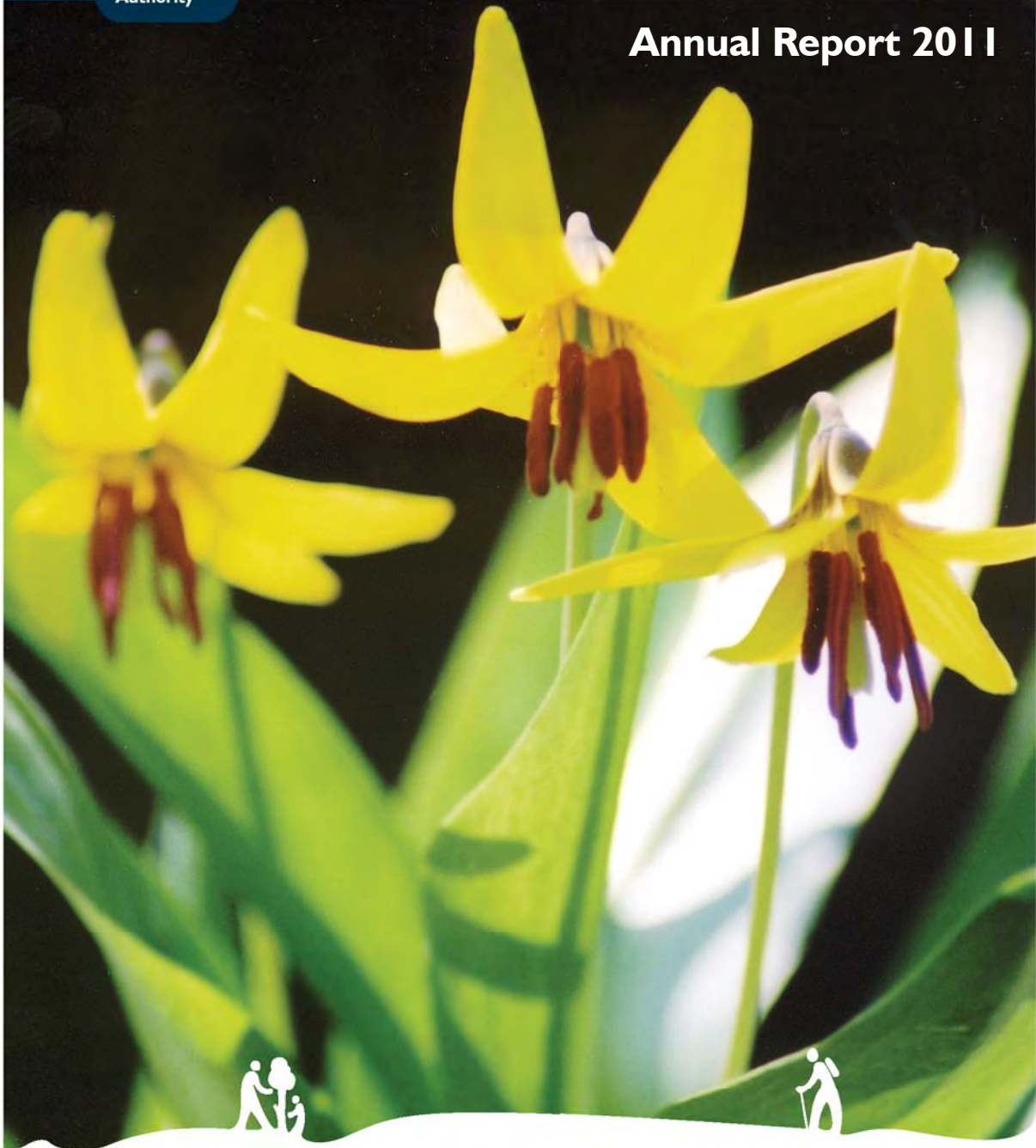




Essex Region  
Conservation  
Authority



# Annual Report 2011



## Our Vision for 2020

To achieve a sustainable environment with healthy watersheds, highlighted by clean creeks, rivers and Great Lakes, thriving natural areas, productive agricultural lands and vibrant places.

## Our Mission

To provide locally based leadership in creating a sustainable environment for the residents of the Essex region.



