

**we**conserve

Ontario's Conservation Strategy



A Blueprint for the Voluntary Transition to  
a Sustainable Future

September, 2011



**The Conservation  
Council of Ontario**

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## A Call to Action

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Sooner or later, by choice or by crisis,  
Ontario will be a conserver society.  
We prefer sooner, and by choice.

### Think about it.

We live in the most prosperous time in all history. We have the highest standard of living, and we consume more resources than ever. We can continue to squander these resources and foul our ecosystems, or we can use this period of unprecedented luxury to invest in a sustainable future.

We all know conservation and respect for nature is important, yet we all aspire to a high standard of living. Can we ever find a balance between the two? And can we do it voluntarily, before scarcity, climate change, or economic collapse forces a conserver society upon us?

This is our call to action:

- We need to promote and support conservation as if our future depends on it.
- We need to all be conservation leaders, each in our own way.
- We need to make conservation easy, affordable, and desirable.
- We need to support each other.
- We need a common strategy.

### This is where we come in.

We are the Conservation Council of Ontario, a provincial association of Ontario's organizations, businesses, municipalities, and individuals working together to promote a healthier and sustainable future. We were founded in 1952 in order to help coordinate conservation efforts in Ontario. Ontario's conservation movement has grown immeasurably in both size and scope over the past 60 years, and the need for a conservation council has never been stronger.

Our mission is to be a catalyst for the voluntary transition to a conserver society.

This is our strategy – how we will get there.

Read it with a sense of self-interest and urgency. Self-interest, in that you should be able to see how a conservation strategy can help you, and urgency in that our future well-being depends on being able to restore a balance between consumption and the restoration of natural ecosystems.

Read it, adapt it to your needs, and adopt it. Make conservation part of your priorities.

# Overview

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## In a Nutshell...

**The Council:** We are the Conservation Council of Ontario, a sixty year old association of organizations, businesses, municipalities and individuals working to promote conservation in Ontario.

**Our Mission:** Our mission is to be a catalyst for the voluntary transition to a conserver society in Ontario.

**Our Strategy:** We Conserve is our strategy in support of our mission: a simple approach to build a culture of conservation in Ontario. It is designed to promote positive change, distributed leadership, and the ability to find simple solutions within a complex movement.

**Our Objective:** Our overall objective is to help people live better by living lightly. We believe the future of our planet rests on our own ability to transform ourselves into a conserver society. To affect that change, we need a united conservation movement that will help make conservation easy, affordable, and desirable.

**Our Priorities:** We have set ten priority actions that help define a conserver society. They are:

- |                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Help Nature     | 6. Eat Smart         |
| 2. Save Water      | 7. Waste Less        |
| 3. Save Energy     | 8. Prevent Pollution |
| 4. Use Green Power | 9. Buy Green         |
| 5. Drive Less      | 10. Live Local       |

**Mapping the Movement:** For each of these priority actions, we identify lead organizations, coordinating networks and other allies who can develop support programs and collaborative campaigns to achieve our common goals.

**Priority Actions:** To strengthen the movement, we focus on four key actions:

1. Promote conservation
2. Promote distributed leadership
3. Promote effective networking
4. Promote innovation

**Evaluating our progress:** To assess our progress, we focus on macro level statistics, including state of the environment reporting and social values tracking.

In a world where the focus of environmental change is on regulation, ours is a unique model. We are a council, whose members are committed to leading, and our strategy recognizes that voluntary leadership by consumers and constituents alike is the only way to achieve long-lasting change in our economy and social policy. Our approach does not replace a regulatory model, it builds a much stronger foundation for regulatory and fiscal actions that support a strong culture of conservation.

**Next Steps:** As an organization, the Conservation Council of Ontario is committed to supporting a voluntary transition strategy for Ontario. Our members are working to promote conservation within their membership and/or areas of expertise. For those in Ontario, we invite you to join in, and adapt and adopt the strategy to support your work as a conservation leader. For those outside Ontario, we offer our strategy and resources as a model you can adapt and adopt in your own jurisdiction.



## What is Conservation?

*What's in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet.  
William Shakespeare*

Conservation is an age-old term, a strong social value, and yet, in application, it is widely misunderstood. Before we begin, we need to explain what we mean by “conservation” and “conserver”.

Simply put, conservation is to use less, or to protect.

Using less is a simple concept, but it carries a world of applications and implications. Conservation applies to nature, energy, water, food, forests, land, and minerals – everything we need for life and economic development. Conservation means we consider the future in our actions, as well as our present needs and desires.

Many people equate conservation with sacrifice, which is wrong. True, sacrifice may be the simplest way to conserve, but it's also the least desirable. True conservers understand that conservation is about making choices that allow us to live well, at the same time as using less.

### The Conserver Paradox

It sounds strange, but you have to be a consumer to be a conserver.

The opposite of consumption is not conservation, but protection. Conservation is that space between unbridled consumption and absolute protection. It's a huge space, which is why conservation is not a list of prescribed activities but a common value we should all apply in our lives, from daily routines to major decisions.

Conservation is how we can ensure a sustainable and healthy future. This is why we define conservation as “the art of living lightly.”

## A rose by any other name...

We all believe conservation is important, most of us are active conservers, and yet few of us call ourselves conservers. We have a lot of work to do in selling conservation.

One of the biggest problems is the proliferation of environmental terms, philosophies and brands. Ours is perhaps the most branded social movement in all history – so much so that we cannot even agree on a common name. What we call the conservation movement, others call the green movement, stewardship, or sustainable development, healthy communities movement, or transition towns.

We could call ourselves the “sustainable green healthy conserver transition movement”, but we suspect it wouldn't catch on. In the end, what we call ourselves matters not. The important fact is that we all share a common goal, and that we collaborate in helping people live better by living lightly.

In this strategy, the term “conservation” can substituted with “green”, “sustainability”, or any other term. You can adapt the strategy to fit the branding and terminology used in major social marketing campaigns. After all, a conservation strategy by any other name, would still be a conservation strategy.

