



2024 | DRAFT BUDGET COMPANION REPORT





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ADMINISTRATION
SERVICES | 4 FTEs
OPERATING \$841,454
CAPITAL \$105,000

INFORMATION
SERVICES | 4.8 FTEs
OPERATING \$501,635
CAPITAL \$22,500

CONSERVATION
LANDS | 8.6 FTEs
OPERATING \$915,912
CAPITAL \$105,000

DRINKING WATER
PROTECTION | 2.4 FTEs
\$287,044

PLANNING &
PERMITS | 5.5 FTEs
\$560,833

FORESTRY | 2.9 FTEs
\$430,203

WATER MANAGEMENT
| 1.3 FTEs
OPERATING \$193,081
CAPITAL \$39,600

WATER QUALITY
| .25 FTEs
\$43,124

STEWARDSHIP
| 1 FTE
\$74,943

ENGINEERING
SERVICES
| 1 FTE
\$127,263

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 10 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.





2024 BUDGET SUMMARY

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

Throughout 2023, GSCA worked with participating municipalities to draft, negotiate, and execute agreements for Category 3 programs and services, as required by the Conservation Authorities Act. The changes to the Conservation Authorities Act, which stem from Bill 229, are now in full force. These changes can be seen in the Draft 2024 budget as the levy apportionment for Category 1 (mandatory) programs and services and general operating expenses are separated from Category 3 (other) programs and services.

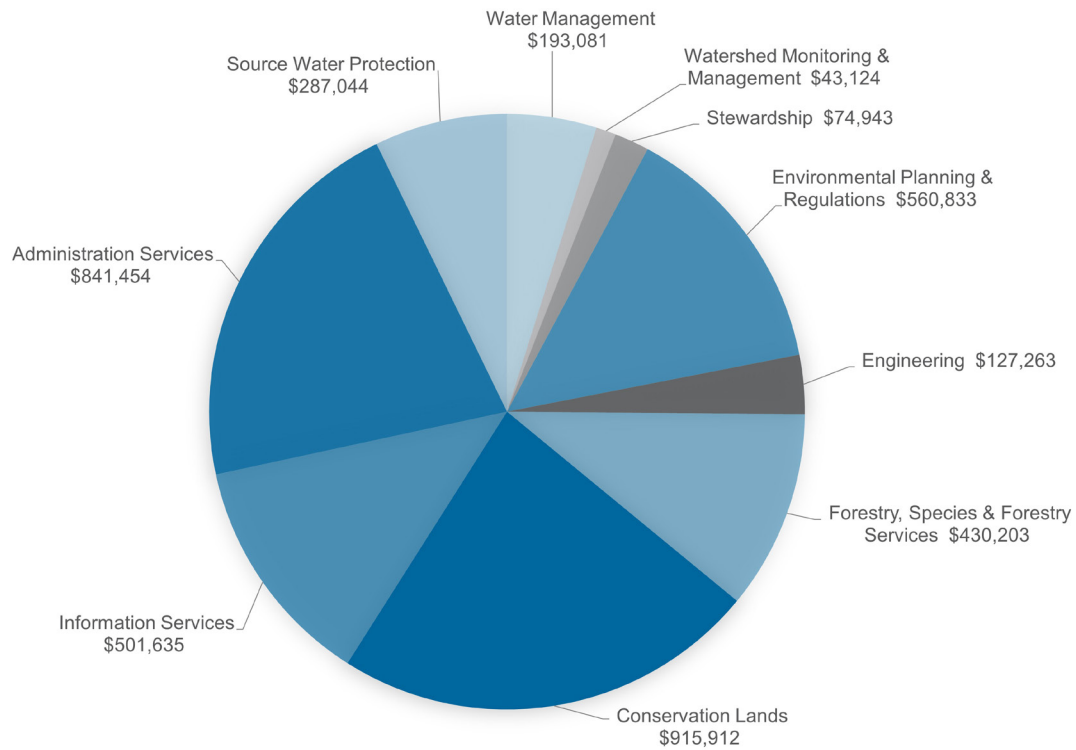
The 2024 budget reflects the ongoing changes that are necessary to ensure that GSCA continues to be sustainable in the long-term. To help reduce the overall impact on ratepayers and member municipalities, GSCA uses several mechanisms, where feasible and appropriate, to drive revenue generation and limit 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.

