer Section 29 Regulations in Conservation Areas	49
Other Owned Land.....	50
3.1.3 Source Water Protection	51
3.1.4 Other Programs and services	52
Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN).....	52
Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network (PWQMN)	53
3.2 Category 2: Non-Mandatory Programs at the request of a Municipality.....	54
Mapping Service.....	54
Mosquito and Pennock Creek Monitoring.....	54
3.3 Category 3: Non-Mandatory Programs.....	55
3.3.1 Education	55
Environmental Education.....	55
Nature Interpretive Programming	56

3.3.2	Stewardship	56
	Superior Stewards Program	57
	Tree Seedling Program.....	58
	Private Land Stewardship	58
	Seeds for Conservation	60
	Sea lamprey.....	60
4	RESERVE APPROPRIATIONS	61
4.1	Percentage of Target Reserve Limit Reached	62
4.2	2026 Planned Appropriations to and from Reserves	63
5	CONCLUSION.....	64
6	RECOMMENDATIONS	65

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1: Projected Revenues
- Figure 2: Projected Expenses by Program
- Figure 3: 2026 Budget Summary
- Figure 4: Levy-all Comparison for the period of 2018 to 2026
- Figure 5: Budget Levy Comparison
- Figure 6: 2026 Compared to 2025 Levy Cost Comparison

LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix A: 2026 Budget Summary
- Appendix B: Budget Levy Comparison
- Appendix C: Passed Resolutions

1 INTRODUCTION

The 2026 Budget document contains details for the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority's (LRCA) planned operations and capital activity. The 2026 total Budget is \$3,245,679 which includes a total levy of \$1,183,882.

The budget results in a 3.50% increase in levy-all in 2026 compared to 2025. The 2026 budget requires a 3.50% increase in order to maintain its current level of service, which is at the current cost-of-living increases.

The total Budget Levy is summarized in Appendix A including the amount applicable to each Member Municipality, which includes a summary of the breakdown between Operating and Capital. Appendix B outlines the cost for each Member Municipality based on per resident, per household and \$100,000 of assessed value.

It is noted that at the time of budget preparation confirmation had not been received that the long-standing provincial Section 39 was forthcoming for the 2026/2027 fiscal budget year from the province. For budget purposes, it has been assumed it will be provided. If funding does not materialize, staff will come back to the Board with a revised budget, including the use of Reserve Funds from the Operating Capital Category. It is noted that notification of provincial funding is consistently late.

Between draft approval and final budget approval, the Province announced the proposed regional consolidation of the 36 Conservation Authorities into 7 regions, with the LRCA grouped in the Huron-Superior Regional Conservation Authority. If approved the consolidation would result in the amalgamation of all reserves, assets and debt. Due to the unknowns at the time of budget approval, it is recommended to not appropriate any funds in to reserves or deferred funds in 2026 and to recommend to the City of Thunder Bay to appropriate the planned sole-benefitting levy into a City Reserve for future work on the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway, Victor Street Erosion work and floodplain mapping maintenance. Future budgets will be part of a regional budget, beginning in 2027.

2 BACKGROUND

The LRCA is a community-based environmental protection and advisory agency, established in 1954 (initially the Neebing Valley Conservation Authority) by the Province of Ontario at the request of municipalities in the Lakehead watershed. The LRCA's purpose is to provide for the organization and delivery of programs and services that further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources in the Lakehead Watershed. Conservation Authorities undertake a broad range of programs, including: watershed management, erosion control, Flood Forecasting and Warning, recreation and land management, water level monitoring, Plan Review, environmental education and stewardship. We improve quality of life by actively providing Conservation Areas for semi-passive recreation and environmental education opportunities.

Our integrated approach to resource management leads to a wide range of programs and projects, which are aimed at keeping our watersheds healthy. We improve quality of life by actively providing open space and protecting life and property from flooding and erosion, as well as restoring and conserving aquatic and natural habitats. In addition to serving our watershed residents, we also provide advice and counsel to all levels of government regarding natural hazards.

The LRCA is one of 36 Conservation Authorities across Ontario, including one of five in Northern Ontario.

Historically Conservation Authorities were administered by Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR); however, in 2018, Conservation Authorities were moved under the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP). In September 2022, Conservation Authorities were moved back under the administration of MNR and in June 2025, were moved back under the administration of MECP.

2.1 MANDATE

In 2017, the LRCA adopted vision and mission statements and in January 2018, the LRCA adopted its first ever Five-Year Strategic Plan for the period 2018-2022. The Strategic Plan was updated in 2022 for the next five-year period (2023-2027). The Strategic Plan identifies four main priorities including: conserve and sustain; protect and support; connect and explore; and govern and enhance. LRCA's vision and mission statements are as follows:

Vision: A healthy, safe and sustainable Lakehead Watershed for future generations.

Mission: To lead the conservation and protection of the Lakehead Watershed.

Action items will be drafted taking into consideration the identified initiatives in the Strategic Plan, which will be incorporated into future work plans and budgets, as well as the overall business of the Authority.

2.1.1 PURPOSE

With the passing of Bill 139 on December 12, 2017, a purpose statement was added to the *Conservation Authorities Act*, which states:

The purpose of this Act is to provide for the organization and delivery of programs and services that further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources in watersheds in Ontario.

2.1.2 FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

Conservation Authorities are based on three fundamental principles:

- Municipal and Provincial partnership
- Local initiative and involvement
- Management of natural resources on a watershed basis.

2.1.3 OBJECTS OF AN AUTHORITY

Per Section 20(1) of the *Conservation Authorities Act*,

The objects of an authority are to provide, in an area over which it has jurisdiction,

- a) the mandatory programs and services required under Section 21.1;
- b) any municipal programs and services that may be provided under section 21.1.1; and
- c) any other program or services that may be provided under section 21.1.2.

2.2 ORGANIZATION DETAILS

2.2.1 AREA OF JURISDICTION

The LRCA Area of Jurisdiction (2,719 square kilometres) includes:

- City of Thunder Bay
- Municipality of Neebing
- Municipality of Shuniah
- Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge
- Township of Conmee
- Township of O'Connor
- Township of Gillies

- Township of Dorion

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) is responsible for areas outside the jurisdiction of the Authority.

The scientific boundary of the Lakehead Watershed is 11,526 square kilometres.

2.2.2 BOARD OF DIRECTORS/MEMBERS

Policy and budget decisions are made by a Board of Directors comprised of eleven members appointed by LRCA's Member Municipalities. The number of representatives appointed as Members of the LRCA Board of Directors is based on population as outlined in subsection 2(2) of the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

Per Bill 229, Schedule 6, as of the end of the 2022 term of the Board, at least 70% of the appointees to the Board must be municipal councillors, unless an exception has been granted by the Minister, at the request of a municipality (per Section 14(1.1), 14(1.2) of the *Conservation Authorities Act*). Therefore, unless an exception has been granted each Member Municipality must only appoint municipal councillors, with the exception being the City of Thunder Bay who has four Members. They will be required, at a minimum, to appoint three municipal councillors. Prior to this change, the City of Thunder Bay appointed two municipal councillors and two citizen appointees. Historically, other municipalities had periodically appointed citizens to the Board.

As of February 2, 2021 (per Section 17 (1.1)(1.2)(1.3) of the *Conservation Authorities Act*) the term of the Chair and Vice-Chair is limited to one year and they can serve for no more than two consecutive terms. Positions must rotate between participating municipalities; therefore, the Board cannot appoint the succeeding chair from the same municipality as the current chair. A Conservation Authority or a municipality can request permission for a longer term to the Minister.

Four exceptions have been granted by the Minister to date. For the 2022 election both the Chair and Vice-Chair were approved to continue their terms if so elected. Additionally, for the 2023 and 2024 elections, the Chair was approved to continue her term if so elected. A fourth exception was granted for both the Chair and Vice-Chair to hold their positions if so elected for the 2025 and 2026 elections.

AGRICULTURAL REPRESENTATIVE

Per Bill 229, Schedule 6, as of February 2, 2021, the Minister may appoint an Agricultural Representative to the Board of Directors. If appointed the Agricultural Representative can not vote on enlarging, amalgamating or dissolving an authority or any budgetary matter. Their term can be up to four years as determined by the Minister. Per diems for

this position would be paid by the Ministry. To date no agricultural representative has been appointed to the LRCA Board.

2.2.3 STAFF COMPLEMENT

In 2026, the Authority will have a full-time equivalent (FTE) staff complement of 13.67 who deliver the programs/services on behalf of the LRCA Board, which include:

- Chief Administrative Officer
- Finance Manager
- Watershed Manager
- Lands Manager
- Communications Manager
- Development Regulations Officer
- GIS/IT Specialist
- Admin Clerk/Receptionist
- Finance Assistant (part-time)
- Field Operations Lead Hand
- Environmental Planner
- Watershed Biologist
- Watershed Stewardship Technician
- Regulations and Planning Assistant

Recurring contract employees that amount to an equivalent of 2.0 FTEs include:

- Education Co-ordinator (39 weeks)
- Field Operations Assistant (33 weeks)
- Seasonal Watershed Stewardship Technician (33 weeks)

Seasonal employees that amount to an equivalent of 1.8 FTE include:

- Four summer field staff (15 weeks – students)
- Two Assistant Water Resources Technologists (16 weeks – students)

2.2.4 CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF LAND

The LRCA owns a total of 2,597 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. The properties owned by the LRCA fall into three land use categories including:

1. Conservation Areas for Passive Recreation
2. Conservation Authority Administrative Area
3. Management Area

The categories of land are grouped in the Inventory of Programs into two classifications, Conservation Areas and Other Owned land, which includes the Administrative Office and Management Areas.

CONSERVATION AREAS

The LRCA owns and maintains ten Conservation Areas (1,550 hectares), which provide semi-passive recreational use opportunities to the public and access to Lake Superior. The areas include:

- Hurkett Cove (Township of Dorion)
- Cascades (City of Thunder Bay)
- Silver Harbour (Municipality of Shuniah)
- Cedar Falls (Township of O'Connor)
- Little Trout Bay (Municipality of Neebing)
- Hazelwood Lake (unincorporated Township of Gorham)
- MacKenzie Point (Municipality of Shuniah)
- Mission Island Marsh (City of Thunder Bay)
- Mills Block (City of Thunder Bay)
- Wishart (unincorporated Township of Gorham)

In 2022, Mills Block Forest and Wishart Forest were renamed as Conservation Areas. Previously, they were referred to as Managed Forests.

Boat launches at Silver Harbour and Little Trout Bay Conservation Areas provide access to Lake Superior.

As a private landowner, the LRCA pays property taxes to the Municipality/Township in which the land resides.

OTHER LAND OWNED BY THE LRCA

The LRCA owns 3.4 hectares at 130 Conservation Road in Thunder Bay which is where the LRCA's Administrative office and grounds are located.

Management Areas include floodplain and erosion control lands, forest management properties, nature reserves, Neebing-McIntyre Floodway and the Hope and Memory Garden.

The LRCA owns and maintains one Forest Management property known as Williams Forest, located in the Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge and is not open to the public. That property, as well as other Conservation Areas have Forest Management Plans under the Managed Forest Tax Incentive program (MFTIP), which provides some tax relief as well as provides a plan for proper long-term forest management. As warranted, harvesting occurs with revenue used to maintain the forest management area and the associated

Forest Management Plans. Surplus generated funds in a given year are allocated to the Forest Management Reserve.

The LRCA also owns other conservation, floodplain and erosion lands as well as the banks and bed of the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway. Property taxes are paid on all lands.

Conservation of Land Tax Incentive Program (CLTIP) is applied to annually to reduce the taxes in recognition of natural heritage features for the following lands:

- 330 Beaver Avenue
- Wakefield Common
- Hurkett Cove
- Mills Block

2.2.5 WATERSHED MONITORING

The LRCA conducts a variety of watershed monitoring throughout the year including:

- Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Program (in partnership with MECP)
- Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Program (in partnership with MECP)
- Streamflow Gauges (in partnership with Water Survey of Canada)
- Precipitation Gauges (some in partnership with Water Survey of Canada)
- Neebing River Climate Change Monitoring Station (in partnership with MECP)
- Dorion Fish Culture Station Monitoring Station (new as of 2018, in partnership with MNR)
- Bathing Beach Sampling (Hazelwood Lake and Mission Island Marsh)
- Blue/Green Algae Monitoring (Hazelwood Lake, Mission Island Marsh, Hurkett, Silver Harbour)
- Snow Surveys
- Floodway Channel water level monitoring (automated in 2024)
- Ontario Low Water Response
- Invasive Species Monitoring (Neebing-McIntyre Floodway and Conservation Areas and other areas subject to funding)

2.3 SOURCES OF FUNDING

LRCA funding comes from several sources:

- Grant Revenue
 - MNR – Provincial Section 39 Transfer Payment
 - MNR – Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECl) (when applicable and approved)
 - MECP – Source Water Protection
- Special Projects (programs/available funds vary from year to year)

- TD Friends of the Environment
- Enbridge
- Ontario Power Generation
- Canada Summer Jobs
- Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) - Great Lakes Freshwater Ecosystem Initiative
- Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) – COA, Wetland Conservation Partnership Program
- Invasive Species Centre – Invasive Species Action Fund
- Invasive Phragmites Control Fund
- Green Shovels Collaborative – Invasive Phragmites Control Fund
- TC Energy
- Northern, Ontario Heritage Corporation (NOHFC)
- Natural Resources Canada (NRCan)
- Parks Canada
- CPRA Green Jobs Canada
- Municipal Levy
 - Levy – All
 - Levy - Sole-Benefitting
- Other Revenue
 - Interest
 - Contracts - Department of Fisheries and Oceans Wolf River Weir Inspections, Sea Lamprey Trapping
 - Coin Boxes/Pay and Display – parking fees/day use fees at Conservation Areas
 - Explore Card sales
 - Lakehead Conservation Foundation donation
 - Multi-purpose Room rentals
 - Forest Management harvesting
 - Property Rentals
 - Mapping Service
 - Donations
 - Lawyer Request Fees
 - Development Regulation Permit Fees
 - Plan Review Fees
 - Education Fees
 - Calendar advertising
 - Seeds for Conservation Sales
 - Other

2.3.1 GRANT REVENUE

2.3.1.1 PROVINCIAL SECTION 39 TRANSFER PAYMENT

The *Conservation Authorities Act* Section 39 Provincial “Operating” Grant funds the Conservation Authority in undertaking provincially mandated activities that include:

1. Flood/Erosion Operations (flood and erosion control structures, Flood Forecasting and Warning, ice management) and
2. Hazard Prevention (Plan Input, Hazard Information).

