

Our Future Taking Shape

Strategic Plan 2020-2022



**Credit Valley
Conservation**
inspired by nature



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Message from the Chair and Vice Chair



It was with great excitement and promise that we launched **Our Future to Shape**, our strategic plan for 2015-2019. With new-found direction, we moved swiftly and purposefully to execute the plan, aligning resources and workplans with the directions within. We accomplished a lot within five years, but there is much more to do as we continue to face challenges to the natural environment such as climate change, rapid urban growth and invasive species. We also face challenges in our political environment with changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act* and related regulations that have the potential to cause significant organizational change. And now a pandemic – shifting how and where we do our business and interact with our partners, volunteers and staff.

While there is uncertainty surrounding us, there has never been more certainty that our work is vitally important to the health and well-being of communities in the Credit River Watershed. Residents felt the loss of access

to conservation areas for months as we all coped with the peak of the pandemic. Our partners, while currently focused on public health, continue to push for urgent action on climate change. The will to work together through the pandemic shows us that it is possible to make hard decisions that save lives and make us more resilient.

This new strategic plan lays out a course of action for the next three years, aligning with the term of our current Board of Directors, our pandemic recovery and likely regulatory change. We will stay the course, finish what we started and show our partners that conservation matters in the Credit River Watershed and across Ontario.

On behalf of the Credit Valley Conservation Board of Directors, it is our pleasure to introduce **Our Future Taking Shape**, Credit Valley Conservation's strategic plan for 2020-2022.

Karen Ras
Chair

Tom Adams
Vice Chair

Message from the CAO



When we began down the path of updating our strategic plan, it was impossible to imagine the barriers we would face that challenged our progress. We persevered and are now pleased to present **Our Future Taking Shape**, Credit Valley Conservation's Strategic Plan for 2020-2022.

We knew at the end of 2019 that changes being proposed to the *Conservation Authorities Act* might fundamentally change the way we are funded and, as a result, some of the programs we are able to offer. But waiting for clear direction was not an option. To make the most of the public dollars we were entrusted with we needed to forge ahead, strategically and effectively, to protect, connect and sustain our watershed.

We worked to ensure the directions within this plan focus on:

- local science for evidence-based decisions
- watershed-based evaluations and solutions for challenging problems
- climate change education and action
- Indigenous perspectives and engagement
- ensuring recreational lands and amenities for a growing population

- building relationships and partnerships
- modernizing technology, spaces and processes to drive efficiency and effectiveness
- building the capacity and talents of staff
- working with Credit Valley Conservation Foundation to achieve philanthropic goals

The past five years of work under the previous strategic plan laid a solid foundation for the next three. Many of the plans and strategies are done, setting the stage for implementation. The timing has never been better to build more trails, install more green infrastructure and provide more opportunities for residents to participate in actions that foster a healthy environment and make us resilient to climate change.

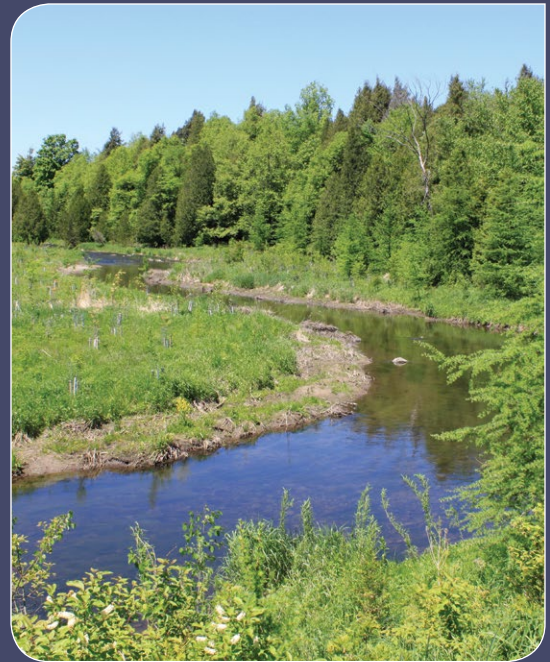
If the COVID-19 pandemic taught us anything, it is that we can work differently and change rapidly. This plan continues the path of change that Credit Valley Conservation has been on for the past five years, enabling us to weather our current challenges and preparing us for new ones. I hope you will join us as our future continues to take shape.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah Martin-Downs".