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## Supporting the Voluntary Transition to a Conserver Society



*A conserver society maximizes social well-being while minimizing environmental impact.*



# Introduction

Chances are, if you are reading this strategy you are already active in the conservation movement.

You may call it something else: the green movement, sustainable development, or ecological living. It doesn't matter what name you use, we are all working to find a balance between ourselves and nature.

The stakes are high, whether you are starting your own small business, or are part of a large organization or international company. If we do it right, humanity will thrive. If we fail, our economy and our ecosystems will collapse.

The challenge of "getting it right" has led to many bold initiatives over the past fifty years, including the Conserver Society model in 1973, the World Conservation Strategy in 1980, the United Nations Commission on Environment and Development (sustainable development) in 1986, and the National and Ontario Round Tables on Environment and Economy in 1989.

For our part, the Conservation Council of Ontario was founded in 1951 to help coordinate the efforts of conservation groups in Ontario. Over the years, our council has been at the forefront of environmental strategic planning for Ontario, providing advice to governments, helping communities organize for action, and helping develop collaborative projects and campaigns.

About ten years ago, we realized that a profound change in the environmental movement had occurred with the emergence of a new wave of green organizations and businesses whose focus was on helping people live green. Public demand for eco-friendly solutions was fuelling a new economy and social infrastructure.

The tipping point, for those of you who keep track, was around 1990, likely in response to the sustainable development movement of the late 1980s.

This new movement is complex and organic, but it is changing the world. It is consumer-driven, having changed the auto industry, given rise to new markets for local and sustainable food, and now creating opportunities for green power. In the end, it is our only hope. It needs nurturing – from incentives for conservation to support networks and seed funding for innovative ideas.

We've risen to the challenge. In 2005, the Conservation Council launched "We Conserve" to support the voluntary transition to a conserver society. Over the past six years, we've mapped the movement and piloted new approaches, and tested new approaches such as "movement-based social marketing", community networks, and a "distributed leadership" model.

All that we have learned, we have now pulled together into a simple strategy paper. It is our best thinking on how to find the common threads in a complex movement and weave them together into a united strategy.

This strategy is for all of you. Your job is to take this simple approach and adapt it to your own situation. Make it complex and organic once again, but build on the common cause that unites us all.

It will still take us years to get there – especially considering that growth in the conventional economy and consumption still outstrips the savings of a conserver society. But with a little luck and a lot of spark, our collective vision of a better future will take hold.



Chris Winter  
Executive Director  
The Conservation Council of Ontario  
July, 2011

# Our Mission

“We Conserve” is a high-level strategy developed by the Conservation Council of Ontario in support of a voluntary transition to a culture of conservation in Ontario. It is designed to support an existing and diverse conservation movement in Ontario through ten conservation priorities and four major areas of activity.

**Our mission is to be a catalyst for the voluntary transition to a conserver society in Ontario.**

- Conservation is how we, as individuals, businesses, or a society, balance our demands on nature and resources with the need to protect natural ecosystems and provide for future generations.
- We believe a conserver society is inevitable. The challenge is to create a successful conserver society that combines a high quality of life with a low and sustainable rate of consumption.
- The shift to a successful conserver society requires a **voluntary transition**. By acting now, through voluntary change, we have the opportunity to design the conserver society we'd actually like to live in.
- Our role is to be a **catalyst** for voluntary change, supporting the change and innovation that is already happening all around us. Together, we seek to make conservation **easy, affordable, and desirable**.
- We will only get there if people want to conserve, either through a strong culture of conservation or by linking a conserver lifestyle with lower costs and a higher quality of life. This is why we define conservation as “the art of living lightly”.

# Adapt and Adopt

This strategy has been drafted by the Conservation Council of Ontario, a provincial association of conservation leaders. It is written on behalf of all participating and supporting organizations, businesses and municipalities, including our active members and all other interested parties.

As with all our work, this strategy is shareware, meaning that it is freely available to all those who share in our mission (above). We encourage our partners in conservation to “adapt and adopt” this strategy:

- to identify areas of leadership,
- to integrate the structure and conservation priorities into their outreach and promotion work
- to develop programs, products and services that support the overall strategy
- to collaborate with others in common cause

We also encourage other jurisdictions to replicate this strategy and the work of the Conservation Council of Ontario. Good ideas are worth sharing.





## Our Theory of Change

Our mission is to be a catalyst for the voluntary transition to a conserver society in Ontario.

