



SOIL
AND WATER
CONSERVATION
SOCIETY

Soil and Water Conservation Society
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The First 50 Years
of the Ontario Chapter
of the Soil and Water
Conservation Society

Advancing the Science & Art of Good Land & Water Use

Dedication

This brief summary of the first 50 years in the life of the Ontario Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society is dedicated to the visionary charter members who established the Chapter in 1951.

They were:

- Edward W. Baker (Toronto)
- Walter J.P. Creswick (Toronto)
- Richard C. Hodges (Oakville)
- Frank R. Hore (OAC)
- Leonard N. Johnson (London)
- Peter L. Moore (Toronto)
- Frank F. Morwick (OAC)
- Edward G. Pleva (London)
- Don F. Putnam (Clarkson)
- Leonard R. Webber (OAC).

Baker, Creswick, Hodges and Putnam were especially instrumental in taking the first steps to get it going.

The history, activities, accomplishments and vision of the Chapter are documented here as an example of advancing the science and art of good land and water use.



Foreword

THIS PUBLICATION WAS produced to celebrate the occasion of the Soil and Water Conservation Society Ontario Chapter's 50th Anniversary. We wanted to capture the origin, activities and role of the Ontario Chapter and its members in the conservation movement in the province. This historical context allowed us to refocus our mission statement and move forward into the next 50 years of conservation in the province. The Chapter history presented here is a snapshot of the full documentation available through members of the swcs Ontario Chapter executive committee and our website (www.swcs-ontario.org). We hope this publication will instill pride in our past and enthusiasm to build on the wealth of expertise, knowledge and commitment to conservation embodied in the Ontario Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

Pamela Shantz
Joosse, President



Congratulations

Dear Members of the Ontario Chapter,
Soil and Water Conservation Society:

We are writing to express our warmest congratulations on the 50th anniversary of the Ontario Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

The history and accomplishments of the Ontario Chapter are impressive. Your members have demonstrated their commitment to conservation and the conservation movement by making the Ontario Chapter one of the most active and innovative chapters within our Society. You have been actively engaged in international activities and through that work have brought a critical global perspective to bear on the mission of the Society as a whole. You have also helped lead our Society – two of your members have served as President of the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

We are very pleased to celebrate this milestone with you and offer our help and encouragement as you implement your strategic plan and meet the conservation challenges of the next 50 years.

Congratulations!

Myron Senechal
President

Craig Cox
Executive Director

Congratulations!

Myron Senechal
President

Craig Cox
Executive Director

Past presidents

1952	Richard Hodges
1953	Frank Morwick
1954	Oswald McConkey
1955	Donald R. Putnam
1956	Leonard Webber
1957	Ted Sutter / Herbert Crown
1958	Leonard Webber
1959	Leonard Johnson
1960	Hugh Ayers
1961	Kenneth Higgs
1962	Thomas H. Lane
1963	Craig R. Leuty
1964	Jesse A. Bryson
1965	Arthur D. Latornell
1966	B. Harper Bull
1967	Burton C. Matthews
1968	G. Mac Coutts
1969	Ralph E. Crysler
1970	Douglas W. Hoffman
1971	Douglas Robinson
1972	Harry G. Hooke
1973	Ronald V. Brittain
1974	James S. Anderson
1975	F. Ivan Lorant
1976	David R. Cressman
1977	Alex Ansell
1978	Murray E. Steven
1979	Richard D. Hunter
1980	Robert J. McClure
1981	Phil Hale
1984	Bryan D. Boyce
1982-1983	Jane I. Devito
1985-1986	Jack McFadden
1987	Art Bos
1988	Karen Switzer-Howse
1989	Paul Fish
1990	Robert Chang
1991	Tom Prout
1991-1992	Tom Prout
1993-1994	Ray Tufgar
1995-1996	Elizabeth Pringle
1997-1998	Barbara Veale
1999-2000	John Parish
2001-2002	Pamela Joosse

Introduction



The beginnings of an Ontario soil and water conservation movement

THE CONSERVATION of natural resources is not an idea just developed over the past 50 years. Numerous events led to an interest in conservation and the establishment of the Ontario Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. In 1909 the government of Canada appointed an advisory body called the Commission of Conservation. This group was to provide advice on the conservation of soil, forests, water and wildlife to the federal government. Its recommendations can be found in the annual reports of the commission.