Eligible activities include:

- Flood and Erosion Operations
 - Operation of Flood Control Structures
 - Routine/Minor Maintenance of Flood Control Structures
 - Preventative Maintenance of Flood Control Structures
 - Operation of Erosion Control Structures
 - Routine/minor Maintenance of Erosion Control Structures
 - Preventative Maintenance of Erosion Control Structures
 - Flood Forecasting and Warning-System Operation
 - Ice Management
- Hazard Management
 - Plan Input (Official Plan/Amendment review only)
 - Information (i.e., Watershed Planning/Technical Studies)
- Administration

Funds are provided by lump sum payment for work undertaken from April 1 to March 31 of any given year. Funding is contingent of having local matching levy from the Member Municipalities. Interim and Year End reports are submitted by the LRCA to the MNR.

Between 1998 and 2019, Provincial Section 39 Transfer Payments to all 36 Conservation Authorities remained at the same level of \$7,400,000. In 2019, mid-way through the budget year, the Provincial Government announced a 48-50% funding cut to all Conservation Authority Section 39 Transfer Payments, effective for the current year. LRCA's transfer payment was reduced from \$292,380 to \$150,940, resulting in a funding reduction of 48% (\$141,440). This resulted in an emergency mid-year amendment to the budget, which resulted in a cancelation of all planned training, advertising, and capital expenditure spending at Conservation Areas as well as delaying some planned repairs. Funds were reallocated to ensure that the provincially mandated programs were still delivered.

At the time of budget preparation, no confirmation had been received that this long-standing Transfer Payment is forthcoming for the 2026/2027 fiscal year. For budget purposes, staff have budgeted as though the funding would be provided at the reduced

level of \$150,940. If this funding is not forthcoming, it is proposed to utilize funds from the Operating Capital Reserve, which was established to provide operating funds in the event of loss of funds in a given year. Notification of the approval of this funding is consistently delayed annually.

2.3.1.2 SOURCE WATER PROTECTION FUNDING

The MECP provides 100% funding to administer the Source Protection program through Provincial Transfer Payment, which is a program under the *Clean Water Act* to protect municipal drinking water systems, which there are two in the LRCA Area of Jurisdiction (i.e., Bare Point Water Treatment Plant (City of Thunder Bay) and Rosslyn Drinking Water System (Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge)).

This program runs on the Provincial fiscal year of April 1 to March 31 of any given year. In 2024, a multi-year funding agreement was signed for the period of April 1, 2024 to March 31 2027 for a total of \$226,007.48 in funding. Total funded FTEs over the period are 0.55 FTE for 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 and 0.5 FTE for 2026-2027.

It is noted that if the Drinking Water Source Protection Transfer Payment was ever eliminated, the cost to administer this mandatory program would be applicable to the City of Thunder Bay and the Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge as sole-benefitting municipalities.

2.3.1.3 WATER AND EROSION CONTROL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

MNR administers the Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECl) funding program, which typically provides an annual five-million-dollar capital investment to fund major maintenance required to maintain Conservation Authority dams and other flood and erosion control structures.

The WECl program provides matching funding to Conservation Authorities for studies or major maintenance of water or erosion control structures that are either owned by or maintained by Conservation Authorities. Local benefiting municipalities provide matching funds. A committee made up of five Conservation Authority representatives, one MNR and one Conservation Ontario representative, oversees the program and determines the priority list of eligible projects based on need and level of risk.

Funding is not guaranteed year to year. The LRCA applies for funding when major maintenance or studies are required on the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway or if major maintenance (i.e., soil nailing) is required on City of Thunder Bay owned land on Victor Street along the banks of the Kaministiquia River.

2.3.2 MUNICIPAL LEVY

2.3.2.1 LEVY – ALL

Operation and Capital Project costs that benefit all Member Municipalities is levied to all Member Municipalities based on their proportion of the Modified Current Value Assessment (see Section 2.4).

2.3.2.2 SOLE- BENEFITTING LEVY

A sole-benefitting levy is applied to a single Municipality for work undertaken by the LRCA upon which they are sole-benefitting. The operation and maintenance of the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway and Victor Street erosion protection (City owned land) are included in the sole-benefitting levy of the City of Thunder Bay. Another example is the completion, updating or maintenance of floodplain mapping, where the municipality/municipalities upon which the watershed is located are levied for that cost of the project.

2.4 MODIFIED CURRENT VALUE ASSESSMENT (MCVA)

Modified Current Value Assessment (MCVA) means a method of apportioning an authority's operating and capital costs that is based on the MCVA of the properties within the authority's area of jurisdiction (as outlined in O. Reg. 402/22). Municipal Current Value Assessment values are modified for conservation authorities where only a portion of a municipality falls within an area of jurisdiction of an authority. Since the LRCA's Member Municipalities are geographically entirely within the LRCA area of jurisdiction, no modification of the CVA is required. The Modified Current Value Assessment (MCVA) data is provided by the MNR annually, which is then used to calculate the levy-all for each Member Municipality. Each Conservation Authority has an Agreement regarding the use of Modified Property Assessment Information with MNR. Generally, this data is received by the Conservation Authority in late August. Since adoption of the CVA method, the levy percentage for Member Municipalities fluctuates annually.

For population data, reliance on the information from Statistics Canada is used, as the information received within the MCVA is not reflective of the actual population in our Member Municipalities. Representation on the Board is determined by the population of the applicable Member Municipality as detailed in the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

2.5 BUDGET APPROVAL PROCESS

The *Conservation Authorities Act*, and O. Reg. 402/22 outline the process of approving Conservation Authority budgets, specifically the process of approving the annual Municipal levies.

2.5.1 O. REG. 402/22: BUDGET AND APPORTIONMENT

O. Reg. 402/22: Budget and Apportionment specifies that the 2024 budget and all subsequent budgets must adhere to this regulation. It provides details on the budget process and municipal apportionment methods for levying participating municipalities and includes revocation of the previous regulations that governed municipal levies (O. Reg. 670/00 and O. Reg. 139/96).

The regulated budget process includes:

First Phase

Budget must include:

- All sources of revenue (other than municipal levy)
- Categorize operating expenses into Category 1, 2 and 3
- Categorize capital expenses into Category 1, 2 and 3
- Amount of levy for each Member Municipality
- Specify if the Authority considered opportunities to raise and use self-generated revenue to help finance the authority's operations, including the programs and services it provides, a description of what the authority considered.

Budget must:

- Apply any relevant revenue to specific programs to offset levy.
- Apply Modified Current Value Apportionment method to determine levy for each program.
- Apply Benefit Based Apportionment method to sole benefitting programs (i.e., Floodway, Victor Street Erosion)

Second Phase

Draft Budget Process:

1. Notify all Member Municipalities of Draft Budget meeting if a Member Municipality will owe levy for Category 1 *Clean Water Act* programs and Services.
 - a. Advise of amounts owing or to be owed for Category 1 *Clean Water Act* programs and services (n/a to LRCA)
2. Hold meeting to consider draft budget.
3. Hold vote on whether or not to approve the draft budget for consultation.
 - a. If there is a levy for Category 1 *Clean Water Act* programs and services, hold a separate vote of Members from applicable municipalities for that portion of the draft budget (n/a to LRCA).
 - b. Vote is a one-member-one vote method.
4. Send Member Municipalities a copy of the Draft Budget and all financial information relating to the apportionment of operating and capital expenses.
5. Post a copy of the Draft Budget and financial information on Governance section of Authority's website.

6. Consult as necessary with Member Municipalities on draft budget in order to finalize final budget.

Third Phase

Final Budget Approval Process:

1. Notify all Member Municipalities of Budget meeting.
 - a. Notification must be at least 30 days prior to meeting.
 - b. Must include copy of most recent draft of the budget.
 - c. Must specify amount of levy for the given year.
2. Hold meeting to approve budget.
3. Hold a recorded vote to municipal levy/amounts owing.
 - a. If there are any Category 1 *Clean Water Act* apportionments, hold a vote with participating municipality representatives (n/a to LRCA).
 - b. Weighted vote to approve municipal levy/amounts owing.
 - c. Authority can not send a notice of apportionment unless a vote has occurred.
4. Hold a recorded vote to approve final budget.
 - a. One -member-one vote to approve final Budget Document.
5. “Promptly” after the final budget process is approved, provide a copy of the final budget to the Minister and each Member Municipality.
6. Post final budget on the Authority’s website in the Governance section.

2.5.2 BUDGET APPROVAL METHODS

Quorum must be achieved to approve the budget (i.e., 6 of 11 members must be present. Voting by proxy is not permitted.

For each phase of the budget approval process, the following budget approval method shall be used:

- Draft Budget
 - Decide on whether to approve draft budget for consultation
 - one-member-one-vote method
- Final Budget
 - Municipal levy/amounts owing
 - recorded weighted majority vote
 - Budget document
 - recorded one-member-one-vote

Weighted Majority Vote:

As outlined O. Reg. 402/22 Section 19, a recorded weighted vote is to be conducted to approve the levy/amounts owing in the Final Budget.

The following rules apply:

- Each Member's vote shall be weighted according to the ratio of the MCVA for applicable Member Municipality.
- Approval requires 51%, based on the weighted percentage of those present.
- In the case of a tie vote, the vote is lost.
- If a municipality appoints more than one member to the authority, each member's votes shall be equal to the municipality's weighted vote divided by the number of members the municipality appoints to the authority.
- A municipality shall not have a weighted vote of more than 50 percent of the total weighted value for all the votes to be cast unless the municipality appoints more than 50 percent of the members to the authority.
- Absent members percentage does not carry to the members present from their Municipality (only applies to the City of Thunder Bay, as they have four members).
- Must be a recorded vote.

For weighted voting, the weighting of the votes is based on the applicable year's MCVA values provided annually by MNR. In the case of the City of Thunder Bay, where their MCVA apportionment is greater than 50%, their members are equally apportioned 50% of the total vote, as no one municipality can hold greater than 50 percent of the vote for the weighted majority vote.

Weighted Vote Allocations:

Municipality	# of Members	2026 CVA (%)	Vote %
City of Thunder Bay	1	85.62	12.5
	1		12.5
	1		12.5
	1		12.5
Conmee	1	0.44	1.53
Dorion	1	0.29	1.01
Gillies	1	0.25	0.87
Neebing	1	2.25	7.82
O'Connor	1	0.48	1.67
Oliver Paipoonge	1	5.69	19.78
Shuniah	1	4.98	17.32
TOTAL	11	100	100

Example: Conmee = $(0.44 / (100-85.62)) \times 50$

One-Member-One-Vote Method:

A one-member one-vote (i.e., majority vote) is to be conducted to approve consultation of the draft budget and approval of the Budget Document. Each member present has an equal weighting of their vote.

Majority Vote Allocations:

Municipality	# of Members	% Vote
City of Thunder Bay	1	9.09
	1	9.09
	1	9.09
	1	9.09
Conmee	1	9.09
Dorion	1	9.09
Gillies	1	9.09
Neebing	1	9.09
O'Connor	1	9.09
Oliver Paipoonge	1	9.09
Shuniah	1	9.09
TOTAL	11	100

2.6 ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

KGS Consulting Group completed the LRCA Asset Management Plan (AMP) in July 2021 and will be updated in 2026. The AMP provided insight into the current condition of the Authority's assets and a timeline indicating recommended repairs, maintenance and replacement of assets. The goal of the AMP is to provide a strategy to achieve and maintain the desired level of services for each asset while maintaining financial goals.

2.7 RESERVE POLICY

The Authority has an approved Reserve Policy (FIN-04) which outlines how the various reserves are to be managed. A summary of planned appropriations to and from Reserves is included in Section 4.

2.8 PURCHASING POLICY

The LRCA approved Purchasing Policy (FIN-06), which was updated in 2019, guides all purchasing.

2.9 LAKEHEAD CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

The Lakehead Conservation Foundation was formed in 1987 as it became evident that funding from the Province of Ontario was decreasing. Since inception, the Foundation has donated \$836,290 towards these programs. Their annual contribution has been typically \$20,000 and is allocated for environmental education and other special projects.

Due to COVID-19 in 2021 the annual Dinner and Auction and the Wine Tasting Fundraising events were cancelled, and in 2022 the Dinner Auction was cancelled resulting in a loss in revenue of approximately \$20,000.00 each year, and subsequently no donation to the LRCA. The LCF hosted both events in 2024, however only plans on hosting the wine tasting event in 2025 and beyond. Future donations will be determined based on the success of the events.

2.10 CONSERVATION ONTARIO

Conservation Ontario (CO) is the network or umbrella organization of the 36 Conservation Authorities similar to the Association of Municipalities (AMO). Decisions made at CO Council Meetings do not bind individual Conservation Authorities unless specifically adopted by the Conservation Authority. CO advocates on behalf of the collective and has been instrumental during the current *Conservation Authorities Act* review process. Typically, both the Chair and CAO attend the quarterly CO Council meetings; however, since COVID, meetings have been mostly virtual, with two meetings in person per year. The LRCA pays an annual levy to CO.

2.11 PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

In October 2021 the MECP released O. Reg. 686/21: Mandatory Programs and Services and O. Reg. 687/21: Transition Plans and Agreements under the *Conservation Authorities Act*. The purpose of the transition period is to provide conservation authorities and municipalities with the time to address changes to the budgeting and levy process based on the delivery of mandatory programs and services (Category 1), municipal programs and services (Category 2), and other programs and services (Category 3) and to reach agreements.