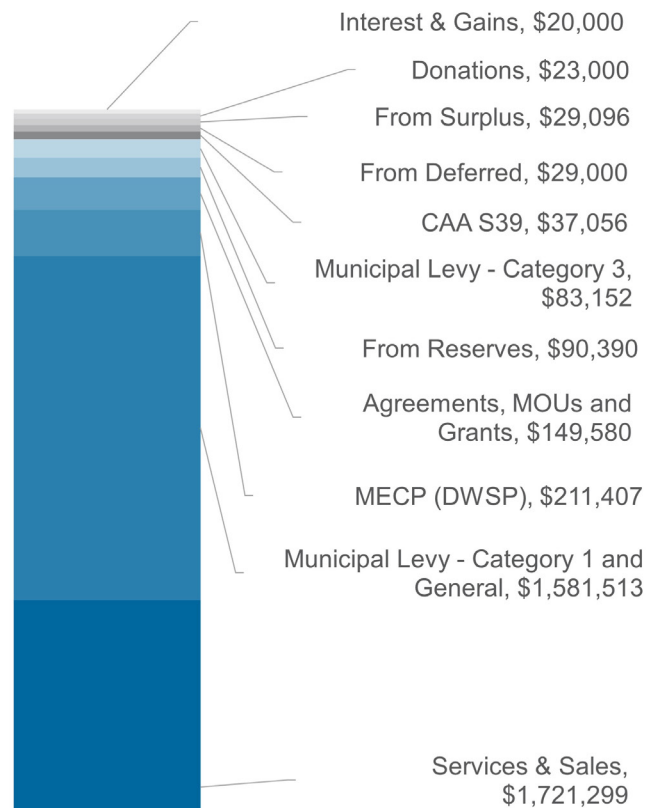
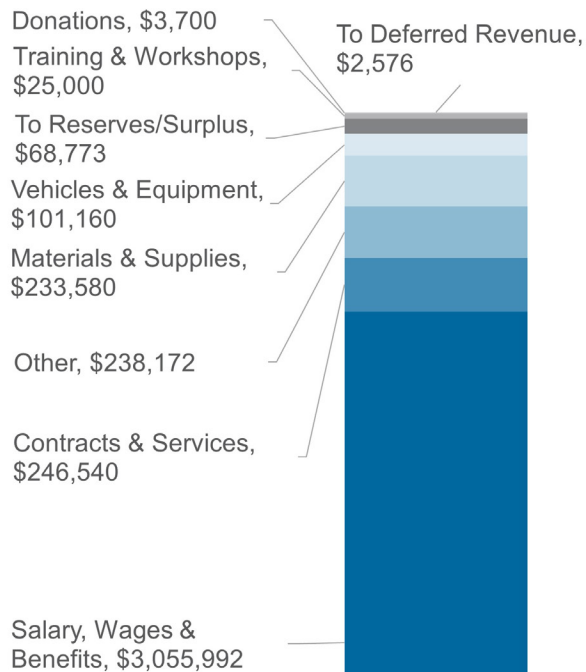
In the 2023 budget year, municipal levy is accounted for approximately 41 percent of the total budgeted revenue, transfer payments from the Province for Drinking Water Source Protection and Natural Hazards will account for approximately 6 percent, and the remaining 53 percent will be derived from other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

2024 OPERATING BUDGET BY SERVICE AREA

TOTAL BUDGET \$3,975,493



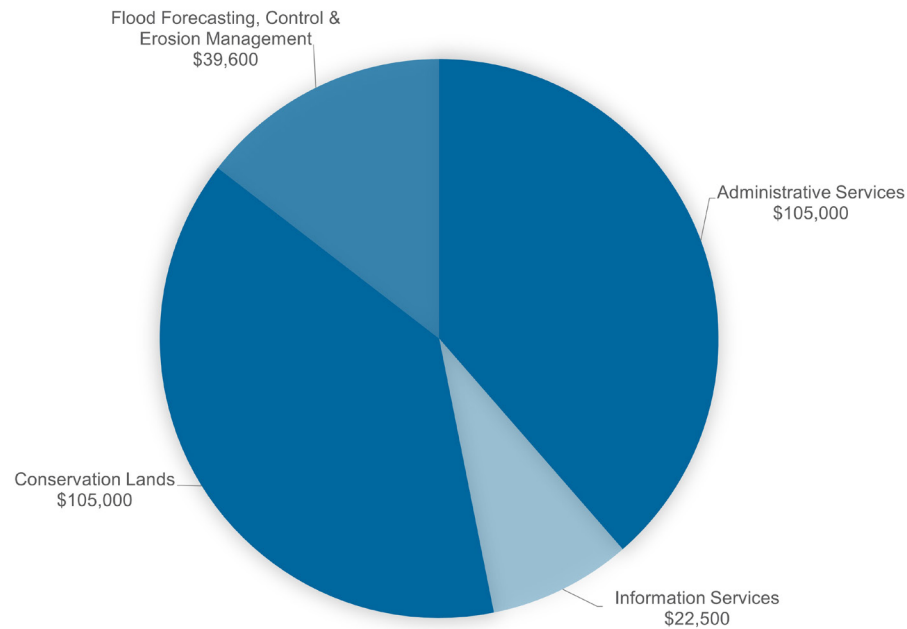
FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES



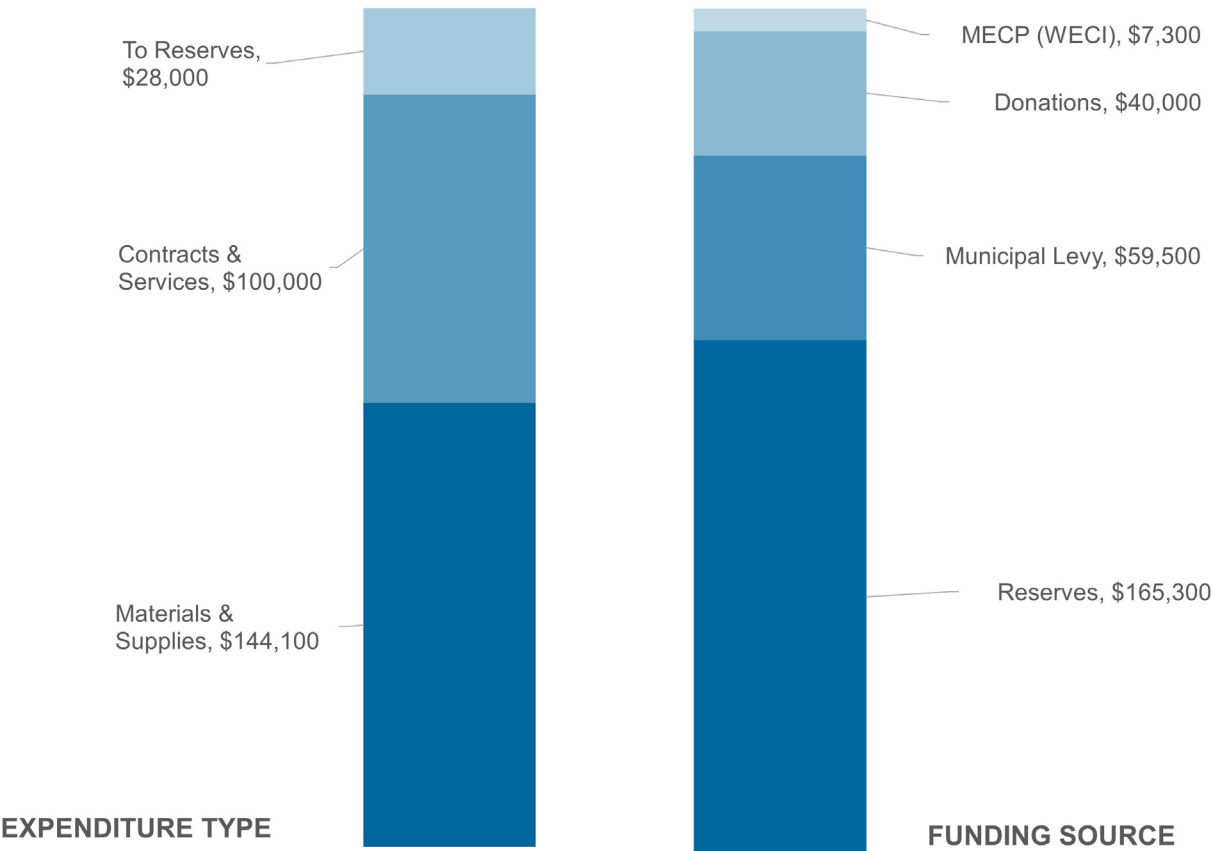
EXPENDITURE TYPE

FUNDING SOURCE

2024 CAPITAL BUDGET BY SERVICE AREA
TOTAL BUDGET \$272,100



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. 2023 was a busy year for Administration Services as GSCA negotiated and finalized Category 3 service agreements with municipal partners and adjusted to new requirements and changes to the Conservation Authorities Act.

Administration Services consists of the following:

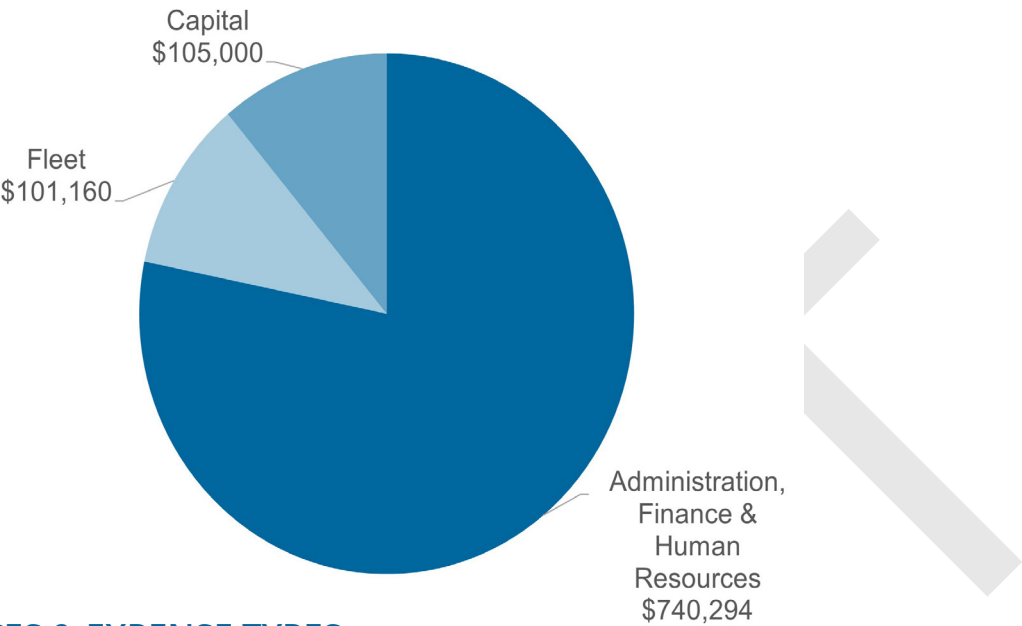
Administration, Finance & Human Resources

