

Environmental Education

- Provided free educational and recreational based activities to over 3,000 community members under the Active Naturally Initiative, thanks to funding provided by the Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund;
- Provided environmental education programming to 35 classes during the maple syrup season, and 14 classes for various other outdoor environmental education programming throughout the year;
- Developed a new Environmental Education Guide to showcase the CCCA's vital and engaging education programming;
- Implemented an in-class programing module that is becoming more prominent due to educational cuts and increases to school bus rental costs;
- Hosted 2,600 school-aged children for the Carolinian Forest Festival and Ontario Envirothon at Springwater Conservation Area, and MarshQuest at YNHA.



Springwater Maple Syrup Program
Photo The Aylmer Express



MarshQuest
Yarmouth Natural Heritage Area
Photo The Aylmer Express



Springwater Special Event -
Fred Eaglesmith Charity Picnic
Photo The Aylmer Express



Springwater Special Event - Kids, Cops and
Canadian Tire Fishing Derby
Photo The Aylmer Express



Community Participation
Pollinator Garden Planting
Photo The Aylmer Express



Environmental Education
East Elgin Secondary School Garbage Clean-Up Day
Photo The Aylmer Express

Mission Statement

“To communicate and deliver resource management services and programs in order to achieve social and ecological harmony for the watershed”

The **CCCA** is a non-profit organization that needs your financial support and volunteerism to ensure locally driven environmental initiatives continue in the future. All donations are used for programs and projects within the Catfish Creek watershed.

YES, I would like to demonstrate my devotion and vision for a healthy environment by donating \$ _____ in support of the following initiative(s):

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Protection & Preservation of Conservation Lands | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Environmental Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife Habitat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Springwater Forest Preservation/Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Commemorative Forest Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Wetlands Restoration |

Official tax receipt will be issued for minimum donations of \$20.00. **Commemorative gifts and land donations graciously received.**

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

**Payment in Cash, Visa, Mastercard, or Debit will gladly be accepted at the CCCA Office or please mail a cheque to:
CATFISH CREEK CONSERVATION AUTHORITY, 8079 Springwater Rd., R.R.#5, Aylmer, ON N5H 2R4**



2019 Partners/Donors/Volunteers

(please notify our office of any errors or omissions)

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Aylmer Express
Aylmer Optimist Club
Aylmer Tire
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Cam's Heating & Air Conditioning
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Canada Summer Jobs
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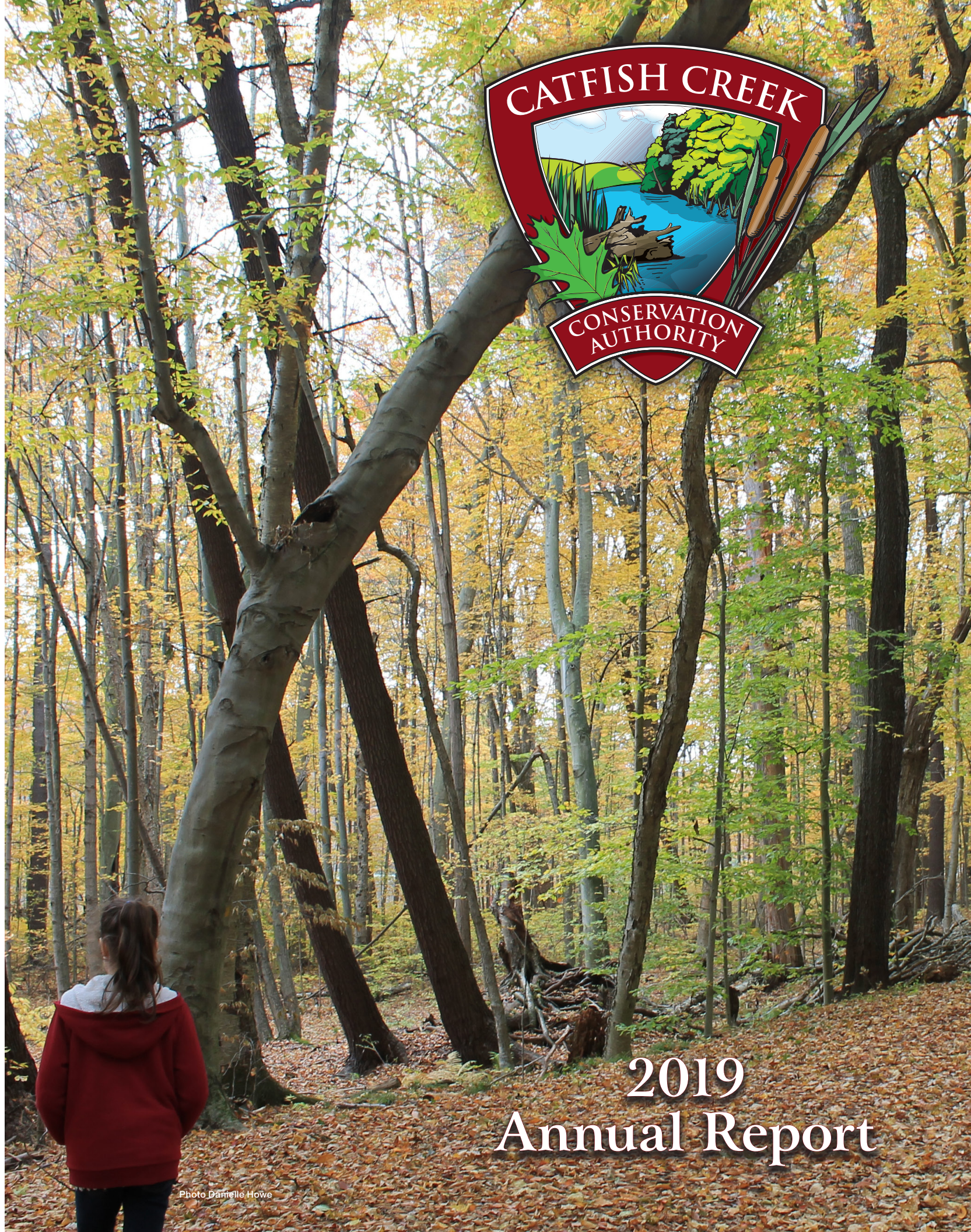
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2019
Annual Report

