



Grey Sauble
CONSERVATION

20
23

DRAFT BUDGET
COMPANION
REPORT



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ADMINISTRATION
SERVICES | 4 FTEs
OPERATING \$735,360
CAPITAL \$225,000

INFORMATION
SERVICES | 4 FTEs
OPERATING \$433,429
CAPITAL \$24,500

CONSERVATION
LANDS | 8.6 FTEs
OPERATING \$839,414
CAPITAL \$52,800

DRINKING WATER
PROTECTION | 2.4 FTEs
\$281,311

PLANNING &
PERMITS | 5.8 FTEs
\$694,430

FORESTRY | 2.9 FTEs
\$389,824

FLOOD FORECASTING
| 1.3 FTEs
OPERATING \$186,780
CAPITAL \$8,000

WATER QUALITY
| 1.2 FTEs
\$40,055

STEWARDSHIP
| 1 FTE
\$72,027

GSCA PROFILE

Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSCA) conserves and nurtures the natural environment, protects people and property from natural hazards, and inspires stewardship and environmental awareness within local communities. With a team of over 30 full-time, part-time, contract, and seasonal staff, GSCA delivers vital conservation work across the region through essential programs and services that protect and enhance a healthy watershed.

The Grey Sauble watershed is complex and includes five major rivers and numerous smaller tributaries, spanning all or parts of 8 local municipalities. As such, delivering services with an integrated approach across the entire watershed is crucial to upholding clean water; safe communities; access to environmental education and recreation opportunities; and healthy forests and wetlands for all to enjoy.

Within this expansive area, GSCA owns and manages over 11,000 hectares of the most scenic and environmentally sensitive lands in Grey and Bruce Counties and delivers programs and services throughout its 3100 square kilometer watershed boundary. GSCA's value to this entire watershed community is delivered through the 9 service areas detailed in the pages that follow. The employees championing these programs and services uphold GSCA's mandate and support the vision of a healthy watershed environment in balance with the needs of society.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

THE 2019-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN IDENTIFIES SEVERAL GOALS THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE REALIZATION OF GSCA'S VISION.

- Better monitor and manage flood risks
- Enhance GSCA land management and natural heritage preservation
- Support the development of watershed plans with municipalities
- Improve water quality
- Strengthen environmental education and communication



VISION

A healthy watershed environment in balance with the needs of society.

MISSION

GSCA's mission, in partnership with the stakeholders of the watershed, is to promote and undertake sustainable management of renewable natural resources and to provide responsible leadership to enhance biodiversity and environmental awareness.



2023 BUDGET INCREASE SUMMARY

GSCA strives to provide excellence in corporate management and client services through our dedicated, experienced staff and the programs that we offer to our communities. We believe that through partnership building, strategic thinking, and open and transparent communication, we can help to build and support a healthy, beautiful and diverse community.

Although not without its challenges, the Staff at GSCA really came through in 2022 and worked together with our partners to ensure that operations generally returned to normal. Similar to our municipal partners, GSCA started the year in lockdown and ended the year facing dramatic and sweeping legislative changes. The COVID-19 situation appears to be stabilizing; however, it is anticipated that 2023 will hold its own new challenges as GSCA and our municipal partners work to adjust to the changes brought on by Bill 229, Bill 109 and Bill 23, all of which require changes to the relationship between conservation authorities and municipalities.

The 2023 budget reflects the changes that are necessary to ensure that GSCA continues to be sustainable in the long-term. To help reduce the overall impact on ratepayers and member municipalities, GSCA uses several mechanisms, where feasible, to drive revenue generation and limit the reliance on municipal levy and the general tax base.

In the 2022 budget year, municipal levy accounted for approximately 45 percent of the total budgeted revenue. Transfer payments from the Province for Drinking Water Source Protection and Natural Hazard Management accounted for approximately 7 percent. The remaining 48 percent was derived from other sources, including self-generated revenues, grants, agreements, and reserves.

In the 2023 budget year, municipal levy is proposed to account for approximately 41 percent of the total budgeted revenue, transfer payments from the Province for Drinking Water Source Protection and Natural Hazards will account for approximately 6 percent, and the remaining 53 percent will be derived from other sources, including self-generated revenues, grants, agreements, and reserves.

GSCA has experienced substantial increases in insurance premiums over the last several years. The 2023 budget accounts for the predicted 2023 premium increase, as well as for the unforeseen portion of the 2022 increase. We understand from our insurance provider that the insurance market is starting to stabilize, so we are hopeful that the trend of double-digit percentage increases is waning.

In 2021, GSCA undertook a review of staff positions and salaries compared to similar organizations within the market. This review was conducted by a third-party consulting firm and was approved by the GSCA Board of Directors at the July 2021 Full Authority meeting. To reduce the impacts of this review on the 2022 levy, GSCA utilized existing surplus to offset the impacts in year one. The remainder of the impact is being recognized in the 2023 operating budget.

One major change in the GSCA Operating Budget for 2023 is the inclusion of levy dollars in the Forestry portion of the budget. Historically, levy dollars were not utilized in the Forestry Department as timber revenues in the early-2000's were substantial and offset the need to supplement this important work. These timber revenues have been declining year-over-year and dependence on remaining reserve funding is not sustainable. Through recent changes to the Conservation Authorities Act, the Province has defined the programs and services that it is mandatory for conservation authorities to provide. In light of this, we have analyzed the work being done within the Forestry Department related to corporate services and land management, excluding any commercial forestry. Based on this essential work continuing to be completed, it was vital that GSCA found ways to reduce levy needs in other departments to ensure a sustainable source of funding for this important land management and corporate service work.

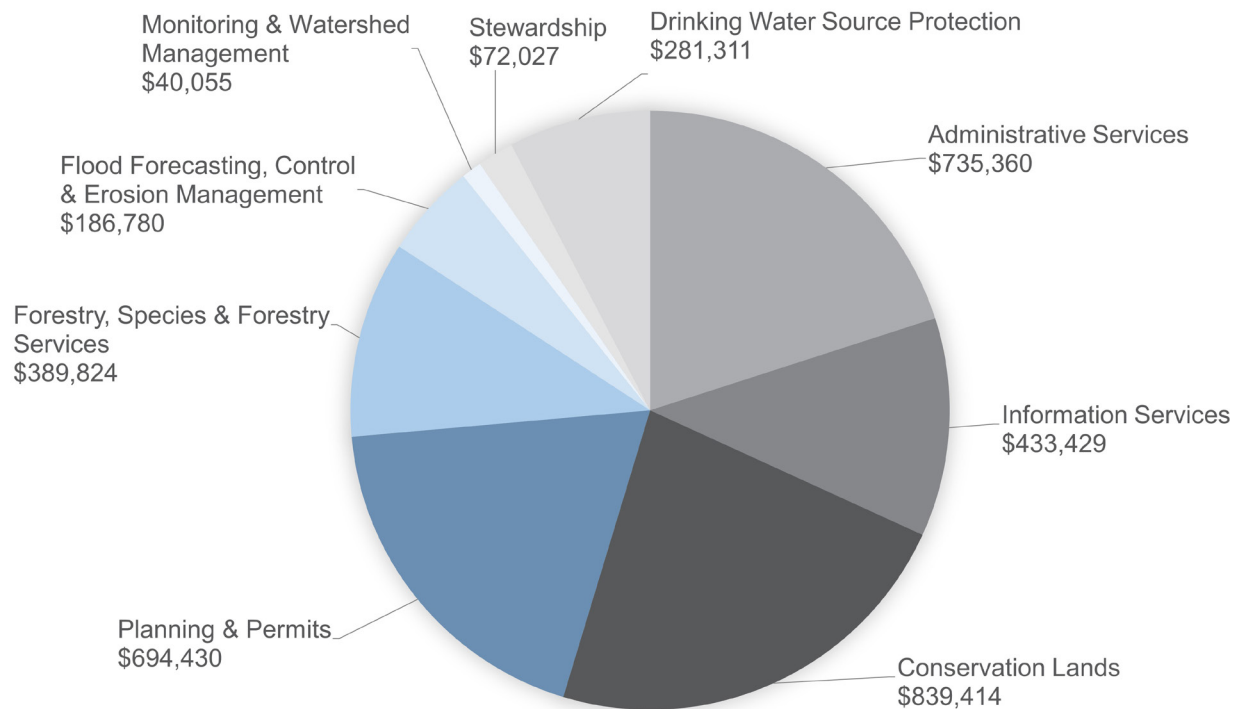
The GSCA draft 2023 budget totals \$4 million for Operating and Capital expenditures combined. This is up from \$3.4 million in 2022. The majority of the increase in the budgeted expenses is matched by increased revenues which are predominantly self-generated. Although several mandatory cost increases associated with salary, OMERS, WSIB, CPP, and insurance have gone up by more than \$130,000 within GSCA's Operating Budget, GSCA has managed to keep the total Operating levy expense increase to \$45,295, or 2.99%, over 2022. This minor increase in Operating Levy is necessary to adjust to fluctuating market conditions and to ensure long-term stability of all facets of the organization.

On the Capital Budget side, GSCA is proposing a levy increase of \$38,700 in 2023 to bring the total annual Capital Levy contribution to \$80,000. This is an increase from \$41,300 in 2022. This increase in the Capital Budget is necessary to assist GSCA in meeting its capital renewal needs.

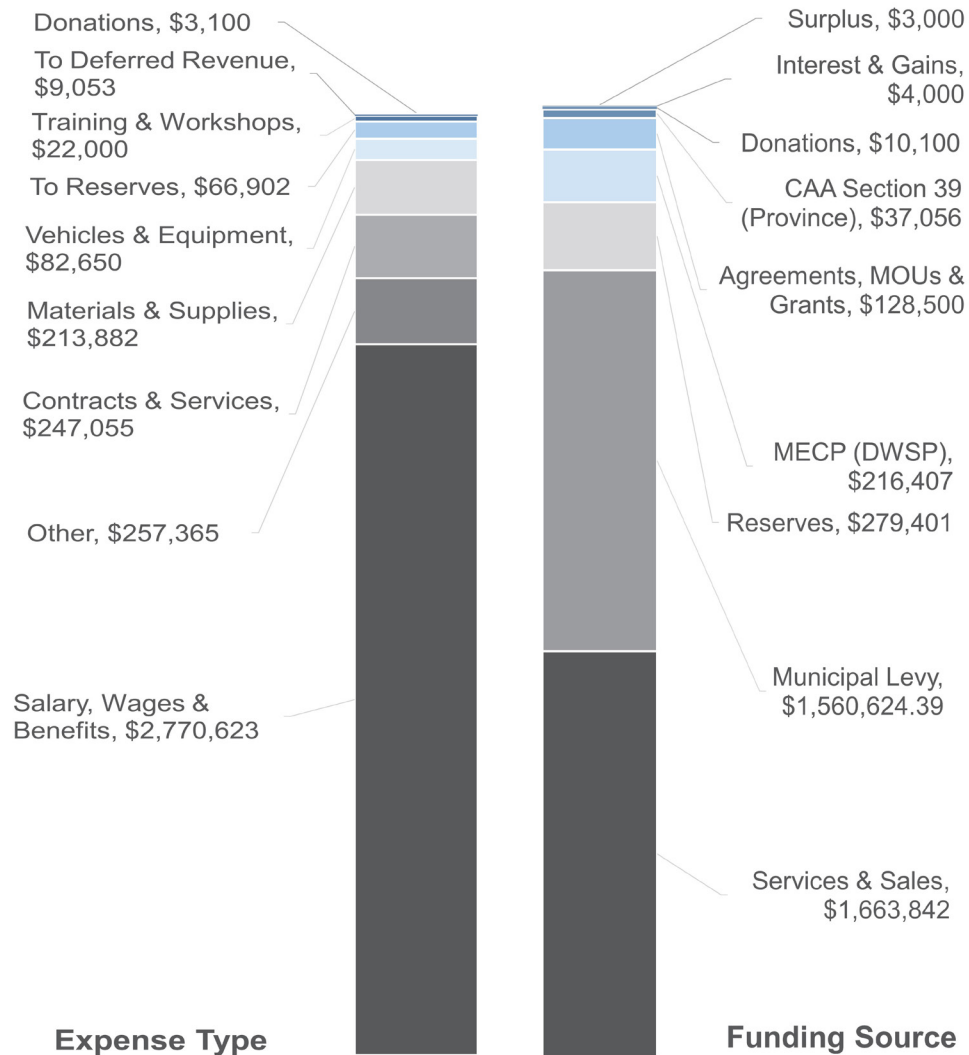
GSCA's current 10-year capital renewal need is approximately \$3.8 million. The most pressing current need is the renewal of the Administration Centre, for which the Authority is currently undergoing architectural design. As part of the financing plan for this building, it is proposed that \$50,000 from levy and \$50,000 from self-generated revenues be contributed each year for a minimum of six years. Of the \$50,000 from levy, \$25,000 is being diverted from other Capital needs, while \$25,000 is new in 2023. Municipal levy represents 26% of the 2023 capital spend, with 74% coming from other sources, including reserves, self-generated revenues, grants and donations.

