



Mattagami Region  
Conservation Authority

The background of the cover is a photograph of a lake at sunset. The sky is filled with dark, dramatic clouds, with a bright glow of light breaking through near the horizon. The water is calm, reflecting the colors of the sky. In the foreground, there are tall, thin reeds or grasses that are slightly out of focus. The overall mood is serene and natural.

*Annual Report*  
**2016**





# *Mattagami Region Conservation Authority*

The Mattagami Region Conservation Authority (MRCA) has a mandate to protect, conserve and restore the natural resources within its watershed area. The MRCA's watershed covers a geographic area of over 11,000 square kilometres from the Height of Land south of Gogama to a point 30 km downstream of the Sandy Falls Dam. The work the Authority does is defined by three key founding principles: promotion of local involvement and initiative, establishment of a strong municipal/provincial partnership, and the use of natural watershed boundaries.

The Authority operates as an independent government agency governed through a municipally-appointed Board of Directors. Full-time and part-time staff sees to the Authority's day to day operations. From the time it was established in 1962, the Authority has put in place a water and land management program that includes the construction of flood control works, the development of a flood forecast and warning system and the implementation of regulations and policies to restrict the use of hazardous lands. This program also includes water quality and quantity monitoring and the development and implementation of the Drinking Water Source Protection program. The Authority also plays a key role in providing recreational open space, trails and conservation information and education.

## **Board Members**

Steven Black, Chair – Mayor, City of Timmins

Noella Rinaldo, Vice Chair – City Councillor, Ward 5

Andrew Marks – City Councillor, Ward 5

Rick Dubeau – City Councillor, Ward 5 /André Grzela – City Councillor, Ward 1

Walter Wawrzaszek – City Councillor, Ward 2

## **Staff**

David Vallier, General Manager

Crystal Percival, Communications Specialist

Kevin Gagnon, Field Supervisor

Matthew Pawson, GIS/DWSP Project Lead

## **2016 Summer Students**

Scott McDowell      Spencer Blahey

Kirsten Janssen      Cody Brazeau

Adam Kvas              Blaire Francis

Kelsey Lefebvre      Kristina King

Mathew Richard      Melissa Onlock



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# MANAGING OUR *Water Resources*

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The Conservation Authority's water management program includes responsibilities in flood protection, the regulation of development in flood plain areas and other hazardous lands, watershed monitoring and drinking water source protection. Partnerships with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, Ontario Power Generation, Water Surveys of Canada and the City of Timmins play an important part in meeting the goals and objectives for a healthy and safe watershed.



*Hersey Lake  
Well Maintenance*

## Flooding

The spring of 2016 was welcomed with warmer daytime temperatures and cooler night-time temperatures allowing the freshet to proceed without any flood threats to the municipality.

A total of 3 news releases were issued during the spring regarding water conditions on the Mattagami River, Town Creek and Porcupine Lake.

As part of its Flood Forecast and Warning responsibilities, the Procedures Manual was updated and circulated to local emergency responders.

The MRCA circulated watershed statistics and updates to watershed stakeholders on bi-weekly basis.

Only one meeting of the Upper Mattagami Water Management Committee was held and 3 meetings with the Municipal Flood Advisory Committee took place.

Staff resources were also applied to updating the City of Timmins Emergency Plan, which is done on an annual basis.

# Watershed *Monitoring*

- The health and safety of the region’s watersheds are monitored through a network of stream flow gauges, snow course collection sites, monitoring wells and weather stations.
- The Authority’s Flood Forecast and Warning System is supported by 8 streamflow stations operated by Water Surveys of Canada and Ontario Power Generation.
- Groundwater resources are observed by 4 wells under the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network.
- Staff also collects data at 4 stations under the Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network.