Deborah Martin-Downs
Chief Administrative Officer

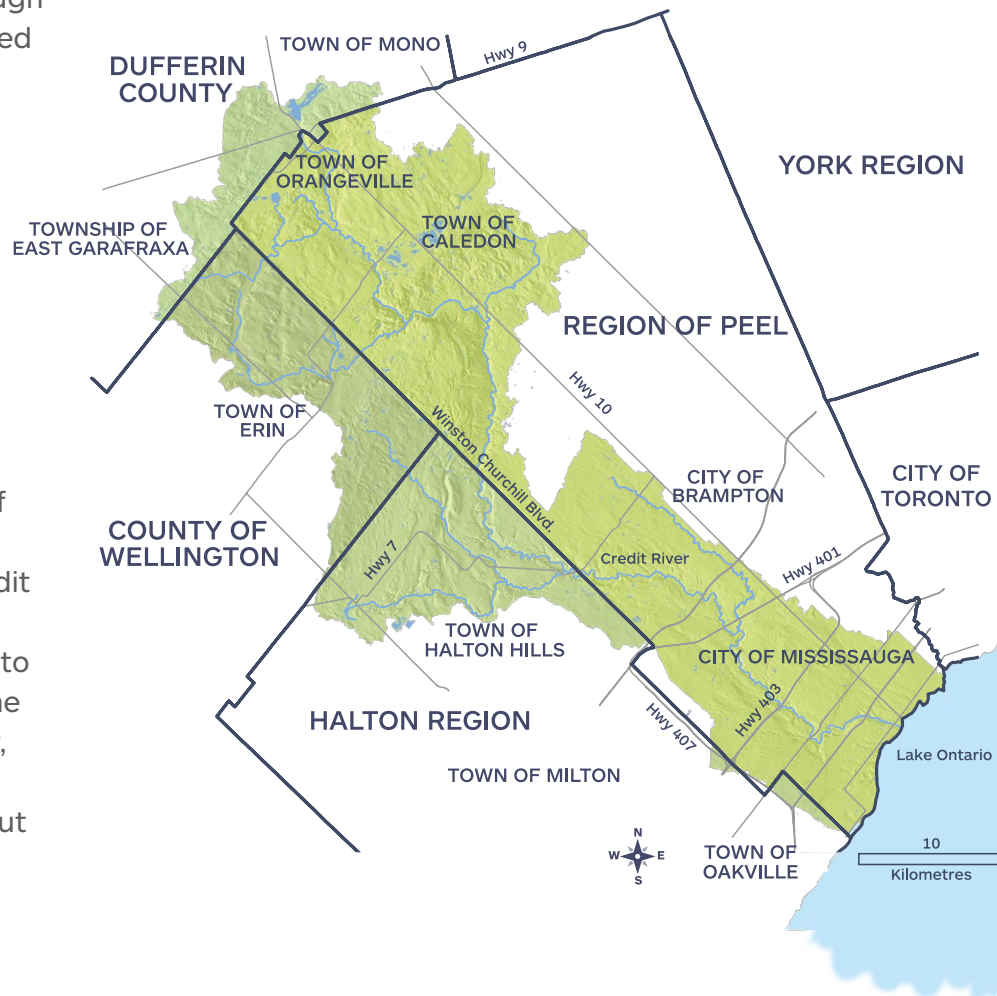
Our Watersheds and Shoreline

The Credit River is almost 90 km long and meanders southeast from its headwaters in Orangeville, Erin and Mono, through nine municipalities, eventually draining into Lake Ontario in Mississauga at Port Credit.



While the Credit River flows through one of the most densely populated regions of Canada, the lands surrounding the river are also some of the most naturally rich, biodiverse and beautiful landscapes in southern Ontario, including parts of the Niagara Escarpment, Oak Ridges Moraine and Greenbelt.

Credit Valley Conservation has a mandate to protect, restore and manage the natural resources of the Credit River Watershed – all the lands that drain into the Credit River – as well as other, smaller watersheds that drain directly into Lake Ontario, and a section of the Lake Ontario shoreline. Together, these areas make up our jurisdiction, referred to throughout as the **Credit River Watershed**.



Setting the Stage

This strategic plan updates the previous plan ***Our Future to Shape: Strategic Plan 2015-2019***. Much of this plan will look familiar. The vision and mission are essentially the same, the values unchanged, the goals are fundamentally the same and many of the actions build on those we have been pursuing for the past five years.

As this is an update, most of the consultation occurred with our Board and staff across all departments.

With uncertainty on the horizon, this plan focuses on completing or making substantive progress on the projects and activities we started under the previous



plan. Additionally, there are many ongoing activities recognized in the directions such as plan review, permitting, monitoring and conservation area operations that continue to be cornerstones of our work. With potential funding shifts, we maintain focused on ensuring value for our partners and a return on their investment.

This document provides a framework for internal alignment and work planning that:

- forms the basis of our work plans over the next three years
- supports our budget requests to our municipal partners
- supports funding requests to donors and grantors
- recognizes and enables the actions from plans and strategies that were prepared under the previous plan
- focuses on the outcomes we strive for as we implement the various actions
- establishes measures of success where applicable to help us track and demonstrate progress

This plan remains as a primary reference document for our organization in directing business planning, workforce planning, project planning, employee objectives and budgets. It guides us while providing enough flexibility to pivot and address changing needs. It ensures we remain accountable to our partners, donors, taxpayers and above all, the environment.



Honouring the Land and Water

As we work to further our mission we are reminded of the rich history and enduring presence of Indigenous peoples as stewards of the land and water of the Credit River Watershed.

Credit Valley Conservation acknowledges that the Credit River Watershed is part of the treaty lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. The Credit River Watershed is also the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, Métis and, most recently, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

As citizens, we continue to be party to the treaties made with Indigenous peoples. We affirm that this land and water are our common source of life and we must all share in their stewardship and prosperity, now and for future generations.