In 1946, a farm planning service for Ontario farmers was started at the Soil Science Department, Ontario Agricultural College (OAC). Farmers desiring this service made application through the County or Region Agricultural Representative. A soil specialist made a survey of the farm, mapping type of soil, slope of land, erosion problems, stoniness present use of the land, and type of farming carried on as a basis for setting up a plan. With this information and in consultation with the farmer, plans for suitable crop rotations, field re-arrangement, fertility practices, pasture renovation, methods of erosion control and drainage were drawn up. Many of the scientists conducting these studies formed the backbone of the Ontario Chapter. T.H. Lane, F.F. Morwick, N.R. Richards, L.R. Webber and C. Leuty are but a few of these.

In 1940, Webber and Richards attended the Conservation Techniques Program at Coshocton, Ohio run by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service. There they made connections with their American counterparts interested in similar issues and services.

Soil erosion and land use practices were of particular interest and a number of conferences took place prior to 1951. Of particular significance was a conference held at the OAC on April 25, 1941. The most important achievement of this conference was the initiating of the Ganaraska survey undertaken jointly by the federal and provincial governments. A recommendation of the Ganaraska Report was that legislation be enacted which would enable conservation works to be undertaken within the natural boundaries of a river valley under the supervision of the municipalities in the valley or watershed. In 1944, the Conservation Branch was established in the Department of Planning and Development, and in 1946, the Conservation Authority Act was passed. Other related events were also happening at Guelph. In 1943, L.R. Webber and



An example of soil erosion in the last 1950s.

N.R. Richards prepared a report titled "Conservation Practices in the USA" which was a detailed account of their conservation course at La Crosse, Wisconsin. Also, N.R. Richards and F.F. Morwick conducted what was the first erosion survey in Ontario and a report was prepared titled "Soil Erosion and Land Use Survey, Hope Township Project Area, Durham County, Ontario."

A major advance for conservation occurred in 1949 with the appointment of a provincial govern-

ment committee on Soil Conservation. This committee was appointed to study all aspects of conservation and found itself concerned with three basic resources: soil, water, and wood. The committee conducted its work by consulting senior government officials, university scientists and officials, landholders and the general public meeting with these people at 32 different municipalities throughout the Province.



Contour strip cropping was promoted in farm planning programs in the 1950s to 60s.

A.H. Richardson, in *Conservation by the People: The History of the Conservation Movement in Ontario to 1970* (University of Toronto Press, 1974), offers a broad overview of conservation issues and activities in Ontario in the years preceding formation of the Ontario Chapter. He chronicles the establishment of the Conservation Branch (later, the Conservation Authorities Branch) in the Department of Planning and Development, passage of the unique Conservation Authorities Act in 1946, formation of many conservation authorities. He describes the highly significant work of the Ontario Conservation and Reforestation Association (OCRA) as they vigorously promoted the expansion of vast tracts of County Forest that stabilized fragile landscapes across southern Ontario. These landscapes had been ravaged through the clearing of virgin forests for intensive agriculture without the essential erosion control techniques.

Also important in setting the stage for new ventures into conservation as highlighted by Richardson was the “Guelph Conference” in 1937 where members of OCRA, OAC, the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (FON) and others gathered to consider the precarious state of affairs with respect to deforestation and erosion across southern Ontario and agreed that the time for action had come and that “real progress could be made only when municipalities all over the province united in forward-looking conservation policy actually put into effect.” These groups played a significant role in launching a 1940s conservation movement.

Richardson’s emphasis rests with the efforts and accomplishments of Ontario’s 38 conservation authorities established through the passage of Bill 81 in the Ontario legislature in 1946 and of the Conservation Authorities Branch of the Department of Planning and Development who provided most of the technical and manpower support needed to launch their programs. It would later ensue that many and at times, most of the members and many of the leaders of the Chapter were drawn from the Branch and the conservation authorities.

Past history has had a considerable influence on the establishment of the Ontario Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. People concerned about conservation matters became members of the chapter when it was first established in 1951 and many continue their membership until this day.



Ontario

Present plans are to establish a chapter of the Society in Ontario Canada. In a recent letter to the Secretary, R. C. Hodges of Toronto says "We have listed some fifty persons whom we consider would be good charter members. The intention is to circularize all these people and follow up with a personal visit or telephone call to as many as we can reach."

Plans call for an organization meeting in September or October. We hope to have a national officer or member of council attend.