## Flood Messaging

	<p><b>Normal:</b> Conditions are within NORMAL limits. No flooding is expected.</p>
	<p><b>Watershed Conditions Statement - Water Safety:</b> High flows, unsafe banks, melting ice or other factors could be dangerous for recreational users such as anglers, canoeists, hikers, children, pets, etc. Flooding is not expected.</p>
	<p><b>Watershed Conditions Statement - Flood Outlook:</b> Early notice of the potential for flooding based on weather forecast calling for heavy rain, snow melt, high wind or other conditions.</p>
	<p><b>Flood Watch:</b> Indicates that there is the potential for flooding within specific watercourses and municipalities.</p>
	<p><b>Flood Warning:</b> Indicates that flooding is imminent or occurring within specific watercourses and municipalities.</p>



# Watershed *Regulations*

Regulating the use of hazardous and environmentally sensitive lands is one of the key roles the Conservation Authority plays as a watershed manager. The Development, Interference with Wetlands, and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation requires that anyone constructing or placing fill in these areas must receive the permission of the Authority.

As part of its delegated responsibility, the MRCA reviews most Planning Act applications on behalf of the City of Timmins to provide comments related to natural hazards.

In 2016, the Authority processed 18 Consent Applications, 7 Development Proposals, 42 Minor Variances and many other specific requests for information regarding plan input, i.e., lawyer's inquiries, zoning and official plan inquiries, shoreline stabilization approvals, City of Timmins Planning Department inquiries and general public requests for information.

The MRCA also participated in meetings regarding the 5 year Official Plan update for the City of Timmins.



# Drinking Water *Source Protection*

The Mattagami Region Source Protection Authority continues to provide policy interpretation, implementation tools and other support to municipal staff to ensure policies are understood and undertaken to meet compliance deadlines.

The Source Protection Committee held one meeting in March 2016.

As part of the education and outreach strategy, the City of Timmins and the MRCA partnered with Science Timmins to host a water education event. The event was hosted at the Science Timmins Village throughout the entire month of June, in celebration of "Water Education Month".



## *Water Education Month at the Science Village*



*No Water Off A Duck's Back*



*On Thin Ice*





# Operations and Maintenance

- The regular annual maintenance of Town Creek and Crawford Creek included the removal of sediment and debris and the repair of its ice management structures.
- The MRCA's summer student compliment ensures that the Authority's 55 km of trails are kept clear, pristine and safe.
- The Authority's beaver management program addressed several nuisance beaver problems at various locations in the City. An annual program with the local fur council makes sure all flood centres are inspected and maintained.
- Continuing maintenance of Authority parklands and conservation areas including trails, beaches, shelters, signage, etc.



*Town Creek maintenance work*



*Sealing the Gillies Lake Promenade*



*Gillies Lake walking trail*



# MANAGING OUR *Land Resources*



With over 260 hectares of land, most of which has been acquired under its flood management program, the Conservation Authority is able to provide a variety of recreational facilities including trails, beach and picnic areas, parkland and open space. These holdings include conservation areas at Gillies Lake, Hersey Lake, Mountjoy Historical (Mattagami River) and Porcupine Lake.

- In 2016 the Conservation Authority continued to promote its properties within the business community as possible locations for compatible commercial enterprises. To date, this now includes food concession stands, a wakeboard park and a watercraft rental business. Funds generated through these land use agreements are used to offset taxes and further develop the properties.
- Authority lands are used by school boards, outdoor clubs and community partners for anything from athletic events to fundraising projects.
- Donations and grants allowed the Authority to continue with its program of planting trees, installing benches and picnic tables, and improving the many walking trails in its conservation areas.

## Conservation *Areas*



*Gillies Lake Conservation Area*





*Hersey Lake  
Conservation Area*



*Mountjoy Historical  
Conservation Area*



*White Waterfront  
Conservation Area*



- The MRCA designated an off-leash area at the Hersey Lake Conservation Area. The Rainbow Loop is the only area at the Conservation Area that park users can exercise their pets without the constraints of a leash. The off leash area is clearly marked with new signage.
- Grade 4 students from École Catholique Don-Bosco installed several bird houses at the Hersey Lake Conservation Area. They built the houses as part of a class project.
- Groomed winter trails at Hersey Lake and Gillies Lake are attracting more users each year.
- A variety of employment programs through the federal and provincial governments allow the Authority to hire part-time students for facility maintenance and development.
- The Gillies Lake boardwalk and Gillies Lake Promenade were cleaned and sealed. Several boards were also replaced on the boardwalk.
- All park benches at Gillies Lake were sanded and restained.
- The MRCA received \$61,000 through FedNor's 150 Community Infrastructure Program. The funds enabled the Conservation Authority to expand its compound and to construct a cold storage building.
- The lights at Gillies Lake were converted to newer, energy efficient LED lights.
- Rainbow Lake lookout at the Hersey Lake Conservation Area saw many improvements including a new viewing platform with a storyboard and two benches. The trail to the lookout was resurfaced, a bear proof garbage can and new stairs were installed.
- Eighteen Hersey Lake location maps were upgraded.
- New park benches were installed at Lynx Lake and the Hersey Promenade.
- New on leash regulation signs were installed at all Conservation Areas.