2023 OPERATING BUDGET BY SERVICE AREA

TOTAL BUDGET \$3,672,629

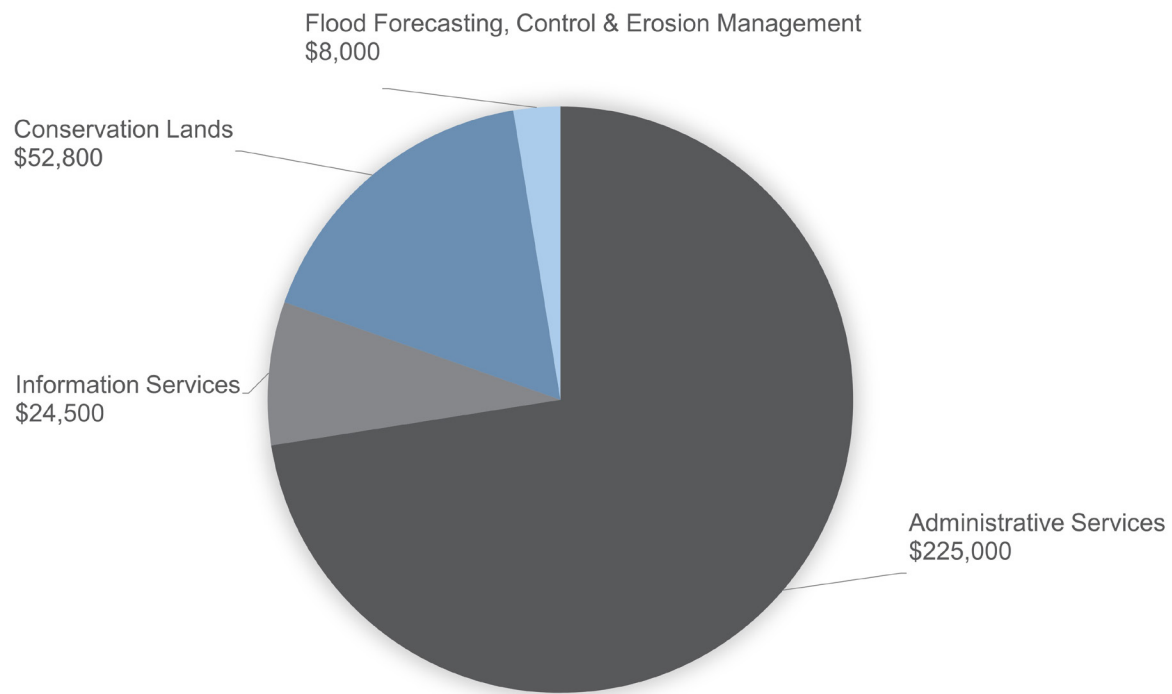


FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES

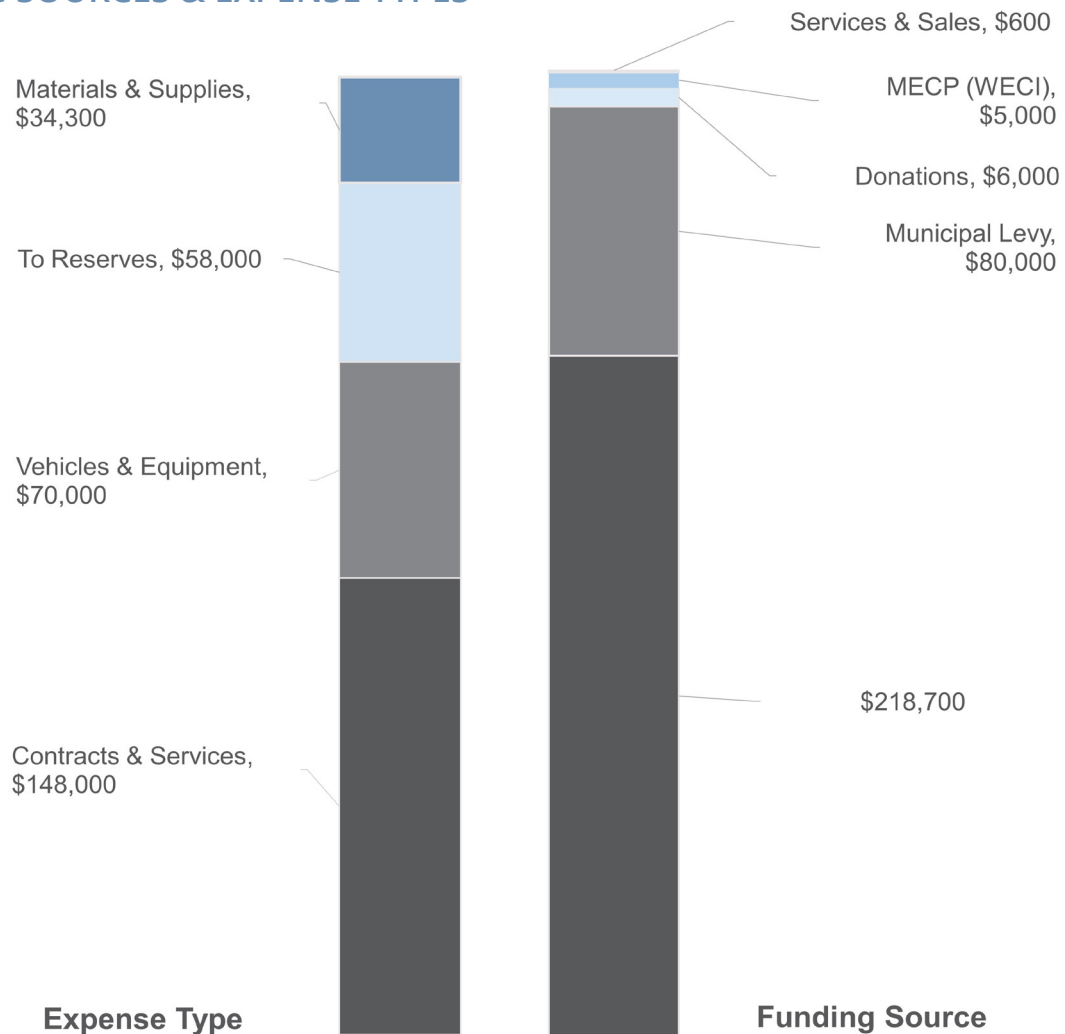


2023 CAPITAL BUDGET BY SERVICE AREA

TOTAL BUDGET \$310,300



FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES





ADMINISTRATION SERVICES

Administration Services provides ongoing management of the organization, including strategic planning, partnership networking, budgeting, finance management, general governance and staffing resources. Despite starting the year amid COVID-19 restrictions, associated changes with the organization generally stabilized within 2022. 2023 will be a very busy year for Administration Services as GSCA works towards finalizing agreements with municipal partners and adjusting to new requirements and changes to the Conservation Authorities Act.

Administration Services consists of the following:

Administration, Finance & Human Resources

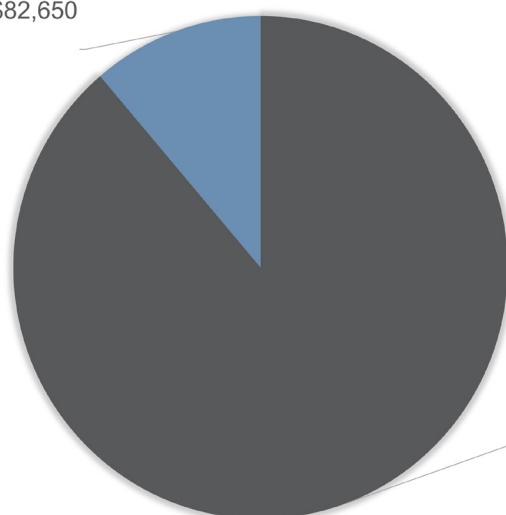
Notable changes in the budget from 2022 to 2023 are related to a general decrease in the levy requirements for this Department. This is associated with the cost-based accounting that we have implemented for the Environmental Planning Department which provides for some of the direct and indirect costs of Administration to be covered from revenues from Planning and Permitting work. Despite positive changes in expenses and revenues in this Department, insurance premiums continue to be a substantial issue, with rates moving upwards by 10-20 percent annually. This increase is reflected under “Other” within the Administration budget.

Fleet & Equipment Management

The expenses in the department are proposed to decrease moderately in 2023, associated with a reduction in contribution to the Fleet and Equipment Reserve. This is reflective of a reduction in Fleet and Equipment usages across the other Departments. However, GSCA has recently undertaken an internal review of fleet and equipment needs over the next 10-year period and has implemented an increase in its internal mileage rate to ensure long-term stability of this reserve fund.

ADMINISTRATION SERVICES

Fleet & Equipment
Management \$82,650



Administration, Finance &
Human Resources, \$652,710

FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES

TOTAL \$735,360

Donations, \$1,100

CAA S39, \$2,020

Interest & Gains,
\$4,000

Services & Sales,
\$192,269

Municipal Levy,
\$535,971

FUNDING SOURCE

Vehicles & Equipment,
\$1,500

To Reserves,
\$15,873

Training & Workshops,
\$20,000

Materials & Supplies,
\$39,870

Contracts & Services,
\$91,700

Other, \$175,565

Salary, Wages &
Benefits, \$390,852

EXPENDITURE TYPE



ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE & HUMAN RESOURCES

Administration, Finance, and Human Resources provides leadership and ongoing management of daily finances and staffing resources central to the successful operation of the entire organization. This includes functions such as payroll, accounts payable/receivable, financial reporting, records management, strategic planning, staff support, governance and partnership building.