Birth of the Ontario Chapter



To advance
the science
of soil and water
resources

IT WAS PROFESSIONALS from two separate but closely related streams of involvement in conservation—the Ontario Agricultural College (OAC), Guelph and the new provincial Conservation Branch of the Department of Planning and Development—that united to form the Ontario Chapter of the Society. It appears that four individuals from Ontario, already members of the Soil Conservation Society of America (SCSA), are instrumental in establishing a chapter in Ontario. After attending the 1950 annual meeting of the SCSA in Detroit Michigan, Dr. Donald F. Putnam, Dick

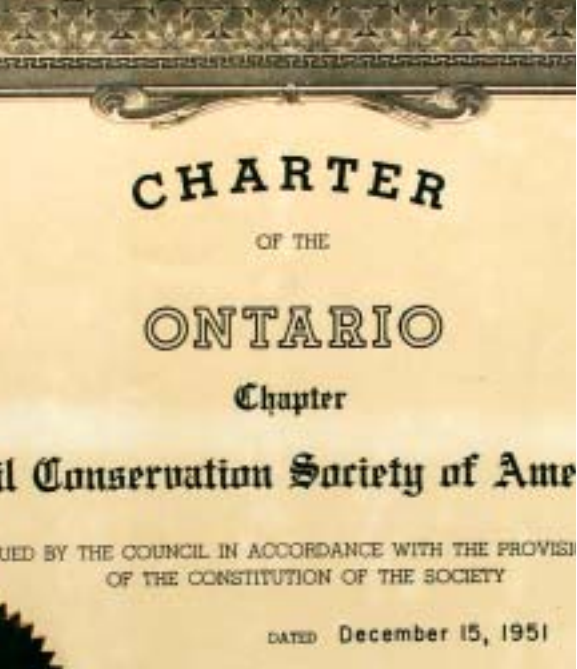
Hodges, Walter Creswick and Ted Baker decided that it was time for an SCSA Chapter in Ontario. In August 14, 1951, they jointly drafted and signed a letter to members of the SCSA in Ontario and other professional colleagues proposing “an organization for those of us whose work or interest is in the advancement of the scientific aspects of soil and water conservation.”

At least six recipients of this letter responded affirmatively, thus yielding the minimum number required to form a chapter. They are the charter members listed in the dedication on page 2.

The organizational meeting for the Ontario Chapter took place at the Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, on October 13, 1951 and was attended by the Society’s president Morris Fonda. R.C. Hodges was elected as the first chairman. Other Chapter officers elected were F.F. Morwick (First Vice-Chairman), E.G. Pleva (Second Vice-Chairman), D.R. Putnam (Councillor), L.R. Webber (Councillor), and W.J.P. Creswick (Secretary Treasurer).

According to the minutes: “The birth of the chapter was followed by attending a rugby game in which OAC-OVC “thoroughly trounced” the Royal Military College.”

The Chapter’s Charter was granted December 15, 1951.



It is planned to hold the first Annual Meeting for establishment of the chapter and election of officers in the autumn, at which you will meet some of the officers of the organization.

Yours sincerely,

D. F. Putnam Member

R.C. Hodges
R. C. Hodges Membership Committee

W.J.P. Creswick
W. J. P. Creswick Member

Chapter Activities

Chapter Meetings

Each year the Ontario Chapter invites speakers to address its meetings on key resource management issues. The themes over the years have been varied, as they represent a multi-disciplinary organization and are indicative of the wide range in interests and expertise contained within the membership. Some of these themes were:

1962	Interpretation and Application of the Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Act (ARDA)	1990	Sustainable Development
1965	Water Supply for Farms and Small Communities	1993	The Cost of Conservation: The Benefits—Who Pays?
1966	Recreational Resource Problems in Southern Ontario	1994	Protecting our Resources Through Policy: Do Current Approaches Work?
1968	Conservation Education	1996	Innovative Technologies
1972	Conflicts in Land Use Planning	1997	Volunteerism
	Erosion and Sedimentation	1998	Global Climate Change: Implications for Soil and Water Conservation
	Land-Use Planning in the Beaver Valley	1999	Biosolids Application on Land: A Balancing Act
	Energy Choices for the Eighties—What are our Alternatives?	2000	Recreational Water Demands: Can and Should They be Met?
1987	Water Management	2001	Innovative Approaches for Environmental Enhancement at the Local Level
1989	Emerging Issues in Soil and Water Management in Ontario		

Tours

Tours of conservation projects have frequently enhanced the learning process. Conservation needs and activities were periodically observed in the field on tour to help the learning process, usually in association with Chapter meetings. Examples of some of the early tours are:

- viewing of conservation farming practices on Canada Packers, Massey Harris and Tory farms.
- to the Cayuga Experiment Station (run by the Federal Government near Dunnville) to consider conservation issues on Haldimand clay soils
- to Maple Research Station run by the Department of Lands and Forests
- tour of erosion and sediment control on land development sites in urbanizing areas on the north fringe of Toronto held in association with a conference called “Erosion- Cause Effects Controls” sponsored jointly by the Chapter and the Conservation Council of Ontario.
- tour of Old Order Mennonite Farming Country in association with the second “Crisis in the Countryside” meeting, this one in St. Jacobs.