Notable changes in the budget from 2023 to 2024 are related to a general increase 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. However, this funding has been impacted by unforeseen fluctuations in the market causing lower than anticipated revenues. On a positive note, insurance premiums which had been rising by 10-20 percent annually seem to have stabilized. These premiums are listed under “Other” within the Administration budget.

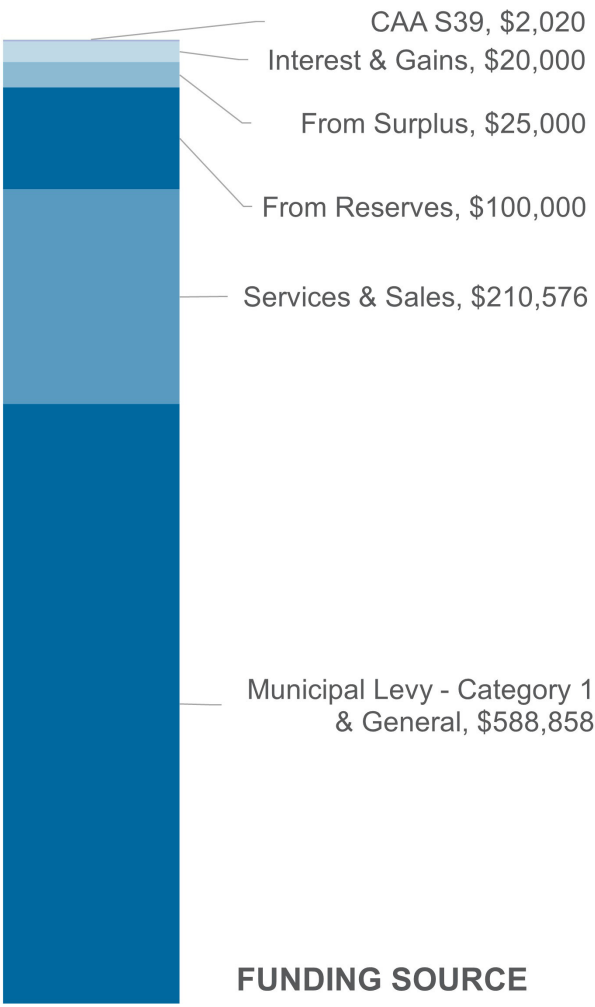
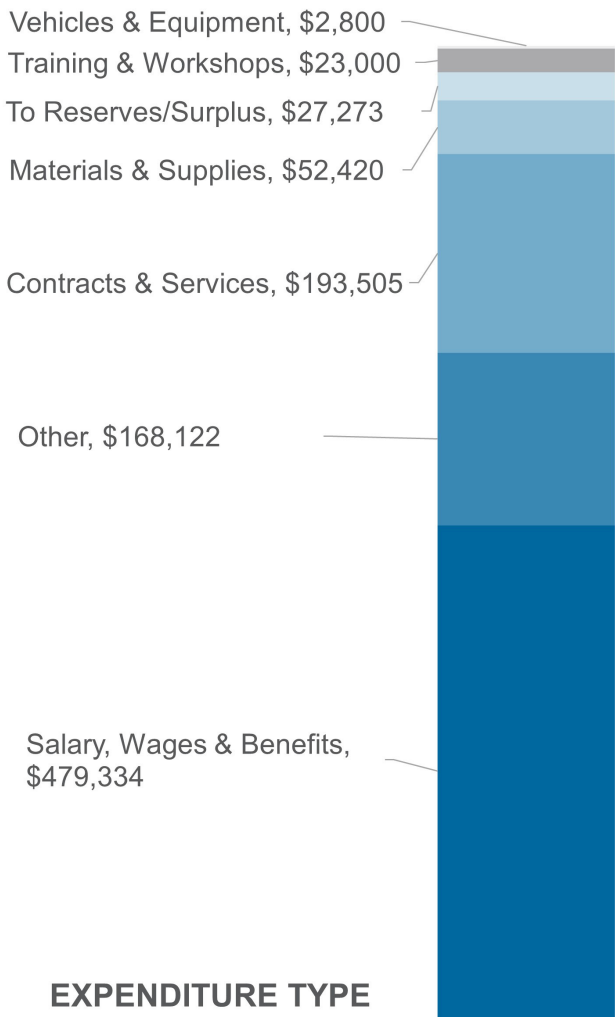
Fleet & Equipment Management

The expenses in the department are proposed to increase in 2024, associated with a increase in maintenance costs and an increased contribution to the Fleet and Equipment Reserve. This is balanced on the revenue side by an increase in sales and services revenue associated with increased mileage chargeback rates within each departmental budget. These increases are necessary to ensure that GSCA can manage fleet and equipment needs over the next 10-year period.