2022 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Continued to consult with municipal partners on new municipal funding agreements.
- Completed consultation and the implementation of new Environmental Planning rates and fees.
- Ongoing implementation of new requirements under the Conservation Authorities Act.
- Continued to find creative new partnerships and funding opportunities.
- Initiated a Business Disruption and Continuity Plan for GSCA.
- Commenced development of GSCA's multi-year capital assets financial plan.



2023 FOCUS

- Address ongoing changes to the Conservation Authorities Act.
- Finalize the Programs and Services Inventory.
- Create and execute all necessary agreements with member municipalities.
- Update GSCA's Strategic Plan.
- Finalize GSCA's Asset Management Plan.

INTERESTING FACTS

- 1% levy increase is equivalent to approximately \$15,000.
- Administration Staff facilitated the issuance of 1186 Yearly Parking Membership Passes in 2022.
- GSCA's Board of Directors consists of 11 elected officials representing 8 member municipalities.



FLEET & EQUIPMENT MANAGEMENT

Fleet & Equipment Management oversees the management and maintenance of all GSCA's vehicles and equipment, including purchases, repairs, scheduled vehicle maintenance, licenses and insurance.

2022 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Issued a Request for Tender for a new passenger vehicle.
- Completed ongoing preventative maintenance and repairs, as well as licencing and insurance updates for GSCA vehicles.
- Created and implemented new systems to keep track of vehicle maintenance.
- Worked with Administrative Staff to improve reserve renewal.
- Added GSCA's new logo to two fleet vehicles.

2023 FOCUS

- Conduct ongoing preventative maintenance and repairs, as well as licencing and insurance updates for vehicles.
- Continue to assess the needs of GSCA's fleet.
- Replace two fleet vehicles.

INTERESTING FACTS

- GSCA owns and manages 15 vehicles and close to \$70,000 in equipment.

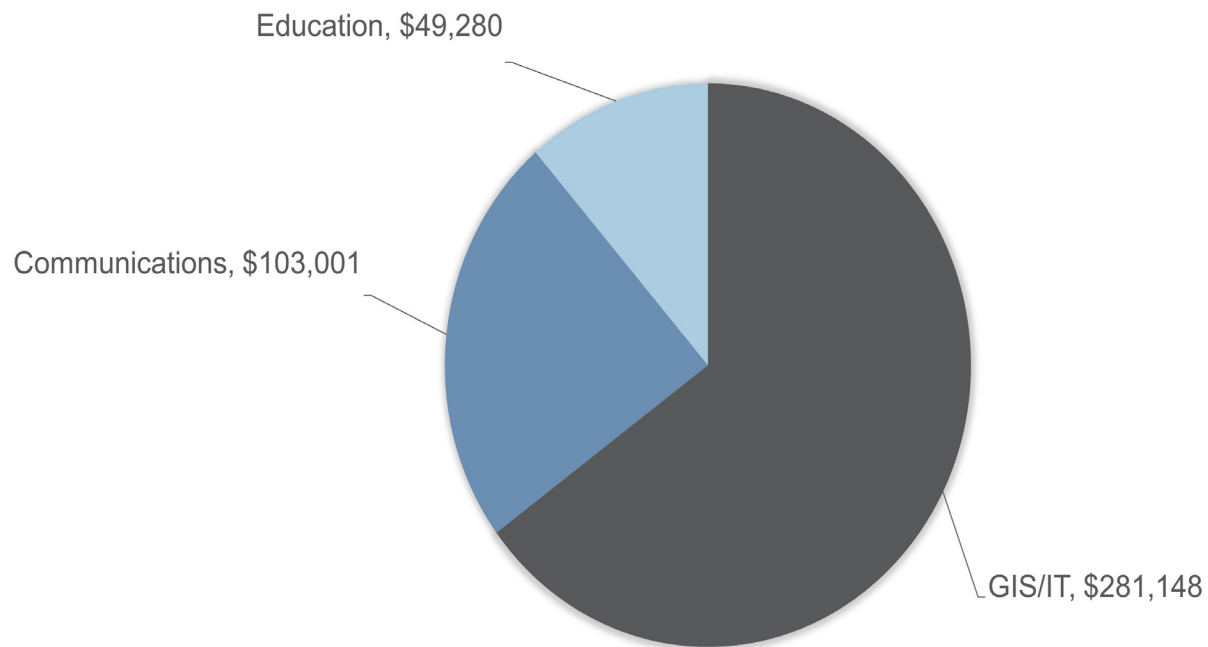


INFORMATION SERVICES

This service area oversees the management, delivery, training and direction of various types of internal and external information produced and stored by GSCA. Information Services consists of three main departments: Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Information Technology, Communications, and Environmental Education.

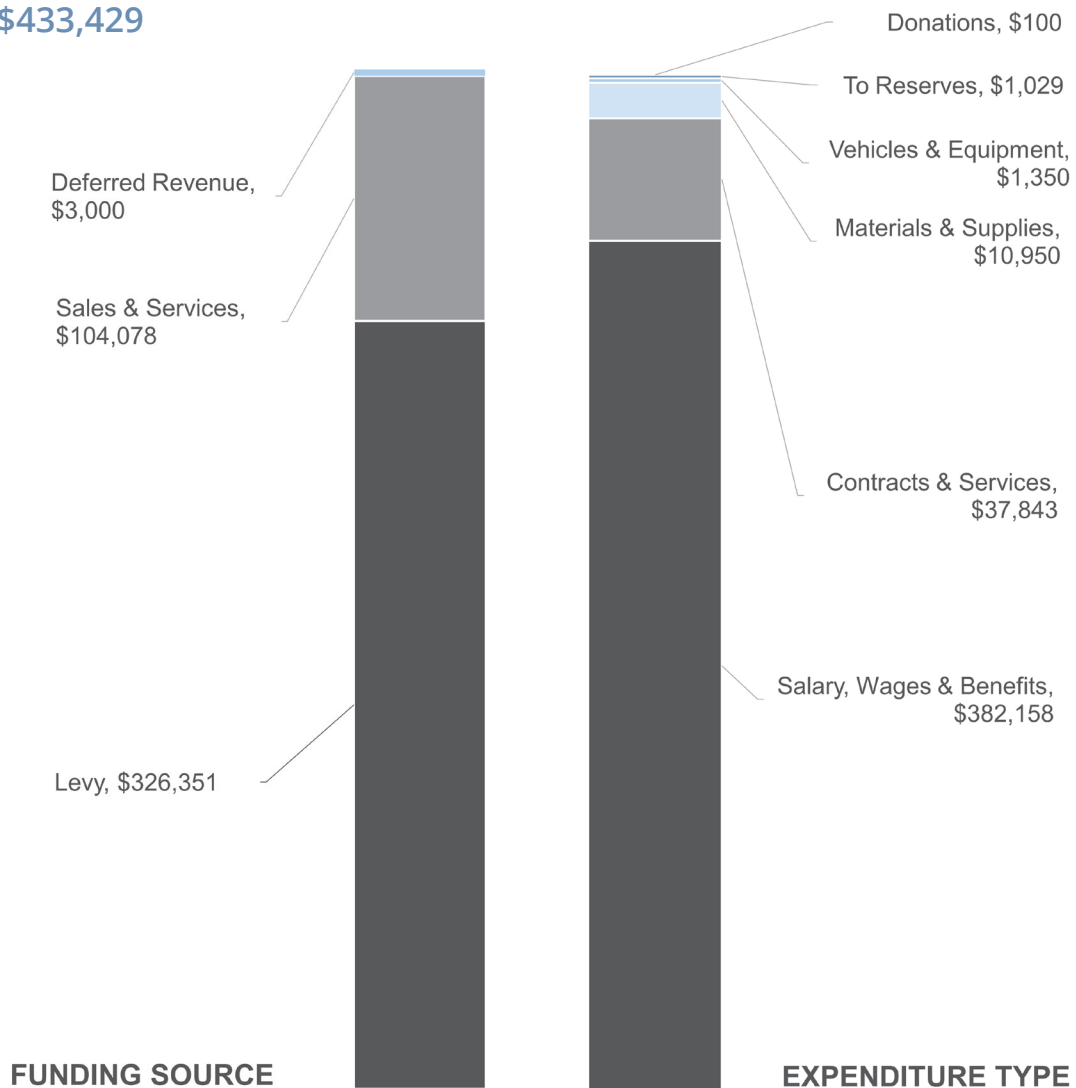


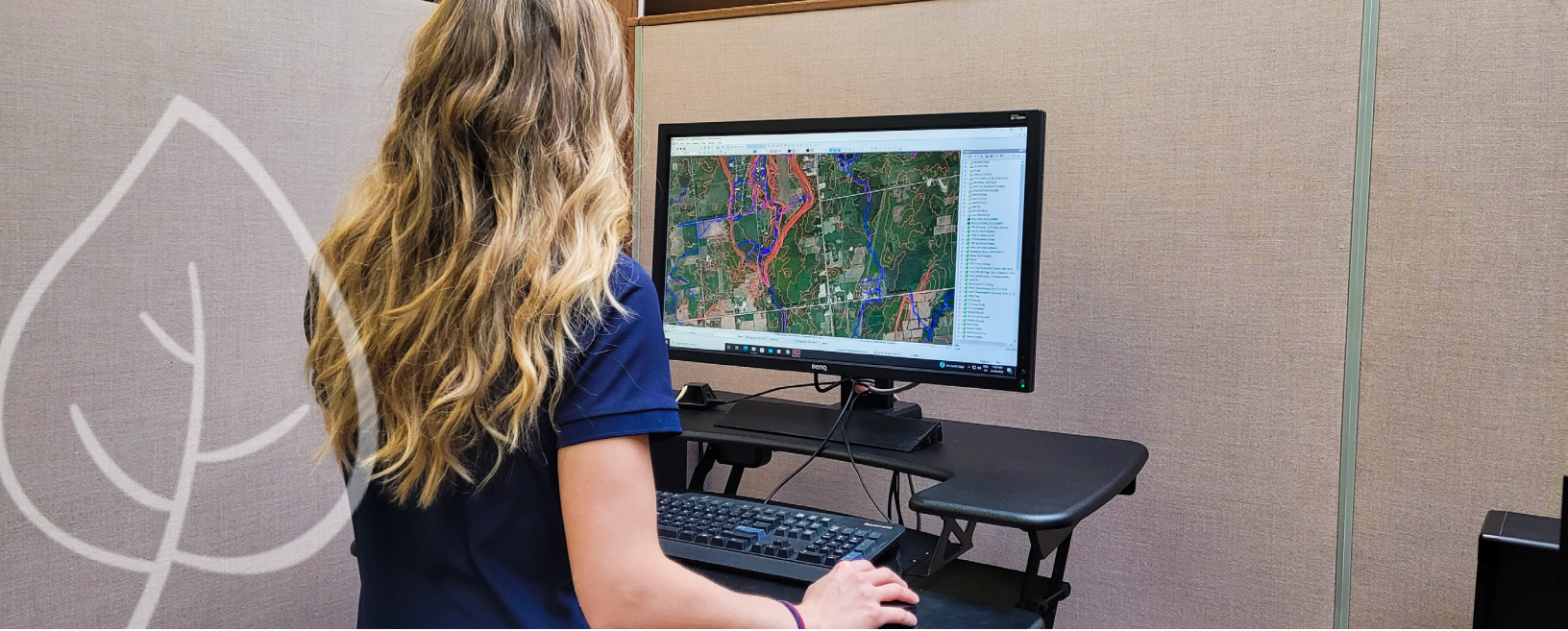
INFORMATION SERVICES



FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES

TOTAL \$433,429





GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS) & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Information Technology supports all departments in the organization and other associated individuals or groups that use GSCA's computer technology resources and assets. A combination of staff, hardware, software, and data all serve to ensure a fully integrated, secure network and the provision of required applications to meet the technology needs of all staff and users in the organization.