Over time, the Chapter’s principal focus had shifted from the soil erosion aspect of land degradation to broader aspects of resource degradation and wastage, especially in southern Ontario where the majority of members lived and worked.

Insights from Early Chapter Meetings

Prof. Len Webber (1952):

“In silt we have some of our worst erosion problems. The aggregating ability of clay makes it less erosive. The effect of one inch per hour of falling rain on the soil has the same effect as a ten ton truck traveling at 60 miles an hour.” He quoted a Country Gentleman poll which said that only two per cent of all farmers polled thought that conservation was their greatest problem. He said that “education was necessary and that should be our first attempt in conservation.”

Prof. Hugh Ayers (1957):

Reporting on a meeting he had recently attended of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers, Prof. Ayers wrote that “one of the papers dealt with ‘minimum tillage’—the plough-plant method of tillage. The advantages of the system are the reduction on the cost of the tilling operation, less susceptibility to erosion and equal yields.”

Herb Crown (1957):

“Studies have shown that if the in-soak of water on the Upper Thames watershed could be increased to take an additional one inch of rainfall, the cost of one large flood control structure could be saved. Also at that meeting ‘little valley’ (sub-watershed) studies were discussed as a means of promoting the application of soil and water conservation practices to farms in a watershed.”



Above: The results of the Grade 3 "Plants and Soil Grow Together" program.



Left: Presentation of 2001 A.D. Latorrell Award of Merit.

Art Latornell

Information and Education Programs

In addition to opening its meetings to the general public, the Chapter has undertaken a variety of public information and education initiatives.

Education of Young People

The Ontario Chapter has always had strong programs in public information and education. The importance of involving teachers in Chapter meetings and holding educational seminars was recognized as early as 1957. In 1963, 3,000 brochures and cartoon booklets on Forestry, Soils, Water, Fish & Wildlife and Recreation suitable for elementary school use were distributed. The booklets were produced at Society headquarters then sold to agencies such as conservation authorities for distribution. A commission on those sales acted as an early fund raising mechanism for the Chapter.

In 1990, the Ontario Chapter decided to initiate a "home-grown" and more in-keeping-with-the-times format for the message. In conjunction with the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, it produced a Soil Conservation Kit also for use in elementary schools.

In 2000, the Ontario Chapter sponsored a pilot project "Plants and Soil Grow Together," which enhanced the Grade 3 curriculum through hands-on field trips, expression through art and awareness in the local community.

Student Chapter

The Ontario Chapter has also encouraged the development of student chapters at several of the province's educational institutions. A student chapter at the University of Guelph received its charter in 1967.

Art Latornell Award of Merit

Arthur Douglas Latornell (1923-91) is a symbol, an icon, of conservation in Ontario. For 40 years, Art influenced the conservation movement in Ontario through his quiet and supportive manner. Art's style was to lead from behind, but there was no doubt about his ability to guide, direct and mentor. During Art's career he met hundreds of people, people who remembered him as a gentleman and a statesman. These qualities helped carry him on to become the first Society President from Canada



The Arthur D. Latornell Award of Merit furthers two of Art's passions: one; giving young people an opportunity to pursue conservation careers and, two; encouraging and recognizing conservation efforts in Ontario. The Award has two categories, student and non-student and annually awards are presented to one individual in each category. The award consists of funds to support education, community projects and travel to society meetings, a one-year membership in SWCS, plus funds towards the cost of attending the A.D. Latornell Symposium.

Chapter Publications

The Ontario Chapter has held numerous symposia and workshops for the purposes of member education and to collect opinions and expertise for preparing publications and position statements. The publications were intended for both the professional development of members and for the benefit of others working in the field of resource conservation. They also served as a basis for a variety of position papers with respect to a number of important provincial resource management issues.

To communicate with members about developments in the Chapter and about other significant resource management issues, the Chapter started a newsletter in 1977 with Jane DeVito as its first editor.

Advocacy Initiatives

Realizing in 1977 that education about sound principles of conservation would accomplish more if government policies and programs were consistent with these principles, for the first time in its history, the Chapter Executive Committee, decided to speak directly to government and the general public about pressing resource management issues of the day. Thus, the first position statement, *Crisis in the Countryside*, was prepared and forwarded to the Ontario Minister of Housing and to the leaders of the opposition parties.