Our Vision

**A thriving environment that
protects, connects
and sustains us.**

Our Mission

**Together, we conserve, restore, develop and manage
the natural resources of the Credit River Watershed
through the power of science, education, policy,
planning and leadership.**

Our Values



Our values guide our actions. They represent who we are as people and as an organization. They factor into every decision made at every level. As our organization evolves, our values remain a constant source of inspiration and guidance.

Leadership: We lead by example. We inspire and empower the community and our partners.

Service: We are responsive and professional in our interactions with the public, our partners and among ourselves.

Collaboration: We work together and with our volunteers, partners and the community to achieve shared goals.

Accountability: We are accountable to taxpayers, our partners and donors. Above all, we are accountable to the environment.

Integrity: We are consistent, honest, ethical and make decisions based on the best available science.

Excellence: We continually learn and improve to be the best we can be.

Innovation: We encourage new and creative technologies and approaches.

Holistic Thinking: We see the big picture and recognize the interconnectedness of elements that form larger systems.

Inclusiveness: We value the diverse perspectives, work experiences, lifestyles and cultures that together inform the work we do.

Spirit: We help each other, give back to the community and celebrate achievements.

Change Agents and Our Commitments

Strategies should not be static. They must adapt to the changing world in which they are implemented. We recognize the importance of all societal change and, more specifically, the change agents impacting conservation in the Credit River Watershed since the last strategic plan was drafted in late 2014.

The change agents and commitments below reflect drivers that will impact, influence and guide our work.

Change Agents

Science: Our evolving understanding of the environment and its stressors.

Technology: Advancements that allow us to work more effectively and efficiently, while offering improved services and experiences for partners, residents and visitors.

Climate Change: New realities that call for greater resilience, mitigation measures, public education and adaptive management.

Health: Environmental health supports physical health, mental well-being and can reduce the cost of health care by ensuring people have safe drinking water, protection from natural hazards and access to greenspaces.

People: The impacts of urban growth and changing demographics require that our services and spaces evolve to meet increased demand and ever-changing public expectations.

Our Commitments

Stewardship of Land and Water: We are thoughtful and principled stewards of Credit Valley Conservation's publicly held land and water and partners in the stewardship of our entire watershed.

Accountability: We are accountable to the residents of the Credit River Watershed, conservation area visitors, donors, our partners and, above all, the environment.

Indigenous Peoples: We are committed to partnering with Indigenous nations, communities and peoples to advance reconciliation through our work and practices.

Service: We provide our customers, clients, partners and visitors with customer-focused programs and services that protect people and communities and connect people with nature.

Staff: We support, engage and develop our people, fostering a culture of inclusiveness, health and safety, well-being, excellence, and leadership.

Goal One

Plan for an environmentally sustainable future

Directions (three years)

1 Study and monitor our environment ensuring we have the right information to base our decisions and management actions on to maintain a healthy natural heritage system and address climate change, land use change and invasive species.

2 Work with Indigenous communities to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing in our work.

3 Regularly evaluate and integrate the results of environmental field programs to identify emerging issues, areas for future investigation and to forecast the impacts of various environmental stressors, including climate change.

4 Regularly report our findings through watershed report cards, publications and other user-friendly tools to communicate results to diverse audiences.

5 Complete the 100-year Watershed Plan telling our story of change – past, present and future – and initiate implementation of short- and long-term recommendations.

6 Complete Headwaters Subwatershed 19 and Shaw's Creek Subwatershed 17 plans and initiate implementation of short- and long-term recommendations.

7 Complete the Hungry Hollow Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan (SNAP) and initiate implementation of short- and long-term recommendations.

8 Identify needs for additional subwatershed or neighbourhood-scale plans to meet requirements of municipalities, the growth plan, asset management plans and infrastructure planning.

9 Complete management plans for Island Lake Conservation Area, Pinchin Pit and Charles Sauriol Conservation Area, incorporating protection, management and visitor experience.

10 Continue work with the Peel Climate Change Partnership and individual municipal partners to implement existing strategies and develop new ones that advance local climate action in response to declared climate emergencies.

Outcomes (ten years)

Environmental monitoring and inventory data, including Indigenous knowledge, that inform decisions, detect trends and identify emerging issues in environmental health.

A comprehensive understanding of watershed stressors, including climate change, land use change and invasive species, that inform strategies designed to address protection, mitigation, restoration and adaptation.

Science-based, community-supported watershed, subwatershed, neighbourhood and management plans that inform existing and future environmental protection, future land use policies, tools and management activities.

Communities better prepared for climate change.



Spotlight: Fletchers Creek SNAP

The Fletchers Creek Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan (SNAP) is our first and flagship SNAP project. Developed and delivered in partnership with the City of Brampton, Region of Peel, local groups and residents, this comprehensive, multidisciplinary plan drives urban renewal and climate action at the neighbourhood scale in this established central Brampton community.

The plan was endorsed by our Board of Directors and City of Brampton Council in early 2019. In the first year of implementation, 2,700+ residents were engaged in 24 community events and projects. SNAP highlights to date include an award-winning low impact development stormwater management project, infrastructure

retrofits, ecological restoration in local parks and on-the-ground engagement of residents and corporations. These activities produced multiple co-benefits that enhance the health and well-being of the local environment and community.