*New on leash regulation signs were installed at all Conservation Areas throughout the City.*





*Grade 4 students from École Catholique Don-Bosco installed several bird houses at the Hersey Lake Conservation Area.*



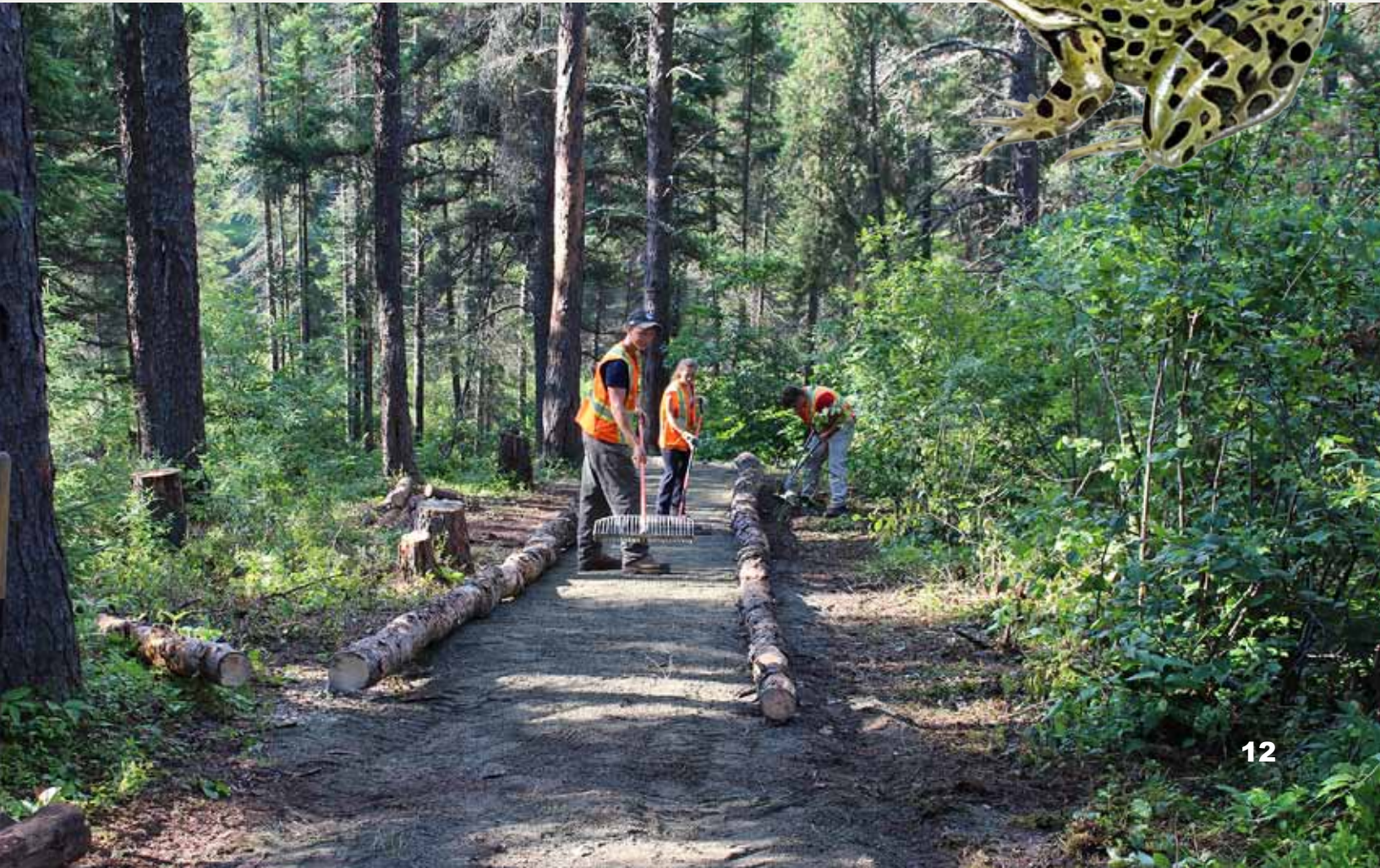
*Contractors install siding on the newly constructed cold storage building*