This program oversees the creation, acquisition, storage, analysis, and display of spatial data and mapping. In addition, the GIS program provides support to partnering municipalities and the public, particularly with respect to regulatory and natural hazard mapping.

2022 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Created and improved mapping products through the ongoing use of LiDAR data, such as updating Ontario Regulation 151/06 mapping for shorelines based on updated 100-year flood line.
- Completed ongoing updates and tracking for all IT assets.
- Continued an offsite backup process to ensure the safety of all data.
- Responded to the discontinuation of McKay Pay and changed daily and membership paid parking to online Square payments.
- Researched and began implementation of an online-based phone system using Microsoft Teams.
- Implemented a new HR portal to improve staff time tracking efficiencies.
- Refreshed the permitted uses map for GSCA properties to align with branding guidelines.
- Chaired the provincial watershed report card GIS committee to provide guidance on the 2023 Watershed Report Cards.



- Completed updates and improvements to the GSCA website.
- Partnered with Bruce Municipal Innovation Council to complete risk assessments for mapped flood risk areas within Bruce County.

2023 FOCUS

- Update Ontario Regulation 151/06 mapping in response to the required changes under Bill 23.
- Sit on the Provincial Land Inventory Database Working Group and implement appropriate updates to GSCA Lands and Forestry databases to improve lands management and decision-making capabilities.
- Implement new payables and receivables applications to improve budget tracking and accounting efficiencies.
- Work on seamless data interchangeability between Grey and Bruce Counties and GSCA.
- Continue to meet requirements for cybersecurity to ensure the safety of all data.

INTERESTING FACTS

- GSCA has hosted a Topcon GPS base station on the roof of the Administration Centre since 2016 and plans to install an additional station. This equipment will improve data collection of highly accurate information as part of the Global Navigation Satellite System.
- GSCA manages over 50 terabytes of data including a huge portion of spatial information
- In fall of 2022, the Province began the provision of Light detection and Ranging data within GSCA jurisdiction. This data will be fully acquired and disseminated in 2023 and will aid in improving base



COMMUNICATIONS

Communications Staff guide effective external communications and provide services and materials designed to increase awareness and support for the vital work of GSCA. Communications Staff also deliver priority communications, including public and media relations, advertising, content creation, and social media/website management.

2022 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Provided ongoing support of departmental, GSCA Foundation, and partner group communications needs and content creation.
- Created a series of webpages to explain what plantation management on GSCA lands involves and highlight the many benefits to the environment and our communities.
- Completed a Watershed Health Review for the Upper Sauble watershed.
- Began work for the 2023 Watershed Report Card (WRC) through involvement with the Conservation Ontario WRC Communications Committee. This committee provides communications related input to guide the development of the template and messaging for the WRC, which showcases watershed conditions of Ontario's 36 conservation authorities every 5 years.
- Supported the implementation of a GSCA parking pass loan program at libraries throughout Grey and Bruce Counties.
- Met with all departments to develop a new "site map" that will guide future updates to the GSCA website.
- Promoted GSCA at various community events.
- Continued to promote the new Explore Guide by delivering copies throughout the watershed and beyond.



2023 FOCUS

- Work with all departments to update the information on GSCA's website.
- Complete and promote the 2023 Watershed Report Card.
- Provide support for the completion of GSCA's new Strategic Plan.
- Promote GSCA's programs and services at community events.
- Support the Foundation and partner groups with their communications needs.
- Provide communications support related to the ongoing changes to the Conservation Authorities Act.

INTERESTING FACTS

- GSCA utilizes Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn to share information with residents across the watershed and beyond.
- GSCA's social media content reached approximately 115,000 people this year.
- The GSCA website saw over 105,000 visitors and approximately 2,340,000 page visits in 2022.
- The GSCA newsletter was delivered to over 700 people this year.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

The Environmental Education program strives to increase environmental awareness, inspire a sense of responsibility, and promote conservation through a variety of programming available across the GSCA watershed.



INTERESTING FACTS

- The National Environmental Education Foundation have shown that environmental education has numerous benefits including improving academic achievements, encouraging environmental stewardship, deepening personal development and wellbeing, and strengthening communities.
- In 2022, GSCA received \$2000 in grant funding from Enbridge Gas Inc. to enhance summer day camp programming.
- Over half of the children who attended the Grey Sauble Day Camp in 2022 have asked to return to a Grey Sauble property that they visited during their time at camp.





2022 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Delivered summer day camp programming after two-year hiatus, which involved the creation of a Return to Operations Plan.
- Hired a part-time Environmental Education Programmer for 2022 who developed and delivered programming for the Grey Sauble Day Camp and supported environmental education events.
- Began work on an environmental education framework document that will help shape signature programming and give GSCA's environmental education deliverables more focus. The initial phase of this work included connecting with other conservation authorities about their environmental education policies and procedures.
- Judged the virtual Bluewater Regional Junior Science and Technology Fair.
- Supported the Forestry Department with a "Mini Forest Festival" that taught grade 7 students from the Municipality of Meaford, the Town of the Blue Mountains, and the Municipality of Grey Highlands about the importance of our forests.
- Delivered environmental education at various community events, including Earth Day Grey Bruce, the Friends of Hibou Free Family Fun Day, and the Sydenham Fall Fair.

2023 FOCUS

- Complete and begin to implement GSCA's Environmental Education Framework.
- Refresh day camp programming to better align with staffing resources and guidelines within the Framework.
- Liaise with school boards and communities regarding their environmental education needs.
- Seek funding and partnerships to enable the delivery of environmental education programming.
- Seek funding to hire a full-time education specialist to implement GSCA's Environmental Education Framework.



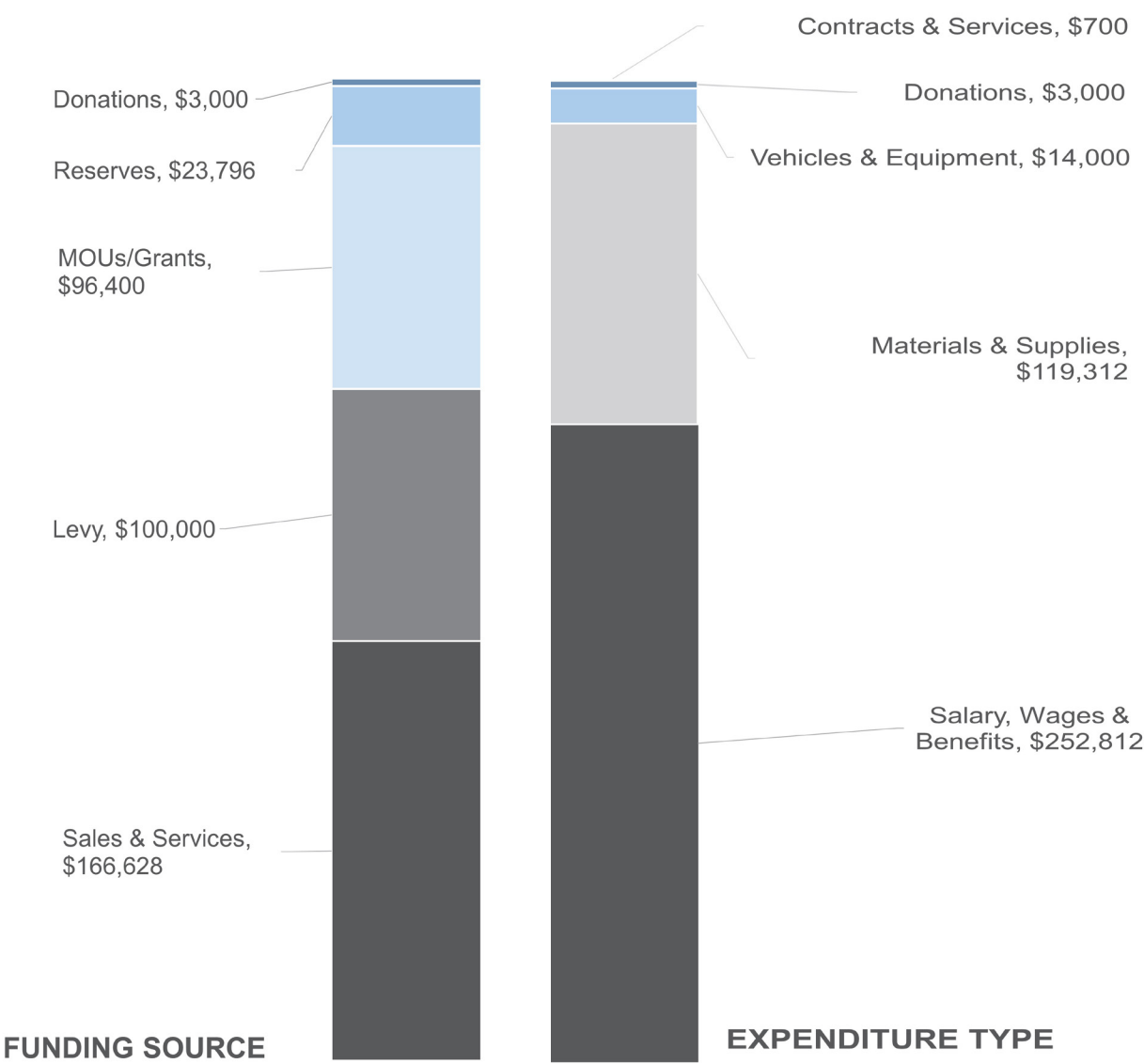
FORESTRY

GSCA's Forestry Department sustainably manages the forests on all GSCA lands throughout Grey and Bruce Counties and offers a range of services, affordable trees, and professional expertise to private landowners. The delivery of these programs and services ensures that the 8 municipalities across GSCA's watershed will continue to receive the benefits that forests and treed areas provide, such as increasing wildlife habitat and connectivity; reducing impacts of severe weather events; and improving soil retention and water quality.

In recent years, a dramatic reduction in marketable timber resources is causing challenges for revenue within this department. Forestry is seeing marginal increases in wages associated with the Salary Compensation Review and COLA, however there is a reduction in available revenues. Although staff are working to remedy the shortfall in revenue through efficiencies and additional work, it is proposed that levy funding, which has not been previously utilized by this department, be incorporated into the Forestry budget moving forward to ensure that vital land management and corporate service work continues to be completed.



FORESTRY
FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES
TOTAL \$389,824





GSCA FORESTRY

This program manages forests on GSCA lands to be healthy, diverse ecosystems that provide ecological, social, cultural, and economic benefits to the communities that GSCA serves. As part of this process, staff identify areas with special or rare habitats; natural and cultural heritage features; species at risk; and invasive species in order to make informed decisions that ensure the long-term health of forests on GSCA lands. Harvesting trees is an important part of GSCA's forest management, which keeps forests healthy by mimicking natural disturbances that create suitable habitats for trees to regenerate. Harvesting trees also generates revenue for GSCA, supports the local economy, and is essential in the production of forest products that are a sustainable alternative to non-renewable materials.