Success can be attributed to the efforts of staff joining forces across departments and with multiple stakeholders. It exemplifies our organizational value of collaboration: **To work together and with our volunteers, partners and the community to achieve shared goals.** We thank everyone involved for their contributions and look forward to continuing to come together to realize the vision for a cleaner, greener Fletchers Creek neighbourhood.

Goal Two

Safeguard people, property and communities from natural hazards

Directions (three years)

- 1** Complete flood risk mapping products and flood damage cost calculations that will aid our organization, municipalities and landowners in understanding and responding to riverine flood risk.
- 2** Provide online tools to access flood hazard and flood risk mapping.
- 3** Update Section 28 Regulation mapping and policies, communicate changes to partners and support applications through plan review and permitting.
- 4** Complete flood hazard mapping for Sheridan, Fletchers, Springbrook and Churchville Creeks, and for priority flood damage centres in Glen Williams and Inglewood.
- 5** Complete the review of the Lake Ontario Shoreline Hazard Report updating shoreline hazard modelling and mapping.
- 6** Develop mitigation plans to reduce flood and erosion risks to properties and infrastructure near Cooksville Creek, Fletchers Creek, Shaw's Creek and the Credit River using the Risk and Return on Investment Tool.
- 7** Support decision making by our partners in the Ontario Low Water Response Program during drought conditions through stream flow and precipitation monitoring.
- 8** Enhance our Flood Forecasting and Warning Program considering emerging technologies, communication tools and technical guidance.

- 9** Assist municipalities in preparing for, responding to and recovering from extreme natural events such as flooding, erosion, drought and ice storms.
- 10** Support municipalities in implementing Source Protection Plan policies, including working with landowners to reduce risks.
- 11** Update the Credit Valley Source Protection Plan to reflect new science, threats, drinking water systems and climate change.
- 12** Provide oversight and annual reporting of the implementation of the CTC (Credit Valley, Toronto Region, Central Lake Ontario) Source Protection Plan.
- 13** Update emergency management plans for conservation areas to include emerging public health, wildfire and safety scenarios.

Outcomes (ten years)

- Science-driven actions to reduce flood and erosion risks to safeguard people, properties and infrastructure.
- Engaged and aware residents ready to respond to a flood emergency.
- Clean and abundant drinking water for our communities now and in the future.
- Public safety on our properties.



Spotlight: Risk and Return on Investment Tool

The social, economic and environmental costs of climate change are already being felt across Canada. Residents and municipalities have paid a high price to repair flooded properties and infrastructure. To fully understand the risks and costs of extreme rainfall events, we worked with our partners to update floodplain mapping with advanced software and developed a Risk and Return on Investment Tool. The tool identifies properties and infrastructure at risk of flooding

and erosion under historic and climate change scenarios. The tool also allows us and our partners to evaluate solutions to maximize return on investment and safeguard our environment and communities for the future. Recognizing we all play a part in protecting our community, the tool provides a series of maps to help property owners understand their risks and prioritize preventative measures.

Goal Three

Manage a healthy, resilient environment through protection, restoration and enhancement

Directions (three years)

- 1** Incorporate priority conservation actions from key watershed-based plans as well as ecosystem evaluation and risk assessment tools into the Integrated Watershed Restoration mapping tool to inform coordinated restoration of public and private lands by us and our partners.
- 2** Complete the Ecological Restoration Strategy and Guidelines.
- 3** Complete the dam and headpond restoration at Belfountain Conservation Area.
- 4** Mitigate the impact of the Monora Creek dam on coldwater habitat and fish movement and undertake a dam mitigation outreach strategy for landowners to identify other candidate projects.
- 5** Complete substantial components of Jim Tovey Lakeview Conservation Area habitat projects.
- 6** Complete the Sustainable Forest Management Plan and initiate implementation of priority actions on our lands while building capacity for private landowner forest management services.

- 7** Implement priority actions from the Invasive Species Strategy focusing on surveillance and response to emerging threats on our lands and adjacent lands where new invasions can be controlled, including Forks of the Credit and Jim Tovey Lakeview Conservation Area.
- 8** Manage, enhance or restore natural features in existing and new conservation lands, including projects at Pinchin Pit, Terra Cotta and Silver Creek.
- 9** Work with landowners to promote behaviour change and identify priority stewardship opportunities that support restoration, management and sustainable landscaping on residential, agricultural, commercial and institutional lands.

Outcomes (ten years)

- Water quality and quantity that support healthy native ecosystems.
- Healthy and resilient aquatic, wetland and terrestrial communities and species that meet ecological targets.
- Vulnerable, ecologically sensitive, at risk and valuable ecosystems are protected, restored or enhanced through strategic management.



Spotlight: Jim Tovey Lakeview Conservation Area

In 2010, Credit Valley Conservation, the Region of Peel and Toronto and Region Conservation laid out a plan to transform an ecologically impaired industrial shoreline in Mississauga with a new conservation area created from repurposed rubble and clean fill. When completed, Jim Tovey Lakeview Conservation Area will offer a total of 26 ha of new habitat, including 11.8 ha of meadow, 1 ha of cobble beach, 4.6 ha of forest, 7.7 ha of coastal wetland and 0.8 ha of rocky islands.