Front cover image: Yellow Trout Lily at Sydney Mitchell Woods, Canard Valley Conservation Area

## Message from the Chair and General Manager

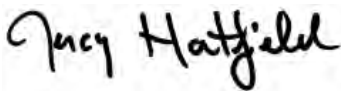
2011 once again proved to be a year of success and exciting opportunity for the Essex Region Conservation Authority. It marked the first full year of implementing our new strategic directions and we strived to connect, engage, collaborate and discover ways to achieve our sustainable environment. We worked towards revitalizing our conservation areas, better engaged our region's youth and contributed to the sustainability of the region through continued tree planting and water quality projects. We celebrated many partnerships, developed and implemented new communications standards for our organization and broadened our outreach with enhanced social media presence.

But this year was not without its challenges. An extraordinarily rainy spring season combined with some infrastructure failure resulted in a six week delay in opening Holiday Beach. The unpredictable weather patterns of the past year also resulted in eleven wind/flood advisories. This matches the record number of advisories issued during the high lake periods of the mid 1980s, and recognizing that these extreme weather events will likely increase in frequency, ERCA began moving forward on a regional approach to addressing the impacts of climate change.

Budgets and funding continued to present a challenge. As we focus on creating environmental sustainability for our region, we concurrently need to ensure the sustainability of our organization, after five years of zero and negative levy increases. Toward this goal, we began to develop a five year plan to maintain a stable funding base.

We have taken a slightly different approach to producing our annual report this year and have highlighted just a few of our top achievements. The many, many projects and programs that ERCA undertakes each year toward improving our regional environment have become too numerous to outline fully, so we have chosen to focus on just a few. Certainly though, we hope you will agree that there is much to celebrate.

We continue to thank the many organizations and individuals with whom we partner. Indeed, none of these incredible accomplishments would have been possible without the support of our member municipalities, senior levels of government, community and business partners, our dedicated volunteers, the Conservation Foundation and those who generously donated. While there is still much to do, by continuing to work together, we will be successful in creating cleaner, healthier and more vibrant future for the Essex Region.



**Percy Hatfield**  
Chair



**Richard Wyma**  
General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer



*Hillman Marsh Conservation Area*

## 2011 Highlights

The following highlights from 2011 illustrate some of the many programs and services ERCA has undertaken in this past year toward creating a future of sustainability. All of our programs continue to focus on achieving our strategic priorities.



# Connect



*Mitchell family with MP Jeff Watson, Mayor Wayne Hurst, Chair Percy Hatfield and NCC's Wendy Cridland.*

ERCA strives to connect people to our landscape, waterfronts, and our Great Lakes and rivers with attractive natural areas, trails and Conservation Areas as part of a vibrant and sustainable community.

- Completed the Conservation Areas Land Management Framework, which provides clear guidelines for existing and future properties to protect and conserve ecological and cultural heritage values, provide opportunities for high quality visitor experiences, and provide opportunities for residents and visitors to increase their knowledge and appreciation of Essex Region's natural and cultural heritage.
- Developed the draft Land Securement Strategy to guide implementation of our Clean Water ~ Green Spaces program, prioritize biologically significant properties, identify a suite of acquisition tools and techniques, and describe a process for engaging and partnering with landowners to protect the region's most remarkable natural areas.
- ERCA also fulfilled its \$4.5 million commitment toward the Spring Garden ANSI in the City of Windsor, and together with the Nature Conservancy of Canada and other partners, acquired Sydney Mitchell Woods, 77 acres of environmentally significant area in the Canard Valley ESA. This conservation effort will protect many species, including the nationally and provincially threatened Kentucky Coffeetree and the only known location of a unique hybrid of the Yellow and White Trout Lilies.



*A beautiful cobble beach improves habitat and provides access to the Detroit River.*

- Restored 550 metres of Detroit River shoreline in partnership with the City of Windsor and others. The project involved removing the existing failing wood cribwall and replacing with an irregular stone shoreline which incorporates techniques to increase overall shoreline length and enhance the food supply for fish. The project also features a 120m long cobble beach, which allows access directly to the Detroit River.
- Improved regional habitat and water quality by planting or distributing over 170,000 trees and completing approximately 60 water quality improvement projects.