2022 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Began investigating carbon credits on GSCA properties.
- Updated GSCA's Forest Management Plan and submitted it to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) to renew GSCA's MFTIP.
- Provided expertise in the development of plantation management information for GSCA's website.
- Partnered with the MNRF to trap Spruce Budworm at Bognor Marsh, which will support the Provincial Forest Health Program.
- Developed an Invasive Species Strategy for GSCA properties.
- Completed two sustainable forest management operations on 16.2 hectares of plantation and 40.5 hectares of hardwood forest.
- Worked with the Ontario Hawking Club to survey GSCA properties for Northern goshawk.
- Initiated a "Mini Forest Festival" in the absence of the Bruce Grey Forest Festival, which was pre-emptively cancelled due to COVID-19, and delivered programming within the GSCA watershed.



2023 FOCUS

- Measure and analyze two forest plots on GSCA lands to acquire valuable data on how forests change over time.
- Update the information on forestry programs and services on the GSCA website.
- Begin implementation of the Invasive Plant Species Strategy.
- Continue investigating the best harvest cycle timelines for plantations that consider specific site conditions and tree species.
- Conduct a trial harvest of white cedar using a technique that involves the systematic removal of circular patches of trees rather than rows.

INTERESTING FACTS

- The Forestry Department sustainably manages over 5,600 hectares (14,000 acres) of forested land owned by GSCA.
- GSCA is a founding member of the Bruce Grey Forest Festival! This event promotes the wise use of forest resources and educates over 800 grade 7 students annually in a natural forest setting.
- The Forestry Department has hosted many co-op students who are interested in pursuing post-secondary education in an environmental field.



GREY SAUBLE FORESTRY SERVICE

The Grey Sauble Forestry Service provides ethical, affordable, and sustainable forestry-related services to private landowners; enables good forest management practices; and increases forest cover throughout the GSCA watershed. These services include tree planting services; Forest Management Plans; and the sale of affordable native trees and seedlings. Trees on private property provide numerous benefits to the landowner and the entire community, such as improved air and water quality; increased resilience to the impacts of flooding; and reduced household energy bills. The Grey Sauble Forestry Service program offers trees and planting services at a reduced rate through programs administered by GSCA. There are also tax incentives for people who engage GSCA to develop a Managed Forest Plan for their property, making it a lucrative option for landowners.



2022 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Planted 53,150 trees this spring, creating 30.5 hectares of new forests.
- Secured approximately \$125,000 in grant funding for landowners to offset the cost of tree planting projects.
- Sold over 16,000 seedlings and over 1,600 landscape trees to approximately 188 clients through the pre-order tree program.
- Ensured the sustainable management of over 600 hectares of forest through the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP).

2023 FOCUS

- Plant 50,000 trees throughout the GSCA watershed.
- Support the Bruce Grey Forest Festival following a three-year hiatus due to COVID-19.
- Continue to provide ethical and affordable forest management services to GSCA watershed residents.
- Create and update Managed Forest Plans for private landowners with a target of 400 hectares.
- Bring back the Annual Arbour Day Tree Sale.

INTERESTING FACTS

- Planting trees can help reduce heating and cooling costs at home.
- Trees are a great way to make use of marginal or less productive acreage.
- Implementing a Forest Management Plan through the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program can reduce your property taxes!
- Trees planted along watercourses (riparian area) can improve water quality, especially when combined with livestock restriction fencing.
- Trees planted along fencerows as windbreaks can reduce soil erosion, especially when combined with cover crops on agricultural lands.

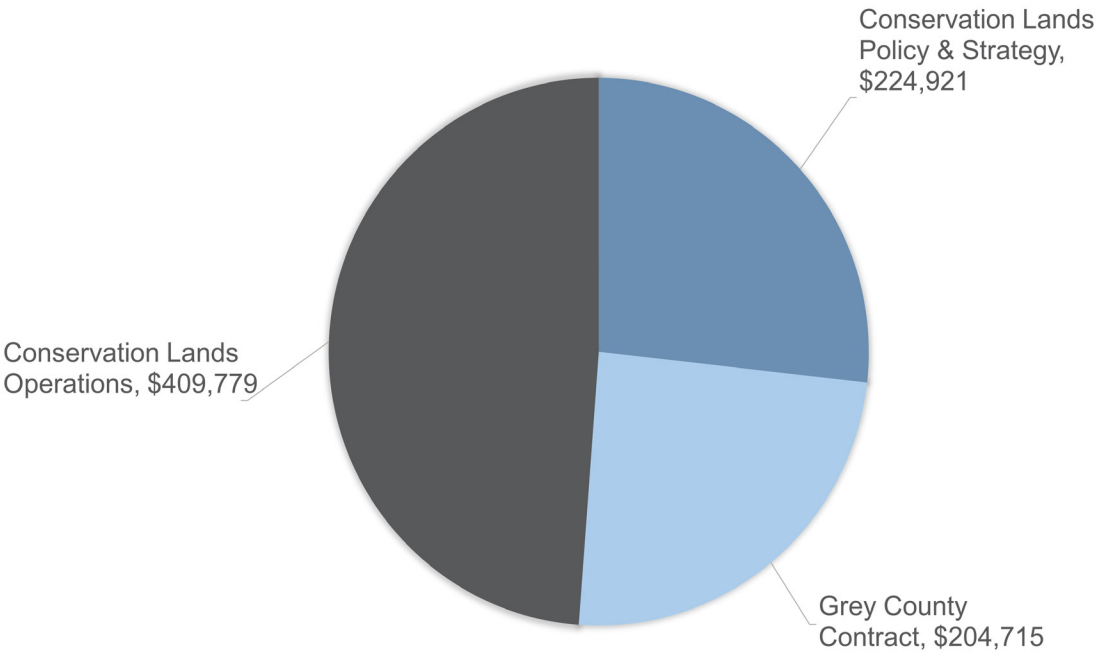


CONSERVATION LANDS

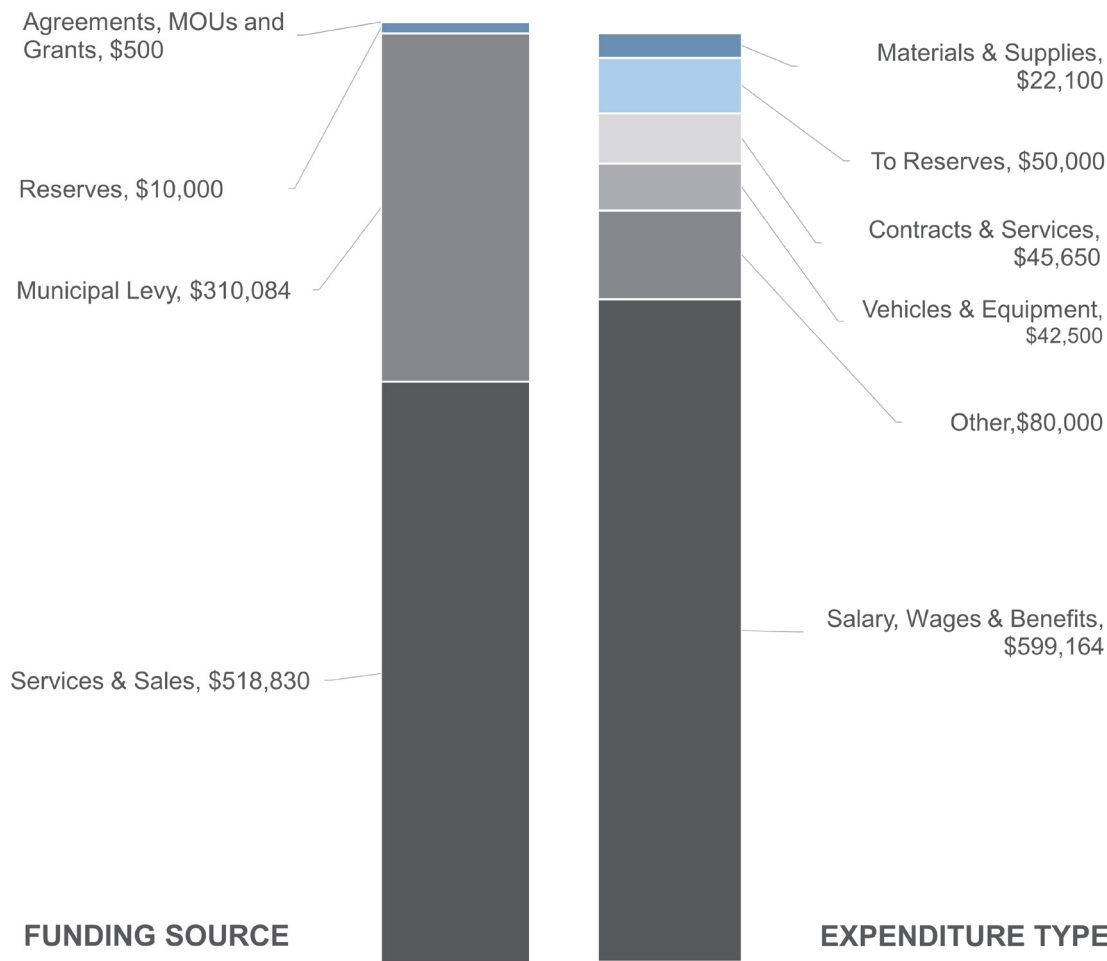
GSCA has been actively protecting the natural landscape of Grey and Bruce Counties for over 60 years through property acquisition and sustainable land management efforts. GSCA lands have been divided into three classifications based on the reason for acquisition, conditions on title, or management objectives, which include conservation areas, management areas, and nature preserves. A preliminary evaluation of GSCA's landholdings determined that 72-million dollars of ecosystem service benefits are provided annually to residents and visitors by over 11,000 hectares of land and 172 km of trails managed by GSCA. These services include recreation opportunities, flood and drought mitigation, climate regulation, wildlife benefits, and carbon sequestration, just to name a few!



CONSERVATION LANDS



FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES
TOTAL \$ \$839,414





GSCA LANDS, POLICY & STRATEGY

The Lands, Policy & Strategy Department is actively working to manage, utilize, and leverage GSCA lands and services to the benefit of GSCA, the 8 member municipalities, and the communities throughout GSCA's watershed and beyond.

2022 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Began Phase 1 of Administration Centre renovation process, which involved issuing two RFPs for architecture design, awarding Lebel and Bouliane the contract, and working on design concepts.
- Worked towards the completion of draft Management Plans for Inglis Falls and Eugenia Falls, including public consultation through various platforms.
- Investigated options for Carbon Credits for GSCA lands.
- Completed Ecological Land Classification (ELC) mapping and hosted a community BioBlitz for West Rocks Conservation Area to better understand vegetation communities.
- Managed land use leases, agreements, and easements for GSCA properties.
- Commenced two potential land securement projects that will further GSCA's goal to enhance land management and natural heritage preservation.
- Supported the GSCA Foundation by assisting with meetings, events, and projects.