The designs for the conservation area reflect multiple priorities, many of which are captured in our shoreline management plan: ***Living by the Lake: Action Plan***. These include increasing habitat for wildlife, building rocky islands to reduce shoreline erosion and making the area accessible to people and wildlife. Jim Tovey Lakeview Conservation Area will connect with Marie Curtis Park to the east and Lakeview Village to the west, adding a missing piece of the Waterfront Trail.

Goal Four

Develop, maintain and share leading-edge knowledge to advance science-based decision making and on-the-ground action

Directions (three years)

- 1** Lead or participate in joint research and knowledge transfer with our municipal and conservation authority partners, academia and other public and private sector stakeholders.
- 2** Provide knowledge, support and training for water management practitioners through the Sustainable Technology Evaluation Program (STEP).
- 3** Continue to develop scientific understanding to aid in ecological impact assessment and ecosystem offsetting in support of a no-net-loss approach to land use planning.
- 4** Develop guidelines and assessment tools to help maintain adequate streamflow quantity, duration and timing for aquatic life while allowing for sustainable human use of water resources.
- 5** Complete road and valley crossing tools to support municipal infrastructure planning and guide restoration priorities.
- 6** Develop guidance for green infrastructure to meet water balance and climate change risk requirements.
- 7** Continue to develop, upgrade and implement innovative decision support tools, including the Benefit-Cost-4 Natural Asset, Health and Well-Being, Risk and Return on Investment, and STEP LID Life Cycle Costing Tools, to support municipalities in making the business case for investment in green infrastructure.

- 8** Demonstrate the application of the *Drainage Act* for urban stormwater management for properties on Mississauga's Southdown Road, promoting the methodology and results widely.
- 9** Work with municipal partners to operationalize green infrastructure through the development of frameworks and standard operating procedures for inclusion in infrastructure asset management programs.
- 10** Leverage monitoring data and tools to make science-based decisions in land use planning and restoration and advance adaptive watershed management considering a changing climate.

Outcomes (ten years)

- Credit Valley Conservation is a trusted source for leading-edge environmental science, tools and guidance.
- Policy, practice and guidelines are informed by environmental science.
- Watershed health is improved through science-driven actions.



Spotlight: Business Case for Natural Assets

Natural assets – wetlands, forests and streams – play an important role in delivering critical community services such as stormwater treatment and reducing the urban heat island effect. To make the case for protecting natural assets, we worked with our partners to develop the Business Case for Natural Assets Tool.

The tool estimated the stormwater value of natural assets in Peel Region as close to \$18.4 billion today and \$20 billion under future climate change conditions. An interactive dashboard assesses additional services such as carbon sequestration, urban heat reduction, air quality improvements and recreation value. It also compares the costs and benefits of protecting and enhancing natural assets.

Goal Five

Connect people with nature, culture and greenspace to promote environmental awareness, appreciation and action

Directions (three years)

- 1** Develop a learning strategy to engage watershed residents, diverse watershed communities and park visitors through programming, infrastructure and innovative technology, including a baseline survey of watershed environmental and climate change literacy.
- 2** Engage and coordinate a committed volunteer base that advocates for and builds a healthier environment, including building innovative volunteer management tools and processes.
- 3** Build capacity of business and industry to undertake ecological approaches to managing land and water and engage their employees through an enhanced Greening Corporate Grounds program and expanded municipal partnerships.
- 4** Work in priority communities to address environmental concerns through targeted outreach and action, including implementation of Sustainable Neighbourhood Actions Plans in Brampton and Halton Hills, the Peel Climate Change Partnership and the Integrated Marketing and Outreach Strategy.
- 5** Develop a digital marketing and communications strategy to increase online engagement, program uptake and amplify our reach across all channels.
- 6** Work with Brampton and other community partners to plan and develop a regionally significant hub for environmental learning, stewardship and public engagement.
- 7** Operationalize the Conservation Areas Master Strategy by implementing the Visitor Experience, Indigenous Engagement and Land Acquisition Plans.

- 8** Work with municipal and regional governments and private landowners to expand public access to green space, generate outdoor recreational opportunities and develop supporting infrastructure.
- 9** Work with our partners to implement the Credit Valley Trail Strategy, including securing, planning, designing and opening segments of the Credit Valley Trail and Indigenous placemaking at key trailheads as per the Credit Valley Trail Indigenous Engagement Implementation Plan.
- 10** Establish an Indigenous Elders Circle to counsel and advise on all aspects of Indigenous partnership and engagement.

Outcomes (ten years)

- Enhanced environmental and climate change literacy among residents.
- An informed and connected community of environmental stewards and volunteers that take action on public and private lands to protect and enhance the local environment.
- Residents from diverse communities with a strong sense of place, a deep connection to the land they call home and an appreciation for the connection between nature and their well-being.
- Conservation areas that provide accessible natural spaces and unique environmental experiences for all to enjoy.
- Meaningful engagement and partnerships with Indigenous communities connected to the Credit River Watershed.