No sooner had this step been taken but a public furor erupted over the proposed designation of large areas of special and scarce (if not unique) fruit land in the Niagara Peninsula for urban expansion in the Regional Municipality of Niagara's Official Plan. Based on the principles outlined in the position statement, the Chapter prepared a brief objecting to these proposals and forwarded it to the Minister of Housing and the leaders of the opposition parties

Reports published by the chapter

- 1972** *Erosion, Causes, Effects and Controls, proceedings of a meeting co-sponsored with the Conservation Council of Ontario.*
- 1976** *Crisis in the Countryside, proceedings of summer and fall meetings of the Chapter.*
- 1980** *Watershed Planning and Management, proceedings of the Chapter's annual, summer and fall meetings.*
- 1981** *Erosion and Sedimentation in Ontario, A Time for Action, proceedings of the Chapter's winter, summer and fall meetings.*
- 1989** *Resources for Soil and Water Conservation Education: An Annotated Bibliography.*



Position Statement Summaries

1977

Crisis in the Countryside: New Directions for Policy on Land Use

In the early 1970s, controversy raged in Ontario over the apparent escalating loss of farmlands. Controversy centred on the accuracy and correct interpretation of the Census data being used to document this trend and the extensive urbanization of unique tender fruit lands next to the Niagara Escarpment.

The Chapter Executive decided to publicly address this aspect of farmland degradation by focusing on the principles that should drive public policy.

First examined were the wide variety of threats to the highest quality agricultural soils and the associated farms. This statement described the ways in which farmlands were being adversely affected by urban expansion, and by non-farm land uses in rural areas. It noted the scarcity of the highest quality agricultural lands in Canada most of the best lands being here in southern Ontario where urban pressures are the greatest

The statement concluded with recommendations for public policy with Goals for Rural Land Use, Guiding Principles and Action Recommendations.

Summary by Dave Cressman

1983

Soil Erosion: Its Agricultural and Environmental Implications for Southern Ontario

In the 1970s, the International Joint Commission identified rising levels of nutrients in the Great Lakes. Research conducted under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) revealed that agricultural land use practices were significant sources of sediment and associated nutrients. In 1977, to bring public attention to this problem, the Ontario Chapter adopted the theme: "Erosion and Sedimentation in Ontario: A Time for Action" for three meetings, and in 1981 published the papers from those meetings. In 1983, the Chapter published *Soil Erosion: It's Agricultural and Environmental Implications for Southern Ontario*.

The position statement drew attention to accelerated soil erosion and land degradation as a serious threat both to the long-term security of agriculture and to the quality of surface water. Attention was drawn to increasing rates of soil erosion and consequent water quality degradation.

After publication of the Chapter's position statement, a number of publicly funded soil and water conservation programs were initiated. The first and largest of these in 1985 was a coordinated federal-provincial agreement to launch the Soil and Water Environmental Program (SWEEP).

Summary by Dr. Greg Wall



Position Statements

Position Statements reflect the Chapter's views and assertions on a broad spectrum of resource management issues. Recommendations have been forwarded to governments and special interest groups, and many have been the basis for action. Outlined at right are the Position Statements prepared by the Chapter. Details on each are available from the Chapter Executive.

Chapter members have had numerous opportunities to play an active role, thus helping to further the Chapter's mission and objectives. Many members have served on Chapter or Society committees, some organizational in nature, others, more program or issue-related. For example in 1978, the Chapter had three very active committee in action simultaneously i.e. water management, forestry and land use. Most were active in planning Chapter meetings and often in drafting the follow-up position statements.

- 1977** Crisis in the Countryside: New Directions for Policy on Land Use
- 1983** Soil Erosion: Its Agricultural and Environmental Implications for Southern Ontario
- 1987** Wetland Conservation: A Call for Action.
- 1992** Private Forest Land Management
- 1992** Sustaining the Landscape: Agriculture, Land, Water and Wildlife in Ontario
- 1995** Natural Channel Design
- 1997** Watershed Management in Ontario: Two Steps Forward—One Step Back?

Local Arrangements Committee, 1960 Annual Conference, Guelph, Ontario. Back row: Craig Leuty, Ross Irwin, Len Johnson, Tom Lane, Art Latornell. Front row: Herb Crown, Rick Richards, Ken Higgs, Fran Hoffman, Len Webber, Hugh Ayers.



Involvement in Broader Initiatives

Hosting Society Annual Meetings

Annual meetings of the Society have always been a much anticipated opportunity to both see conservation activity in other parts of North America and to get acquainted with professional colleagues in other jurisdictions, both US and Canada.