Photo Danielle Howe

Chairperson’s Message

As Chairperson of the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority (CCCA) for the past three years, I am proud of the work that this strong, environmentally-responsible, and adaptive Conservation Authority has undertaken.

Our new Strategic Plan for 2019-2023 will guide the Authority’s operations over the next four years. This plan directs that we run a sustainable organization, focus on our mandates to protect people from flood and erosion, curate an appreciation for nature, and ensure our Conservation Lands are protected and enhanced.

Ensuring our organization remains sustainable was particularly challenging due to the unexpected cut to our provincial funding. Our Board members and all of our dedicated staff worked together to find innovative ways to maintain the level of programs and services we have historically provided.

During the year we implemented a streamlining initiative to improve customer service and increase the speed of permit approvals. We also worked to improve the management of the Springwater Reservoir and continue to work closely with the Township of Malahide to successfully manage ice jams in Port Bruce.

Our commitment to curate the public’s appreciation for nature and to improve the health of the watershed was demonstrated by our participation in the Ontario Envirothon, MarshQuest, the Carolinian Forest Festival, and Springwater Maple Syrup Program. Our long-term working relationship with East Elgin Secondary School’s Environmental Leadership Program (ELP) is a vital community partnership that continues to be successful

due to the dedicated leadership of Duncan Sinclair and the commitment of his students. With the help of the ELP students and the Canadian Chestnut Council, 1,500 endangered American Chestnut trees were planted at the Yarmouth Natural Heritage Area (YNHA) to ensure the longevity of the population’s genetic diversity.

We continue to improve our Conservation Areas with electrical upgrades undertaken at the Springwater Conservation Area campground. In the coming year we plan to seek public input on our 20-year plan for the Springwater Conservation Area. Our staff will work to implement even more creative ideas to generate revenue which supplements our important initiatives and mandated work.

Our Board of Directors are a pleasure to work with and I want to thank them for their commitment to conservation and the CCCA. We are also very thankful for the volunteers, sponsors, donors, and organizations that supported the CCCA in achieving its many goals in 2019. The successes we enjoyed this year would not to be possible without the dedication and commitment of the community.