Spotlight: Credit Valley Trail Indigenous Experience Plan

The Credit Valley Trail (CVT) Indigenous Experience Implementation Plan was developed and finalized through the collaborative efforts of the trail's Indigenous Roundtable, Credit Valley Conservation and Indigenous-led consulting firm, Neegan Burnside Ltd, building on the work of the earlier Credit Valley Trail Indigenous Experience Plan, ***Bimaadiziwin Nibi Aawan*** (Water is Life).

The Implementation Plan identifies areas of Indigenous significance located in the main valley of the Credit River and contains a set of recommendations intended to animate the CVT route with concepts such as, interactive

storytelling experiences, interpretative signage, public art installation and trail markers.

The plan identifies seven key sites and specifies location-specific conceptual themes to be created along the trail route. Within the plan, each site incorporates unique animal totems and key themes which may be represented by stories, teachings and symbology. Central themes include interpretative features such as art installations and features which encourage place-based learning. We continue robust collaboration with municipal, community and Indigenous partners, ensuring effective communication as we bring these plans to life.

Goal Six

Provide trusted expertise, tools and resources to our clients and partners that protect the environment and support climate change and sustainability goals

Directions (three years)

- 1** Revise planning and development policies, reflecting policy and regulatory changes, advances in science, changes in flood plain and flood risk mapping, ecological offsetting and updated guidance documents.
- 2** Provide technical expertise, support tools and programs to various partners and economic sectors, including municipalities, building and land development, agriculture and aggregates on innovative and best management practices for climate change, flood and water management and environmental protection, management and restoration.
- 3** Integrate recommendations from the Watershed Plan and Subwatershed Plans into strategies, programs and plans of Credit Valley Conservation and our partners for coordinated implementation.
- 4** Complete incorporation of the Credit River Watershed Natural Heritage System Strategy into municipal official plans with supporting policies and continue to support a healthy natural heritage system.
- 5** Support municipalities by developing biodiversity guidelines, including coyote and Canada goose management and bird-friendly design.

- 6** Update our stormwater management criteria guidance document to reflect climate change, new science and policy directions in partnership with member municipalities and the development community.
- 7** Develop a bank of habitat projects to provide voluntary or compulsory ecological offsetting opportunities.
- 8** Develop guidelines with municipal partners on how to incorporate the inventory and assessment of natural assets into municipal asset management frameworks.
- 9** Support the implementation of best management practices on development and infrastructure sites through expertise, monitoring and compliance inspection.

Outcomes (ten years)

- Barriers are removed to facilitate the adoption and installation of green infrastructure, including low impact development.
- New development and redevelopment that successfully integrates natural and built elements.
- Agricultural properties that are productive and environmentally sustainable.
- Natural assets successfully incorporated into decision making frameworks.



Spotlight: Natural Heritage System

The Natural Heritage System (NHS) for the Credit Watershed is made up of natural heritage features such as wetlands, forests and streams, as well as their buffers that are collectively important for their biodiversity and ecological function. The system takes us from a series of 'islands of green' to a linked system improving the size, shape and connectivity of the natural

features on the landscape. Municipalities are directed to develop an NHS and accompanying policy in the Provincial Policy Statement. With completion of the NHS strategy, we are now working with municipal partners to build it into their official plans to protect, manage and enhance the natural heritage of the Credit River Watershed for current and future generations.

Goal Seven

Ensure that Credit Valley Conservation is a well-managed, sustainable and service-driven organization

Directions (three years)

- 1** Implement information management systems and maintain our investment in information technology infrastructure as critical corporate assets and platforms enabling staff to readily adapt to business demands.
- 2** Deliver a new, state-of-the-art website that brings our brand to life while optimizing service delivery and user engagement.
- 3** Use collaboration tools that enable multi-disciplinary and cross-departmental teams to deliver integrated projects and programs efficiently and effectively.
- 4** Complete and implement an asset management plan that supports corporate sustainability.
- 5** Continue to promote a progressive culture of employee well-being while maintaining a strong focus on workplace health and safety.
- 6** Strengthen leadership skills, strategic thinking, project management and financial expertise across the organization to ensure the next generation of leaders are ready for our future.
- 7** Implement the Youth Engagement Strategy by recruiting, training and mentoring youth, providing valuable work experience and inspiring youth to be future environmental champions.
- 8** Develop and maintain a workplace culture that attracts, inspires and retains a diverse and inclusive workforce and recognizes and celebrates staff achievements.
- 9** Embed the Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy into our way of doing business, focusing on operational changes and mobilizing staff to contribute to corporate and community well-being.

- 10** Lead by example through our Climate Change Strategy by completing corporate risk assessments, reducing our carbon footprint and increasing operational resilience in the face of climate change.
- 11** Demonstrate accountability through continued transparent public reporting, development of a performance measurement system, ongoing program evaluations and a commitment to continuous improvement.
- 12** Deliver programs and services in a manner consistent with our values and behaviours that demonstrate our commitment to service and public accountability.

