

# Annual Report 2019



**"Pay attention to the whispers,  
so we won't have to listen to the screams."  
Cherokee quote**



**Bay of Quinte**  
Remedial Action Plan  
Healthy Bay • Healthy Community  
[www.bqrap.ca](http://www.bqrap.ca)



## Phosphorus Management Strategy

The main issue with the Bay of Quinte has always been the amount of excess nutrients (phosphorus) entering it from a number of sources both urban and rural. As the Bay gets closer to being removed from the Areas of Concern list, a Phosphorus Management Strategy is under development to ensure it doesn't revert to conditions that required a RAP in the first place.

In 2019, meetings started with area municipal staff to get their input on the strategy. In 2020 meetings will continue with municipal staff and presentations will be made to councils. As well the public will be asked for their input.



## Beneficial Use Impairment - restored

Official confirmation was received from the Federal and Provincial governments on the reclassification of the beneficial use impairment **Beach Closings** to restored.

## Public Engagement Period

A public engagement period was implemented from July 25 - August 23, 2019 to get input on whether the public agreed or not with changing the status of another beneficial use impairment - **Restrictions on drinking water or taste and odour problems**. The majority of comments received had no issues with the scientific evidence supporting the change in status to restored.

The public comments were incorporated into the final reports and it was sent to the Federal and Provincial governments for formal approval to redesignate this beneficial use impairment to restored.



## Aesthetics Monitoring

In 2018, the criteria for the beneficial use impairment **Degradation of Aesthetics** was revised to align with the International Joint Commission's original intent of addressing human influences. In 2018 and 2019, Lower Trent Conservation and Quinte Conservation assisted with assessing aesthetics for the Bay of Quinte using their established water monitoring programs that run from May through November. They collected water samples from the lower portions (i.e. south of Hwy 401) of the major tributaries flowing in to the Bay of Quinte and nearshore surface waters of the Bay of Quinte.

The water samples were evaluated on four environmental endpoints: clarity, colour, odour and debris and assigned a score. A score that is equal to or above 9 is considered excellent. BQRAP conducted the analysis of the data and the Bay exceeded expectations and received scores of 9.5 in 2018 and 9.8 in 2019. A final report is being compiled and a public engagement period will be held in 2020

## 2019 BENEFICIAL USE IMPAIRMENT STATUS SUMMARY

### STATUS: RESTORED

- # 3 Degradation of fish and wildlife populations
- # 4 Fish tumours and other deformities
- # 6 Degradation of benthos
- # 7 Restrictions on dredging activities
- # 10 Beach closings
- # 14 Loss of fish and wildlife habitat

### STATUS: SUBMITTED FOR REDESIGNATION APPROVAL

- # 9 Restrictions on drinking water or taste and odour problems

### STATUS: REDESIGNATION PROCESS UNDERWAY

- # 1 Restriction on fish and wildlife consumption
- # 8 Eutrophication or undesirable algae
- # 11 Degradation of aesthetics

### STATUS: IMPAIRED

- # 13 Degradation of phytoplankton and zooplankton populations





## High Water Levels

In 2019, the big story on the Bay of Quinte was high water levels and the resulting flooding concerns. Water levels on Lake Ontario/Bay of Quinte are primarily influenced by precipitation, runoff, and inflows from Lake Erie. Lake Ontario outflows from the Moses-Saunders Dam are regulated by the International Joint Commission's Plan 2014. The peak daily water level on Lake Ontario reached 75.92 metres between the dates of June 6, 2019 to June 15, 2019. Water levels were 85 centimetres above average over the month of June.

## It's all about the science

Every summer on the Bay of Quinte, there's a lot of scientific research and monitoring happening as part of the Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan (BQRAP). Numerous BQRAP federal and provincial partner agencies and conservation authorities are on the water collecting data for a variety of water quality indicators like: fish populations, wetland habitat, phosphorus levels, algae species, and water chemistry. All this data ensures the Bay is meeting the goals outlined in the RAP.

## Stormwater Projects

Over the last year, work was undertaken on the South Foster Avenue and Picton Harbour Master Drainage Plan projects. Cumulatively, these projects have assessed current needs and reviewed past planning for more than 1250 ha of urban lands draining to the Bay of Quinte.

## Marsh Monitoring



Every year, volunteer citizen scientists monitor local wetlands for frogs and wetland birds. The data is submitted to Birds Canada to track long term population trends. The BQRAP hosts an evening presentation by Quinte area naturalist Tery Sprague to help recruit new citizen scientists. This year, 30 people attended the presentation.

## Osprey/Eagle Monitoring



Citizen scientists were asked to locate and monitor Osprey/Eagles nests around the Bay of Quinte. The goal is to establish a long-term monitoring program to ensure the Osprey population remains healthy and abundant. It was another successful year for the Osprey, the majority of nests produced 1 - 2 fledglings. In the past 4 years, Eagles have returned to the Bay of Quinte. There are 2 known nesting sites on the Bay, one produced young in 2019.

## Stewardship Projects



Despite a delayed start we still managed to implement projects under the Habitat Enhancement Program, do some planting under the Cover Crop Program and complete several septic site visits. Currently, we are planning and ramping up for a busy year in 2020.

The Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan is working towards a healthier Bay of Quinte ecosystem. Work to clean up the Bay of Quinte, which was identified in 1985 as an "Area of Concern" by the International Joint Commission under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, is directed by the Bay of Quinte Restoration Council. This Council includes members from local Conservation Authorities, federal and provincial agencies and non-government organizations, who work together to implement the recommended actions to restore the Bay of Quinte.

### **RESTORATION COUNCIL**

Lower Trent Conservation • Quinte Conservation • Environment and Climate Change Canada • Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks • Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry • Fisheries and Oceans Canada • Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs • Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte • CFB Trenton • Municipal representatives • Public representative

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