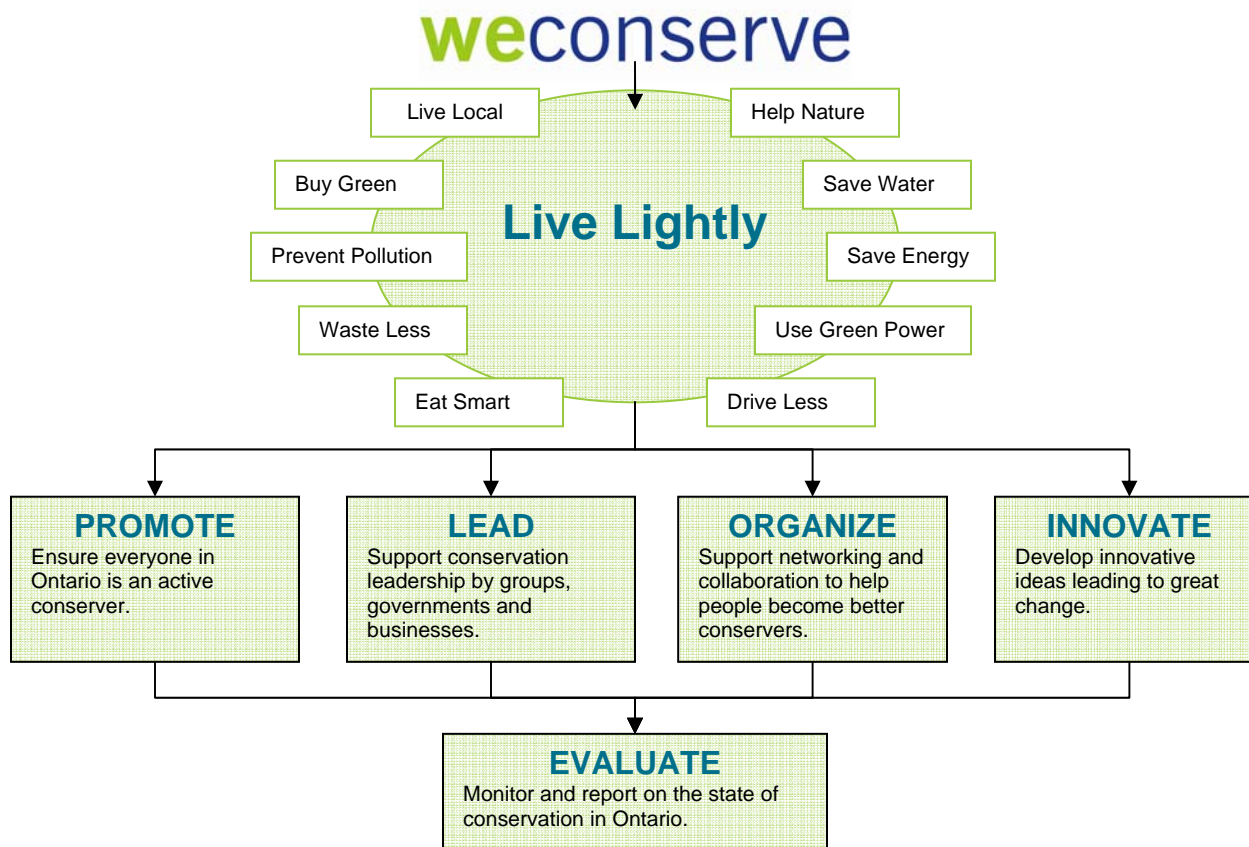
“We Conserve” will promote a culture of conservation in Ontario: the art of living lightly. In turn, a culture of conservation will support and facilitate action in each of ten conservation priorities that will help define Ontario as a conserver society.

“We Conserve” supports a united conservation movement, recognizing that the goal of a conserver society far exceeds the capacity of any one organization or government. We promote a distributed leadership model, which encourages all organizations, businesses and governments to identify how they can lead in promoting conservation to their members, clients, constituents, and the public.

We believe in the power of communities: be they neighbourhoods, cultural bonds, economic sectors, or environmental issues. We promote effective networking and collaboration, where conservation leaders work with each other to co-promote their work and to achieve common goals.

We believe in innovation and creativity. This is the “art” of living lightly – finding new ways to integrate environmental values into our social and economic development. In the end, a voluntary transition depends on finding new ways to make conservation easy, affordable, and desirable.

We believe the challenges of environmental sustainability, economic resiliency, and a healthy society can only be overcome if we learn to think and work like a movement.



## Our Guiding Principles

There are many principles that guide our work, including fairness, inclusivity, and creativity. We have selected three principles that best reflect our approach.

### 1. Promote positive change

To be effective, our solutions must be socially desirable and economically viable. The voluntary transition to a culture of conservation rests on our ability to make conserver solutions **easy, affordable and desirable**.

Our society is always changing, and never stagnant. We will use social and economic growth as an opportunity to reshape our society and economy into a more sustainable and healthier model.



*If Ontario is to make the shift to a conserver model, our solutions must be positive, adaptive to individual needs, and embraced by all.*

### 2. Promote distributed leadership.

Our strategy is built around an understanding that we are all leaders, each of us in our own way and according to our own opportunities and capabilities. We define green leadership as ‘environmental excellence in who we are, what we do, and how we help’.

**For individuals**, we are leaders in our personal actions; our activities at work, school or in the community; and how we volunteer or help others.

**For organizations**, we are leaders in our internal operations, our programs and activities, and our ability to work together in support of the common good.

**For businesses** we are leaders in our internal operations; our products and services; and our support for local community, peers, or environmental causes.

**For governments**, we are leaders in our internal operations; our legislation, policies, fiscal instruments, and programs; and our support for intergovernmental cooperation as well as community engagement.

### 3. Embrace complexity and promote simplicity.

Cultural change is inherently complex. A strong culture requires continual interpretation and creative expression. We will promote simple solutions that reflect an understanding of the complexity of cultural change and develop common messaging and catalytic programs and that can be readily adapted to specific needs and opportunities.

## Ten Conservation Priorities

Conservation is the art of living lightly. It is a deep-rooted value that we can apply to all facets of our lives, and economy. Sounds great, but how can you translate a cultural value into tangible and measurable actions?

Our approach is to identify ten priority areas of activity. Each one reflects a priority for the environmental movement – it is how the movement has organized itself, with lead organizations and issue-based networks. Taken together, they represent ten priority actions, which can be used to promote conservation to the public, through schools, and in a common approach to conservation leadership by organizations, business and governments alike.

Priority Areas		Priority Actions
1.	Nature	Help nature
2.	Water	Save water
3.	Energy	Save energy
4.	Green power	Use green power
5.	Transportation	Drive less
6.	Food	Eat smart
7.	Waste	Waste less
8.	Pollution	Prevent pollution
9.	Green economy	Buy green
10.	Urban design	Live local

### Applying the Priorities

Together, these ten priorities help scope conservation and provide a focal point for organizing our combined efforts to deliver solutions.

Our approach is to connect and support the existing capacity for promoting a culture of conservation and the conservation priorities. We look for leaders and networks that address:

1. **integrated approaches** (e.g. conserver society, sustainability, and green living)
2. **each of the priority areas** (e.g. issue networks and lead organizations)
3. **economic sectors** (e.g. business associations and market transformation)
4. **social and cultural communities** (e.g. faith, culture, schools, and neighbourhoods)

It's a wide net to cast, but if you think about it, all the complexity of the conservation movement pretty much comes down to these ten priorities. So, if we focus on building the links around some very common goals, we can build a much stronger and united movement.