# Community Trails

The trail network has evolved since 1979 into a community-wide, non-motorized, recreational trail system. It started with the construction of the Golden Springs Trail along Highway 655 and was completed in 2004 with the opening of the Bridge to Bridge Trail along the Mattagami River. The current layout is focused on connecting the main population centres of Timmins and many of the key recreational and open space resources within the community.

- The trails program, in 2016, continued to focus on several upgrades throughout the trail network. Trails were resurfaced, a number of bridges were replaced, and benches and rest areas were installed.
- Culvert installation and resurfacing on the South end of the Bart Thomson trail was completed.
- Brushing of Hersey Lake trails with assistance from MNRF Stewardship Rangers.
- The Authority and Wintergreen sponsored several hikes throughout the community. Residents participated in guided hikes to Hersey Lake. These events were used to promote both the trail system as well as the need for watershed residents to get healthy exercise.
- 2017 will also see continued maintenance and upgrades to area trails.





# Communications, *Education & Outreach*

A variety of media including a Facebook page, active website, special events, news releases, and numerous publications help communicate and promote Authority programs and events to watershed residents.

- In 2016, Authority staff organized several special events including Hiking Days.
- Information booths were set up at several local public events including the Sportsman Show and Welcome to Timmins Night.
- Local media followed the activities of the Authority throughout the year. Nine news releases were issued highlighting the activities and accomplishments.







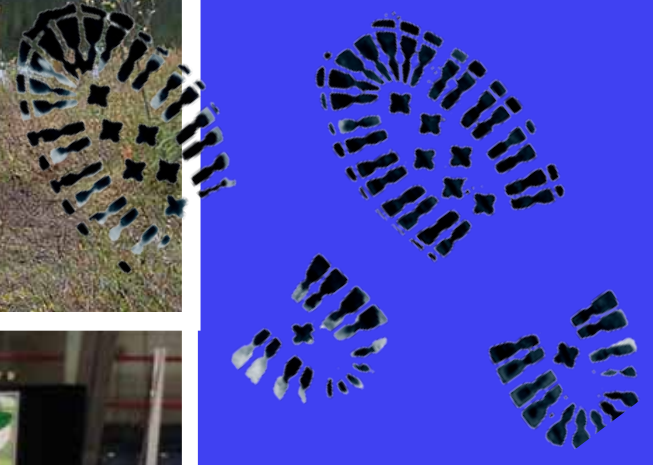
A small group gather at the newly constructed Rainbow Lake viewing platform for Timmins Fall Hiking Day.



General Manager David Vallier staffs the MRCA/Wintergreen booth at the 2016 Sportsman Show.

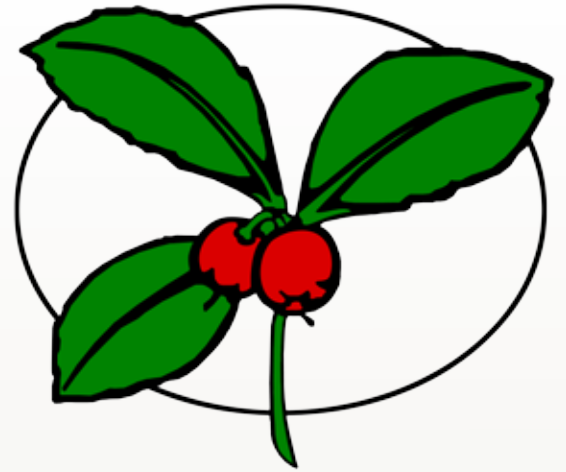


The MRCA received \$61,000 through FedNor's Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program. The funds enabled the Conservation Authority to make a number of upgrades to the Gillies Lake Conservation Area such as lighting, storage, general landscaping and trail upgrades.