ADMINISTRATION SERVICES



FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES
TOTAL \$946,454





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.

2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Finalized GSCA's Programs and Services Inventory.
- Executed new municipal funding agreements for Category 3 programs with all member municipalities.
- Ongoing implementation of new requirements under the Conservation Authorities Act.
- Finalized GSCA's 2019-2023 Strategic Plan and reported back to the Board of Directors and public.



2024 FOCUS

- Finalize GSCA's 2025-2035 Strategic Plan.
- Create a Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy.
- Finalize GSCA's Asset Management Plan.

INTERESTING FACTS

- Starting on January 1, 2024, Ontario's conservation authorities must have agreements in place with municipal partners to use levy for non-mandatory programs (Category 3). For GSCA, these programs are Stewardship, Watershed Monitoring, and Communications.
- The total levy based operating cost of all GSCA's programs equals approximately \$21 per resident per year.
- The total levy based operating cost of continuing with Category 3 programs equals approximately \$1 per resident per year (part of the \$21 noted previously).



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.

2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

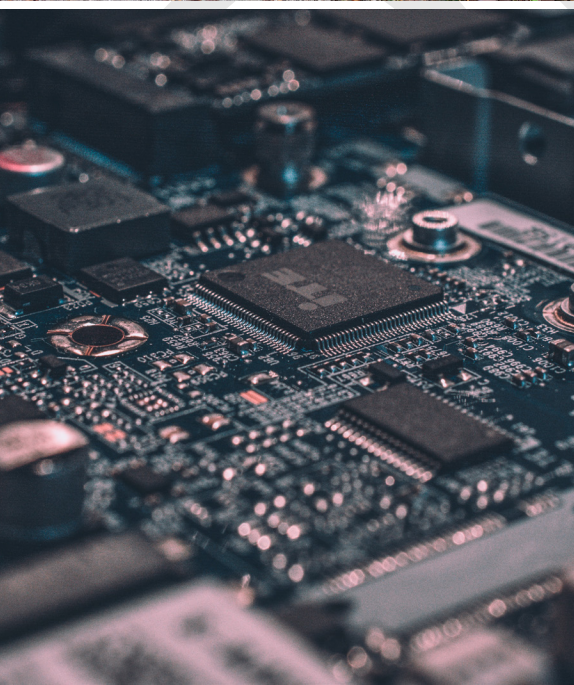
- Revised the mechanism used for tracking monthly usages of GSCA vehicles.
- Sold two longstanding vehicles to increase fleet reserves.
- Continuously evaluated the vehicle and equipment needs for all departments.
- Investigated the short to long-term needs for the fleet.
- Completed ongoing preventative maintenance and repairs, as well as licencing and insurance updates for GSCA vehicles.

2024 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.

INTERESTING FACTS

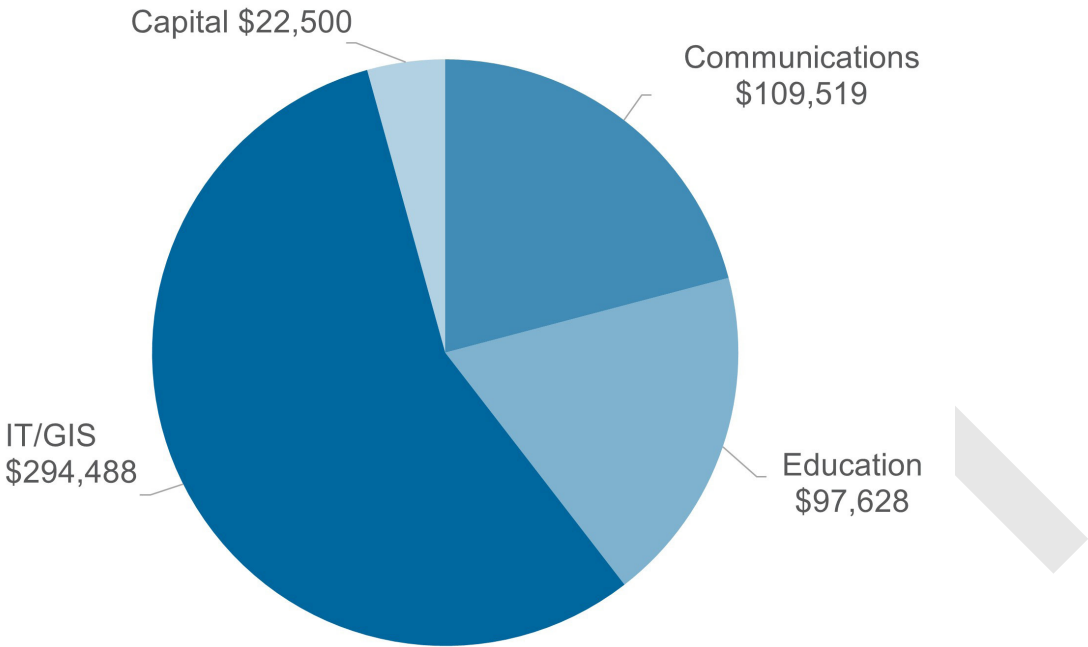
- GSCA owns and manages 12 vehicles and close to \$70,000 in equipment.
- The Operations Department is responsible for fleet management.