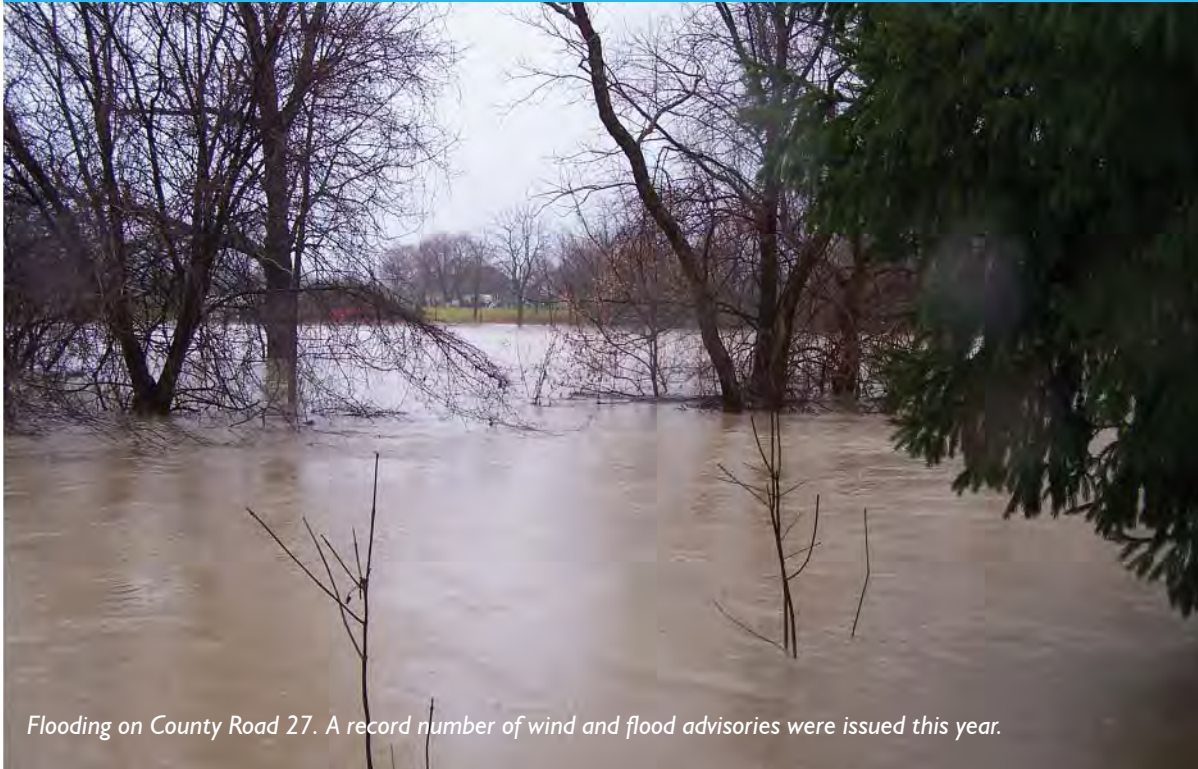
# Engage



Engaging our community to increase awareness of conserving and enhancing our environment continues to be a focus.

- Celebrated the 10 Year Anniversary of the Detroit River as a Canadian Heritage River, together with dignitaries from the City of Windsor, Town of LaSalle and Town of Amherstburg, who shared with the crowd the many accomplishments toward the protection and enhancements of the river's Human Heritage, Natural Heritage and Recreational Values over the past decade.
- Launched the *Yours to Explore: Windsor-Essex-Pelee Island Trail Guide* to rave reviews. This 72 page guide features 32 trails from each municipality within the Essex region, and includes mapping, trail highlights and driving directions for each.
- Developed and began implementing our first Youth Engagement Strategy with the guiding principles of leadership, opportunity and inclusion.
- Hosted a Local Treasures exhibition at the Civic Centre. The John R. Park Homestead Conservation Area joined together with 17 other regional heritage institutions - a first for Ontario. The Homestead also coordinated and produced the *Explore the Shore Podcasting* project, completing nineteen bilingual podcasts for the Homestead and Holiday Beach.

# Collaborate



*Flooding on County Road 27. A record number of wind and flood advisories were issued this year.*

Reaching out to engage existing and new stakeholders to create a partnership for a sustainable environment is another of ERCA's top priorities.

- Conducted the Detroit River Shoreline Assessment Survey of properties in Windsor, LaSalle and Amherstburg. These surveys will be used to prioritize shoreline restoration projects that address both habitat enhancement and flood and erosion protection priorities. The study collected all available data about existing shoreline conditions. One thousand properties were surveyed, with land owner permission. The data was compiled into a GIS based system to prioritize restoration and enhancement opportunities. Partners in this initiative included the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment Canada, Windsor Port Authority, City of Windsor and Carolinian Canada.
- Issued 11 Wind/Flood advisories, which equals the record number issued during the high lake levels of the 1980s, and continued to monitor weather information and conditions for extended periods of time to ensure protection of people and property.
- Secured \$356,000 in new funding from the Province of Ontario's Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure program for our municipal partners to conduct work or studies to improve flooding and erosion. Funded projects included repair to Reaume Park Shorewall in Windsor, the Little River Sheet Steel Wall Study in Windsor, the Detroit River Shoreline Assessment Study in Windsor, LaSalle and Amherstburg, and the East Marsh Dyke Study in Leamington.