# Wintergreen Fund *For Conservation*



For the past 17 years, the Wintergreen Fund for Conservation has been raising monies for community conservation projects that have included improvements to the community trail system, a variety of conservation education programs and most recently the Gillies Lake South Shore Promenade Project. Wintergreen features several like-minded community volunteers with an active interest in conservation and education.



Wintergreen activities included:

- Hiking Day events at Archie's Rock and Hersey Lake;
- Gillies Lake LED lighting upgrade;
- Gillies Lake beautification efforts;
- a high school bursary;
- assistance with the Gillies Lake gardens;
- assistance with the Archie's Rock signage;
- continued support for the Mattagami River Sturgeon Program.

*Above: Wintergreen Chairman Michael Doody presents Chiara Pizzale with the 2016 Student Bursary for Environmental Conservation to assist with her post-secondary studies.*



*Muddy Mark discusses winter ecology with participants during Timmins Winter Hiking Day.*



*New LED lights were installed around Gillies Lake.*



*New directional signage for Archie's Rock.*





# What's New *for* 2017

- The MRCA will continue maintenance duties and responsibilities for the Mountjoy Historical Park in 2017.
- Mountjoy Historical Park entrance sign rebuild.
- Implementation of components of the Trails Master Plan.
- Website refresh.
- Focus on maintenance to Conservation Authority attributes, amenities and infrastructure.
- A complete overhaul of the Scout Rock Trail including resurfacing, brushing and culvert installation / replacement.
- The Mattagami Region Source Protection Authority is required to prepare a workplan as part of the Section 36 review for the Source Protection Plan by November 30, 2017.



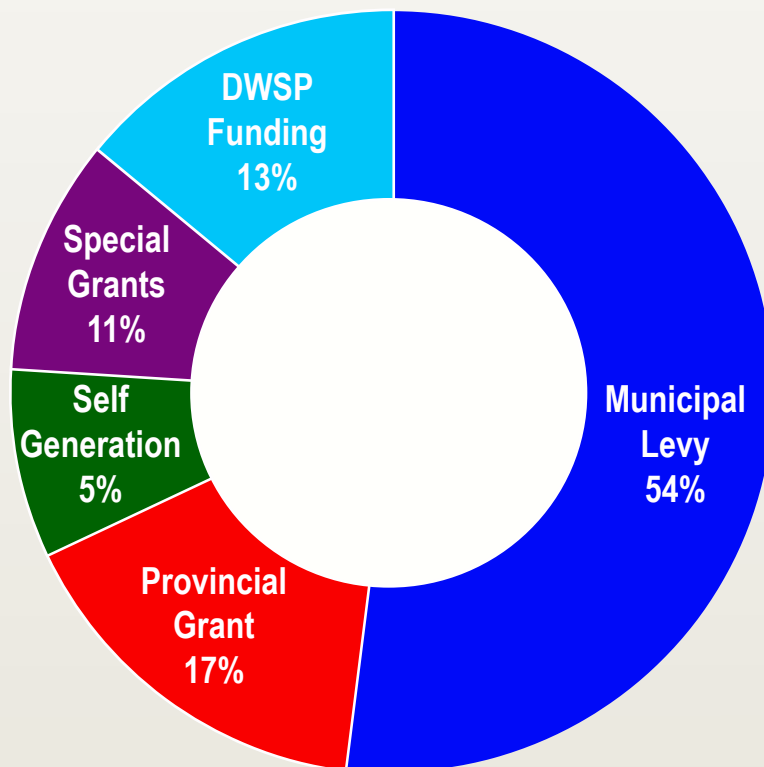


# Financial *Summary*

In 2016, the Conservation Authority's budget totaled \$832,277. On the revenue side, the Municipality contributed \$448,000 while the Province provided \$141,427 in regular grant funding and \$109,323 in Drinking Water Source Protection funding. An amount of \$92,963 was received in special grant funding. The remaining revenue of \$40,564 was made up of donations, self-generated income and specific federal and provincial employment program funding. Source Water Protection Activities are 100% Government funded.

