

Effects of Provincial Changes to Conservation Authorities Funding and Legislation on Grey County

Distributed: May 3, 2019

Unprecedented Floods and Storms



- Floods have closed highways and flooded neighbourhoods across Canada this spring
- The Insurance Bureau of Canada quantified over \$80 million in damages from a Toronto thunderstorm in August 2018
- Calgary estimates that their 2013 flood cost over \$6-billion and the loss of five lives

Climate Change fears are increasing, and the harsh reality is that the frequency and magnitude of flood events and water levels will increase

Protecting People and Property from Flooding is a CA Priority



- CAs predict water levels and peaks, considering flood plains, expected storms, snow depth and temperature, river levels and soil saturation
 - Informs Municipal Leaders, Fire Chiefs, Forepersons, Emergency Management Coordinators and Roads Superintendents
- CAs support studies such as whether municipal infrastructure has capacity for storms, and emergency routes in flood scenarios



*Anyone can check
near real-time
monitoring
information at
greysauble.on.ca*

Provincial Budget Cut in Half CA's Flood-related Funding



GSCA flood-prediction funding have been about \$72K since 1996, and this amount just received a 50% cut

The GSCA department is one person

Rural CAs will suffer disproportionately

GSCA has recognized the need to **ADD** a water scientist or engineer to support timely development decisions and update many 1980 and 1990 studies

Provincial Perception



“Ontario is well positioned to respond to the ongoing flooding in our communities, and we have supplies strategically located across the province to aid any municipality across the province that requests assistance. On average, provincial funding accounts for less than 10 per cent of a conservation authority’s overall budget. This reduction will not interfere with the core programs that conservation authorities are mandated to provide and Ontarians depend on.”

John Yakabuski, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, in a statement on April 25th 2019.

Other Provincial Cuts

Like municipalities and others, CAs are also managing within recent cuts to other programs:

- The 50-Million Tree planting subsidy
- Summer staff to deliver water quality monitoring and stewardship
- A project reviewing of the health of the Georgian Bay shorelines

Legislative Change will limit Watershed-wide Approach



- Government is seeking input on the “modernizing conservation authority operations” (ERO #013-5018) to *“focus conservation authorities on a core mandate of:*
 - *Natural hazard protection and management;*
 - *Conservation authority owned lands and conservation;*
and,
 - *Drinking water source protection.”*
- We would like to provide feedback that other programs also endorsed by the municipally-appointed Board of Directors can be important supports for natural resources and development.

We Need your Support to Keep Doing this Important Work



- These changes will impact the ability of Grey Sauble Conservation Authority to advocate for balance
- Municipalities may shoulder more risks and costs
- It is important to provide input to provincial decision-makers about Conservation Authorities programs (via their ERO request for input) and the value of their continued investment in flood programs

Proposed Motion



We respectfully request that Council consider a Motion of support:

- **WHEREAS** *Climate Change and flooding are mounting threats in Grey County, & Conservation Authorities provide services including real-time flood forecasting, emergency planning support and water-related studies, and*
- **WHEREAS**, *in 1996, the total provincial Section 39 Transfer Payment to all of Ontario's conservation authorities for Flood and Erosion Control and Natural Hazard Prevention was reduced from \$50-million to \$7.4-million, and Grey Sauble Conservation Authority's (GSCA) share of this payment has remained static at \$71,779 and \$157,669 since 1996, and*
- **WHEREAS** *the recent Provincial Budget has further reduced GSCA's Section 39 Transfer Payments about 50% to \$37,055 & \$81,396, and*
- **WHEREAS** *this will affect emergency management supports & municipal planning, zoning & development input provided by GSCA , and*
- **WHEREAS** *there is a provincial role in province-wide flood risks reduction and emergency management, and investments in prevention can potentially avoid or reduce losses to life and property and major expenditures during and after an emergency, and*

Proposed Motion, Continued



- **WHEREAS** the Ontario Government's Proposal on the Environmental Registry of Ontario 013-5018 on Modernizing Conservation Authority (CA) Operations proposes to define a limited list of the core mandatory programs and services for CAs,
- **THAT** Grey County recognizes the value provided by the work of the CAs, supports the current multi-municipality governance model for the selection of programs, and the current municipal levying approach that includes annual input from Local Municipal Councils, and
- **THAT** Grey County recommends that the province acknowledge a strong and positive provincial role in flood risk reduction programs and reinstate funding to CAs, and
- **THAT** County Staff be directed to provide a copy of this resolution to the Environmental Registry of Ontario (<https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/013-5018>) prior to the May 20th deadline, to Ministers Bill Walker and Lisa Thompson, Ministers MECP, MNRF and MOF, the Premier, AMO, ROMA, OSUM, and Conservation Ontario.



Questions or Comments?