As the meetings rotated annually from Region to Region, it was the Canadian Region's opportunity to host an annual meeting about every nine years.

The Ontario Chapter has hosted four of these annual meetings:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1960 Theme: "New Technologies in Land Resource Use," 15th meeting, University of Guelph. This was the first meeting of the Society to take place outside the United States of America and emphasized the international perspective of the Society.</p> | <p>1979 "Resource Constrained Economies: The North American Dilemma," 34th meeting, Chateau Laurier, Ottawa.</p> |
| <p>1970 Theme: "Turning Points in Time," 25th meeting, York University, Toronto.</p> | <p>1997 The Theme: "Interactions: Managing Watersheds on an Ecosystem Basis," The 52nd meeting, Toronto.</p> |

Typically, the annual meeting was the duty of the Society, but the far more onerous work of planning the local arrangements and executing the logistics of the meeting, tours, etc. was the work of the Chapter. Ken Higgs survived the work of planning the 1970 meeting in Toronto and lives to tell the tale.

This was always a time when a host of volunteers was required from the local chapter to carry out the many basic tasks that help make a meeting of 1,000 plus people as success, especially for the families of the registrants.



A common thread was the desire to learn from each other



Chapter members at 1970 Society Annual Meeting at York University.

1987

Wetland Conservation: A Call for Action

The Ontario Chapter felt a balanced analysis of this issue could contribute to the momentum towards more coordinated and effective public programs on wetland conservation.

A committee consisting of biologists, planners and representatives of drainage and agricultural interests developed this position paper.

Issues of concern noted were: lack of a coordinated approach to wetland conservation, lack of technical data, problems defining wetland value; landowners saddled with the wetland conservation costs despite many broader societal benefits; lack of public awareness; scarcity of government funding for conservation; and an inadequate evaluation and provincial guidelines for wetland management.

In the 15 years since the position paper there has been progress on many of the 29 recommendations. The most dramatic is likely in the area of policy. Within a few years, the governments of Ontario and Canada each finalized a wetland policy with many of the features proposed in the position paper. Wetland conservation has since become part of the Provincial Policy Statement where wetlands are now one of the most protected ecosystem types.

Summary by Elizabeth Snell

1992

Private Forest Land Management in Ontario

Through this position statement the Chapter wanted to encourage more effective management and use of forests on privately owned lands in Ontario and to ensure that management systems incorporate ecological knowledge to achieve compatible production of commodities and protection of ecological values. To further this goal the Chapter encouraged the Province to adopt a Private Land Forest Management Act. Such an Act would incorporate the best features of the existing legislation, provide new provisions to more adequately encourage the management of Ontario's private forests and include a public awareness program.

Unfortunately, the message from SWCS fell on deaf ears. By the late 1990s the Province privatized its tree nurseries and discontinued incentives to private landowners.

Summary by Tom Prout



Chapter President Tom Prout receives the Outstanding Chapter Award from Rich Duesterhaus in Spokane, Washington in 1991.

Society Leadership

Throughout its history, the Ontario Chapter has been strongly involved in the leadership of the Society affairs and activities. There have been from the outset, representatives of the “Canadian Region” on the Society’s governance body, first called the Council, now the Board of Directors. The representatives of the Canadian Region (Region 9) —all Ontario Chapter members at one time or another—are listed at right.

Significant Society leadership positions in the Society occupied by Ontario Chapter members include: Art Latornell—Second Vice President 1975–1976, First Vice-President 1977, President 1978, Past President 1979 and Chair of the editorial board of the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation 1988–1990.

David R. (Dave) Cressman—Vice President 1987, President Elect 1988, President 1989, Chair of International Affairs Committee 1990–91.

Over the years, other members of the Chapter served on many Society committees but a complete record is not available.

Formation of Other Canadian Chapters

The Chapter has played a very important role in the formation of other Canadian Chapters. Past members of the Ontario Chapter who relocated to other Provinces, with assistance and encouragement from Ontario have been instrumental in the formation of Chapters in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and Atlantic Canada.

Collaborative Efforts

Over the years, the Ontario Chapter promoted and spearheaded meetings with sister chapters in the neighboring regions of the USA, especially others located in the Great Lakes drainage basin. The meeting topics and locations illustrate the common interests. A common thread through all was the desire to learn from each other and seek opportunities for joint action.

The Chapter has long had working relationships with other environmental organizations, as well as government, industry and academia. It has, for example, had a representative on the Conservation Council of Ontario since 1961. It had delegates at the Resources for Tomorrow Conference in 1962.