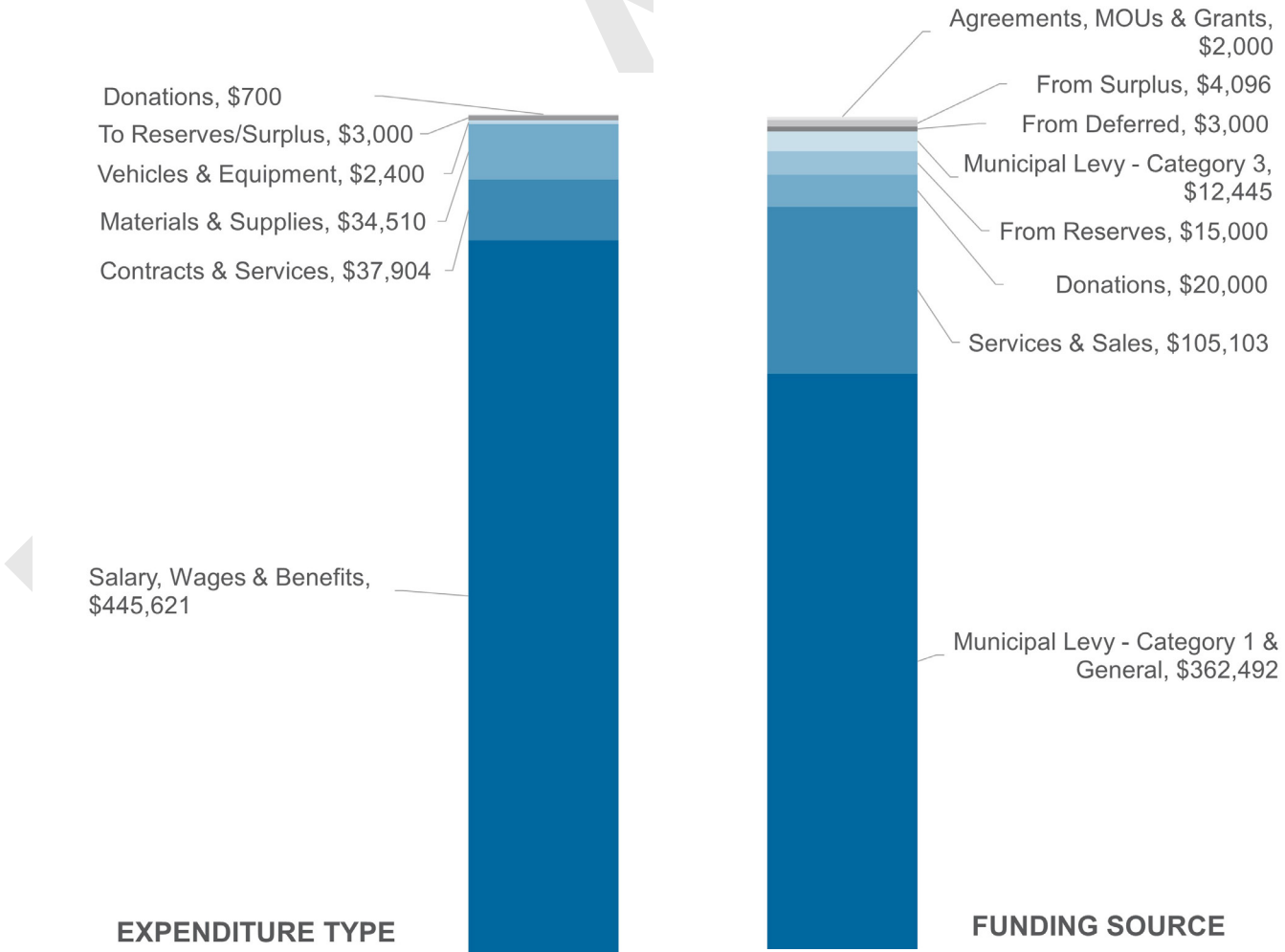
INFORMATION SERVICES

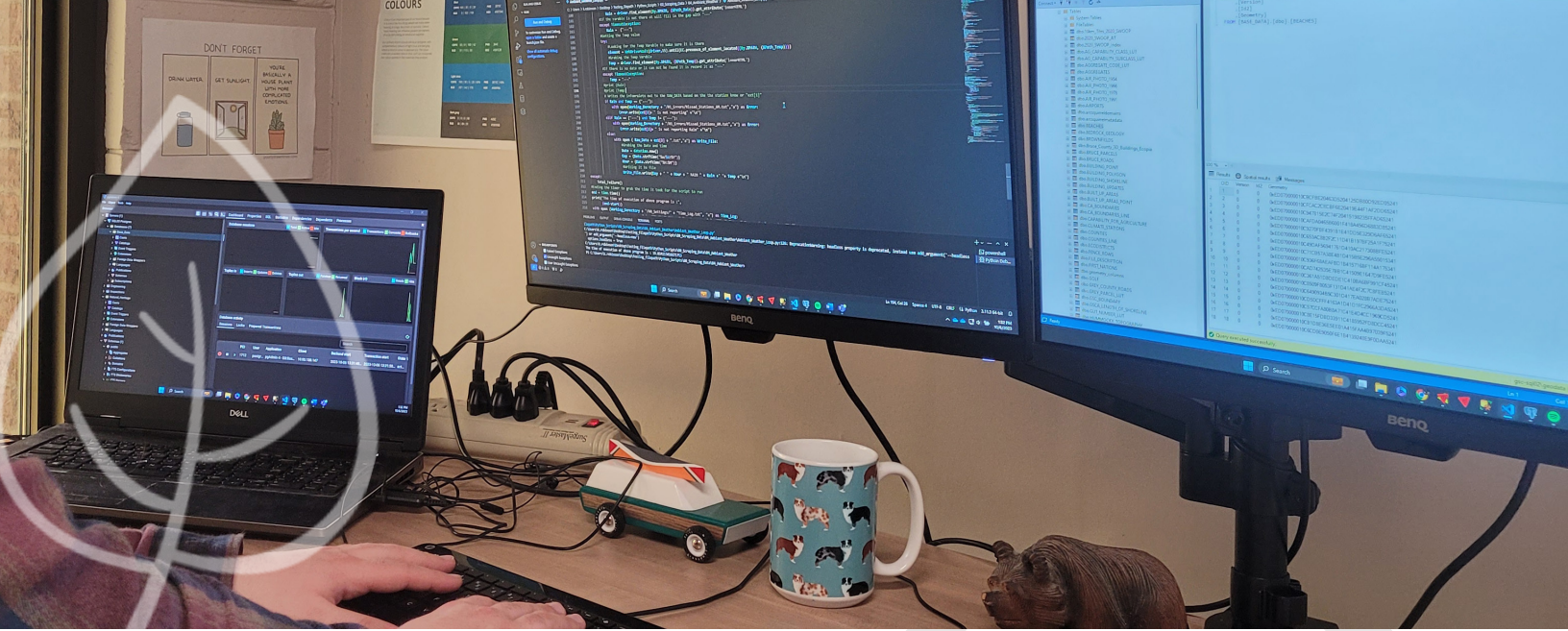
This service area oversees the management, delivery, training and direction of various types of internal and external information produced and stored by GSCA. Information Services consists of three main departments: Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Information Technology, Communications, and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

INFORMATION SERVICES



FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES
TOTAL \$524,135





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 team also supports streamlining work and application procedures and data flow across department for maximum efficiency withing the organization.

The GIS team undertakes the deployment, management and administration of spatial data and other associated information. This program is responsible for the creation, acquisition, storage, analysis and display of spatial information. In addition, the GIS program provides support to partnering municipalities and the public, particularly with respect to regulatory and natural hazard mapping.

2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Updated mapping for Grey Highlands Zoning By-law.
- Completed ongoing updates and tracking for all IT assets.
- Provided ongoing support for field data collection and integration with in-house mapping
- Implemented a new internet (Teams) phone system that has reduced the cost of the previous system by more than half.
- Developed and implemented a new finance system.
- Created wayfinding signage maps for Inglis Falls and Clendenan Conservation Areas.
- Digitized forest cover from 2020 aerial imagery and consolidated several data sets to calculate the grades used in the 2023 Watershed Report Card.



- Completed updates and improvements to the GSCA website, including public reporting utilities for lands and permit violations across the watershed.
- Completed an online Grey County Forest By-law application system.

2024 FOCUS

- Provide flood modelling support.
- Improve the consistency of natural hazard and Ontario Regulation 151/06 mapping.
- Support the completion of the GSCA Land Inventory and associated spatial data holdings.
- Continue to implement new payables and receivables application to improve departmental efficiencies.
- Continue to meet requirements for cybersecurity to ensure the safety of all data.
- Document all IT related processes to improve succession planning and organizational memory retention.
- Work with new provincial LiDAR data and incorporate into base data mapping for regulatory and hazard mapping.