For this reason, we encourage all those who are active in the environmental field to adapt and adopt these priority actions to your work. Feel free to develop your own brand and marketing, but if you can integrate your programs and campaigns within the ten priorities, then it will be easier for all to see the connections.

Individual brands, campaigns and programs will change over the years, but the ten priority actions will provide a common and consistent message to the public.

# Our Activities

Our primary task is to build a united conservation movement – a sense not only of common cause, but of common potential. By working together, great change becomes possible.

Our implementation activities will focus on four key steps: promoting conservation, promoting leadership, promoting collaboration, and promoting innovation. A fifth activity will look at monitoring and evaluating our progress.

## 1. Promote Conservation

We will promote a culture of conservation and awareness of the ten conservation priorities, through high-level campaigns and with movement-based strategies for outreach and engagement.

### Public Awareness

1. **We will promote awareness of conservation and conservation solutions at all levels of society.**
  - a. We will reinforce a culture of conservation in Ontario
  - b. We will promote widespread commitment to live lightly
  - c. We will promote our priority conservation actions
  - d. We will promote solutions that help make conserver lifestyle easy, affordable, and desirable
2. **We will reach all Ontarians.** We can reach every individual in Ontario several times over through movement-based marketing of common messages, such as “we conserve” and the ten priority actions.
  - a. Organizations, businesses, and governments can adapt and adopt the conservation message and priority actions into their member communications and support.
  - b. Umbrella associations can adapt and adopt the conservation message and priority actions as part of their communications and support for member organizations
  - c. Environmental education and awareness organizations can adapt and adopt the conservation message and priority actions into their programming.

### A Conserver Challenge

3. **We will develop a Conserver Challenge, designed to enlist all Ontarians as active conservers.**
  - a. The challenge will promote the ten priority actions, and allow for participating partners to adapt the challenge to better address the opportunities and priorities of their audience.
  - b. The challenge will help guide people to support services and solutions that will make it easy to become a better conserver.

### Collaborative Campaigns

4. **We will develop high-level collaborative campaigns to promote conservation priorities and individual solutions.**
  - a. The campaigns will connect all our programs and individual campaigns within the common and long-term conservation priorities.
  - b. Campaigns may be developed by any collaboration of partners within the conservation movement.

## 2. Promote Distributed Leadership

Every group, institution, business and government in Ontario needs to be part of this strategy. There are no sidelines in the conservation movement. We must all be leaders – in our own way and at our own pace, to be sure, but with a commitment to become better. “We conserve” is a statement of commitment: to lead, and to help others on the path to a conserver society.

### Distributed Leadership

1. **We will encourage conservation leadership in all sectors of society and the economy**
  - a. Social, cultural, faith and all other organizations are encouraged to interpret and integrate conservation leadership into their operations, programming and services.
  - b. Businesses and business associations are encouraged to adapt and adopt conservation leadership into their operations, products and services, and community support.
  - c. All governments are encouraged to have an internal environmental plan as well as legislation, policies, fiscal incentives, and programs to assist in promoting conservation.

### Promoting Conservation Leadership

2. **We will develop a common approach to promoting conservation leadership**, based on the ten conservation priorities. The five categories of leadership are: initial pledge, five significant actions; an internal environmental management system; 50% or more environmentally preferable products and/or services; and contributing one percent or more of time or money to supporting your community.
  - a. Organizations, businesses and governments can use the leadership program to promote their conservation activities and commitments.
  - b. Individual certification or green labeling programs can be integrated into the leadership rating
  - c. Municipalities, trade associations, or other organizations can adapt and adopt the program, and provide outreach and support programs to help their members become conservation leaders.
3. **We will connect conservers with conservation leaders.**
  - a. Social marketing programs will connect the individual conservation challenge with the conservation leaders.

### **3. Promote Effective Networking**

We will support a complex conservation movement. We will foster networks and collaboration at the community level and through communities of interest (including issues, business sectors, culture, and faith). We will recognize and support the role of networks, membership associations, and lead organizations in developing and promoting solutions across Ontario.

#### Issue Networks

1. **We will identify lead organizations and networks for our ten priority areas.**
  - a. Organizations and networks can self-identify their areas of leadership and expertise
  - b. New networks and lead organizations can be established to fill gaps and opportunities within the conservation priorities
  - c. Online directories, websites, and social media will help connect people with conservation resources.

#### Community Networks

2. **We will help establish community action networks across the province.**
  - a. Municipalities and/or other community-oriented lead organizations will organize local networks of community groups
  - b. We will support a network of community networks and lead organizations, including conservation networks, Green Communities, Transition Towns, Environmental Advisory Committees, Healthy Communities, or any other community-oriented programs.
  - c. We will assist community networks to develop a community vision, action plans and project priorities.
  - d. We will connect community networks with programs, resources, and funding to support community-led projects and campaigns.

#### Other Networks and Lead Organizations

3. **We will promote conservation with other networks and organizations with compatible goals**
  - a. Other networks and social movements can identify common cause with the conservation movement (e.g. culture, social equity, health, and fair trade).

#### Collaboration and Capacity Building

4. **We will improve our capacity to deliver conservation solutions.**
  - a. We will collaborate within our networks, building upon our individual strengths and areas of expertise
  - b. We will collaborate across networks, finding common cause and ways to co-promote our goals
  - c. We will strengthen our ability to deliver results through training and support programs and collaborative fundraising.



### **4. Promote Innovation**

Society is never static. It changes and evolves over time. The very forces of innovation and invention that gave rise to the industrial age can also guide us into a prosperous conserver society. We will foster change through innovation and creativity in our communities, the voluntary sector, business and governments that will help make conservation easy, affordable and desirable.

#### **Innovation in Communication**

1. We will encourage innovative and creative ways to express our common priorities. Our high level and long-term messaging (e.g. the ten priority actions) will be reinforced by individual campaigns and programs.

#### **Innovation at Work**

2. We will encourage entrepreneurial innovation and the creation of new small businesses that are green from the ground up.
3. We will encourage innovation in conventional businesses that are redesigning their products and services to better integrate conserver values into a consumer model.