Outcomes (ten years)

- Tools and infrastructure that support program delivery.
- Efficient and effective financial management and operations.
- A healthy, safe, respectful, accessible and inclusive work environment.
- A culture of continuous improvement, innovation, high performance and community service excellence.
- Leading by example with environmentally, socially and economically responsible infrastructure and practices.
- Recognized as a top employer in Canada and one of Canada's Greenest Employers.



Spotlight: IT/IM Transformation

In 2018, a bold plan was endorsed by our Board of Directors to undertake a digital transformation of the organization. The first stage occurred in 2018-2019 and included creating an in-house Information Technology/Information Management (IT/IM) team that undertook and completed a series of integrated projects that built a new network, infrastructure and upgraded all core applications focused on mobilizing the workforce within a robust and secure digital environment. The success of these efforts transformed how and where staff worked.

The second stage began in 2019 with Board approval of key new applications to reinvent how we do business. Internal focus is on advancing data, information, documents and records management along with the introduction of electronic workflows. Externally, efforts will be focused on improving the customer experience through a new booking, reservation, rental, customer management and point of sales system that will integrate seamlessly with our redesigned website.

Goal Eight

Expand partnerships and build new business models to increase organizational resilience and capacity

Directions (three years)

- 1** Work with municipal partners to develop new financial arrangements aligned with changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act* that sustain programs, operations and facilities.
- 2** Work with other conservation authorities, watershed municipalities, government agencies and local environmental organizations to collaborate on similar programs and business areas to maximize efficiency of service delivery.
- 3** Work with our municipal, provincial, federal and Indigenous partners to share management of public lands and infrastructure for more efficient and effective use of combined resources.
- 4** Create a Business Leadership Lab to generate new and noble solutions for collaboration in green infrastructure and community economic development.
- 5** Participate in the Serson Innovation Corridor at Lakeview Village to create a centre of excellence hub in green infrastructure and Great Lakes science and appreciation.
- 6** Partner with the Credit Valley Conservation Foundation to foster and leverage a culture of giving that supports our highest priorities and underfunded projects or programs.

- 7** Recognize and celebrate the talents and achievements of volunteers, partners and donors.
- 8** Develop public, community and Indigenous engagement guidance and build our capacity to deliver on our commitments.
- 9** Expand the network of "friends of" conservation area groups and establish Credit Valley Trail chapters to achieve shared goals.

Outcomes (ten years)

- Increased financial resilience through stable and diverse funding sources.
- Enhanced partnerships that maximize the impact of resources, expand reach and create efficiencies.
- A culture of giving to environmental initiatives through the Credit Valley Conservation Foundation.
- An alliance of environmental and community organizations that work together to achieve shared goals.



Spotlight: Cheltenham Badlands

Located in the Town of Caledon, the Cheltenham Badlands is one of the most recognizable and visited natural heritage landmarks in southern Ontario and an example of the power of collaboration and partnership.

The property was purchased by Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT) in 2002 and until 2017, the site was managed by Bruce Trail Conservancy on behalf of OHT. In June 2015, the Cheltenham Badlands had to be closed to the public due to the accelerated erosion caused by visitors walking on the badlands feature, concerns over public safety along the road beside the site, garbage and littering, destruction

of trail signs and structures and the creation of additional "rogue" trails on the property.

A collaborative effort by numerous partners to identify a long-term solution for the property resulted in the re-opening of the site in September 2018 under our management with support from the Region of Peel, the Town of Caledon and Bruce Trail Conservancy. In 2019, the first full year under our management, more than 100,000 visitors enjoyed new onsite features including an accessible boardwalk, upgraded trails, educational and interpretive panels, and public and accessible parking.

Implementing the Plan and Measuring Success

The test of a plan is in its implementation. While divisions, teams and staff will each track and measure the success of their individual activities, the implementation of this plan will be tracked first at the level of three-year directions – have we started, made substantive progress on, or completed each direction. Second, implementation will be tracked via high-level measures of success.

Conservation measures of success show the cumulative impact of many teams working across multiple goals and directions, making on-the-ground progress to restore and enhance the natural environment. **Customer service and financial measures of success** demonstrate our commitment to being a resilient and service-driven organization that meets the needs of our customers and stakeholders.

These measures and their targets are aspirational and made with current knowledge despite areas of uncertainty related to the current COVID-19 pandemic and the yet to be finalized changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act*. These measures will be benchmarked at 2015 and 2019, where data is available, and reported on as the overall measures of success of both ***Our Future to Shape*** and ***Our Future Taking Shape***.

Conservation

1. Increased annual total area (ha) of the watershed restored or managed by our programs and services.
2. Increased percentage of conservation actions implemented in the highest priority areas annually.
3. Increased total area of the Credit River Watershed Natural Heritage System incorporated into municipal natural heritage systems by 2022.
4. Consistent or improving trends in water quality in the upper, middle and lower watershed.
5. Reductions in corporate carbon emissions that meet or exceed provincial and federal targets by 2022.
6. Increased environmental and climate change literacy across watershed communities by 2022.

Customer Service

7. 95 per cent of all permit transactions meet the Conservation Ontario service delivery guidelines.
8. Warnings issued for 100 per cent of forecasted flood events.
9. Internal network uptime of nine per cent or greater.
10. Increased customer loyalty across services.
11. Increased employee engagement.