As required in O. Reg. 687/21: Transition Plans and Agreements the following requirements have been completed:

- **Transition Plan** (November 24, 2021): Included a timeline/workplan to meet the requirements for the first and second phases of the transition period.
- **Inventory of Programs and Services** (February 28, 2022): List of all the programs and services that the authority was providing at that time, and those that it

intends to provide as of January 1, 2024. Summarized programs into Category 1, 2 and 3 and detailed how they were funded.

The Act outlines programs areas which have been categorized into three categories:

2.11.1 CATEGORY 1 – MANDATORY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Mandatory programs and Services (as outline in the Act)

21.1 (1) An authority shall provide the following programs or services within its area of jurisdiction:

1. *A program or service that meets any of the following descriptions and that has been prescribed by the regulations:*
 - i. *Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards*
 - ii. *Programs and services related to the conservation and management of lands owned or controlled by the authority, including any interests in land registered on title.*
 - iii. *Programs and services related to the authority's duties, functions and responsibilities as a source protection authority under the Clean Water Act, 2006.*
 - iv. *Programs and services related to the authority's duties, functions and responsibilities under an Act prescribed by the regulations.*
3. *A program or service, other than a program or service described in paragraph 1, that has been prescribed by the regulations on or before the first anniversary of the day prescribed under clause 40 (3) (i).*

Within the budget the Mandatory Programs and Services are categorized under each of the following categories:

- Risk of Natural Hazards
 - Floodplain Mapping
 - Technical Studies
 - Communications and Outreach
 - Flood Forecasting and Warning
 - Drought and Low Water Response
 - Infrastructure: Neebing-McIntyre Floodway
 - Infrastructure: Victor Street Erosion

- Review of Proposal Under an Act
- Plan Review Comments
- Administering and Enforcing the Act (Section 28 Development Regulations)
- Conservation and Management of Lands
 - Conservation Areas
 - Administer Section 29 Regulations in Conservation Areas
 - Other owned land
- Source Protection
- Other Programs and Services
 - Water Quality and Quantity Monitoring: Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network
 - Water Quality and Quantity Monitoring: Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network
 - Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy

2.11.2 CATEGORY 2 – NON-MANDATORY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AT THE REQUEST OF A MUNICIPALITY

Municipal programs and services (as outlined in the Act)

21.1.1 (1) *An authority may provide within its area of jurisdiction municipal programs and services that the authority agrees to provide on behalf of a municipality situated in whole or in part within its area of jurisdiction under a memorandum of understanding or such other agreement as may be entered into with the municipality in respect of the programs and services.*

On November 28, 2022, the *More Homes Built Faster Act* (Bill 23) was passed and subsequently O. Reg. 596/22 (Prescribed Acts) came into affect on January 1, 2023. This legislation impacts the LRCA's Category 2 programs as outlined in the Inventory of Programs.

Within LRCA's current Inventory of Programs, the Category 2 programs include:

- Mapping Service
 - GIS mapping service provided to Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge, Township of Dorion and the Lakehead Rural Planning Board, as a fee for service.

Effective January 1, 2023, the following section was added to the *Conservation Authorities Act*:

21.1.1 (1.1) *An authority shall not provide under subsection (1), within its area of jurisdiction, a municipal program or service related to reviewing and commenting on a proposal, application or other matter made under a prescribed Act.*

Where the prescribed Acts are outlined in O. Reg. 596/22:

The following Acts are prescribed for the purposes of subsections 21.1.1 (1.1) and 21.1.2 (1.1) of the Act:

1. The *Aggregate Resources Act*.
2. The *Condominium Act, 1998*.
3. The *Drainage Act*.
4. The *Endangered Species Act, 2007*.
5. The *Environmental Assessment Act*.
6. The *Environmental Protection Act*.
7. The *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act*.
8. The *Ontario Heritage Act*.
9. The *Ontario Water Resources Act*.
10. The *Planning Act*.

The new legislation prohibits the LRCA from providing the Category 2 program “Natural Heritage Planning Review” program as proposed to the City of Thunder Bay. Staff have removed this program from the Inventory of Programs. The “GIS Mapping Service” program will continue to be offered to the applicable municipalities.

2.11.3 CATEGORY 3 – NON-MANDATORY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Other programs and services (as outlined in the Act)

21.1.2 (1) *In addition to programs and services described in section 21.1 and 21.1.1, an authority may provide, within its area of jurisdiction, any other programs and services that it determines are advisable to further the purposes of this Act.*

NEW AS OF JANUARY 1, 2023 - (1.1) *An authority shall not provide under subsection (1), within its area of jurisdiction, a program or service related to reviewing and commenting on a proposal, application or other matter made under a prescribed Act.*

(2) *On and after the day prescribed by the regulations, if financing under section 25 or 27 by a participating municipality is necessary in order for the authority to provide such programs and service authorized to be provided under subsection (1), the program or service shall not be provided by the authority unless an agreement that meets the following criteria has been entered into between the authority and the participating municipality in respect of the program and service:*

1. *The agreement must provide for the participating municipality to pay to the authority,*
 - i. *An apportioned amount under section 25 in connection with a project related to the program or service, or*
 - ii. *An apportioned amount under section 27 in respect of the program or service.*
2. *The agreement must include provisions setting out on which the agreement terminates and a requirement that it be reviewed by the parties within the period specified in the regulations for the purpose of determining whether or not the agreement is to be renewed by the parties.*
3. *The agreement must meet such other requirements as may be prescribed by the regulations.*

Category 3 programs included in the budget include:

- Education
 - Environmental Education
 - Nature Interpretive Programming
- Stewardship
 - Superior Stewards
 - Tree Seedling
 - Private Land Stewardship
 - Seeds for Conservation
 - Sea Lamprey

2.11.4 CORPORATE SERVICES

Corporate Services that apply to all program areas are considered an enabling service and are categorized as a separate budget category. They are considered to be applicable to all Member Municipalities and are part of the levy-all. Subservices within this category include:

- Corporate Services
 - Administration
 - Community Relations
 - Vehicle and Equipment Program
 - Information Technology Management
 - Corporate GIS

The *Conservation Authorities Act* defines the following term:

Operating expenses: include,

- a) salaries, per diems and travel expenses of employees and members of an authority,
- b) rent and other office costs,
- c) program expenses,
- d) costs that are related to the operation or maintenance of a project, but not including the project's capital costs, and
- e) such other costs as may be prescribed by regulation.

3 2026 BUDGET

The 2026 Budget document contains details for the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority's (LRCA) planned operations and capital activity. The 2026 total Budget is \$3,245,679 which includes a total levy of \$1,183,882. The draft budget has a 3.50% levy-all increase compared to the 2025 approved budget.

BUDGETED REVENUE

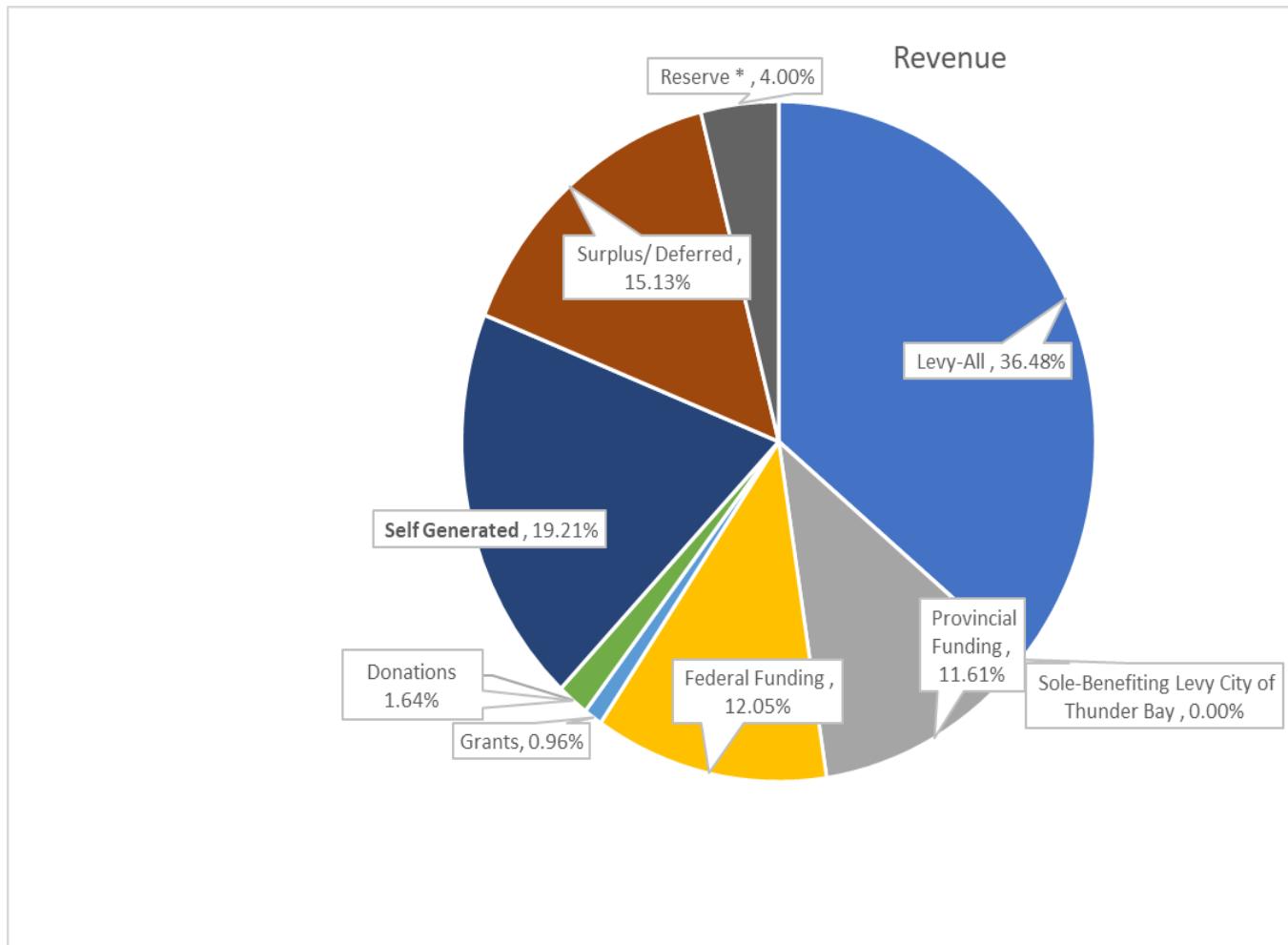
The LRCA draws revenue from a variety of sources:

- Municipal levies
- Provincial transfer payments (MNR)
- Other Transfer Payments for specific purposes (i.e., Source Water Protection)
- User fees (i.e., parking fees, education programs, permit fees, etc.)
- Reserves and prior years deferred revenue
- Other miscellaneous sources of revenue (i.e., property rental, interest, etc.)
- Other funding sources (varies from year to year)
-

**See Section 2.3 – Sources of Funding for a detailed analysis*

Projected Revenues by category:

FIGURE 1: 2026 PROJECTED REVENUES



Significant revenue sources budgeted for 2026 include the following:

- \$1,183,866 – Levy-all
- \$150,940 – MNR Section 39 Provincial Transfer Payment
- \$301.125 - NRCan Climate Resilient Coastal Communities Program
- \$72.652 – MECP – Source Water Protection
- \$8,500 – MECP NWP Admin Controls Protocol
- \$49,550 – MECP Indigenous Community Garden
- \$40,000 – Invasive Phragmites Control Fund
- \$30,000 – Thunder Bay Rotary Club (Seeds for Conservation)
- \$30,000 – Parks Canada Hurkett Cove Cattail
- \$40,000 – MNR Shoreline Protection
- \$77,500 – ECCC GFLEI Floodway Habitat Corridor
- \$30,000 – MECP Restoration Maintenance of Current Sites
- \$233,000 – Interest income

Other grants that the LRCA intends to apply for in 2026 include:

- Canada Summer Jobs (\$11,000)

This budget has been prepared based on estimates of potential revenue from various funding sources, which will be dependent on successful funding applications. Some of the projects included in the budget will only be completed if grant funding is successfully obtained. Additional applications for other programs may be completed as funding becomes available throughout the year.

CONSIDERATION OF OPPORTUNITIES TO RAISE AND USE SELF-GENERATED REVENUE

Per O. Reg. 402/22, Section 13(2)8, the budget must provide a description of what opportunities the authority considered to raise and use self-generated revenue to help finance the authority's operations, including the programs and services it provides.

Currently the LRCA's self generated revenue is derived from fee for service and user fees from the following sources:

- Interest
- Mapping Service (Category 2 program)
- Education programming fees (Category 3 program)
- Plan Review fees
- Section 28 Permit fees
- Lawyer Inquiry fees
- Explore Card sales
- Coin boxes for parking/day use fees at:

- Mills Block Forest
- Little Trout Bay
- Cedar Falls
- Hurkett Cove
- Wishart Forest
- Hazelwood Lake
- Pay and Display Units for parking fees (enforced under City of Thunder Bay Parking By-Law)
 - Mission Island Marsh
 - Cascades
 - Silver Harbour
- Seeds for Conservation native seed and plant sales

In 2025 or 2026, depending on weather and the arrival of the unit, a new pay and display will be installed at Mills Block Conservation Area.

The Fee Schedule will be reviewed annually to determine the annual fee rates, as approved by the Board. On December 28, 2022, a Minister's Direction was issued to Conservation Authorities prohibiting them from changing fees related to reviewing and commenting on planning and development related proposals or land use planning policies, or for permits issued by the Conservation Authority for the period of January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023. The freeze was extended for 2024 and 2025. At the time of budget creation, it was not known if fees were going to be frozen again for 2026.

Increased revenue will be used to offset levy and reinvest in amenities provided at Conservation Areas.