#### **Innovation in our Communities**

4. We will encourage innovation in our communities to help create vibrant local economies and healthy neighbourhoods.

#### **Centres of Innovation**

5. Local hubs and centres for innovation will provide office space and common services for community organizations and new social ventures.
6. Regional and sectoral innovation centres will provide resources for larger scale innovation and collaboration on priority issues.

#### **Innovative Policy**

7. We will promote policies, long-term programs, and investments in green infrastructure that will further support a voluntary transition to culture of conservation.

## Evaluating Our Progress

We will use both quantitative and qualitative indicators to measure our success with both state of the environment reporting, and qualitative review. In the end, the transition to a conserver society will be measured by both our values and our actions.

### State of the Environment Reporting

1. We will encourage our governments to maintain a regular State of the Environment report, including statistics relevant to our ten conservation priorities.

### Annual Conservation Poll

2. We will conduct an annual poll of our members and allies to develop a scoring of Ontario's status as a conserver society. Over time, this scoring will provide an indication of our ability to respond to long-term pressures (such as peak oil, urban sprawl, and climate change) as well as immediate resource and economic crises (such as blackouts and recessions).
3. Public opinion polls, especially during elections, can track how public awareness and commitment to conservation and the ten priority actions will translate into support for policy initiatives.

# Vision

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## 2020 Vision

If Ontario were a conserver society, we would live better on less. We would have a high standard of living with a fraction of the ecological footprint. Our actions as individuals would influence economic development, community design, and the ability for our governments to act on regional, provincial and national issues on our behalf.

Here's how it might look in 2020.

### A Culture of Conservation

#### Livelihoodly

1. **Conservation will be second nature.**

In the same way as the civil rights, gay rights, and feminist movements have helped to make social equity (the respect for other people) a strong cultural value, the conservation movement will make the respect for nature an equally strong cultural value that is reflected in our daily routines as well as our large scale actions and investments.

#### greengiving

2. **We will give 1% for the planet.**

Conservation will also be a strong part of our charitable giving and community volunteerism. We will all contribute at least 1% of our time and/or income to conservation causes, be they local, provincial, national or global.

### Help Nature

#### greenhomes

3. **We will be at home with nature.**

From pesticide-free lawns to butterfly habitat and food gardens, our lawns are an important part of the natural ecosystem. Homeowners and building managers will have access to a full range of support services to help them design and implement an ecological plan for their yards and/or balconies.

#### greencommunities

4. **Ontario communities will be green.**

Each municipality will have an integrated plan and support services for nature and green spaces within the community, including tree cover, recreational parks, natural features, rainwater retention, school and building naturalization, green roofs, community gardens, and protected ecological areas.

#### greenspaces

5. **The southern Ontario green corridor will be completed.**

Ontario needs a connected green corridor that incorporates the Niagara Escarpment, the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Greenbelt and other significant ecological features. Green tourism and rural economic development will be key features of the green corridor.

# Vision

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**6. Ontario's prime farmland will be protected.**

We will come to realize that farmland is our most precious resource, and protect our remaining class 1 to 3 farmland from development. We will strengthen the link between farmers and consumers, promote community agriculture, farmer's markets, and local and sustainably grown food.

**7. Ontario will be a leader in green gravel and sustainable mining.**

Ontario will be a leader in aggregate conservation through an aggressive 3Rs program, demand management strategies (including compact community design), the protection of significant natural areas, and the restoration of old pits and quarries.

Ontario will be a leader in sustainable mining, through the aggressive recycling of mineral resources (in particular from e-waste), the protection of significant natural areas, the protection of aquifers and ecosystems from tailings and pollution, and through local economic development.

**8. Ontario will be a leader in sustainable forest management.**

Ontario will be a leading supplier of FSC certified products. We will have a completed biodiversity strategy, including a completed parks system and endangered species legislation. Northern economic development strategies will emphasize community-based sustainable economic development, including tourism, renewable resources and value-added products. We will maintain the Boreal forest as the largest intact carbon pool in the world.

## Save Water

### greatlakes

**9. Our lakes and rivers will be protected.**

Healthy lakes and rivers will ensure clean water for swimming, fishing, and drinking. A Great Lakes Act will ensure the integrated management and protection of our largest water resource. It will ensure coordinated action to clean our beaches, control invasive species, control stormwater runoff and pollution, and promote healthy wetlands and coastal areas around our lakes. With waterfront cycling trails, recreation areas, and local community development, our lakes will become one of our strongest tourist attractions.

### cleanwater

**10. All Ontarians will have clean drinking water.**

Clean water is a right. We will ensure safe drinking water, whether through pollution prevention or municipal water treatment. First Nations and communities on groundwater sources are priorities.

Bottled water will be largely replaced with free community filling stations, otherwise known as "taps".

### conservewater

**11. We will treat water as a precious resource.**

We will conserve our water supplies, particularly through controlling development on aquifers and installing water-efficient appliances. We will use rainwater and grey water for our lawns and gardens, and capture storm runoff for community wetlands.

# Vision

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## Save Energy

### energysecurity

**12. Ontario will have reduced its dependence on energy imports.**

Recognizing that energy is the lifeblood of our economy, Ontario will emphasize energy resilience through aggressive conservation programs and an emphasis on increasing local, green power and regional energy production.

### homeheating

**13. Ontario's homes will be EnerGuide 70 or better.**

According to Green Communities Canada, Ontario's homes currently have an average EnerGuide rating of 54. Investing in conservation has raised the average rating up to 66. Through increased auditing capacity, improved incentives, and public outreach, we will raise the average to an EnerGuide 70 rating for around 2.7 million homes across Ontario.

**14. All new homes will be EnerGuide 80 or better.**

Ontario's building code mandates that all homes built after 2012 will need to meet the EnerGuide 80 standard. Voluntary leadership will achieve the EnerGuide 80 standard sooner, and will ensure that homes built after 2012 exceed the EnerGuide 80 standard.