2023 FOCUS

- Commence work on Conservation Authority Act requirements pertaining to CA Lands: Land Strategy and Land Inventory.
- Complete and report back on GSCA property operational reviews.
- Initiate Phase 2, schematic designs for the GSCA Administration Centre.
- Manage GSCA properties land use leases, agreements, and easements, including the retendering of GSCA agricultural leases.
- Begin to implement capital projects as outlined in the Inglis Falls Management Plan.
- Receive final endorsement of outstanding management plans.
- Continue to fulfill Grey County Forest Management and By-law Compliance contract.
- Provide support to GSCA committees, “Friends of” groups, and agency working groups.

INTERESTING FACTS

- GSCA properties continue to drive local tourism with over 300,000 visitors per year.
- Research reveals that our environment impacts our mental health and two-thirds of people choose natural settings to spend time in when experiencing stress.
- GSCA partners with many community, municipal, provincial, and federal partners to enhance green spaces for everyone to enjoy!



CONSERVATION LANDS OPERATIONS

This department oversees the maintenance of all GSCA lands and associated assets, including buildings, facilities, dams, and trails.

Operations staff are responsible for a broad range of tasks, including removing hazards on trails, building and repairing infrastructure, landscaping and snow removal, addressing compliance issues, and managing property gate houses.



2022 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Grew the Park Ambassador Program and expanded Gate Staff services to Bruce's Caves Conservation Area.
- Successfully implemented a new cashless parking payment system using Square at 9 GSCA properties.
- Built and installed new, more visible entrance signage for popular Conservation Areas.
- Updated Colpoy's Lookout to make it more user friendly, including stonework renovations, tree pruning, and the installation of a new entrance sign.
- Completed various stone repointing projects in-house at Hibou, Inglis Falls, Eugenia, and Colpoy's Lookout.
- Built and installed new custom stoplogs for Clendenan Dam.
- Decommissioned and removed the old privy at Lake Charles.
- Coordinated Grey County's Rail Trail resurfacing project, consisting of 20 km from Berkley to Dundalk.
- Updated the Asset Management Plan information for GSCA properties, fleet, and equipment capital assets.
- Worked with GSCA partners to implement property upgrades, including boardwalk and trail maintenance.
- Supported Lands Staff with the Operational Review of twenty GSCA properties.
- Addressed complaints and provided prompt responses to inquiries from the public.



2023 FOCUS

- Install new entrance signage at various GSCA Management Areas.
- Investigate opportunities to expand the Park Ambassador Program to other GSCA properties.
- Review options to expand the paid parking network.
- Meet the net land and revenue budget target.
- Support Grey County with their capital projects.

INTERESTING FACTS

- Operations staff maintain approximately 172 km of trails on GSCA properties as well as Grey County trails, including the Rail Trail.
- Parking fees generated approximately \$305,000 in 2022 to help offset the costs associated with maintaining popular conservation areas that draw in 100s of thousands of visitors to Grey and Bruce Counties every year.



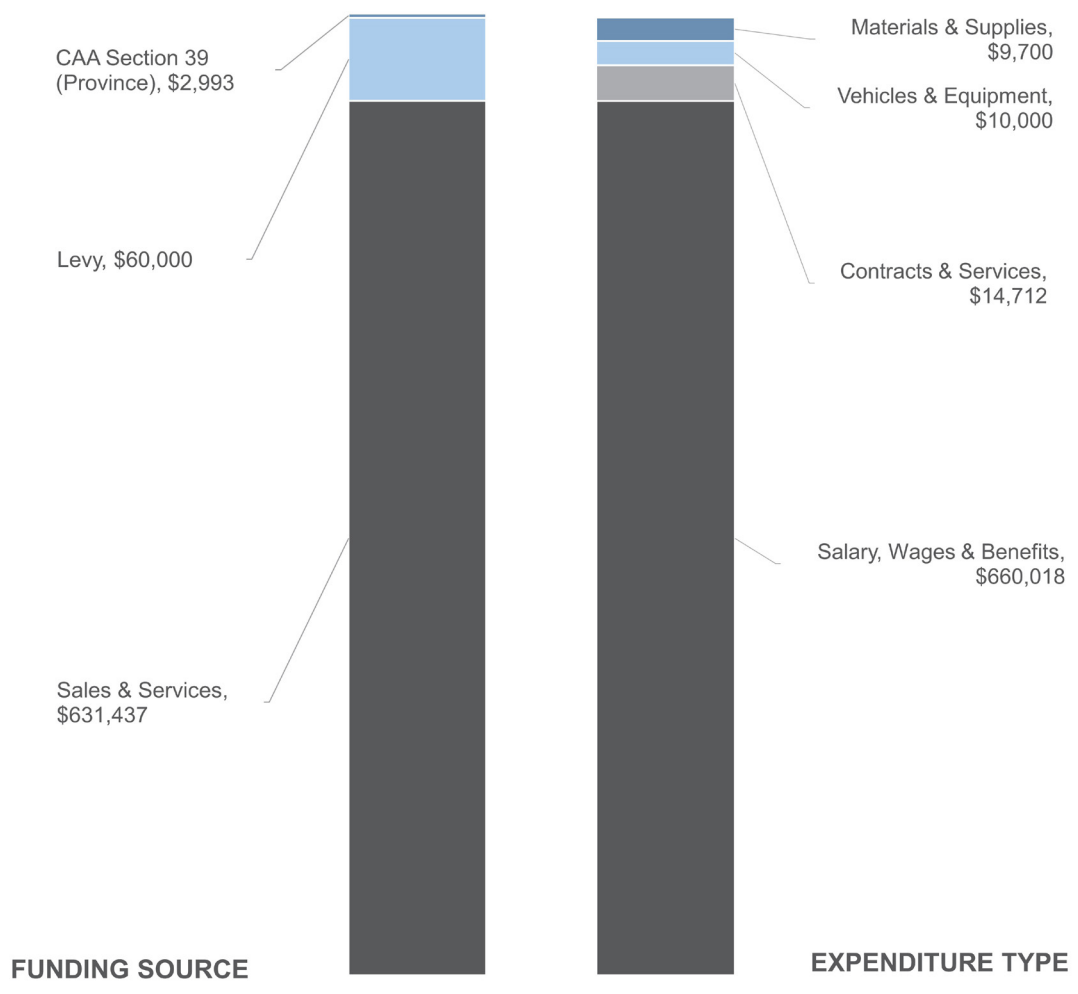
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING & REGULATIONS

The Environmental Planning department plays a specialized role in the land use planning and development process of Bruce County, Grey County, and the 8 lower tier municipalities across GSCA's watershed by providing expertise and input to these decision makers. This department is also the approval authority for applications submitted under Ontario Regulation 151/06: Development, Interference with Wetlands, and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses. These services guide development in a sustainable manner, away from natural hazards, and assist in the protection of significant natural heritage features, water quality, and water quantity.





ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING & REGULATIONS
FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES
TOTAL \$694,430





2022 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Enhanced the enforcement program with the addition of the Regulations Officer position and other program modifications.
- Completed a comprehensive review and consultation of planning and permit fees.
- Continued to modernize and find efficiencies in departmental operations.
- Responded to a high volume of inquiries, planning applications, and permit applications.

2023 FOCUS

- Enhance planning and permitting services through additional staffing with focus on expertise areas.
- Strive for continued service excellence in the delivery of planning and permit functions.
- Continue to provide input and mapping for municipal planning documents.
- Adjust to legislative changes associated with Bill 23.

INTERESTING FACTS

From January 1, 2022 to December 7, 2022, staff:

- Received over 526 submissions through the online planning and permit inquiry form.
- Reviewed 277 Planning Act applications and 96 NEC applications.
- Completed 227 pre-consultations, regulation inquiries, and site review letters.
- Processed 448 permits under Ontario Regulation 151/06.

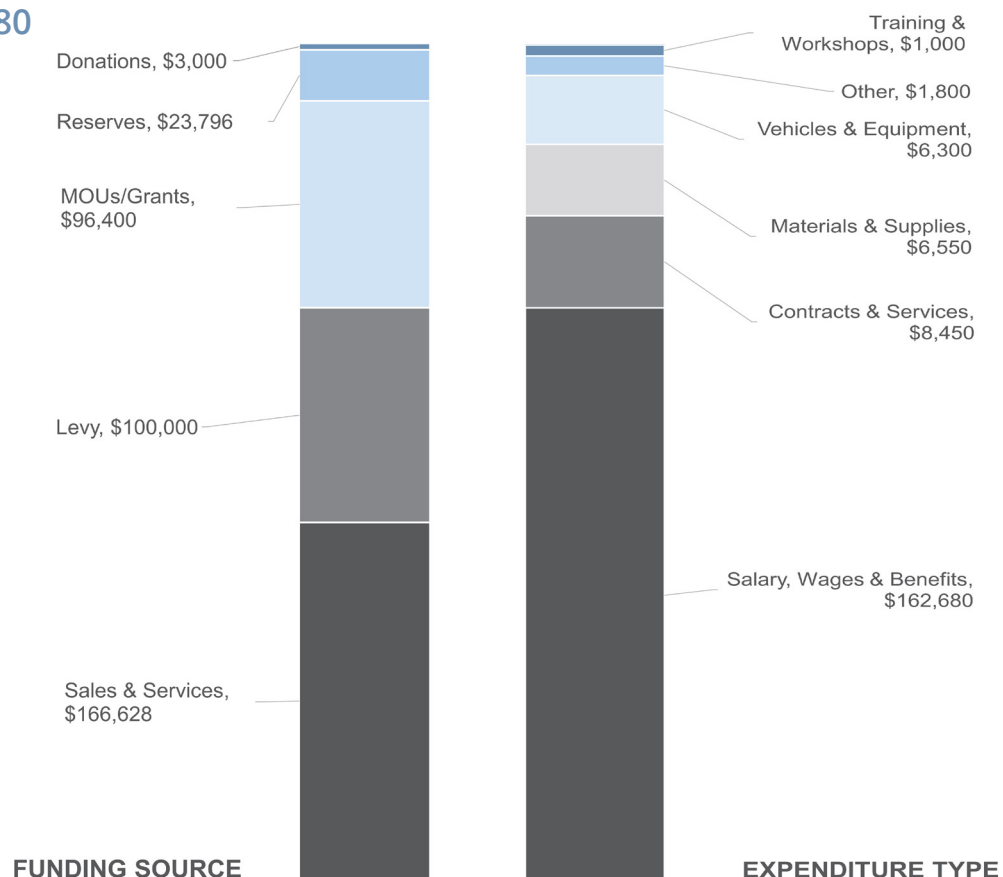


FLOOD FORECASTING & MANAGEMENT

GSCA works collaboratively with 8 local municipalities to ensure that proper planning and maintenance activities are in place to reduce the risk and potential impacts of flooding. Proactive monitoring and early flood warnings help prevent loss of life and allow people to take action in mitigating flood damage to public and private property.

FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES

TOTAL \$186,780





FLOOD FORECASTING & WARNING

Like all conservation authorities across the Province, GSCA maintains a flood forecasting and warning system for the 8 municipalities within its watershed boundary. The purpose of the system is to minimize flood damage and loss of life by providing residents of flood prone areas with advance warning of possible flood events. Through this program, staff work with local municipalities to develop a flood contingency plan; monitor water levels, precipitation and snow water concentration; and predict and communicate extreme water level changes. During times of drought, staff review watershed data and coordinate the local Low Water Response Team.