Financial

12. General levy budget variance plus or minus three percent annually.
13. Increased non-levy revenue to 15 per cent of total revenue by 2022.
14. Consistent or increased annual philanthropic revenue.
15. Grant approval rate of 75 per cent or greater.

Looking Ahead: Our Future Taking Shape



Our last strategic plan, **Our Future to Shape**, focused on defining the actions we needed to take to manage the future of our watershed. Informed by our 60-year history, it identified a number of activities including the development of strategies or plans for many of our business areas that were needed to guide our work.

We have since further defined the problems facing our watershed, prioritized our actions and underscored the effects of taking such actions. Partners were identified for each action, for taking care of the Credit River Watershed is a shared responsibility.

We have studied, prioritized and predicted the future. Now it is time to act – to demonstrate the value of conservation to our watershed communities – for health, for jobs, for safety. Our future is taking shape and we are proud to work with our partners to protect, connect and sustain the Credit River Watershed.

CVC Strategy Map

Our Vision

A thriving environment that protects, connects and sustains us.

Our Mission

Together, we conserve, restore, develop and manage the natural resources of the Credit River Watershed through the power of science, education, policy, planning and leadership.

Goals

1	2	3	4
Plan for an environmentally sustainable future.	Safeguard people, property and communities from natural hazards.	Manage a healthy, resilient environment through protection, restoration and enhancement.	Develop, maintain and share leading-edge knowledge to advance science-based decision making and on-the-ground action.

Outcomes WHERE WE WILL BE IN TEN YEARS

<p>Environmental monitoring and inventory data, including Indigenous knowledge, that inform decisions, detect trends and identify emerging issues in environmental health.</p> <p>A comprehensive understanding of watershed stressors, including climate change, land use change and invasive species, that inform strategies designed to address protection, mitigation, restoration and adaptation.</p> <p>Science-based, community-supported watershed, subwatershed, neighbourhood and management plans that inform existing and future environmental protection, future land use policies, tools and management activities.</p> <p>Communities better prepared for climate change.</p>	<p>Science-driven actions to reduce flood and erosion risks to safeguard people, properties and infrastructure.</p> <p>Engaged and aware residents ready to respond to a flood emergency.</p> <p>Clean and abundant drinking water for our communities now and in the future.</p> <p>Public safety on our properties.</p>	<p>Water quality and quantity that support healthy native ecosystems.</p> <p>Healthy and resilient aquatic, wetland and terrestrial communities and species that meet ecological targets.</p> <p>Vulnerable, ecologically sensitive, at risk and valuable ecosystems are protected, restored or enhanced through strategic management.</p>	<p>Credit Valley Conservation is a trusted source for leading-edge environmental science, tools and guidance.</p> <p>Policy, practice and guidelines are informed by environmental science.</p> <p>Watershed health is improved through science-driven actions.</p>
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Directions WHAT WE NEED TO DO WITHIN THREE YEARS

BUSINESS PLANS

PROJECT PLANS

Our Values

✓ Leadership

✓ Service

✓ Collaboration

✓ Accountability

✓ Integrity

✓ Excellence

✓ Innovation

✓ Holistic Thinking

✓ Inclusiveness

✓ Spirit

5

Connect people with nature, culture and greenspace to promote environmental awareness, appreciation and action.

6

Provide trusted expertise, tools and resources to our clients and partners that protect the environment and support climate change and sustainability goals.

7

Ensure that Credit Valley Conservation is a well-managed, sustainable and service-driven organization.

8

Expand partnerships and build new business models to increase organizational resilience and capacity.

Enhanced environmental and climate change literacy among residents.

An informed and connected community of environmental stewards and volunteers that take action on public and private lands to protect and enhance the local environment.

Residents from diverse communities with a strong sense of place, a deep connection to the land they call home and an appreciation for the connection between nature and their well-being.

Conservation areas that provide accessible natural spaces and unique environmental experiences for all to enjoy.

Meaningful engagement and partnerships with Indigenous communities connected to the Credit River Watershed.

Barriers are removed to facilitate the adoption and installation of green infrastructure, including low impact development.

New development and redevelopment that successfully integrates natural and built elements.

Agricultural properties that are productive and environmentally sustainable.

Natural assets successfully incorporated into decision making frameworks.

Tools and infrastructure that support program delivery.

Efficient and effective financial management and operations.

A healthy, safe, respectful, accessible and inclusive work environment.

A culture of continuous improvement, innovation, high performance and community service excellence.

Leading by example with environmentally, socially and economically responsible infrastructure and practices.

Recognized as a top employer in Canada and one of Canada's Greenest Employers.

Increased financial resilience through stable and diverse funding sources.

Enhanced partnerships that maximize the impact of resources, expand reach and create efficiencies.

A culture of giving to environmental initiatives through the Credit Valley Conservation Foundation.

An alliance of environmental and community organizations that work together to achieve shared goals.

EMPLOYEE OBJECTIVES

MEASURE ACCOMPLISHMENTS
AND COMMUNICATE RESULTS



**Credit Valley
Conservation**
inspired by nature

Credit Valley Conservation

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