### electricityconservation

**15. Ontario peak demand will be 20,000 megawatts.**

20,000 megawatts represents a 25% reduction in peak demand, which can be achieved both by reducing overall demand and by initiatives aimed at reducing peak load.

### homeelectricity

**16. Residential electricity use will be an average of 750 kWh/month.**

Conservation is by far the cheapest way of meeting Ontario's power demand, especially for the first 25% of the demand. 750 kWh represents a 25% decline from the 2007 average of 1,000 kWh.

## Use Green Power

### greengrid

**17. We will generate 20,000 MW of green power.**

By 2020, it's projected that 18,000 MW of Ontario's existing electricity generating capacity will need to be replaced or refurbished. As has been proven in Denmark, where 18% of the electricity demand is now met through wind power, renewable power should be our preferred option, along with investments in a smart grid and new technology for storing renewable power.

### homepower

**18. One million Ontario homes will have renewable power.**

One million homes will have invested in renewable power, either by purchasing green power through a utility, by participating in a community renewable power cooperative, or by installing a photovoltaic solar, passive solar, wind, hydro, or geothermal system.

# Vision

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## Drive Less

### greentransportation

**19. We will drive 25% less kilometres than we did in 2004.**

We love our cars to death. Ontarians drove an estimated 122 billion kilometres in 2004. That's an average of 14,000 kilometres per driver. By focusing on transportation alternatives and services we will decrease the number of kilometres driven annually. By 2020, with greater investments in transit, car-sharing, cycling; improved inter-regional transportation options, and compact community design, we will be able to reduce the need for automobile transportation as well as the distance traveled per trip.

**20. We will reduce gasoline consumption by 30% of 2002 levels by 2016.**

This target is consistent with Californian efficiency standards for 2016. Ontario drivers consumed 15 billion litres of gasoline in 2002. Through a combination of transportation alternatives and improved efficiency for all light duty vehicles, we will reduce the amount of gasoline consumed to 10.5 billion litres by 2016. Achieving this target through efficiency would require that new light-duty vehicle fuel consumption in Canada improve to 6.5 L/100km from the 2001 average of 9.3 L/100km.

### safecycling

**21. Every municipality will have a safe cycling strategy.**

Safe cycling strategies will ensure there is the bicycling infrastructure, support services, education, and incentives in place to make bicycling a viable mode of transportation for downtown and suburban communities. Safe cycling starts with children, carries on through our adult years, and will provide seniors with a safe means to stay healthy and mobile.

**22. Ontario will have a network of cycling routes.**

As part of Ontario's tourism strategy, we will have a network of regional bicycle routes (including dedicated trails) that are connected to the development of local hospitality services and culture.



## Eat local

### localfood

**23. 50% of Ontario's food will be locally-grown.**

According to Local Food Plus, only 10 to 15% of Ontario's food is currently grown locally. Without sacrificing the pleasures of coffee and fruit, it is estimated that Ontario's food system can be 60% local within five years if we support local farmers and food distribution systems. By making our target 50% (or half our diet as local food), we can more easily measure our personal progress.

**24. Our diet will be healthy.**

Our personal food choices will be healthier, supported by a food industry that is committed to providing healthy, sustainable, and ethical foods. Individually, we can all make it a personal priority to eat at least 25% local, organic and/or vegetarian meals.



# Vision

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## Waste less

### wastereduction

**25. We will achieve a 70% diversion rate for solid waste.**

Through extended produce responsibility, product fees, and a combination of waste reduction, recycling, reuse and composting programs, we will improve on the current diversion rate of less than 40%.

## Prevent Pollution

### toxicfree

**26. We will virtually eliminate hazardous waste and pollution.**

Through legislation and performance standards, pollution prevention and green chemistry, we will strive to eliminate the flow of hazardous chemicals into our watersheds and air. These wastes include mining and manufacturing residues, biomedical wastes from hospitals, spent photo finishing chemicals, waste pesticides, PCBs, and motor oil.

**27. We will achieve an 80% diversion rate for household hazardous waste.**

Hazardous waste is only a small percentage of the residential waste stream, but we have few programs in place to facilitate recycling and safe disposal. By 2020, Ontario will have residential hazardous waste collection programs in place that will achieve an 80% capture rate on household hazardous wastes.

## Buy Green

### greeneconomies

**28. 50% of products and services will be green.**

Currently, Ontario's green products and services are estimated to be about 5% of the total economy. Included in this figure are the companies that specialize in environmental and conservation products and services as well as the conservation alternatives and options offered by the mainstream economy. In a conserver society, consumer demand will ensure that at least one-half of all the products and services sold will reflect environmental values in their design, manufacture, and/or packaging.

**29. 50% of personal investments will be environmentally and socially responsible.**

Socially responsible investing (SRI) is estimated to be about 1% of the market at this point, even though there are companies specializing in funds with environmental and social screens. With the growth in SRI funds and the increase in corporate social and environmental responsibility, the opportunities for individuals to invest in responsible companies will increase significantly. Investing in conservation and environmental leaders will make good business sense.

# Vision

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## Live Local

### complete communities

#### **30. We will be a province of villages.**

If we live in an urban area (and most of us do) we will strive to make our communities complete. We will plan for complete neighbourhoods that will have all we need for daily living and well-being, including shops, restaurants and services, institutions, parks, and jobs. Our streets will be pedestrian and bike friendly, and provide safe routes to a village centre, local schools, and other public places. Our neighbourhoods will be green, with natural yards and an urban forest.

Our towns and cities should link neighbourhoods together, and provide higher level services. By planning for complete communities, Ontario's municipalities will be able to accommodate future growth needs while creating more vibrant and sustainable local economies and cultural centres.

### greenstreets

#### **31. Our neighbourhoods will be walkable.**

We will encourage a pedestrian society, with green streets, urban forests, and places to go. We will create village centres in our neighbourhoods and towns that will provide

### localeconomies

#### **32. Over 30% of our shopping will be local.**

Currently, less than ten percent of our shopping is local, which means we drive everywhere to buy everything. With the growth of Business Improvement Areas and incentives for local business, we will increase the market share for local stores to 30%.