2022 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Maintained 8 precipitation gauges and 7 snow survey sites.
- Added 2 new water level gauges and maintained 16 existing water level gauges.
- Worked continuously to inform municipal partners and community members of extreme rainfall events and high flow conditions.
- Added 1 new online weather stations to GSCA's existing network, totaling 18 active stations (Wunderground Network).
- Recruited 2 new CoCoRaHS rain gauge volunteers, totaling 24 active participants.
- Continued to fine-tune snow melt to flow models to better predict spring runoff conditions.
- Accessed 115 on-line, real-time rain gauges, which increased from 95 in 2021.

INTERESTING FACTS

- Three live river cams are available for viewing on the GSCA website. All water level, flow and precipitation data is available on GSCA's website.
- GSCA's "Watershed Conditions" web map gets more than 5,000 hits per year.
- A free web tool (windy.com) is used to forecast high waves for lakeshore residents in the GSCA watershed.
- Measured and modeled snow cover data is available on GSCA's website

2023 FOCUS

- Continue to maintain a flood forecasting and warning system to minimize flood damage and loss of life by providing residents of flood prone areas with advance warning of possible flood events.
- Continue to develop real-time flow and snow melt models.
- Maintain existing network of water level gauges in flood prone areas.
- Install additional online weather stations to fill data holes within the GSCA watershed.
- Encourage more volunteers to sign up for CoCoRaHS rain gauges in order to increase available data.



FLOOD & EROSION CONTROL STRUCTURES & OTHER DAMS

This program manages, monitors, and maintains dams owned by GSCA and existing erosion control structures that were originally partially funded by MNRF.

2022 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Inspected 8 dams owned by GSCA including two flood control structures.
- Conducted inspections on 11 erosion control structures previously installed through partnerships with GSCA, municipalities and the Province.
- Continued phased repairs of gabion baskets at Indian Falls Conservation area.
- Completed regular dam adjustments, including installs, removals, plugs, and beaver debris elimination.

INTERESTING FACTS

- Most of GSCA's dams are drawn down for the winter to prepare for the spring freshet.
- Clendenan Dam is designed to capture sheet ice to reduce ice jamming and flooding in Clarksburg.
- GSCA has real-time water level gauges at 3 dams, including Rankin Dam, Skinner's Marsh Dam, and the Owen Sound Mill Dam.

2023 FOCUS

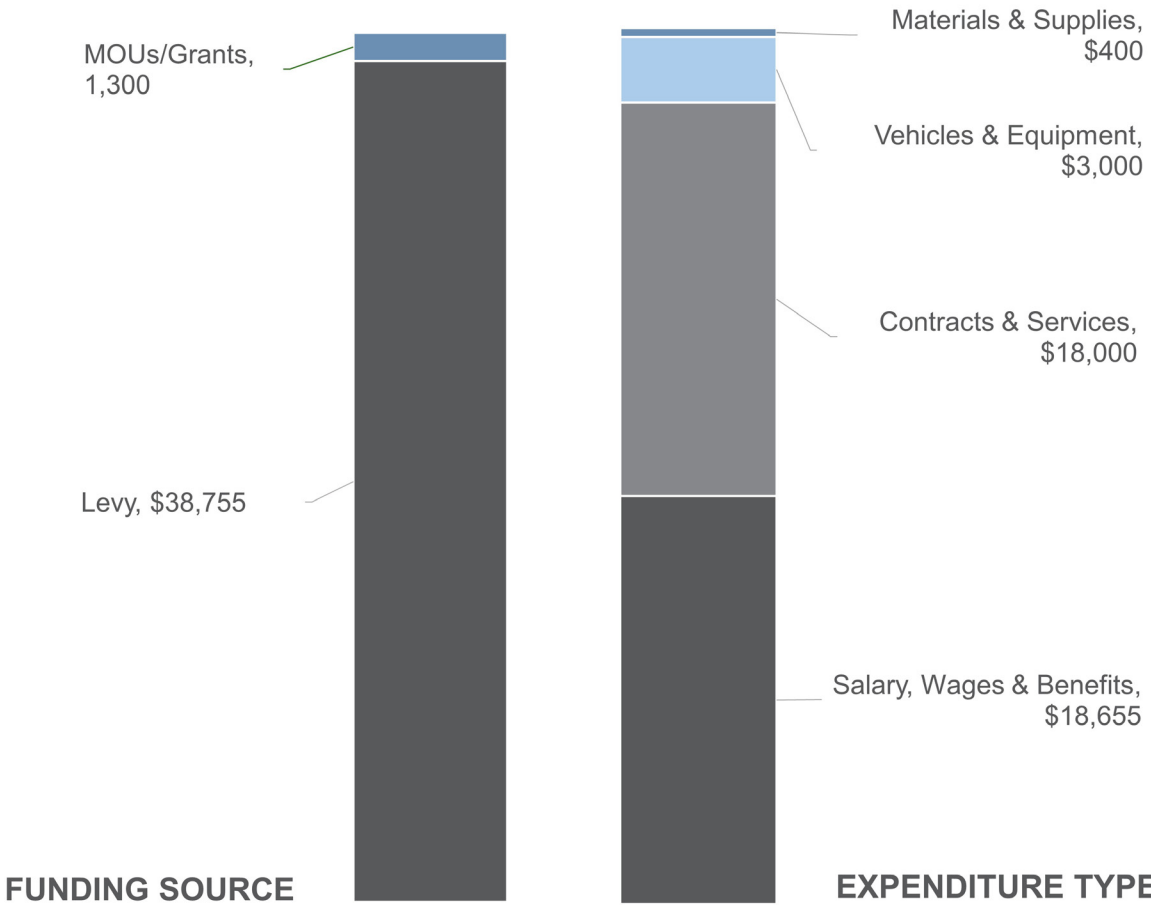
- Continue to maintain dam structures and manage water levels for both recreation and flood control.
- Ensure erosion control structures continue to function as designed.
- Continue repairs to the gabion baskets at Indian Falls Conservation Area.
- Continue to review and update Operational Plans for our dams.



WATER QUALITY MONITORING & WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES

TOTAL \$40,055





MONITORING & WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

This program collects valuable, long-term watershed data that is the foundation of GSCA's Watershed Report Cards. Various water quality parameters such as E. coli, total phosphorus and chlorides are tested on surface water samples collected throughout the watershed. This data is made available on GSCA's website. Benthic macroinvertebrates or "stream bugs" are collected to help monitor changes in the biological communities of our rivers and creeks over time. Groundwater wells are also monitored annually to ensure groundwater levels and water quality are stable. This data has also been used by several agencies to make assessments on Great Lakes health and guide decisions such as informing small drinking water systems, risk assessments, and best practices for winter road salt application.





2022 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Sampled 35 water sites (including 6 new sites) 8 times and sampled 15 benthic sites to support GSCA's Watershed Report Card evaluations.
- Completed a Watershed Health Review for the Upper Sauble River.
- Implemented a new online benthic identification training for staff using a microscope webcam.

INTERESTING FACTS

- GSCA does all its benthic identification in-house to the lowest practical level (i.e. genus and species).
- Surface water quality data is available on GSCA's website.
- Most of the Provincial surface water sites have data dating back to 2002, whereas the additional GSCA sites began in 2012.
- The Provincial surface water site at Sauble Falls has water quality data dating back to 1970!
- GSCA's website provides monthly precipitation and Crop Heat Unit maps (CHU).

2023 FOCUS

- Continue to collect valuable watershed data that supports Watershed Report Cards and stewardship efforts.
- Update water quality monitoring results with new data and post online.



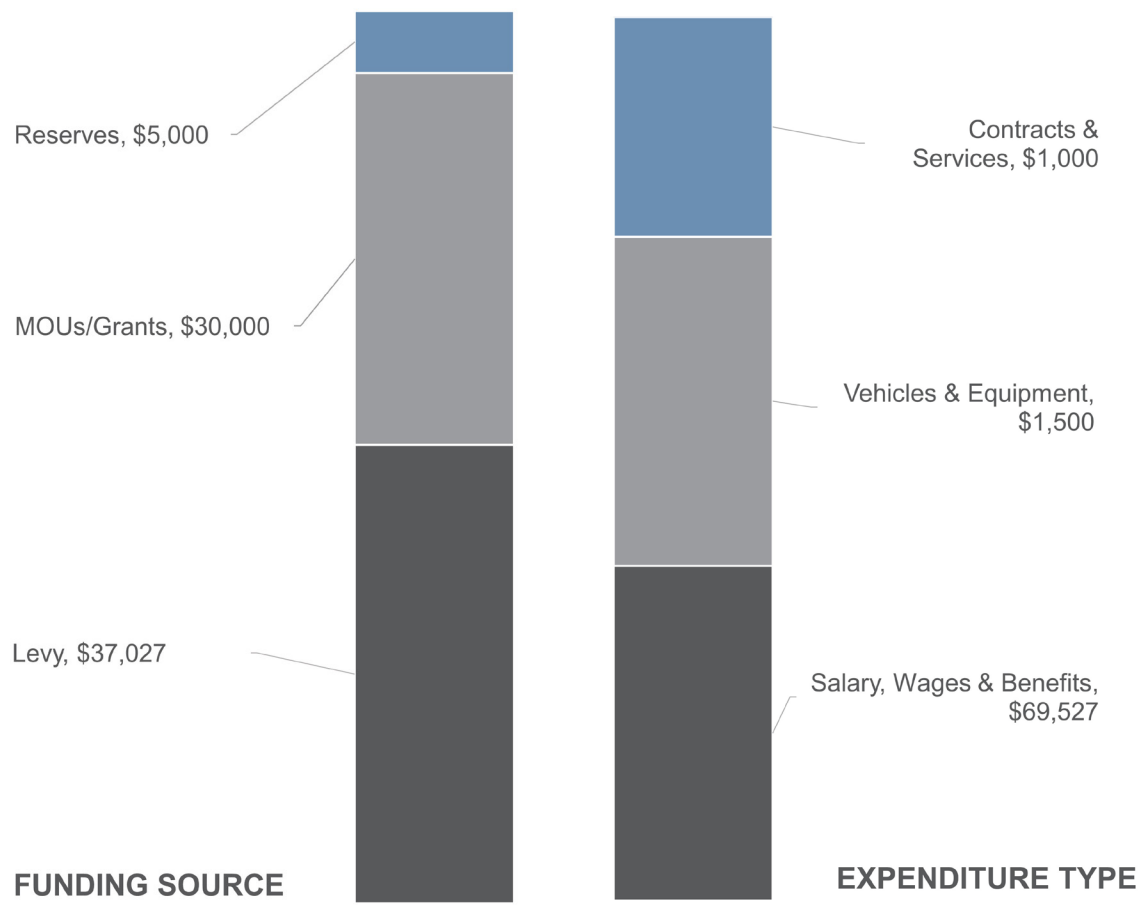
STEWARDSHIP

The focus of the Stewardship program is to inspire and enable others to become stewards of their land by making environmentally conscious decisions and implementing projects that will provide positive environmental benefits. The Stewardship program secures external grant dollars to support landowners with projects that improve water quality, promote soil health, and restore wildlife habitat. Types of projects include livestock exclusion fencing, wetland creation, or winter cover crops on agricultural land. The Stewardship program also works in partnership with other watershed organizations such as ALUS Grey Bruce, Stewardship Grey Bruce, and Bruce Peninsula Biosphere Association.