Canadian Region Council/Board Representatives (from the Ontario Chapter)

- Herbert F. Crown (1962–64)
- Norval Richards (1959–61)
- Leonard Webber (1965–67)
- Arthur Latornell (1968–1973)
- Kenneth Higgs (1974–79)
- David R. Cressman (1980–83)
- Ron Hicks (1984–91)
- Tom Kurtz (1994–97)
- Laurens van Vliet (1997–present) (Laurens is now from the British Columbia Chapter)

Jointly Sponsored Meetings

- 1973** “Land Use Planning in the Great Lakes Basin with an Emphasis on Waterfront Development,” Sarnia and Port Huron, with the Michigan Chapter
- 1975** “Resource Problems and Opportunities in the Lake Ontario Basin,” Toronto, with the Empire State Chapter of New York
- 1982** “Acid Rain: A North American Challenge,” Burlington Vermont, with the New Hampshire-Vermont Chapters,
- 1995** “Natural Channel Design Workshop,” Niagara Falls, with American Fishery Association and Canadian Water Resources Association

Refocusing our Present Mission

THE OCCASION OF the 50th Anniversary triggered a strategic planning exercise for the Ontario Chapter. We recognized that all organizations evolve overtime. In particular, there was a need to refocus our mission: to define our niche and relationship among the many existing environmental organizations, to engage members in active contributions for the continued success of the Chapter, and to continuously evolve with the changing face of environmental management in the province.

The Chapter's present mission recognizes our core strengths. We will focus on offering **professional development** through learning opportunities at workshops and meetings, as well as leadership and networking opportunities through the Society and collaboration with other agencies. The Chapter will support **education** in its broadest sense, providing sponsorship, scholarships, materials and expertise to educate the public and policy makers on conservation issues. We will be **advocates** for conservation issues at the local, municipal, provincial and federal level by responding with an objective and interdisciplinary voice to draft policy statements and by partnering with agencies which share common concerns. The Chapter will continue to identify and address education and **technology gaps** needed to solve conservation issues. All of these activities are aimed at promoting the **integrated management** of our natural resources. The Chapter brings together many disciplines, recognizing the science and art required to arrive at workable solutions to resource management issues.

We will continue to seek the managers of natural resources to form the core of our membership. We plan to add value to professional careers through the opportunity for networking, interdisciplinary discussion and involvement in advocacy and education activities on integrated management which members may not have access to elsewhere. We are a vehicle through which committed conservationists can have a larger voice.

We are a vehicle through which committed conservationists can have a larger voice.



1992

Sustaining the Landscape: Agriculture, Land, Water and Wildlife in Ontario

Shortly after release of the Brundtland Report, the Chapter sponsored three workshops to explore the meaning and implications of the term "sustainable development" for areas of interest to Chapter members, and especially in reference to agriculture, water resources, and wildlife habitat. This was a time when there was provincial government interest in the development of improved guidelines and policies for many resources in Ontario.

The position statement reviewed the concept of sustainable development, key resource systems and users, and examined resource interactions and problems in order to develop recommendations on meeting needs, resolving problems and finding solutions. The Recommendations were directed to Chapter members, government agencies and other organizations such as the Ontario Round Table on the Environment and Economy, which were involved in resource management.

Summary by D. Scott Slocombe

50th Anniversary Organizing Committee Members (left to right, standing): Mac Coutts, Kenneth Higgs, Ray Tufgar, Jane DeVito, David Cressman, Pamela Joosse, Leonard Johnson (Charter Member), Marsha Paley (President Elect), John Parish, Barbara Veale, Tom Prout. Kneeling: Robert Chang, Tom Kurtz, Jim Anderson. Absent: Douglas Hoffman.