#### **33. We will increase local production of value-added goods by 20%.**

By placing a greater value on local jobs and quality products, we will purchase locally-produced goods that meet the highest ecological and social responsibility standards. Incentives for green economic development and buy local campaigns will help ensure that the jobs associated with a conserver economy stay in Ontario.

#### **34. Local tourism and recreation will increase by 20%.**

We will reduce carbon emissions and travel costs with local tourism. To support a growing demand for local tourism and recreation, we will have cycle touring infrastructure to rival that of La Route Verte in Quebec, and make full use of our greenbelt, green spaces and northern wilderness to provide excellent and affordable recreation and vacation opportunities.

### greenculture

#### **35. Our communities will be vibrant.**

From food to arts and entertainment, our communities will be places where we enjoy life and spend our time and money to enrich ourselves with culture instead of through material consumption.

### engaged communities

#### **36. Our communities will be active.**

Through community action networks, community visions, and voluntary sector projects, our communities will be active and continually improving upon themselves.

# Implementation

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## From Strategy to Action

Ontario's conservation strategy is designed to be a catalyst for a voluntary transition to a conservator society. The good news is that action is already happening all around us. There is an emerging green economy, and strong voluntary sector at the community, provincial, and national level.

The fact that a conservation movement is growing organically means we can look at simple and low cost ways to implement our strategy, working with our members and allies. At the same time, we can also work to secure major support for the strategy from our governments, funders and senior environmental leaders.



## Simple Implementation

The Conservation Council will:

- promote public awareness conservation and a personal commitment to conserve
- build online resources to map Ontario's conservation movement and connect people with solutions
- develop components of the strategy via project funding
- promote collaboration via campaigns, networking, and a regular conservation summit
- support leadership by others

Organizations, businesses and governments can:

- adapt and adopt the strategy to your situation
- use the ten priority actions as common language for high level social marketing
- develop and promote your statement of conservation leadership (see [www.weconserve.ca/leaders/](http://www.weconserve.ca/leaders/))
- use "we conserve" to promote your commitment to leadership and/or use the We Conserve wordmark.

The public can:

- make a personal commitment to conserve (see [www.weconserve.ca](http://www.weconserve.ca))
- become a conservation ambassador (see [www.weconserve.ca/leaders/](http://www.weconserve.ca/leaders/))
- support businesses that are conservation leaders
- volunteer or support conservation efforts in your community and in the environmental community.

## Aggressive Implementation

Consider for a moment how we would implement this strategy if we were serious about a culture of conservation.

We would coordinate and enhance funding support for conservation priorities, including core funding for networks and lead organizations, collaborative campaigns, support services, and community projects. We would do this either through a United Conservation Appeal, or through effective pooling and brokering of the many foundation, government, and corporate funding programs.

We would have strong government policy in support of conservation, including high-level strategies, progressive legislation, strong ecosystem and performance standards, and fiscal instruments to fund solutions and provide incentives for conservation.

We would all be conservers. We would say "I conserve" or "we conserve" often enough, and make enough conscious choices in our lives and our work, that conservation would truly be a part of our culture.

## Implementation

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# Make it happen

This is our hope for Ontario. We can get there if we choose to act now to support the voluntary transition to a conserver society.

Or we can wait. Wait for climate change, peak oil, global recession, or food scarcity to force conservation upon us

It's your choice.



# About Us

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The Conservation Council of Ontario (CCO) is a provincial association of conservation leaders. Founded in 1951, we have a long history of promoting cooperation on conservation, developing innovative projects and approaches, researching conservation policy, and promoting a coordinated provincial strategy.

Our membership includes not-for-profit organizations, businesses and municipalities that share in our mission to promote conservation.

## How does the Council help?

**As a council** -- we serve as a forum for its members to share ideas and collaborate.

**As a secretariat** – we work to promote a united conservation movement.

**As an organization** – we take on projects that will strengthen Ontario's conservation movement.

### **We promote conservation**

- We've established ten action priorities to help organize the conservation movement

### **We promote leadership**

- We've developed a self-assessed rating system for green leadership that combines all the green certification programs into a common and simple way to communicate a commitment to lead.

### **We help organize a movement**

- [www.weconserve.ca](http://www.weconserve.ca) helps map Ontario's conservation movement
- [www.greatgreendirectory.ca](http://www.greatgreendirectory.ca) is a searchable online directory of green products, services, programs, incentives and resources
- We host the Ontario Smart Growth Network as the network that supports our goal of "Live local".
- We have developed a low-cost model to organize communities for action
- We are part of a collaborative project to support community action in Toronto
- Our Conservation Summit provides an opportunity to share successes and plan for the future

### **We innovate**

- We've developed campaigns, projects, and policy proposals
- We're working on a red box for household hazardous waste as a catalyst for improved participation in HHW programs

# About Us

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## 2011 Details

### Member Organizations

1. AGCare (Agriculture Groups Concerned About the Environment)
2. American Fisheries Society
3. Bruce Peninsula Environment Group
4. Bruce Trail Conservancy
5. Canadian Centre for Pollution Prevention
6. Canadian Institute of Forestry (S. Ont. Section)
7. Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors -- Ontario Branch
8. Canadian Land Reclamation Association - Ontario
9. Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists - Ontario Chapter
10. Canoe Ontario
11. Centre for Sustainable Watersheds
12. Clean Water Foundation
13. Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario
14. Durham Sustain Ability
15. Earth Day Canada
16. EnviroCentre (Ottawa)
17. Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations
18. Friends of the Don East
19. Green Enterprise Ontario
20. Green Trans (Oakville)
21. Greenest City (Toronto)
22. LEAF (Local Enhancement through Appreciation of Forests)
23. Living Green (Environmental Action Barrie)
24. Local Food Plus
25. Oakville Green
26. Ontario Camps Association
27. Ontario Federation of Agriculture
28. Ontario Federation of Labour
29. Ontario Healthy Communities Association
30. Ontario Horticultural Association
31. Ontario Institute of Agrologists
32. Ontario Landscape Alliance
33. Ontario Professional Planners Institute
34. Organic Food Conferences Canada
35. Ontario Sustainable Energy Association
36. SHARE (Simcoe Huronia Association for Renewable Energy)
37. Sierra Club of Canada (Ontario Chapter)
38. Soil and Water Conservation Society
39. Summerhill Impact (formerly the Clean Air Foundation)
40. The Sustainability Network
41. Toronto Zoo
42. Waste Diversion Toronto/Canada
43. Water Environment Association of Ontario
44. Wildlands League
45. Women's Healthy Environments Network
46. Workers Health and Safety Centre