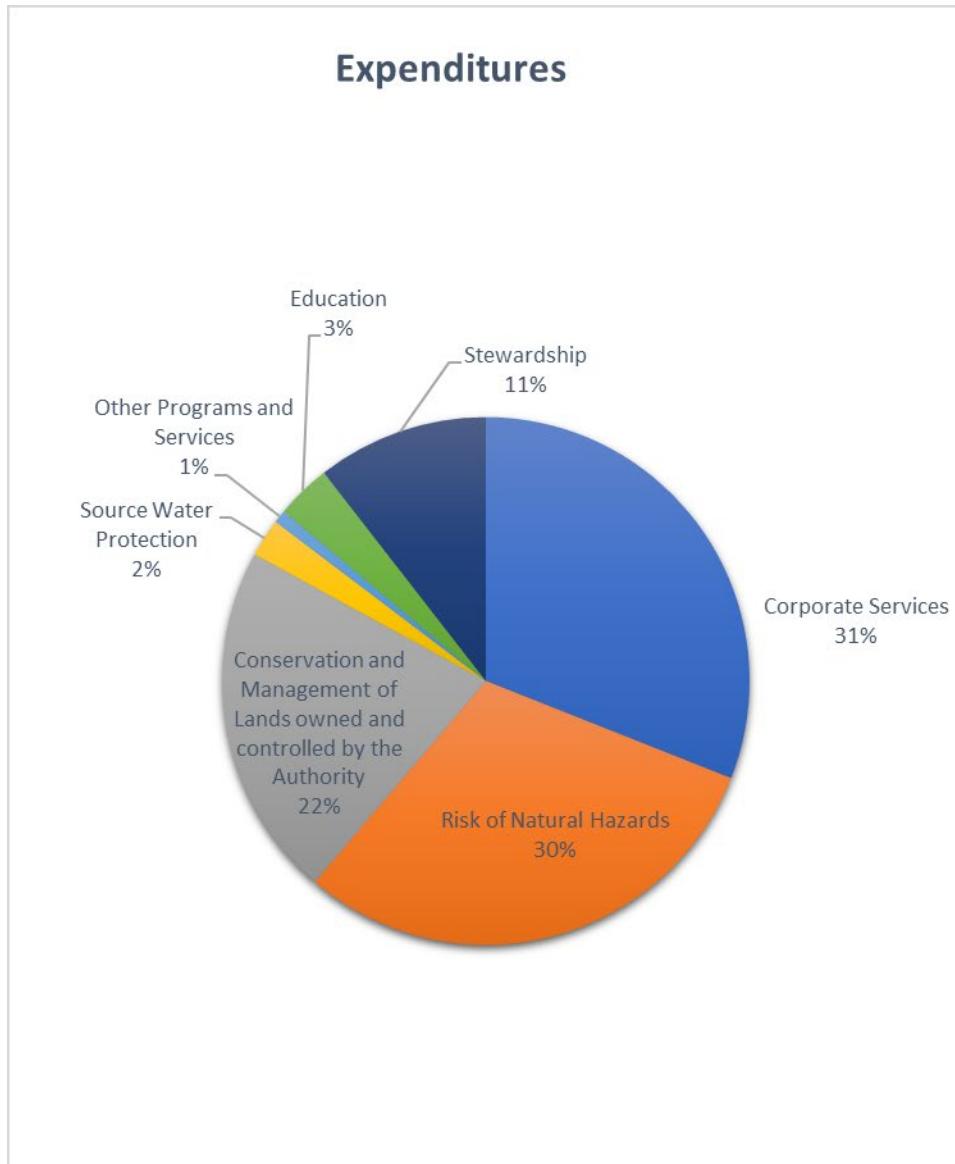
BUDGETED EXPENDITURES

The 2026 Budget is categorized into eight categories as listed below:

Projected Expenses by category include:

- 1) Corporate Services
- 2) Risk of Natural Hazards
- 3) Management, Operations and Maintenance of Authority Owned Lands
- 4) Drinking Water Source Protection
- 5) Other Programs and Services as described in Section 21.1(2) of the Act
- 6) Mapping Services
- 7) Education
- 8) Stewardship

FIGURE 2: 2026 PROJECTED EXPENSES BY PROGRAM



CORPORATE SERVICES

Corporate Services include programs that apply to all programs and services and the general overall management of the organization. In 2026, the Asset Management will be updated (5-year review).

ADMINISTRATION

Expenditures	\$720,867	
Annual	\$685,867	Travel and training (admin staff) Wages and benefits (admin staff) Insurance Professional fees, subscriptions, memberships Conservation Ontario levy Security monitoring Vehicle rental Board Member allowance (per diems, travel, meeting expenses) Audit fees Latornell Conference Legal fees Bank fees Computer equipment and software Photocopying Postage Stationery and office supplies Utilities Annual Report Telephone Northern Ontario Safety Group Health and Safety Training
One-Time	\$35,000	AMP Update
Revenue	\$720,867	
Grants	\$30,188	MNR Section 39
Self-Generated	\$326,502	Interest Revenue \$233,000, SWP Admin Fee \$9,500, Various Revenues \$5,850, Admin Fee for various projects \$78,152
Levy-All	\$235,500	
Reserve	\$30,000	
Prior Year Surplus	\$98,677	Previous Year Surplus

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Community Relations applies to all programs and includes: promoting the Authority; media relations; signage; website; creation of publications (i.e., fact sheets, annual report, etc.) and other materials; and watershed-wide communication and promotion of LRCA and its programs to watershed residents, municipalities, and other agencies. Annually the LRCA produces a calendar, which is fully funded by paid advertising.

Expenditures	\$123,935	
Annual	\$123,935	Staff wages Vehicle rental Advertising Training Booth rentals Promotional items Website Calendar Expenses (\$6,000)
One-Time		
Revenue	\$123,935	
Grants		
Other	\$7,000	Other Revenue \$1,000, Calendar Revenue \$6,000
Levy-All	\$113,366	
Prior Year Surplus	\$3,569	Previous Year Surplus

VEHICLE AND EQUIPMENT PROGRAM

The Vehicle and Equipment Program is utilized to internally charge LRCA programs vehicle related usage costs to self fund all vehicle and equipment costs, including replacement, in the form of a Reserve.

The following table illustrates the 2026 Vehicle and Equipment Program Budget for revenue and expenses, which shows the actual revenue and expenses for the previous three years. The projected surplus at the end of the financial year is to be transferred into the Replacement of Vehicle/Equipment Reserve.

Lakehead Region Conservation Authority 2026 Vehicle and Equipment Budget

	2026 BUDGET	2024 BUDGET
Revenue:		
Vehicle rental recoveries	50,000.00	44,570.00
Equipment rental recoveries	3,000.00	3,000.00
	53,000.00	47,570.00
Expenses:		
Insurance	4,500.00	5,000.00
Vehicles:		
Repairs and maintenance	8,000.00	7,000.00
Annual safety check	1,500.00	1,300.00
Licenses	-	-
Fuel	13,000.00	12,000.00
Equipment:		
Fuel	3,500.00	2,800.00
Repairs and maintenance	5,000.00	4,500.00
Small Tools	500.00	500.00
	36,000.00	33,100.00
Transfer to V/E Reserve	17,000.00	14,470.00

Reserve for Vehicle/Equipment Replacement

Budgeted Purchases from Reserves:

Riding Lawn Mower	6,500.00
Trimmer/Brushcutter (2)	1,400.00
Leaf Blower	1,200.00
All Terrain Vehicle	22,000.00
Total	31,100.00

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

Information Technology Management is provided to all programs and services. It includes all hardware and software and is managed by the GIS/IT Specialist.

Expenditures	\$48,583	
Annual	\$48,583	Staff wages Accounting Software Adobe upgrades Bitdefender upgrade Office 365 upgrade Daldo Alto Cloud Backup Computer purchases Travel and training
One-Time		
Revenue	\$48,583	
Grants		
Other		
Self-Generated		
Levy-All	\$48,583	
Deferred	\$621	

CORPORATE GIS

Corporate GIS is provided to all programs and services. It includes the overall management of data and GIS software and is managed by GIS/IT Specialist.

Expenditures	\$26,273	
Annual	\$26,273	Staff wages Consulting Fees ESRI Software Hardware
One-Time		
Revenue	\$26,273	
Grants		
Other		
Self-Generated		
Levy-All	\$26,273	
Deferred		

3.1 CATEGORY 1: MANDATORY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

3.1.1 RISK OF NATURAL HAZARDS

Mandatory Programs and Services related to the risk of natural hazards.

FLOODPLAIN MAPPING

The Regulatory Floodplain is the approved standard used in a particular watershed to define the limit of the flood plain for regulatory purposes. Adaptive watershed management requires a preventative and proactive approach to address the potential impacts of urbanization and climate change.

The Authority completed various floodplain mapping studies, which are currently used during the administration of the Regulations and for Plan Input and Review purposes. When the studies were completed, partial funding was provided under a variety of government funding programs. The studies were completed between 1979 and 1985, with McVicar Creek updated in 1995.

In recent years, utilizing National Disaster Mitigation Funding, updates to floodplain mapping studies were completed including:

- McIntyre River (2015),
- Neebing River (2018),
- McVicar Creek (2019),
- Kam River (2020),
- Pennock Creek, (2020),
- Mosquito Creek, (2020).

Completed studies are shared with applicable Member Municipalities for use by the engineering departments, for asset management and to be incorporated into their Official Plan and Zoning By-Law.

It is important for the recently updated Watershed hydraulic models to be updated regularly to reflect newly installed/modified infrastructure, such as culverts and bridges, and other changes that are proposed or permitted through the regulations process. Protocols for updating the hydraulic model are needed to ensure that updates are performed efficiently and on a regular schedule with clear communication between the LRCA, Municipality and the Consultant updating the models. A Consultant will be hired to complete updates to the models when required. Any changes to the watersheds allowed through the regulation process, or otherwise identified, will be tracked by LRCA and sent to the Consultant. As the anticipated updates will occur within the City of Thunder Bay, the costs will be part of a sole-benefitting levy to the City of Thunder Bay.

Due to the uncertainty related to the proposed regional consolidation of conservation authorities, the planned \$32,782 sole-benefitting levy from the City of Thunder Bay has been removed from the budget. It will be requested that the City put these funds into a City reserve for future work in this category.

Expenditures		
Annual		
One Time		
Revenue		
Grants		
Other		
Levy, Sole-Benefitting City of Thunder Bay		
Deferred		

TECHNICAL STUDIES

Studies, mapping and data collection to understand the risks related to natural hazards including how those risks might be affected by climate change. Development of plans and policies to support the delivery of programs.

In collaboration with Conservation Ontario, the LRCA is funded through Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) to complete a Lakehead Coastal Resilience Management Plan for the Lake Superior shoreline. The multi-year project will be completed between 2024 – 2027. The key priority of the project will be to understand current and future risks and develop adaptive short- and long-term actions that impacted municipalities can use to prepare for, respond to, and recover from the potential impacts of climate change. This will protect people and property as well reduce the economic impact of climate change impacts to municipal and private infrastructure. The expected products and outputs include:

1. Shoreline analysis to document current and future impacts due to climate change from flooding, erosion, wave uprush and extreme weather events;
2. Identify at risk infrastructure; assess value of impacted infrastructure;
3. Where applicable create a plan of retreat of community assets, housing or infrastructure away from hazards;
4. Create best management practices for mitigating and adapting to climate change;
5. Develop innovative solutions;
6. Develop short- and long-term solutions.

Expenditures	\$305,840	
Annual	\$4,715	Staff wages
One-time	\$301,125	Consulting Fees
Revenue	\$305,840	
Grants	\$240,903	NRCan
Levy-All	\$2,449	
Deferred	\$62,488	Risk of Natural Hazard deferred funds

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

Promoting public awareness of natural hazards including flooding, drought and erosion including: public events and materials; social media services; website; and media relations.

Expenditures	\$20,685	
Annual	\$20,685	Staff wages Clothing Allowance
One-Time		
Revenue	\$20,685	
Grants		
Levy-All	\$19,190	
Deferred	\$1,495	

FLOOD FORECASTING AND WARNING

This includes procedures undertaken by the LRCA required to reduce this risk of loss of life and property damage due to flooding through the forecasting of flood events and the issuing of flood messaging (i.e., Watershed Conditions Statements, Flood Watch and Flood Warnings) to prepare those who must respond to the flood event. Additionally, this includes development and implementation of a comprehensive system developed to guide and implement Flood Forecasting and Warning activities, to effectively manage flood control structures and to provide guidance during the response to a flood.

Annual measures include:

- Operation and maintenance of stream flow gauges and precipitation gauges
- Snow surveys
- Spring Melt Meeting with Member Municipalities and applicable agencies
- Maintaining Flood Forecasting and Warning System Manual
- Monitor weather conditions 365 days per year
- Issuance of Flood Messaging as warranted
- Attend the annual Provincial Flood Forecasting Workshop

- Collect streamflow and precipitation data (partnership with Water Survey of Canada)
- Facilitate the CoCoRaHS program (volunteer-based precipitation monitoring program)
- Participate in Ontario Power Generation's Kaministiquia River Dam Safety Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan
- Post flood event meetings and reports

Expenditures	\$50,557	
Annual	\$50,557	Staff wages Vehicle rental Materials and supplies Insurance Staff training (Flood Forecasting workshop, WISKI training) WISKI software annual maintenance fees Computer and office equipment, network repairs Boot Allowance Clothing Allowance
One-Time		
Revenue	\$50,557	
Grants	\$39,571	Section 39
Other		
Levy-All	\$10,986	
Deferred		

DROUGHT AND LOW WATER RESPONSE

In conjunction with the MNR, the Authority administers the Ontario Low Water Response program within the LRCA area of jurisdiction, which is a response plan to minimize the effects of drought. The program includes condition monitoring and analysis and technical support to the Water Response Team representing major water users and decision makers who recommend drought response actions.

Expenditures	\$2,909	
Annual	\$2,909	Staff wages
		Materials and equipment
Revenue	\$2,909	
Grants		
Other		
Levy-All	\$2,909	
Deferred		

INFRASTRUCTURE: NEEBING-MCINTYRE FLOODWAY

OPERATING

This category includes costs associated with the operation and minor maintenance of flood control structures, the primary purpose of which is to provide protection to life and property. This includes all costs related to the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway. Overall, flood control services provide watershed residents with an effective and efficient system that will reduce their exposure to the threat of flood damages and loss of life.