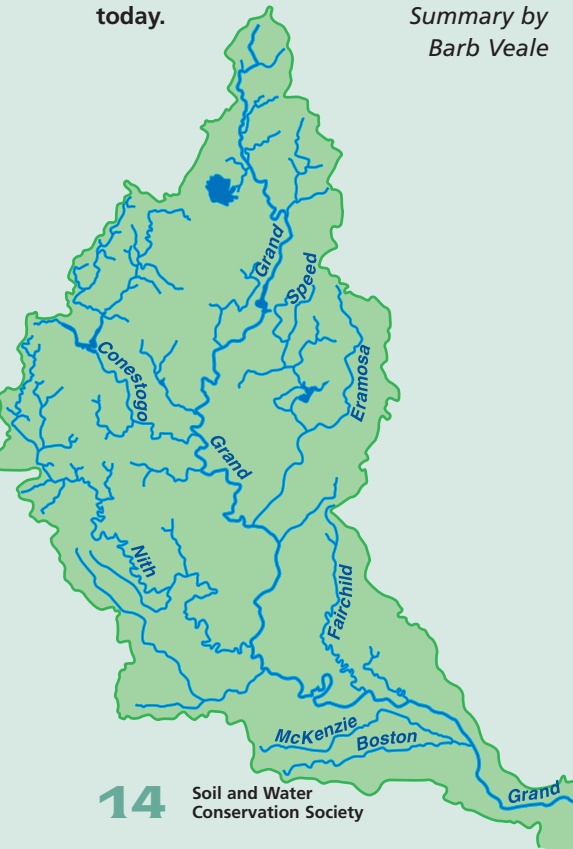


1997

Watershed Management in Ontario: Two Steps Forward—One Step Back?

This statement stressed the importance of balancing growth within a watershed with the conservation of the sensitive and finite natural resource base that supports it. It was recognized that Ontario showed initiative, foresight and leadership in establishing Ontario’s conservation authorities in the 1940s and in promoting co-operative watershed management. It was observed that those same traits are essential to appropriately address the soil and water management issues of today.

Summary by Barb Veale



Looking to the Future



The Soil & Water Conservation Society has a key role to play

THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY of a presentation given by Jim Bruce, 8 June 2002. It provides some of the issues which will give focus for the activities of the Chapter as we move forward.

“A few years ago the Ontario Chapter produced a valuable report on the recent history of conservation in Ontario. It was entitled, appropriately, “two steps forward, one step back”. The signs are beginning to point to a period when another two steps forward might be taken. How can we be optimistic with so many recent negative

developments such as contaminated water, economic threats to the farm community, the hazards of climate change?

These threats can also be considered as challenges. Is there room for optimism about addressing these challenges, in Ontario, in Canada and internationally?”

Water Pollution

In Ontario we bottomed out a couple of years ago with the tragic events of Walkerton. Since then we have seen significant improvements in the way the provincial government is addressing water quality



issues—not nearly enough progress yet, but it will be politically difficult to backslide again. The recommendations of Chief Justice O’Connor’s inquiry report, accepted by the government, calls for protection of sources of drinking water through a watershed-based planning approach, involving local actors, an approach long recommended by swcs and Conservation Authorities.

The Walkerton experience was symptomatic of three main problems:

- Runoff from and seepage through agricultural lands is now the greatest source of pollution of surface and groundwater in Canada from pesticides, nutrients, pathogens. Environmental Farm Plans in Ontario and now a \$100 million federal EFP initiative should help to address this problem.
- High intensity rains are becoming more frequent in Ontario with anthropogenic climate change—washing wastes into water supplies and increasing erosion.
- Inadequacies of municipal water and sewage treatment facilities and of operator training now beginning to be addressed.

Lack of availability of freshwater is projected to affect half of the world’s population within 30 years.

The Grand River Watershed

Water Quantities

Globally, lack of availability of freshwater is projected to affect half of the world's population within 30 years. In Canada, major droughts are causing serious problems, and climate change projections for Ontario suggest declining groundwater tables and reduced minimum streamflows. Improved water allocation procedures, scientifically based and on a watershed scale must be greatly improved. SWCS can assist.

Natural Disasters

Climate-related disaster losses, storms, flash floods and droughts are rapidly increasing in Canada and globally. Better flood plain management and land conservation practices long advocated by SWCS are essential.



In May 1974, the Grand River overflowed its banks. Climate-related flooding is expected to increase in the future.

Farm Income

Farmers produce two products for society. One is the food for which they are compensated by the market. The other is stewardship of the land, for better or worse. This benefits society as a whole and farmers should be supported technically and financially to practise better stewardship. Competing farming countries in USA and Europe do so, and governments in Canada are beginning to take steps in this direction and will need assistance of organizations such as SWCS.

Vigilance about water quality, wiser use and allocation of water, better conservation of agricultural lands, are all within our grasp. Increasing population development and climate pressures will inevitably require governmental responses at three levels and programs need to be delivered in a local or regional watershed context. Appropriate responses will not happen without public interest and public pressure.

The Soil and Water Conservation Society has a key role to play. We can advocate for scientifically and economically sound approaches to these issues and demonstrate them. We can inform the greater public

It takes a vigilant, informed public or portions of the public, such as SWCS members, to ensure that responses are sooner rather than later, and that we do not have to wait until people die, land becomes unproductive or economies collapse.

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– Dave Cressman and Doug Hoffman