### Member Businesses

1. ECO Building Resource Ltd.
2. Grun Canada
3. REGEN Energy

### Member Municipalities

1. The Town of Oakville
2. The City of Oshawa

### Individual members

- |                          |                      |                         |   |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Leslie Adams          | 22. Bruce Falls      | 42. Ken MacKay          | 63. H el ene St. Jacques                    |
| 2. Paul Aird             | 23. Bill Glenn       | 43. Lea Ann Mallett     | 64. Karen Sun                               |
| 3. Greg Allen            | 24. Jack Goering     | 44. Ben Marans          | 65. Tonya Surman                            |
| 4. Loghman Azar          | 25. Rob Grand        | 45. Anthony Marshall    | 66. Geza Teleki                             |
| 5. R. Noel Bates         | 26. Ellen Greenwood  | 46. Leslie McLaren      | 67. Paul Verkely                            |
| 6. Jeb Brugmann          | 27. Lino Grima       | 47. Tony McQuail        | 68. Carol Lynn Wallace                      |
| 7. Chantal Brundage      | 28. David Hardy      | 48. Donald Middleton    | 69. Anthony Watanabe                        |
| 8. Louis (Smoke) Bruyere | 29. Chris Hart       | 49. Allegra Newman      | 70. John Willms                             |
| 9. Paul Bubelis          | 30. Natalie Helferty | 50. Margaret Osborne    | 71. Mark Winfield                           |
| 10. Bob Burdett          | 31. Michael Hough    | 51. Aleksandar Pasic    |   |
| 11. Rick Byun            | 32. Colin Isaacs     | 52. Doug Petrie         | <b>Honorary (Life) Members</b>              |
| 12. Rod Carrow           | 33. David Israelson  | 53. Richard Poersch     | 72. Max Bacon,                              |
| 13. Valerie Charnish     | 34. Lois James       | 54. Sarah Rang          | 73. Lyn MacMillan                           |
| 14. Chris Chopik         | 35. Tony Jennings    | 55. Rob Roberti         | 74. Simon Miles                             |
| 15. Wendy Cook           | 36. Ashifa Jiwa      | 56. Wayne Roberts       |   |
| 16. Phyllis Creighton    | 37. Ron Kanter       | 57. Mary Rowe           | <b>Consulting (Out of Province) Members</b> |
| 17. Beth Anne Currie     | 38. Peter Klose      | 58. Nancy Ellen Sendell | 75. Bob Bateman                             |
| 18. Bob Duncanson        | 39. Steve Koch       | 59. Chandra Sharma      | 76. Arthur Hanson                           |
| 19. John Eleen           | 40. Sally Leppard    | 60. Doug Skeates        |   |
| 20. Suzanne Elston       | 41. Marcelo Levy     | 61. Rachel Stack        |   |
| 21. Elizabeth Everhardus |                      | 62. Lori Stahlbrand     |   |



# About Us

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## In Memorium

We wish to remember three members who passed away in 2011. Harvey Clare was our acting Executive Director in the early 1980s and kept the Council alive and running in lean years. He served on the Board of Directors as Treasurer throughout the 1980s. Mack Williams was a representative of the Canadian Institute of Forestry during the 1980's and was instrumental in developing the Geraldton Community Forest pilot project for the Council. Liisa Wolfgram was a relative newcomer to the Council, joining as the Ontario Horticultural Association representative. She had an infectious spirit and drive and helped strengthen the obvious connection between conservation and gardening.

Each, in their own way, embodied the passion and commitment to conservation that has always made our movement strong.

## Staff and Contracts

- Chris Winter, Executive Director
- Leslie Domenico, Special Projects
- Julia Ford, Community Action
- Calista Arasaratnam, Finances
- Annie Hee, Research
- Addison Cameron-Huff, Web Design

## Friends and Allies

- John Willms, Willms & Shier, Honorary Solicitor
- EcoSpark and the Centre for Social Innovation (Live Green Toronto Community Animation)
- The Ontario Smart Growth Network
- Marty Collier, Healthy Transport Consulting (Transportation workshops)
- Green Neighbours 21 (community outreach project)
- Toronto Green Community (container gardening project)
- EcoAmbassadeurs du Monde (schools outreach)

## Our Sponsors



They've been conserving since 1927, a leader in refillable bottles and a natural partner for We Conserve. The Beer Store is currently sponsoring We Conserve through a 5 cent per bag charge on plastic bags.



The Ministry of the Environment has been a tremendous support over the past year, both with project funding for the Great Green Directory and a grant to support Community Action through the Community Go Green Fund.



With our project partners, EcoSpark and the Centre for Social Innovation, a team of community animators are now building community networks and helping local groups develop projects and engage their members in Live Green Toronto.



The Doors Closed campaign promoted electricity conservation by stores during heatwave. The campaign helped showcase the power of movement-based marketing.

## And with thanks to...

Tenzing Communications, Environmental Communication Options, The McLean Foundation, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, TD Friends of the Environment, the City of Oshawa, the Town of Oakville, Fever Wear, Colin Isaacs, Bob and Carole Duncanson, Ellen and Howard Greenwood, Kinark Outdoor Education Centre, and every group, business, and individual that has picked up on the "We Conserve" message and our campaigns.



Live better. Live lightly.



**The Conservation  
Council of Ontario**

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