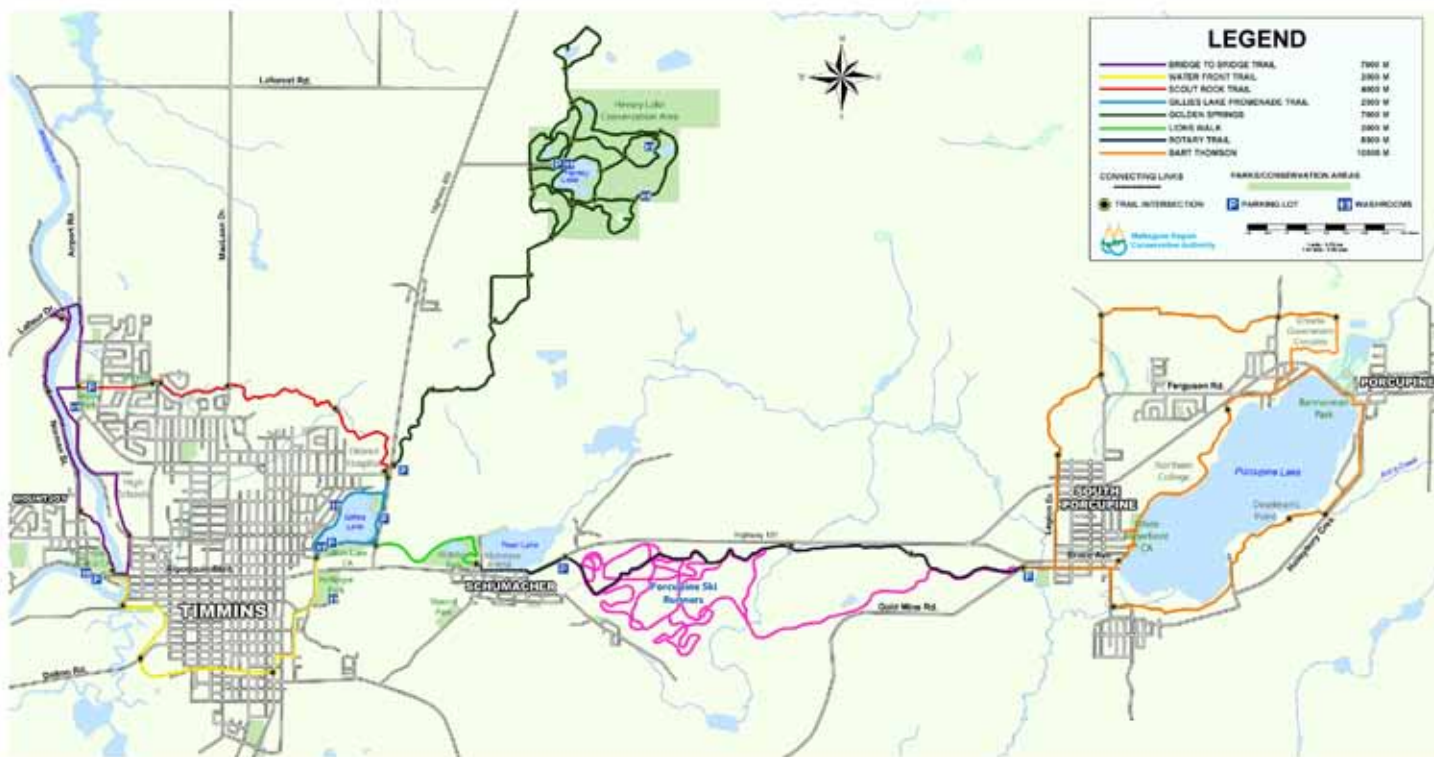
Funding supported the Authority's water and land management programs, its recreation and conservation education programs, and the source water protection program. It is also important to note that the time donated by volunteers is not factored into our operation costs.

## REVENUES





# Conservation Areas / Community Trail System



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Let's Chat!