Invasive species monitoring and management is another important area of the Stewardship Program. Invasive Phragmites has been cut on several GSCA shoreline properties in the past 3 years and baseline data will be used to target future management efforts. Collaboration with community groups in Oliphant and Lake Eugenia to control invasive Phragmites has been a major success story for this program.



STEWARDSHIP
FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES
TOTAL \$72,027





2022 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Completed 4 livestock exclusion fencing projects and 2 alternative watering system that will benefit water quality and livestock health.
- Planted cover crops on 11 properties that will add nutrients to soil and protect against erosion.
- Implemented 3 clean water diversion projects and 3 eavestroughing projects to reduce nutrients, sediment, and bacteria from entering surface water sources after rain events.
- Controlled 2 hectares of invasive Wild Chervil at Griersville Management Area.

INTERESTING FACTS

- Stewardship projects improved water quality and livestock health by keeping 225 head of cattle out of watercourses this year.
- In 2022, Stewardship Staff organized and hosted an event for the Grey Sauble Day Camp that explored farm science!
- Stewardship programs were promoted to approximately 500 people at outreach events in 2022.

2023 FOCUS

- Showcase “landowner champions” and update stewardship information on the GSCA website.
- Work with Healthy Lake Huron to promote best management practices for agricultural producers and municipalities; deliver educational workshops and demonstrations; and develop key messaging.
- Continue to seek stewardship funding to work with landowners and deliver stewardship projects that contribute to healthy watershed communities.
- Promote the 2023 Watershed Report Card to the agricultural community and highlight how agricultural practices can positively impact the watershed.
- Continue to build relationships and share knowledge by working with the GSCA Agricultural Advisory Committee.

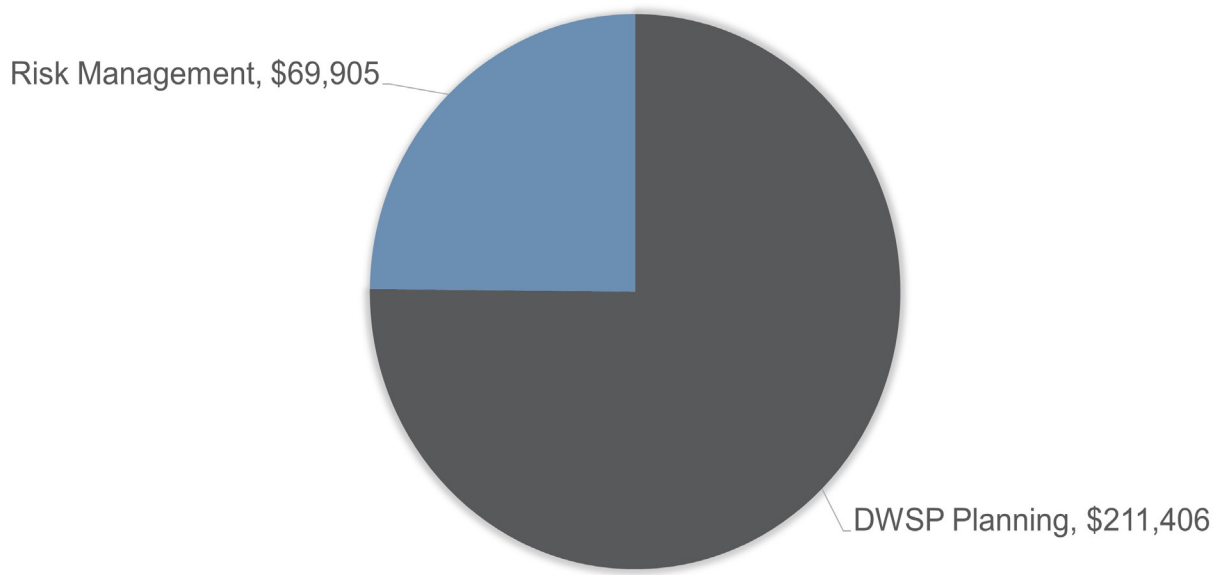


DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION

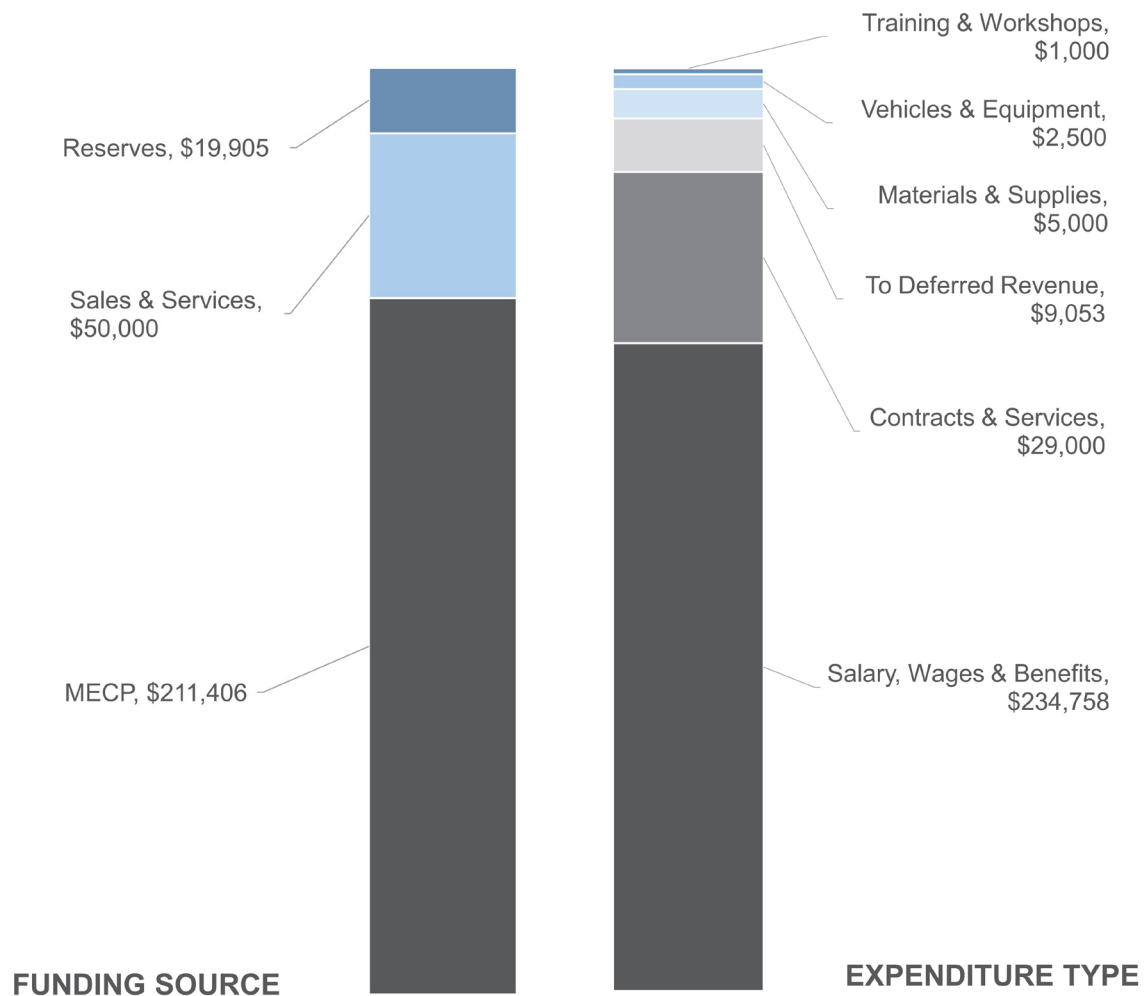
Water is critical to all aspects of life and it is important to ensure there is a safe and reliable source of water for all uses – now and in the future. Drinking Water Source Protection is a resource planning process that aims to keep sources of drinking water safe and usable.

The only notable change in Source Water Protection portion of the budget is to reflect changes with salary and wages. This program is funded through Provincial grant. There is no levy impact associated with this budget. Changes in the Source Water Risk Management program are associated with a nominal increase in salary and wages and a modest increase in contracts & services. This program operates on a fee for service basis as established in agreements with participating municipalities. There is no levy impact associated with this budget.

DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION



FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES TOTAL \$281,311





DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION PLANNING

The Source Water Protection Program ensures a sustainable and safe source of clean drinking water to residents, within the Saugeen, Grey Sauble, and Northern Bruce Peninsula Source Protection Region, by meeting legislative requirements within the *Clean Water Act* and ensuring policies in the Source Protection Plan are implemented.

2022 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Completed the annual report to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks with the noted achievement of implementing 100% of the Source Protection Plan policies by the required deadline of July 2022.
- Submitted the final Source Protection Plan amendments to the Ministry in February 2022, as directed by Ministerial Order under Section 36 of the *Clean Water Act*.
- Currently working with affected landowners and municipalities on implementing Source Protection Plan amendments based on recent Ministry Technical Rule changes.
- Secured source water protection program funding extensions from the Province for the next 2 years.



2023 FOCUS

- Implement the proposed amendments to the Source Protection Plan, with affected landowners, including salt storage and application threats and fuel storage activities in sensitive areas.
- Complete amendments to the source protection plan to include new drinking water systems, as required by Regulation 205 of the Safe Drinking Water Act.
- Work with municipalities on implementing Ministry best practices for source water protection in areas not covered by current source protection plan.

INTERESTING FACTS

- The Source Protection Plan that came into effect in July 2016 includes 119 policies to address 22 prescribed drinking water threats.
- 100% of the policies that address significant drinking water threats have been implemented.
- To-date over 153 Risk Management Plans were established in the Source Protection Region (since July 2016) and 203 Inspections have been carried out by designated Risk Management Officials/ Inspectors.
- The Source Protection Committee is certain that the significant progress achieved to-date is a direct result of provincial funding dedicated to source water protection.

* The Source Water Protection budget and achievements apply to the fiscal year (April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022).



DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION RISK MANAGEMENT

Grey Sauble Conservation staff have the designated responsibility for the delivery of Risk Management services on behalf of 14 municipalities across Grey and Bruce Counties. These services include duties specified under the *Clean Water Act* for the development of Risk Management Plans, screening land-use planning applications, inspection, enforcement and annual reporting requirements.

2022 ACHIEVEMENTS

- 40 Risk Management Plans were renewed (5-year renewal cycle), and 42 Land Use Screening Notices were issued.
- All required Risk Management Plans have been negotiated with the established 5-year timeline.
- There have been 10 inspections carried out or planned by a Grey Sauble Risk Management Official/Inspector for prohibited or regulated activities.
- There is a 100% compliance rate with the Risk Management Plans established in our source protection region.
- Negotiated Risk Management Service Agreements with partner municipalities.

INTERESTING FACTS

- The following municipalities are supported by Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Risk Management Department: South Bruce Peninsula, South Bruce, West Grey, Kincardine, Saugeen Shores, Brockton, Arran-Elderslie, Blue Mountains, Georgian Bluffs, Chatsworth, Grey Highlands, Owen Sound, Meaford, and Northern Bruce Peninsula.

2023 FOCUS

- Negotiate new Risk Management Plans for salt application/storage threats and fuel storage activities resulting from recent Source Protection Plan amendments.
- Renew approximately 50 Risk Management Plans (5-year renewal cycle).
- Conduct ongoing restricted land use planning screenings as required and support communication efforts with municipalities on planning related issues.



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