Rick Cerna, CCCA Chairperson



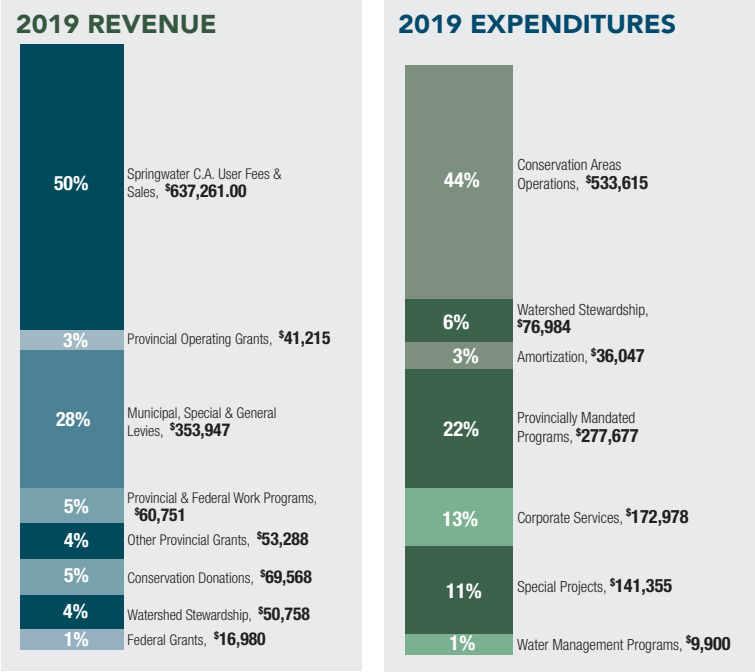
Corporate Services

The activities of the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority are governed by a Board of Directors comprised of five (5) members appointed by the five (5) member municipalities of the Catfish Creek watershed.

Board Member	Municipality
Rick Cerna (Chairperson)	Township of Malahide
Mark Tinlin (Vice-Chairperson)	City of St. Thomas
Sally Martyn	Municipality of Central Elgin
Arthur Oslach	Town of Aylmer
Paul Buchner	Township of South-West Oxford

Staff Member	Position
Christopher Wilkinson	General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer
Susan Simmons	Financial Services Coordinator
Dusty Underhill	Conservation Areas Supervisor
Tony Difazio	Resource Planning Coordinator
Peter Dragunas	Water Management Technician
Kelsey Oatman	Program Support Assistant
Emily Febrey	Community Outreach Technician
Austin Verbeek	Field Technician
Gerrit Kremers	Field Technician

2019 Financial Report



Copies of the full 2019 Audited Financial Statements may be obtained by contacting the Authority Administration Centre.

Conservation Lands

In 2019, the CCCA focused its efforts on new initiatives such as improving ecological health, curating an appreciation for nature, and ensuring our lands are protected and enhanced, all while operating a sustainable and adaptable organization. This hard work saw Springwater Conservation Area awarded the 94.1 MyFM inaugural ‘Favourite Campground / Trailer Park’ award. Thanks to the generous community and financial support from different local private organizations, government agencies, and our many community partners, the following was undertaken in 2019:

- Completed the upgrade to our Community Room / Shop making it accessible;
- Numerous electrical upgrades and improvements were completed in the Springwater Conservation Area west campground;
- A Pollinator Garden was established surrounded by Native Tallgrass Prairie at the Springwater Conservation Area with funding provided by The TD Friends of the Environment Foundation;
- A series of culverts were replaced in the Springwater Forest preventing erosion and ensuring a safe passage for our trail users and guests
- Replaced an access gate and performed hazard tree removal in collaboration with the East Elgin Secondary School Environmental Leadership Program students at the Archie Coulter Conservation Area (ACCA);



2020 Special Events Calendar

March 6-29	Maple Syrup Festival * weekends & March Break +PD Day March 6
April 25	Opening Day of Trout Fishing
May 9	Tim Hortons Kids Trout Derby
June 12-14	Van Fest
July 4	Kid Cops & Canadian Tire Fishing Derby
July 25	Paws-itively Elgin
August 14-16	Fred Eaglesmith Charity Music Festival
December 5	Christmas Spirit Walk

For more information contact our office at 519-773-9037 or visit our website at www.catfishcreek.ca

Stewardship Services

The Catfish Creek Conservation Authority (CCCA) continues to assist landowners in a bi-national effort to improve water quality in the Great Lakes Basin. Reducing discharges of phosphorus into our waterways thereby controlling algae blooms in Lake Erie continues to be an important goal. Along with other funding partners such as the Elgin Stewardship Council, Elgin Clean Water Program, Ducks Unlimited, and the Ontario Soil and Crop Association, the CCCA works to help landowners achieve restoration goals on their own properties. In 2019, the CCCA worked with six landowners to help create seven new wetlands totalling five acres and two new areas of tall grass prairie to enhance species at risk habitat in the watershed.