Expenditures	\$242,940	
Annual	\$242,940	Annual structural inspections of Neebing Weir and Diversion Structure Floodway water level monitoring Minor maintenance (tree removal, minor repairs, etc.) Hiring of two summer students (16 weeks) to complete Floodway maintenance Staff wages Vehicle rental Materials and supplies Insurance Administration Fee Property Taxes
One-Time		
Revenue	\$242,940	
Grants	\$68,681	Section 39 funding
Other		
Self-Generated	\$500	CLE Land Rental
Levy, Sole-Benefiting City of Thunder Bay		
Deferred	\$173,759	

CAPITAL

This category includes costs associated with the capital and major maintenance of flood control structures, the primary purpose of which is to provide protection to life and property. This includes all costs related to the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway. Overall, flood control services provide watershed residents with an effective and efficient system that will reduce their exposure to the threat of flood damages and loss of life.

The Floodway has provided 41 years of continuous operation since completion in 1984. In 2023, a consultant was hired to update the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway Integrity Study, which is updated every 10 years. The study provided a comprehensive review of the original design assumptions versus the actual observed and predicted performance. The schedule of long-range maintenance will be reviewed as part of the study and will be used to confirm future required funds to maintain the integrity of the Floodway. The data was used to update Asset Management Plan and Operational Plan which were mandated to be completed by December 31, 2024.

Due to the uncertainty related to the proposed regional consolidation of conservation authorities, the planned \$534,713 sole-benefiting levy from the City of Thunder Bay has been removed from the budget. It will be requested that the City put these funds into a City reserve for future work in this category.

Expenditures		
Annual		Annual Levy to deferred for future use
One Time		
Revenue		
Grants		
Deferred		
Levy, Sole-Benefiting City of Thunder Bay		A constant amount is levied annually, with funds not needed in the given year placed in a deferred fund for future years in order to avoid the highs and lows when major maintenance is required. LRCA staff maintains a timeline for major maintenance required on the Floodway, which is used to calculate required future funds needed in order to provide a consistent and manageable annual levy to the City of Thunder Bay. As the Floodway is an essential part of mitigating the risk to life and property, the LRCA must guarantee funds are available to ensure the integrity of the Floodway is maintained.

Some of the larger (over \$100,000) major maintenance anticipated to be required in the next 10 years include (based on 2023 Integrity Study):

- 2027 Floodway Channel Dredging – Island Drive to CPR Bridge (\$2,000,000)
- 2028 Balmoral Sediment Trap Dredging (\$900,000)
- 2029 Diversion Channel Lip Dredging (\$450,000)
- 2031 Floodway Channel Dredging – Island Drive to Lake Superior (\$1,500,000)

Major maintenance projects are eligible for Provincial Transfer Payment Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECl) funding which the LRCA applies for the year the work is undertaken; however, the allocation of WECl funds varies year-to-year and is not guaranteed year-to-year; therefore, total costs of major maintenance are used in determining required future funds. Any additional funding obtained through WECl will result in the levy being carried forward for future year's projects and adjusting the long-term projections accordingly.

INFRASTRUCTURE: VICTOR STREET EROSION

OPERATING

This category includes costs associated with the minor maintenance of erosion control structures on City of Thunder Bay owned land on Victor Street and protection of City owned infrastructure along Kam riverbank. The primary purpose of which is to provide protection to life and property. Overall, erosion control services reduce watershed resident's exposure to the threat of property damages and loss of life. This area has historically been managed/monitored on behalf of the City of Thunder Bay.

Expenditures	\$22,873	
Annual	\$22,873	Slope inspection (2x/year) Staff wages
One-Time		
Revenue	\$22,873	
Grants	12,500	Section 39 Funding
Self-Generated		
Levy, Sole-Benefiting City of Thunder Bay		
Levy-All		
Deferred	\$10,373	

CAPITAL

This category includes costs associated with the capital and major maintenance of erosion on City of Thunder Bay owned land on Victor Street, the primary purpose of which is to provide protection to life and property. Overall, erosion control services reduce watershed resident's exposure to the threat of property damages and loss of life. The main erosion control structure is the soil nailing completed along Victor Street on City of Thunder Bay land to protect Victor Street and the adjacent infrastructure.

In 2019 the Kaministiquia River Erosion Sites Inventory Report was completed which delineated the 100-year erosion rate along the Kaministiquia River within the City of Thunder Bay. Within the report, it was identified that Victor Street was within the 100-year erosion hazard, based on the completed methodology. A detailed analysis of the area was recommended to look at the risk to Victor Street and adjacent infrastructure, including long-term recommendations related to access and egress to the area. This study was completed in 2020; recommendations will be incorporated into future budgets in consultation with City of Thunder Bay Engineering.

Due to the uncertainty related to the proposed regional consolidation of conservation authorities, the planned \$24,255 sole-benefiting levy from the City of Thunder Bay has been removed from the budget. It will be requested that the City put these funds into a City reserve for future work in this category.

Expenditures		
Annual		
One Time		
Revenue		
Grants		
Levy, Sole-Benefiting City of Thunder Bay		
Levy-All		
Deferred		

REVIEW OF PROPOSALS UNDER AN ACT

As a mandatory program, staff will provide input to the review and approval processes under other applicable law (i.e., *Aggregate Resources Act*, *Drainage Act*, *Environmental Assessment Act*, etc.) with comments related to natural hazards, wetlands, watercourses and Section 28 permit requirements.

Expenditures	\$2,501	
Annual	\$2,501	Staff wages
Revenue		
Grants		
Other		
Levy-All	\$2,501	
Deferred		

PLAN REVIEW COMMENTS

Conservation Authorities are delegated the responsibility from MNR to comment on all *Planning Act* applications processed by their Member Municipalities as to the applications adherence to Section 5.2 of the Provincial Planning Statement (i.e., natural hazards).

This category includes reviewing comprehensive updates to Member Municipality Official Plans and Zoning By-laws; site specific amendments to Official Plans and Zoning By-laws; subdivision applications; site plan control; consent applications; minor variances, etc. Comprehensive Official Plan and Zoning By-Law reviews are eligible for Section 39 Transfer Payment; however, due to the province under funding core mandate programming, no transfer payment is allocated for this mandated review.

Effective January 1, 2021, the LRCA began charging a Fee for Service for all Plan Review comments. The generated revenue will be used to reduce levy required to administer this delegated program. A few years of revenue will be required to fully predict future years generated revenue, which will fluctuate annually depending on the volume of *Planning Act* applications received by our Member Municipalities.

Effective January 1, 2023, a Minister's Direction as part of the *More Homes Built Faster Act* 2022 (Bill 23) was issued to Conservation Authorities to not change fees related to reviewing and commenting on planning applications for the period of January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023; therefore, fees charged to applicants for planning comments were not changed through the legislated period. The fee freeze was continued in 2024 and 2025. It is unknown whether or not the freezing of fees will be extended into 2026.

Expenditures	\$92,979	
Annual	\$92,979	Staff wages
		Training
		Legal Fees
One time		

Revenue	\$92,979	
Other	\$24,300	Canada Summer Jobs \$9,300, Planning Fees Revenue \$15,000
Levy-All	\$45,532	
Deferred	\$23,147	

**ADMINISTERING AND ENFORCING THE ACT (SECTION 28
DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS)**

The Development Regulations category includes the costs and revenues associated with administering Ontario Regulation 41/24: Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits under the *Conservation Authorities Act*, which includes: permit application review, inspections, permit issuance, enforcement and follow-up. Also, which may include defending appeals and conducting Hearings.

Effective January 1, 2023, a Minister's Direction as part of the *More Homes Built Faster Act* 2022 (Bill 23) was issued to Conservation Authorities to not change fees related to permits issued by Conservation Authorities for the period of January 1, 2023, to December 23, 2023; therefore, fees charged to applicants for development permits were not changed through the legislated period. This freeze was extended in 2024 and 2025. It is unknown whether or not the freezing of fees will be extended into 2026.

Expenditures	\$219,790	
Annual	\$219,790	Staff wages Training and travel Legal Fees Engineering Support Provincial Offences Officer supplies Professional Fees
One-Time		
Revenue	\$219,790	
Self-Generated	\$25,000	Lawyer property inquiries \$4,000, Development Regulation Permit fees \$21,000
Levy-All	\$184,611	
Other		
Deferred	\$10,379	

3.1.2 CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF LANDS OWNED AND CONTROLLED BY THE LRCA

Programs and services related to the conservation and management of lands owned or controlled by the authority.

CONSERVATION AREAS

OPERATING

This includes all expenses and revenue associated operation, and minor maintenance of land owned and/or managed by the Authority. In total, the LRCA owns 2,603 hectares of land, including Conservation Areas, administrative office lands, and management lands.

The Conservation Areas provide an opportunity for the watershed residents for semi-passive activities such as hiking, nature appreciation, photography, fishing, etc. Of the eight Conservation Areas, five provide access to Lake Superior with three being adjacent to Provincially Significant wetlands. Comments on planning applications near Conservation Areas will be provided by the LRCA.

The Bathing Beach monitoring program will continue at Hazelwood Lake and Mission Island Marsh Conservation Areas, which monitors *E. coli* levels in conjunction with the Thunder Bay District Health Unit. Additionally, cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) monitoring will continue at Hazelwood, Mission, Silver Harbour and Hurkett Conservation Areas. Continued testing will solidify LRCA's understanding of cyanobacteria within selected Conservation Areas, while protecting visitors and their pets from Harmful Algal Blooms (HABS). Further, the study will contribute to a greater understanding of how cyanobacteria are influencing the Lakehead Watershed. Continued testing will involve the use of Eurofin's Algal Toxin (Microsystins) Test Strip Kit for Recreational Water and continued Microscopy Work provided by Blue-Green Labs.

In 2024, staff completed the mandatory Conservation Lands Strategy and Land Inventory (due December 31, 2024).

In 2021, pay stations were added to Mission Marsh and Cascades Conservation Areas, and in 2023 a pay station was added at Silver Harbour Conservation Area, in an effort to increase generated revenue. The pay stations at Mission Marsh and Cascades Conservation Areas have resulted in a significant increase in revenue at the respective Conservation Areas. This increase in revenue is anticipated to continue in the years ahead and will be used to off-set required levy to operate the areas and enhance amenities at the area.

In 2025, a consultant was hired to design new wayfinding signage for the Conservation Areas. Signage will be updated per the updated designs as the budget permits. Staff will look for external funding to offset costs with the signage replacement, which may enable more signs to be completed in 2026. Once the designs are completed and the number of signs in each area are established, a long-term plan for the eventual replacement of all signs will be completed.

A consultant will be hired to design an “Urban Conservation Area” to be located at the LRCA Administrative office. This new area will provide amenities for use by staff, staff hosting events, the public, etc. The area will provide a Conservation Area that is accessible by walking and/or public transit as all other areas need to be accessed by a vehicle. Once a plan is designed, external funding can be sought to assist in the construction of the site. The goal is to add features such as a pavilion, AODA trail system through the adjacent wetland and an outdoor classroom area. Work will begin on the area in 2026 as time and funding permits.

Expenditures	\$404,872	
Annual	\$354,872	Staff wages Clothing allowance On-going maintenance Garbage removal Sanding/salting of parking areas Outhouse rentals Property Taxes Credit Card usage fees
One-Time	\$22,000 \$30,000	Wayfinding Sign Installation Design of Urban Conservation Area
Transfer to Reserve		
Revenue	\$404,872	
Other	\$20,000	TD Friends of the Environment, Enbridge
Levy-All	\$244,015	
Self-Generated	\$95,000	Explorer Cards, Pay-Station, Coin Box Revenue
Deferred	\$45,857	Design of Urban Conservation Area \$30,000

CAPITAL

The capital fund is used for major maintenance and capital investment at the Conservation Areas. In 2021, KGS Group updated the LRCA’s Asset Management Plan (AMP), which assessed the current condition, annual maintenance and major repairs required to the Authority’s assets. LRCA staff have analyzed the AMP and prepared a long-term schedule of capital repairs, which has been used to provide a consistent and manageable annual levy. It was identified in the AMP that there are some major repairs

required to ensure the integrity and safety at our Conservation Areas. In addition, other major capital requirements were identified to be completed in the near future to avoid conditions deteriorating. The Conservation Area AMP will be updated in 2026 as part of the overall AMP update.

Annually, \$20,000 is placed in the Hazelwood Dam Reserve to prepare to fund future maintenance of that structure. This has been paused in 2026 due to the proposed regional consolidation of conservation authorities. It will be reassessed after the final consolidation structure is known.

Repairs planned include:

- Replace two concrete vault toilets with one at the Hazelwood beach area.
- Repairs to the privy at Mission Island
- Repairs to asphalt cracks in the trail and parking lot and paint lines at Mission Island
- Decommission old parking lot at Mills Block
- Begin construction of Urban Conservation Area as time and funding permits.

Expenditures	\$203,624	
Annual		
One-Time	\$115,300	Replacement of outhouse at Hazelwood beach area, Repair outdoor Privy Mission, Parking lot repairs Mission, Decommission old parking lot at Mills Block.
Other	\$88,624	Urban Conservation Area
Revenue	\$1155,300	
Grants		
Other		
Levy-All	\$151,324	
Reserve	\$52,300	

ADMINISTER SECTION 29 REGULATIONS IN CONSERVATION AREAS
 Enforcement and compliance in Conservation Areas, related to Conservation Areas Regulations and Parking by-law enforcement in the City of Thunder Bay and Conservation Area Regulation enforcement in Conservation Areas. APEX will be used to increase enforcement at Cascades and Mission Island Marsh after hours and on weekends.

Expenditures	\$8,681	
Annual	\$8,681	Staff wages Enforcement Supplies Apex after hours and weekend enforcement
One-Time		
Revenue	\$8,681	
Grants		
Other		
Levy-All	\$8,681	
Self-Generated		
Deferred		

OTHER OWNED LAND

Operation and minor maintenance in other Conservation Authority owned land (i.e., forest management property, floodplain lands, Hope and Memory Garden, etc.). In 2024, staff completed the mandatory Land Inventory (due December 31, 2024).