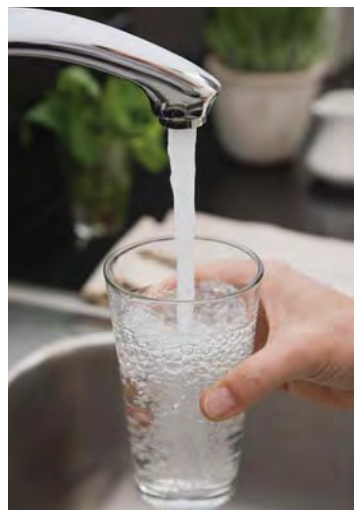
# Discover



*Water quality monitoring provides important data to help protect drinking water sources.*

ERCA also works at developing greater scientific knowledge of our region in order to adapt to climate change and respond to its impact on the safety, health and economic wellbeing of residents.

- Updated/Amended Assessment Report to identify threats and vulnerable areas for the protection of sources of drinking water, the culmination of over 5 years work.
- Continued compiling climate data for future use in recalibrating modeling criteria to assess implications of climate change and the increasing number of severe rainfall events.

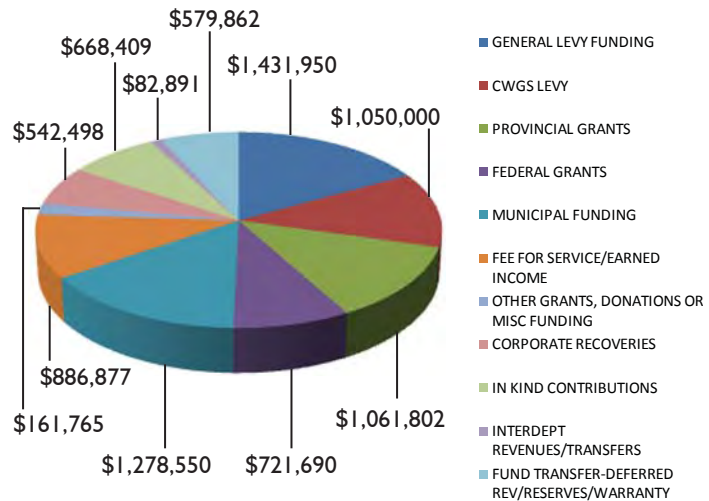


## 2011 Financial Review

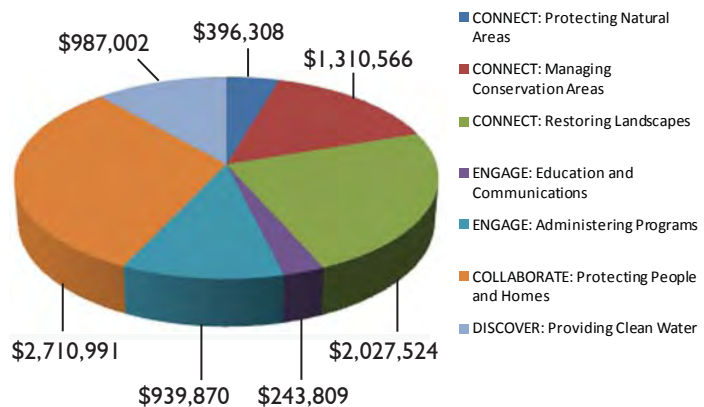
In accordance with the Public Sector Accounting Board PS 3150, ERCA incorporates tangible capital assets into the Financial Statements. Identifying assets and their limited useful lives increases our understanding of using capital assets in the delivery of services. This information gives municipal councils and the public a better understanding of the true financial position.