- Springwater Conservation Area purchased 24 new picnic tables to accommodate our guests;
- American Chestnut trees were planted at the Ward McKenna Conservation Area, Yarmouth Natural Heritage Area (YNHA), and Springwater Forest in conjunction with the Canadian Chestnut Council;

2019 was the final year of a three year agreement with Ontario Power Generation (OPG) to enhance biodiversity in the watershed with funding assistance under the Regional Biodiversity Funding Program. The funding assistance provided by OPG has allowed us to create three new wetlands at the Yarmouth Natural Heritage Area and the Brown Conservation Area. The four acres of new wetlands and associated upland habitat will be a great enhancement feature for the public to view for years to come.



Environmental Planning

In conjunction with our umbrella organization Conservation Ontario, the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority (CCCA) has been working with the Provincial government which proposed updates to the Conservation Authorities Act in 2019. The updates are intended to provide greater accountability and transparency regarding Conservation Authority operations, programs, and funding.

As a result of the review, consultations with Provincial Ministries and the Province’s Special Advisor on Flooding, Conservation Authorities have put forward the following key messages:

- The watershed approach must be preserved.** There are a number of fundamental watershed management activities such as monitoring, studies, education, and stewardship that are needed to effectively deliver mandatory programs and services.
- Working together helps us to address shared challenges more quickly and cost effectively.** Conservation Authorities are valuable partners due to their cost effective watershed-based approach. In addition, CCCA’s flood management programs reduce liability for both municipalities and the Province. These programs and services also help to avoid significant additional costs from flooding and erosion which can threaten municipal and provincial budgets.
- Conservation Authorities are improving their services to clients and speeding up permit review times.**

We will strive to work with the Province and local municipalities to protect the mandate of Conservation Authorities, which includes the onservation, restoration, development, and management of natural resources using a watershed-based approach. We have also been challenged with above normal water levels in the Great Lakes Basin and the resulting impacts from erosion that is occurring along the north shore of Lake Erie. Since 1950, the CCCA has been fulfilling our mandate under the Conservation Authorities Act to deliver programs and services on behalf of our member municipalities. This includes commenting on Planning Act applications and regulating development in proximity to Natural Hazards. Staff from the CCCA reviewed and provided comments on the following development applications, inquiries, and land use planning applications in 2019:

- Issued 36 work permits or authorizations (0 major, 14 minor, and 22 routine) relative to the Conservation Authorities Act or the Drainage Act, each provided well under the proposed 42 calendar day turn around;
- Reviewed and commented on 68 Planning Act applications and Environmental Assessments (service timelines to be determined in 2020 following provincial review of the Planning Act);
- Provided responses to 44 minor and routine property inquiries (legal, real estate, general information requests), each provided within the 7 day turn around time required for pre-consultation.



Water Management

Snowfall and temperatures for the winter of 2019 were in the average range, which in turn yielded near average ice thickness throughout the Catfish Creek watershed. Three (3) Flood Watch, three (3) Flood Warning, eight (8) Watershed Condition Statements, and thirteen (13) Lake Erie Shoreline Condition Statements were issued during 2019. Recognizing the wide-ranging effectiveness of ice breaking/ice mitigation efforts and municipal emergency preparedness, the unfavourable weather and ice conditions during a freshet runoff hampered the ability for creek ice to easily migrate out to Lake Erie. This induced minor flooding throughout the watershed on February 5th, 2019.



As requirements for water increase and climate changes occur, severe water level variability is increasingly widespread. Provincial funding for Low Water Response monitoring was eliminated in 2019, however the CCCA staff continued to monitor current water levels. This assists landowners in making valued

decisions on the appropriate conservation measures and actions for Irrigation Best Management Practices in order to achieve provincially outlined water conservation criteria. In the Low Water season of 2019 (spring to early fall), the Catfish Creek watershed received slightly lower than average sustainable precipitation and the creek was able to maintain average seasonal flows.

Notable water management activities in 2019 included:

- Continual monitoring of precipitation, streamflow, and watershed physiological conditions for flood forecasting and seasonal low water flows to assist with water management initiatives;
- Collected groundwater data through the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network;
- Participated in the Conservation Ontario and Lake Erie Conservation Authorities joint initiative for the Lake Erie Action Plan “Reducing Phosphorus to Minimize Algal Blooms in Lake Erie”;
- Yearly review of the CCCA’s Flood Warning, Flood Operations, and Ice Management program;
- Completed the Benthic Macroinvertebrates Monitoring of 10 sub-watersheds within the CCCA’s administrative boundaries to assess and monitor water quality.