The Authority owns and maintains one Forest Management property (William's Forest) and has Forest Management Plans on 10 property holdings, which guide the management of the areas as well as reduce property taxes through the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP) administered by MNR. In 2026, the 10-year update of the Forest Management Plans will be completed.

The Forest Management Reserve is used for activities related to the forest management properties, including maintaining Forest Management Plans and for promoting greening activities. The Reserve is maintained from previous year's revenue for future purchases of forest management properties and forest management related expenditures.

In 2026, some harvesting may be undertaken at Wishart Conservation Area subject to contractor availability and market conditions.

Expenditures	\$76,547	
Annual	\$66,547	Wages Property taxes, Office Building maintenance, other land maintenance Routine Maintenance
One-Time	\$10,000	10-year update of Forest Management Plans
Revenue	\$76,547	
Grants		
Other		

Levy-All	\$42,026	
Self-Generated	\$5,156	
Reserve	\$29,365	

OFFICE CAPITAL AND OPERATING

This fund is used for long-term capital repairs of the LRCA Administration Facility. In 2021, the Authority updated the Asset Management Plan (AMP) that provides guidance on the long-term maintenance and major capital repairs to maintain the integrity and safety of the building. The AMP was used to plan upgrades and repairs over the next five years. As a result, LRCA staff have completed a long-term plan for the timing of significant repairs, which is used to provide a consistent and manageable annual levy. This levy does not include any additional capital plans; it is only to maintain the building in its current condition. The AMP will be updated in 2026.

Expenditures	\$21,000	
Annual	\$ 10,000	Maintenance of grounds, buildings and equipment
		Emergency repairs as needed
One-Time	\$11,000	Office plumbing repair and storage units in garage.
Revenue	\$21,000	
Other		
Grants		
Levy-All	\$21,000	
Reserve		

3.1.3 SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

This category refers to programs and services related to the Authority's duties, functions and responsibilities as a Source Protection Authority under the *Clean Water Act, 2006*.

The Source Water Protection program commenced in 2005 with 100% funding provided from the MECP with the goal of completion of Source Protection Plans for municipal drinking water systems. Within the Lakehead Watershed, there are only two municipal drinking water systems: City of Thunder Bay Bare Point Water Treatment Plant and the Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge Rosslyn Village Drinking Water System.

The Lakehead Source Protection Plan was approved on January 16, 2013, with an effective date of October 1, 2013. The Source Protection Plan contains a series of policies developed by the Source Protection Committee in consultation with the local community to protect municipal drinking water sources from existing and future drinking water

threats. The Plan describes the actions that must be taken by various implanting bodies to protect surface water and groundwater sources that supply municipal drinking water.

The affected municipalities are responsible to implement the Source Protection Plans and must adhere to the policies including providing annual reports to the Source Protection Authority (i.e., LRCA Board). The Source Protection Authority is then required to assess the municipal annual reports and report annually to the MECP.

The current Agreement provides funding for three years between the LRCA and MECP will expire on March 31, 2027. It provides \$226,007.48 over the period, which funds administration and 0.55 FTE salary and benefits for years 1 and 2 and 0.5 FTE for year 3. The Source Protection Authority (i.e., LRCA Board) is responsible for maintenance of the Source Protection Committee, submission of Annual Reports to MECP, maintenance and retention of data and files (i.e., 15-year retention requirement) related to this program, which began in 2005. There is an expectation by MECP that each Source Protection Authority maintain qualified staff to ensure that the Plan remains current.

If funding is not provided in the future, the cost of the program would be a sole-benefiting levy applicable to the City of Thunder Bay and Oliver Paipoonge.

Expenditures	\$77,313	
Annual	\$77,313	Staff wages (0.20 FTE Watershed Manager, 0.15 FTE GIS/IT Specialist, 0.1 FTE Administrative Assistant, 0.05 FTE Communications Manager)
		Travel and per diem expenses to attend Chair's meetings
		Source Protection Committee (member per diems, room rental, agenda costs)
		Administration Fee
One-Time		
Revenue	\$77,313	
Grants	\$77,313	MECP Transfer Payment
Other		
Levy-All		
Deferred		

3.1.4 OTHER PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

PROVINCIAL GROUNDWATER MONITORING NETWORK (PGMN)

The Authority in partnership with the MECP participates in the Provincial Groundwater

Monitoring Program (PGMN) in which LRCA monitors eight groundwater monitoring wells. LRCA staff collect samples and submit them to the MECP laboratory for analysis. Laboratory costs and sample shipping costs are paid by the MECP. The data not only provides data for the LRCA area of jurisdiction, but it is also the only sampling completed in northern Ontario.

Expenditures	\$17,137	
Annual	\$17,137	Vehicle rental
		Wages
		Materials and equipment
One-Time		
Revenue	\$17,137	
Grants		
Other		
Levy-All	\$16,507	
Deferred	\$630	

PROVINCIAL WATER QUALITY MONITORING NETWORK (PWQMN)

The Authority in partnership with the MECP participates in the Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network (PWQMN) program, in which LRCA monitors six surface water locations. LRCA staff collect samples and submit them to the MECP laboratory for analysis. Laboratory costs and sample shipping costs are paid by the MECP. The data not only provides data for the LRCA area of jurisdiction, but it is also the only sampling completed in northern Ontario.

Expenditures	\$9,968	
Annual	\$9,968	Vehicle rental
		Wages
		Materials and equipment
One-Time		
Revenue	\$9,968	
Grants		
Other		
Levy-All	\$9,430	
Deferred	\$538	

3.2 CATEGORY 2: NON-MANDATORY PROGRAMS AT THE REQUEST OF A MUNICIPALITY

MAPPING SERVICE

The LRCA offers for a fee, a mapping service to our Member Municipalities who choose to participate. LRCA staff maintain the hardware and software required to provide a web-based mapping service that provides mapping capabilities to its users. Additionally, maps are created and updated, by request for a Member Municipality (i.e., Official Plan/Zoning By-Law Comprehensive Updates, etc.). Revenue from this service is used to maintain equipment and supplies related to GIS. The service will continue to be provided, subject to executed Memorandums of Understanding.

Expenditures	\$13,681	
Annual	\$13,681	Staff Wages
		Portion of ESRI License
		Plotter and computer expense
One-Time		
Revenue	\$13,681	
Grants		
Other	\$16,000	Oliver Paipoonge \$12,350, Dorion \$650, Lakehead Rural Planning Board \$3,000
Deferred	(\$2,319)	Surplus to Deferred

MOSQUITO AND PENNOCK CREEK MONITORING

At the request of the City of Thunder Bay Engineering and Operations Division, LRCA staff are completing surface water sampling along Mosquito Creek (10 sites) and Pennock Creek (2 sites) within the City of Thunder Bay once per month, from June through October. The City of Thunder Bay is interested in tracking water quality within Mosquito Creek and Pennock Creek watersheds within the City. Mosquito Creek and Pennock Creek are both watersheds where residents are serviced by municipal water and private septic systems. A Watershed Assessment for Mosquito Creek was last completed in 2022. Since that time, the City has used LRCA's resources and expertise to continue to collect surface water samples for water quality analysis to continue to track exceedances specifically related to nutrients (nitrates, nitrites, phosphorus) within the watershed. The Category 2 program is funded through direct billing to the City of Thunder Bay Engineering and Operations Division and does not use municipal levy.

Expenditures	\$8,061	
Annual	\$8,061	Staff Wages Vehicle and Equipment
One-Time		
Revenue	\$8,061	
Grants		
Other	\$8,061	
Deferred		

3.3 CATEGORY 3: NON-MANDATORY PROGRAMS

3.3.1 EDUCATION

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

The Environmental Education program provides curriculum-based educational presentations and field trips to Conservation Areas and within school classrooms. The non-mandatory (i.e., not related to the risk of natural hazards) education program is operated with 100% other funding (no levy). The program covers a wide array of topics including watersheds, various natural heritage, and natural science topics such as birds, trees, aquatics invertebrates, and other topics, many of which are tied directly to Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum expectations. As a private landowner, the LRCA is uniquely positioned to provide meaningful, impactful outdoor education programming utilizing Conservation Areas as “living classrooms”. Watershed stewardship best practices and fostering a sense of wonder and appreciation for the natural world is the goal of the education program, as the best way to inspire people to care about the natural world and the environment is to give them meaningful educational and recreational experiences.

Expenditures	\$59,065	
Annual	\$59,065	Education Coordinator position (39 weeks) Vehicle rental Educational expenses (guest speakers, supplies, safety items, etc.)
One-Time		
Revenue	\$58,398	
Grants	\$6,200	
Self-Generated	\$27,198	Various fundraising (\$10,000), School Program Fees (\$10,198), Living Classroom

		Donations (\$2,000), Catholic School Board Program (\$5,000)
Levy-All		
Deferred	\$25,667	

NATURE INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMMING

Nature Interpretive Programming is programming developed for execution on LRCA-owned land. Programs and events with nature interpretive programming components within Conservation Areas vary year to year; however, the Dorion Bird Festival is held annually at Hurkett Cove Conservation Area. Nature interpretive programming also includes Watershed Explorer programs (typically funded by the TD Friends of the Environment Fund), guided hikes, workshops, and other non-school-based interpretive programming. Grant revenue is estimated based on previous years applications. Deferred funds will be used in the event external funding is not obtained.

Expenditures	\$51,900	
Annual	\$51,900	Staff Wages Fall Mushroom Hike Fall Migratory Birding Day (formerly Waterfowl Viewing Day) Silver Harbour Day TD Programming Dorion Bird Festival
One-Time		
Revenue	\$51,900	
Grants	\$32,900	TD Friends of the Environment, (\$14,000), OPG (\$13,000), Enbridge (\$5,900)
Self-Generated	\$19,000	Dorion Bird Festival Ticket Sales, OPG Donation
Levy-All		

3.3.2 STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship is the planning, promotion, and implementation of management practices that contribute to restoration and protection of our natural resources. LRCA's Stewardship Program aims to promote and encourage stewardship within the Lakehead Watershed. Programs enable private landowners to restore riparian and shoreline area on their property; plant trees on private land; and facilitate stewardship projects on LRCA/municipally owned lands to restore and create wildlife habitat. Examples of on-the-ground projects include invasive species removal, wetland creation, meadow habitat enhancement, and shoreline stabilization. LRCA's Stewardship Program engages over 300 volunteers annually in these activities. Projects vary year to year depending on funding

and need in the watershed. Stewardship projects are funded from various provincial, federal, and private funding sources. No levy is used for the Stewardship Program.

SUPERIOR STEWARDS PROGRAM

The four-year funding agreement with the MNR for the LRCA's Shoreline Protection Program ended in December 2024; however, in 2025, the LRCA successfully received an additional \$40,000 towards a fifth year of the program, carried out in fall 2025. The program focuses on rehabilitating shoreline and riparian zones on private property within the Thunder Bay Area of Concern. The Thunder Bay Area of Concern is a 100-metre buffer along the Lake Superior coast and up Thunder Bay's five main tributaries, defined by ECCC as having experience significant environmental degradation. The program provides landowners with a shoreline assessment, educational materials, individualized planting plans, up to 100 native plants, and planting implementation support.

Planting native vegetation enhances shoreline and riparian zones, rehabilitates, and maintains healthy shoreline habitat, provides erosion protection, and improves water quality. The objective of the Superior Stewards program is to raise landowner awareness of riparian and shoreline stewardship principles and implement restoration and naturalization through on-the-ground projects. The restoration projects range from terrestrial/aquatic plantings, invasive plant species removal, green infrastructure techniques, species-at-risk habitat enhancement/protection, general habitat enhancement, and/or pollinator habitat creation.

In 2026, additional sources of funding will be sought to continue offering this service to Lakehead Watershed residents. A fee-for-service model will also be explored.

Expenditures	\$40,000	
Annual	\$40,000	Wages and Benefits
One-Time		
Revenue	\$40,000	
Grants	\$40,000	Provincial funding MNR Shoreline Protection
Self-Generated		
Levy-All		
Deferred		

TREE SEEDLING PROGRAM

In partnership with Hill's Greenhouse, the LRCA administers a Tree Seedling Program, which provides the opportunity for the public to purchase locally grown tree seedlings to plant in the watershed. As of 2025, over 181,250 trees have been accessed through the program. Wages for this program are funded by past generated revenue from harvesting on LRCA owned land. This program's goal is to achieve a no net loss of trees in the overall watershed by providing trees to plant to the public to offset any harvesting on LRCA owned land.

In 2024 and 2025, all tree seedling revenue went towards LRCA's Environmental Education Programming at the request of Hill's Greenhouse, who generously donated 9,900 trees. In 2026, the trees will be purchased from the greenhouse.

Expenditures	\$11,720	
Annual	\$11,720	Staff wages Purchase Tree Seedlings
Revenue	\$11,720	
Grants		
Self-Generated	\$6,000	Tree Seedling Sales
Levy-All		
Reserve	\$5,720	Forest Management Reserve

PRIVATE LAND STEWARDSHIP

To promote and practice stewardship on LRCA and municipally owned lands, staff apply for funding for a variety of projects annually. Other funding applications will be submitted throughout the year as they become available. The following restoration projects are planned in 2026:

- The Floodway Habitat Corridor will be continued in 2026, with the vision of restoring a five-kilometre stretch of riparian habitat on LRCA owned lands along the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway corridor. The project aims to enhance riparian habitat by planting native vegetation and managing invasive species through volunteer clean-up and planting events. Funding is provided by ECCC Freshwater Ecosystem Initiative in 2026.
- The Indigenous Community Garden, funded by ECCC EcoAction, will be designed and installed with the support of the Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre, Fort William First Nation, City of Thunder Bay Department of Indigenous Affairs,

local Indigenous artists and Indigenous Elders. The garden will neighbour the Hope and Memory Garden and will restore riparian habitat while fostering relationships.