### 2011 Draft Projected Revenues - \$8,466,295

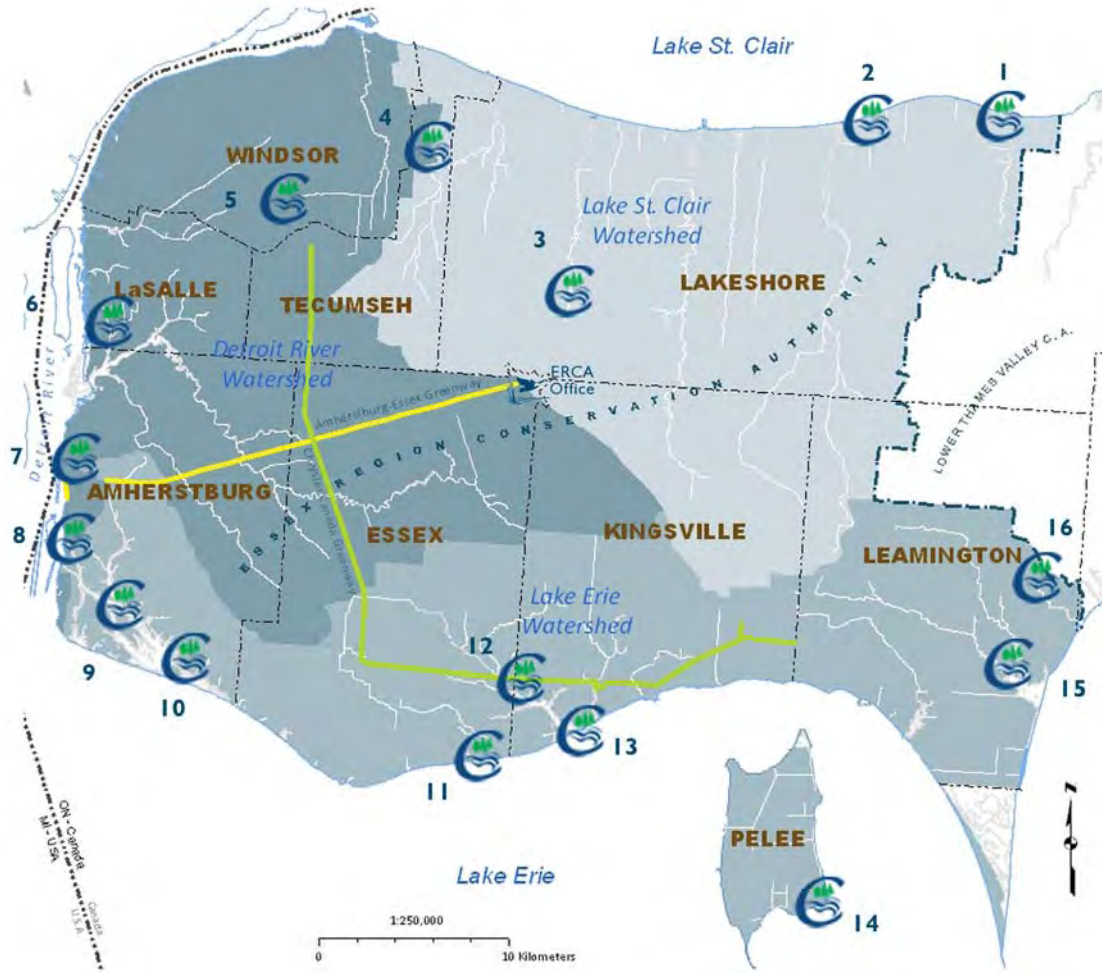


### 2011 Draft Projected Expenses - \$8,616,070



Note: The 2011 unaudited revenues and expenses are based on information available as of January 10, 2012 and as such the numbers are subject to change. These numbers also represent the information which will appear in the Statement of Operations, however due to the accounting for tangible capital assets (PSAB 3150) and non-cash items such as amortization, the Statements of Net Debt and Cash Flow should be referred to in the audited Financial Statements. Amortization of infrastructure is included in totals shown for Managing Conservation Areas. After factoring in non-cash items and increases in non-financial assets such as capital asset additions, the net debt is expected to increase by approximately \$120,000. The Audited Financial Statements will be available in June 2012 and include all Statements and Schedules as required by GAAP for public sector entities.

Make healthy and active lifestyles a priority for your family. Visit any of the region's conservation areas to hike, bike and enjoy nature and each other.



- |                    |                   |                            |
|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Tremblay Beach  | 6. Petite Cote    | 11. John R. Park Homestead |
| 2. Ruscom Shores   | 7. Crystal Bay    | 12. Cedar Creek            |
| 3. Maidstone       | 8. White Sands    | 13. Cedar Beach            |
| 4. McAuliffe Woods | 9. Big Creek      | 14. Stone Road Alvar       |
| 5. Devonwood       | 10. Holiday Beach | 15. Hillman Marsh          |
|                    |                   | 16. Kopegaron Woods        |





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