For More Information:

- Cathy Little, Chair, GSCA Board of Directors - councillorlittle@greyhighlands.ca
- Sonya Skinner, GSCA CAO – 519 376 3076 or s.skinner@greysauble.on.ca

APPENDIX



GSCA's Programs (Programs with Provincial Transfer Payment Funding show with Red Arrows)



Protections from Floods, Waves and Drinking Water Threats

- Watershed Monitoring & Management
- Flood and Erosion Control Structures
- Development, Interference & Alteration Reg. (151/06)
- Flood Forecasting and Warning
- Source Water Risk Management Service
- Source Water Protection

Monitoring and Improving the Health of Watershed Natural Resources

- Land Use Planning (Planning / Technical Clearance)
- GSCA Forests Management
- Grey Sauble Forestry Service
- Stewardship

Enhancing Community Connections to the Watershed's Environment

- Conservation Information, Education & Community Outreach
- Conservation Lands, Habitats & Operations
- Other Dams

Provincial Funding – Now 50% cut

Provincial Funding – 1 of 3 items that can now be in a municipal levy

Support Services

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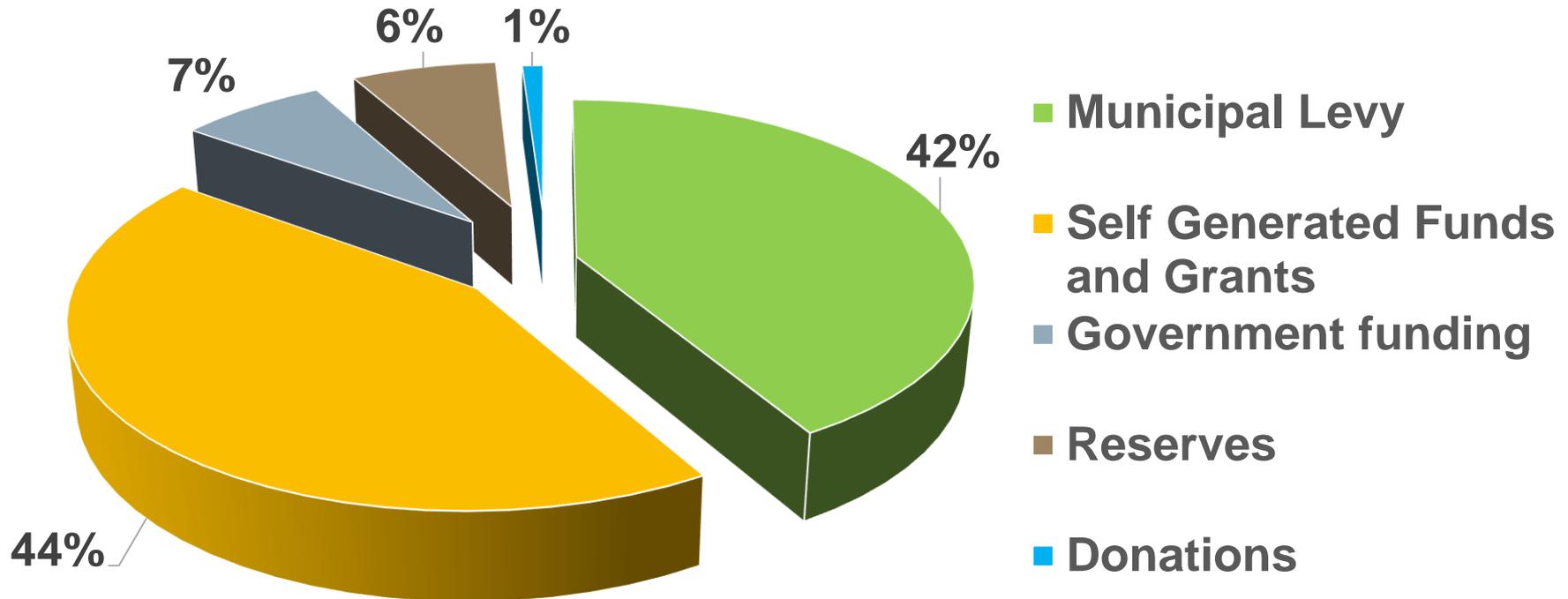
Fleet & Equipment Management

Information Technology Management

GIS & Information Management

Administration
Finance
Human Resources

GSCA's 2019 Funding Sources – Before the Provincial Cuts



Total Proposed Budget: **\$3.32M**

What is a Conservation Authority?

Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities:

- Are created under the Conservation Authorities Act as “...a program designed to further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources other than gas, oil, coal and minerals.”
- Are governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the watershed municipalities.

Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Jurisdictions



Grey Sauble's

Mission Statement:

In partnership with stakeholders of the watershed, to promote and undertake sustainable management of renewable natural resources and to provide responsible leadership to enhance bio-diversity and environmental awareness.

Vision Statement:

A healthy watershed environment in balance with the needs of society.

Drinking Water Source Protection Mission Statement:

Providing leadership to engage the entire community in developing comprehensive, responsible solutions to protect our water resources.