- Funded by the Invasive Species Centre, the Thunder Bay Regional Phragmites Collaboration is coordinated by LRCA and is composed of 35 stakeholders and groups with the shared vision of a “phrag-free” landscape by 2033. The intent of the Collaborative is to engage interested community groups in the status of Invasive Phragmites in the region, develop an integrated long-term plan for its management, and collaborate on its removal.
- In partnership with Parks Canada Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area, LRCA will work to gain a better understanding of the extent and potential impacts of Narrowleaf Cattail at Hurkett Cove Conservation Area. The two-year project will result in the development of a management strategy, with the aim of reducing the spread of invasive cattails, impacts on Wild Rice, and subsequent loss of biodiversity at the site. Recommendations will be put forward to project partners in the spring of 2026, with a three-year continuation of the project proposed.
- Pending successful funding from MECP, restoration maintenance of sites rehabilitated as part of the Thunder Bay Habitat Strategy over the past 3 years will be carried out in 2026. This will include invasive species management and additional plantings of native species where applicable at Fisherman’s Park West, Boulevard Wetland, and along the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway.
- Subject to confirmed funding from MECP, an Administrative Controls Protocol for the Northern Wood Preservers Inc. site will be developed with partner agencies to avoid disturbances to naturally recovering contaminated sediments from future developments.

Expenditures	\$235,550	
Annual	\$235,550	Staff Wages \$130,500 Materials \$93,050 Administration Fees \$12,000
One-Time		
Revenue	\$275,550	
Grants	\$8,500 \$49,550	MECP NWP Admin Controls Protocol ECCC Eco Action Indigenous Community Garden

	\$77,500	ECCC GFLEI Floodway Habitat Corridor
	\$30,000	MECP Restoration Maintenance of Current Sites
	\$30,000	Parks Canada
	\$40,000	ISC Phragmites
Levy-All		
Deferred		

SEEDS FOR CONSERVATION

The Seeds for Conservation program offers native perennials grown from seed sustainably harvested by staff from LRCA Conservation Areas. The plants are grown in the LRCA Greenhouse by the Watershed Stewardship Technician, supported by a Stewardship seasonal staff person. With insufficient access to Northwestern Ontario native species through local nurseries, LRCA's Seeds for Conservation program provides regionally adapted seed and plants for habitat restoration projects, pollinator gardens, rain gardens, and more. It is used by LRCA and community partners such as Fort William First Nation, Ontario Native Women's Association, the City of Thunder Bay, EcoSuperior, Lakehead University and Confederation College. In-person native plant sales and sales through the LRCA webstore have generated additional revenue for this program. In 2026, this initiative will enter into its third year, offering a great support to the growing stewardship program.

Expenditures	\$45,000	
Annual	\$45,000	Staff wages, supplies
One-Time		
Revenue	\$45,000	
Grants		
Self-Generated	\$45,000	Plant sales (sales to public and private land stewardship projects)

SEA LAMPREY

A contract is executed annually between the LRCA and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) for Sea Lamprey Barrier Surveillance, Monitoring and Grounds keeping on the Wolf River. LRCA staff conduct five inspections annually and complete a Barrier Inspection/Maintenance Report.

A contract is executed annually between the LRCA and DFO for Sea Lamprey trapping on the Neebing and McIntyre Rivers. Five days per week for eight to twelve weeks, sea lamprey traps are emptied to conduct mark and release studies, collect biological data, environmental data and complete daily reports to provide data to DFO in order for

population estimates to be undertaken. These estimates are used along with that of other streams to estimate the population in all of Lake Superior. The program is conducted on the permanent trap located on the Neebing River on LRCA land and at Lakehead University on the McIntyre River.

Expenditures	\$13,728	
Annual	\$13,728	Staff wages
		Vehicle rental
One-Time		
Revenue		
Contracts	\$1,886	DFO Wolf River Inspections
	\$11,842	DFO Neebing and McIntyre River trapping
Levy-All		
Deferred		

4 RESERVE APPROPRIATIONS

The Authority's Reserve Policy sets goals for the Board Designated Reserves and the terms and conditions for their use. As outlined in the Policy, planned appropriations to and from reserves will be outlined in the Budget Document annually, and will be approved through the budget approval process.

Unplanned appropriations to and from reserves throughout the year will require Board approval, unless they meet the terms outlined in the Reserve Policy.

Reserve shortfalls from the determined "Target Reserve Level" as outlined in the Policy will be outlined in the Budget Document, and if warranted, appropriations to a reserve will be proposed to achieve the Target Reserve Level.

In 2026, due to the uncertainty related to the potential regional consolidation of all conservation authorities, all appropriations to reserves and deferred funds will be paused.

4.1 PERCENTAGE OF TARGET RESERVE LIMIT REACHED

The Reserve Policy indicates that if any reserve category is less than 50% of the targeted reserve, the Board of Directors, in the absence of any extraordinary circumstances, should consider adopting an annual budget that includes a projected surplus sufficient to rebuild the reserve category over a defined period to its targeted reserve level.

Reserve	Reserve Level as of December 31, 2024	Reserve Limit	Target Reserve Level	% of Target Reserve Level
Operating Capital	\$1,459,479	\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000	133
Administrative Facility - Maintenance	\$280,651		Adequate funds available to complete annual regular maintenance, emergency repairs and major maintenance per the AMP	
Administrative Facility - New Facility	\$32,310		Adequate funds available to construct a new Administration Facility (previous donations)	
Vehicle and Equipment	\$73,081	\$150,000	Adequate funds available to purchase required vehicles and equipment	49
Insurance Deductible	\$32,145		\$30,000	108
Legal Fees	\$120,402		\$100,000	107
Conservation Area Major Maintenance Capital	\$353,465		As forecasted in Asset Management Plan	
Hazelwood Lake Dam	\$80,000		\$250,000	32
Forest Management	\$127,529			
Land Acquisition	\$248,500			

4.2 2026 PLANNED APPROPRIATIONS TO AND FROM RESERVES

Reserve	Appropriations to Reserve	Appropriations from Reserves
Operating Capital		\$30,000
Administrative Facility - Maintenance		
Administrative Facility - New Facility		
Vehicle and Equipment		\$31,100
Insurance Deductible		
Legal Fees		
Conservation Area Major Maintenance Capital		\$52,300
Urban Conservation Area		
Forest Management		\$35,085
Land Acquisition		

5 CONCLUSION

The 2026 Budget document details the LRCA's capital and operating plans for the upcoming year. It is the opinion of staff that the current budget is reflective of the Authority's short-term goals and the long-term requirements.

The Draft Budget document provides the details of the budget. The Budget Summary will be used in the consultation with Member Municipalities and will be posted on the LRCA website as required in O. Reg. 402/22. The Final Budget will be brought to the Board in November for final approval.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recorded Weighted Vote

“THAT: the 2026 Budget levy apportionment as outlined in Version 2.0 of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority Final Budget be approved AND FURTHER THAT a copy of the final budget will be provided to the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks and all Member Municipalities.”

Majority Vote:

“THAT: in 2026 the following will be appropriated from the following reserves: Operating Capital Reserve \$30,000; Vehicle and Equipment Reserve \$31,100; Conservation Area Major Maintenance Capital Reserve \$52,300; and Forest Management Reserve \$35,085.”

“THAT: the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority adopts the 2026 Budget Document, Version 2.0 for a total budget of \$3,245,679. “

APPENDIX A:

2026 BUDGET SUMMARY

Figure 3: 2026 Budget Summary

Lakehead Region Conservation Authority 2026 Budget Version 2.0										
Program	Annual Cost									
	Source of Funding								Total Cost 2026	
	Levy-All	Sole-Benefiting Levy City of Thunder Bay	Provincial Funding	Federal Funding	Other Donations	Grants and Other	Self Generated	Surplus/ Deferred		
Category 1 Mandatory Programs and Services										
Corporate Services										
Administration	235,500	-	30,188	-	-	326,502	98,677	30,000	720,867	
Community Relations	113,366	-	-	-	-	7,000	3,569	-	123,935	
Vehicle and Equipment Program	-	-	-	-	-	53,000	-	14,100	67,100	
IT	47,962	-	-	-	-	-	621	-	48,583	
Corporate GIS	26,273	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26,273	
	423,101	-	30,188	-	-	386,502	102,867	44,100	986,758	
Risk of Natural Hazards										
Flood Plain Mapping	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Technical Studies	2,449	-	-	240,903	-	-	62,488	-	305,840	
Communications and Outreach	19,190	-	-	-	-	-	1,495	-	20,685	
Flood Forecasting and Warning	10,986	-	39,571	-	-	-	-	-	50,557	
Drought and Low Water Response	2,909	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,909	
Infrastructure: Neebing-McIntyre Floodway	-	-	68,681	-	-	500	173,759	-	242,940	
Infrastructure: Victor Street Erosion	-	-	12,500	-	-	-	10,373	-	22,873	
Review of Proposals under Act	2,321	-	-	-	-	-	180	-	2,501	
Plan Review Comments	45,532	-	-	9,300	-	15,000	23,147	-	92,979	
Administering and Enforcing the Act (Section 28)	184,411	-	-	-	-	25,000	10,379	-	219,790	
	267,798	-	120,752	250,203	-	40,500	281,821	-	961,074	
Conservation and Management of Lands owned and controlled by the Authority										
Conservation Areas	244,015	-	-	-	20,000	95,000	45,857	-	404,872	
Conservation Areas Capital	151,324	-	-	-	-	-	-	52,300	203,624	
Administer Section 29 Regulations	8,681	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8,681	
Other Owned Land	63,026	-	-	-	-	5,156	-	29,365	97,547	
	467,046	-	-	-	-	20,000	100,156	45,857	81,665	
Source Water Protection										
Source Water Protection	-	-	77,313	-	-	-	-	-	77,313	
	-	-	77,313	-	-	-	-	-	77,313	
Other Programs and Services										
Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN)	16,507	-	-	-	-	-	630	-	17,137	
Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network (PWQMN)	9,430	-	-	-	-	-	538	-	9,968	
	25,937	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25,937	
Total Category 1	1,183,882	-	228,253	250,203	-	20,000	527,158	431,713	125,765	
Category 2 Non-Mandatory Programs and Services at the request of a Municipality										
Mapping Services	-	-	-	-	-	16,000	2,319	-	13,681	
Mosquito and Pennock Creek Monitoring	-	-	-	-	-	8,061	-	-	8,061	
Total Category 2	-	-	-	-	-	8,061	16,000	2,319	-	
Category 3 Non-Mandatory Programs and Services										
Education										
Environmental Education	-	-	-	-	17,000.00	6,200	10,198	25,667	-	
Nature Interpretive Programming	-	-	-	-	14,000	18,900	19,000	-	51,900	
	-	-	-	-	31,000	25,100	29,198	25,667	-	
Total Category 3	1,183,882	-	376,753	390,981	31,000	53,161	623,356	455,061	131,485	
									3,245,679	

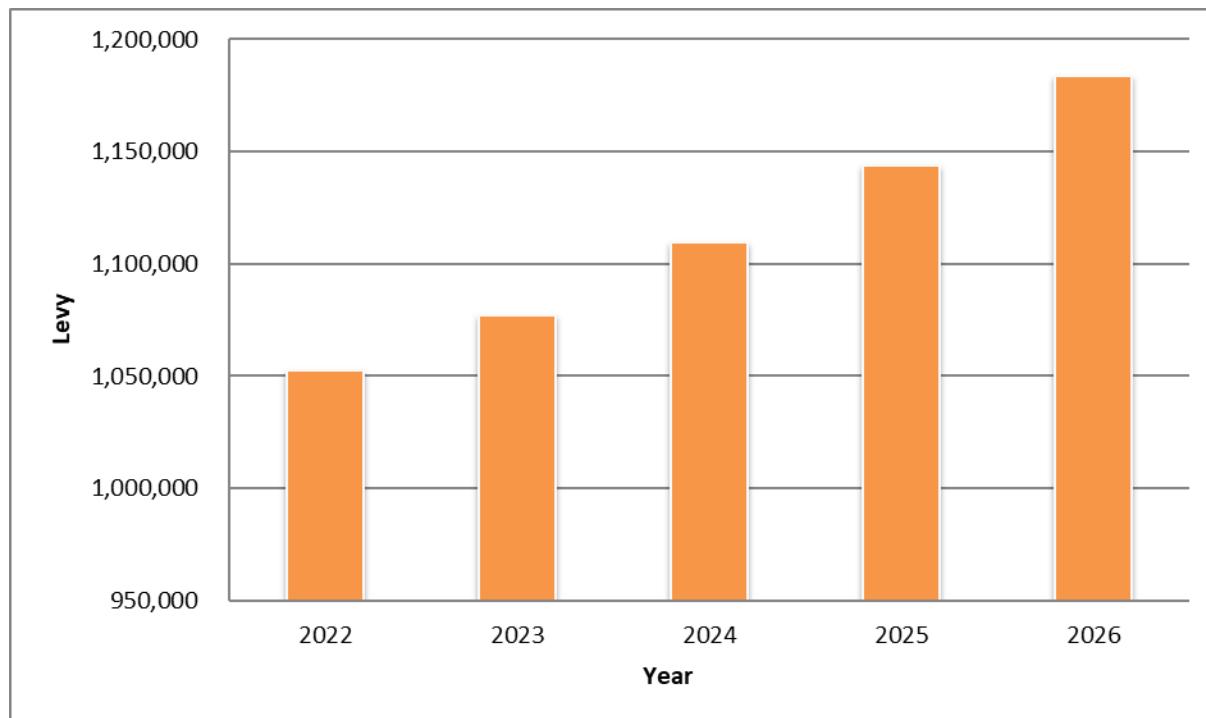
FIGURE 4: LEVY ALL COMPARISON FOR THE PERIOD OF 2022-2026


Figure 4 compares the levy-all fluctuations for the period of 2022-2026. In 2019, the long-standing Section 39 transfer payment was reduced from \$292,380 to \$150,940, which required a mid-year adjustment to the budget and also affected all future budgets. As a result of financial pressures on our Member Municipalities and the effects of COVID-19, 0% levy-all increases were implemented in 2021 and 2022.

Minimal to no increases are feasible in the short term but are not realistic for the long-term operation of the Authority. The 2026 budget requires a 3.50% increase in order to maintain its current level of service, which is consistent with cost-of-living increases.

APPENDIX B: LEVY COST COMPARISON

FIGURE 5: 2026 COMPARED TO 2025 BUDGET LEVY- ALL COMPARISON

2026 Total Levy Compared to 2025- All						
MUNICIPALITY	2026 CVA	Actual Levy 2026	2025 CVA	Levy 2025	\$ Change	% Change
Thunder Bay*	85.6600%	1,013,640	85.8012%	979,821	33,819	3.45%
Conmee	0.4500%	5,204	0.4440%	5,147	57	1.10%
Dorion	0.2900%	3,433	0.2879%	3,317	116	3.49%
Gillies	0.2500%	2,960	0.2470%	2,860	100	3.51%
Neebing	2.2600%	26,638	2.2565%	25,852	786	3.04%
O'Connor	0.4800%	5,684	0.4770%	5,492	192	3.51%
Oliver Paipoonge	5.6300%	67,364	5.5386%	64,400	2,964	4.60%
Shuniah	4.9900%	58,959	4.9477%	56,966	1,993	3.50%
TOTAL	100%	1,183,882	100.00%	1,143,855	40,027	3.50%

The following table summarizes the annual levy cost per household, per resident and cost per \$100,000 of assessed value of property. It is noted that the resident numbers represent permanent residents and does not factor in seasonal residents.

Figure 6: Levy Cost

Municipality	2026	Number of Households (2016)	Cost Per Household	Number of Resident	Cost per Resident	Current Value Assessment \$ (2025)	Cost per \$100,000
***Thunder Bay	\$1,817,801	57,146	\$31.81	121,621	\$14.95	14,430,693,124	\$12.60
Conmee	\$5,206	327	\$15.92	816	\$6.38	74,184,750	\$7.02
Dorion	\$3,433	128	\$26.82	316	\$10.86	48,682,655	\$7.05
Gillies	\$2,960	201	\$14.73	474	\$6.24	42,491,435	\$6.97
Neebing	\$26,638	1,166	\$22.85	2,055	\$12.96	379,134,045	\$7.03
O'Connor	\$5,684	272	\$20.90	663	\$8.57	81,391,217	\$6.98
Oliver Paipoonge	\$37,363	2,289	\$16.32	5,922	\$6.31	959,038,205	\$3.90
Shuniah	\$58,959	2,130	\$27.68	2,798	\$21.07	838,817,690	\$7.03

***City of Thunder Bay Includes Sole Benefiting Levy

16,854,433,121

APPENDIX C: PASSED RESOLUTIONS

Budget Summary Checklist

Per O. Reg. 402/22: Budget and Apportionment, the 2024 budget and every subsequent budget must be prepared in accordance with the regulation.

Budget Year - 2026		
Task	Date	Completed
First Phase		
Identify all sources of revenue including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fees • Donations • Grants • Self-generated • Reserve funds • Deferred funds • From agreements • Other sources • Total revenue 	June	June
Identify operating expenses into Cat. 1,2, 3. Specify total operating expenses for year.	June	June
Identify capital costs into Cat. 1,2 ,3. Specify total capital costs for year.	June	June
Apportion operating expense or capital costs to participating municipalities (levy-all, and sole-benefitting).	June	June
Preliminary % levy-all increase Board Review	June Board Meeting	June 26, 2025
Second Phase – Draft Budget and Consultations		
Prepare Draft Explanatory Budget Document <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include all items in First Phase • Specify if the authority considered opportunities to raise and use self-generated revenue to help finance the authority's operations, including the programs and services it provides, a description of what the authority considered. 	July/August	August 2025
Prepare Budget Summary	July/August	August 2025
Meeting on Draft Budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold majority vote to approve Draft Budget for consultation purposes 	August Board Meeting	August 27, 2025

Send each participating municipality a copy of approved draft budget including apportionment	September	September 3, 2025
Post draft budget on Governance section of LRCA website	September	September 3, 2025
Conduct consultations with participating municipalities as warranted	September	
Third Phase – Final Budget Approval		
Provide notice of Board Meeting to participating municipalities of Final Budget approval <u>30</u> days prior to meeting to approve Final Budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include most recent draft of budget Specify levy apportionments 	September/October	October 14, 2025
Hold a recorded weighted majority vote to approve apportionment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 51% or more is required to approve. Tie is a lost vote 	November Board Meeting	November 26, 2025
Hold a recorded majority vote to approve Final Budget	November Board Meeting	November 26, 2025
Provide copy of Final Budget to Minister	December	
Provide copy of Final Budget to participating municipalities	December	
Post Final Budget on Governance section of website	December	



Board of Directors Meeting Schedule – 2026

Virtual log-in details will be provided prior to Board Meeting on the LRCA website when applicable.

If required, special meetings will be called.

Meeting Month	Day (Wednesday)	Time	Location
January	28 (AGM)	4:30 p.m.	To be determined
February	25	4:30 p.m.	To be determined
March	25	4:30 p.m.	130 Conservation Road
April	29	4:30 p.m.	130 Conservation Road
May	27	4:30 p.m.	130 Conservation Road
June	24	4:30 p.m.	130 Conservation Road
July	No Meeting		
August	26	4:30 p.m.	130 Conservation Road
September	30	4:30 p.m.	130 Conservation Road
October	28	4:30 p.m.	130 Conservation Road
November	25	4:30 p.m.	130 Conservation Road
December	No Meeting		

Revision Date: November 26, 2025

November 26, 2025

Moved By
Seconded By

"THAT: having examined the accounts for the period October 1, 2025 to October 31, 2025 cheque #3690 to #3713 for \$143,101.97 and preauthorized payments of \$153,768.86 for a total of \$296,870.83, we approve their payment."

3690	AG Engineering	Boardroom Renovation Design and Tender phase	8,757.50
3691	ALS Sewage Services	Outhouses Various Cons. Areas	2,223.70
3692	Bay Lock & Security	Door monitoring Oct 2025-Sep2026	135.60
3693	Doane Grant Thornton LLP	3rd Quarter QBO fees	406.80
3694	Englobe Corp.	Victor St. Monitoring final	2,147.00
3695	Innovated Solutions	Cloud Protection	847.50
3696	Iron Range Bus Lines Inc	Bus to Hazelwood Lake - E.Q. Jennings School - September 22, 2025 Bathymetric Survey of Neebing-McIntyre Floodway - August 2025 and Lakehead	216.11
3697	KGS Group Consulting Engineers	Coastal Resilience Management Plan - August 2025	67,636.33
3698	Lowery's	Office supplies	199.52
3699	ML Consulting	Compensation review	24,408.00
3700	North Rock Engineering Inc.	Consultant Services for Diversion Channel Dredging	5,788.43
3701	Rose N Crantz Roasting Co.	Coffee order for fundraiser	1,076.00
3702	Thunder Bay Answering Service Inc.	Answering Service	268.04
3703	Walleye Media Inc	Advertising in the Walleye	146.90
3704	Wren Mangelli	Guest Speaker Honorarium - Branching Out Program - Mushroom Walks	300.00
3705	2611943 Ontario Ltd.	Garbage Removal Various CA's	678.00
3706	All Season Renovations	Rain Garden downspouts	404.37
3707	ALS Sewage Services	Little Trout Bay pump out	381.94
3708	Dorion Bible Camp	Bible Camp for Bird Festival	282.50
3709	JML Engineering	Progress billing Mills Block September 2025	5,152.80
3710	KGS Group Consulting Engineers	Lakehead Coastal Resilience Management Plan	18,287.20
3711	RAS Maintenance Services	Office Cleaning	515.23
3712	Rose N Crantz Roasting Co.	Coffee for resale for fundraiser	300.00
3713	TBT Engineering Consulting Group	Structural Inspections and Reports for Hazelwood Lake Dam, Mission Island Marsh Boardwalk	2,542.50
			<u>143,101.97</u>
PA	Payroll and Per Diems		97,800.69
PA	Royal Bank Group Retirement RRSP and TFSA		2,089.20
PA	RWAM and Lifeworks Benefits		5,169.93
PA	Enbridge		44.06
PA	Synergy North		846.87
PA	Esso		1,143.05
PA	Visa Routine Monthly Expenses		17,271.09
PA	Banking and Visa Fees		863.29
PA	Postage		-
PA	Omers September		16,437.04
PA	Photocopier Lease		278.59
PA	Property Taxes		11,825.05
			<u>153,768.86</u>
			<u>296,870.83</u>

Res# _____ /25

Monthly Plan Input/Review and Fill Regulations Administration

October 1 to 31, 2025

Municipality	Minor Variance (A)	Consent (B)	Official Plan	Official Plan/ Zoning By-Law Comprehensive	Zoning By-Law (Z)	Subdivisions	Clearances	Reality Services	Lawyer Inquiries	Letter of Opinion (Other)	Total	
City of Thunder Bay				OZ-05-2025				300 Tokio Street 1708 Francis St W / 1115 Neebing Avenue 184 Court Street S 466 Francis Street E 753 Tungsten Street 153 Bruin Crescent 1708 Francis St W / 1115 Neebing Avenue	264 Shuniah Street 130 Gibbon Street	PTTW - Mount Baldy		
Total	0	0	0	1		0	0	0	7	2	1	11
Oliver Paipoonge		1B/19/25		ZBLA06-2025								
		1B/20/25										
Total	0	2	0	0		1	0	0	0	0	0	3
O'Connor												
Total	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neebing	A01-2025	B03-2025						58 Cottage Drive				
Total	1	1	0	0		0	0	1	0	0	0	3
Shuniah				Z25-3								
Total	0	0	0	0		1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Conmee												
Total	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gillies												
Total	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dorion												
Total	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rural Planning Board												
Total	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Monthly Total	1	3	0	1		2	0	1	7	2	1	18

Monthly Plan Input/Review and Fill Regulations Administration

November 1 to 18, 2025



Monthly Project Update

MEETING DATE	November 26, 2025
STAFF NAME	Ryan Mackett
POSITION	Communications Manager

2025 Holiday Gathering & Community Partner Thank You Event

The 2025 Holiday Gathering will take place on Thursday, December 11 at the LRCA Administrative Office from 5:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. If you have not already RSVP'd, please let Ryan Mackett know if you and a guest are able to attend.

Fundraising Calendar

For your information, 10,000 copies of the 2026 Fundraising Calendar have been ordered at a cost of approximately \$7,798. Staff were able to sell \$6,175 in advertisements to offset the cost of the calendar's production. Some of the Community Relations discretionary advertising and promotion budget was used to offset some of the printing costs to facilitate printing the calendar. The popularity of this calendar, its reach, and its effectiveness at showcasing the LRCA and its Conservation Areas is value-added and justifies this expenditure. Note that the LRCA advertises its own events in this calendar too, as well as includes various LRCA messaging regarding Explore Card sales, etc. Staff will be distributing the calendars this month. Please let staff know how many copies of the calendar you would like for your municipality.



Monthly Project Update

MEETING DATE	November 26, 2025
STAFF NAME	Melissa Hughson
POSITION	Watershed Manager

Latornell Conservation Symposium

LRCA's CAO, Watershed Manager and Watershed Biologist attended the Latornell Conservation Symposium on November 3-4, 2025 in Toronto. The Symposium is an annual event co-hosted by Conservation Ontario and the University of Guelph that provides a forum for practitioners, students, academics, government, and non-government organizations to discuss issues, challenges, and opportunities in the conservation movement in Ontario and learn about new tools, techniques, and strategies for watershed and natural resources management. The event consisted of two days of engaging sessions with expert speakers, thought-provoking presentations, dynamic panel discussions, and interactive exhibits and workshops designed to inform, inspire, and energize attendees and participants.

Drinking Water Source Protection (DWSP)

The Drinking Water Source Protection (DWSP) Program Manager (Watershed Manager) attended the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) DWSP - Conservation Ontario – Program Manager Meeting held on November 19-20, 2025 in Cambridge, Ontario. Topics of discussion included recent proposed changes to O. Reg. 287/07 of the *Clean Water Act*, staffing updates, annual reporting, TPA's, Best Practices, SPC Chair Appointments, etc.

Needing-McIntyre Floodway Sediment Removal Project - Update

Construction operations were initiated by the hired contractor PNI Contracting Inc. on Wednesday, November 12th. Sediment controls are in place. North Rock Engineering is on site completing Contract Administration tasks for the project as well as sediment sampling as required under O. Reg. 406/19: On-Site and Excess Soil Management. The work is on schedule, and the project is anticipated to be complete by the end of 2025.

Provincial Ground Water Monitoring Network (PGMN)

Sampling under the Provincial Ground Water Monitoring Network (PGMN) program is now complete for the year. LRCA's involvement in the PGMN program consists of monitoring and sampling eight groundwater monitoring wells in our region in partnership with the Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks (MECP). Once per year, the groundwater wells are pumped, and water samples collected and shipped to a MECP laboratory for water chemistry testing. Four times per year, information including water level, temperature and barometric

pressure is downloaded from the wells and reported to MECP. The data is used by MECP, Conservation Authorities, agencies and research groups to identify temporal and spatial trends in groundwater quality and inform policy and program decision making.

Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network (PWQMN)

LRCA's IT/GIS Specialist, Environmental Planner and Planning and Regulations Technician were in Sudbury on November 5th to participate in a Regional PWQMN (surface water monitoring) and PGMN (ground water monitoring) meeting. LRCA staff were able to meet with MECP PWQMN/PGMN staff in person as well as with the other northern region Conservation Authority staff. General discussion included general protocols, sampling schedules, data reminders and updates, common mistakes, equipment updates, etc.

LRCA has volunteered to participate in PWQMN's winter sampling program this year (2025/2026). Winter sampling for PWQMN is completely optional and is flexible by nature. The number of samples collected will depend on how fast the rivers freeze over. The first 'winter' sampling day will occur in early December.