INTERESTING FACTS

- GSCA has hosted a Topcon GPS base station on the roof of the Administration Centre since 2016 and has installed an EOS station to improve availability of the Real Time Kinetic and Global Positioning System (RTK GPS).
- GSCA uses low cost and open-source GIS applications to minimize costs associated with departmental mapping & spatial information.



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.

2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Provided ongoing support of departmental, GSCA Foundation, and partner group communications needs and content creation.
- Created and promoted the 2023 Watershed Report Card, which showcases watershed conditions of Ontario's conservation authorities every 5 years.
- Provided support for the completion of GSCA's new Strategic Plan.
- Promoted GSCA's programs and services at community events.
- Designed wayfinding signage for Clendenan and Inglis Falls Conservation Areas.
- Supported the design of a new trailhead sign at Inglis Falls Conservation Area.
- Designed a new interpretive sign at the Inglis Falls Arboretum that highlights the importance of keeping dogs on leash.
- Facilitated the GSCA parking pass loan program at libraries throughout Grey and Bruce Counties.
- Supported summer job recruitment.
- Developed GSCA's seasonal newsletter.
- Created and implemented advertising and social media plans.



2024 FOCUS

- Update the Explore Guide which provides information about popular GSCA properties, including trail maps and amenities.
- Create new display materials for GSCA and community events.
- Provide continued support for the completion of the new Strategic Plan.
- Promote GSCA's programs and services at community events.
- Provide ongoing support of departmental, Foundation and partner groups communications needs.
- Support GSCA website changes and updates.
- Design a new interpretive sign for St. Jean Point Nature Preserve.
- Design new trailhead signage at the Inglis Falls Arboretum.
- Support departments with developing effective storytelling tools.

INTERESTING FACTS

- GSCA utilizes Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (X) to share information with residents across the watershed and beyond.
- GSCA's social media content reached approximately 128,000 people this year, which is up 11.1% from 2022.
- The GSCA website saw over 120,600 visitors and approximately 244,000 page visits in 2023.
- The GSCA newsletter was delivered to over 850 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

- Over 50% of children reported an increase in confidence exploring the outdoors since attending the Grey Sauble Day Camp in 2023.
- As part of our environment-based day camp, GSCA successfully delivered programming covering topics such as: species at risk, native and invasive species, fire and shelter building, tree planting, forest bathing, sit spots, and wildlife survival.





2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Completed GSCA's Environmental Education Framework and began implementation.
- Extended the Day Camp Supervisor contract to support Environmental Education programming.
- Delivered environmental education at community events, including Earth Day Grey Bruce and the Sydenham Fall Fair.
- Judged the Bluewater Regional Junior Science and Technology Fair and awarded the Conservation Award.
- Delivered a 9-week summer day camp program that better aligned with staffing resources and environmental education objectives.
- Provided support for curriculum-linked environmental education programming, including the Bruce Grey Forest Festival, the Grey Bruce Children's Water Festival, the World of Trees, and the Grey Bruce Regional Envirothon.

2024 FOCUS

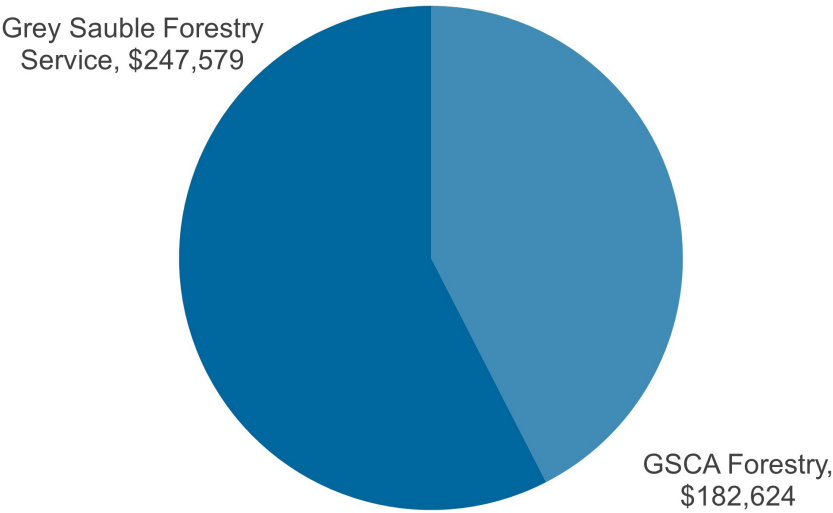
- In partnership with the Inglis Falls Arboretum Alliance, update and deliver the World of Trees program to grade 3 students.
- Continue to run a successful summer day camp program that focuses on immersing children in nature and environmental education programming.
- Create partnerships and connections with local school boards and teachers.
- Begin to offer curriculum-linked programming to schools in GSCA's jurisdiction.
- Seek and acquire stable funding for environmental education programming.
- Use Environmental Education Framework to help guide education programming.



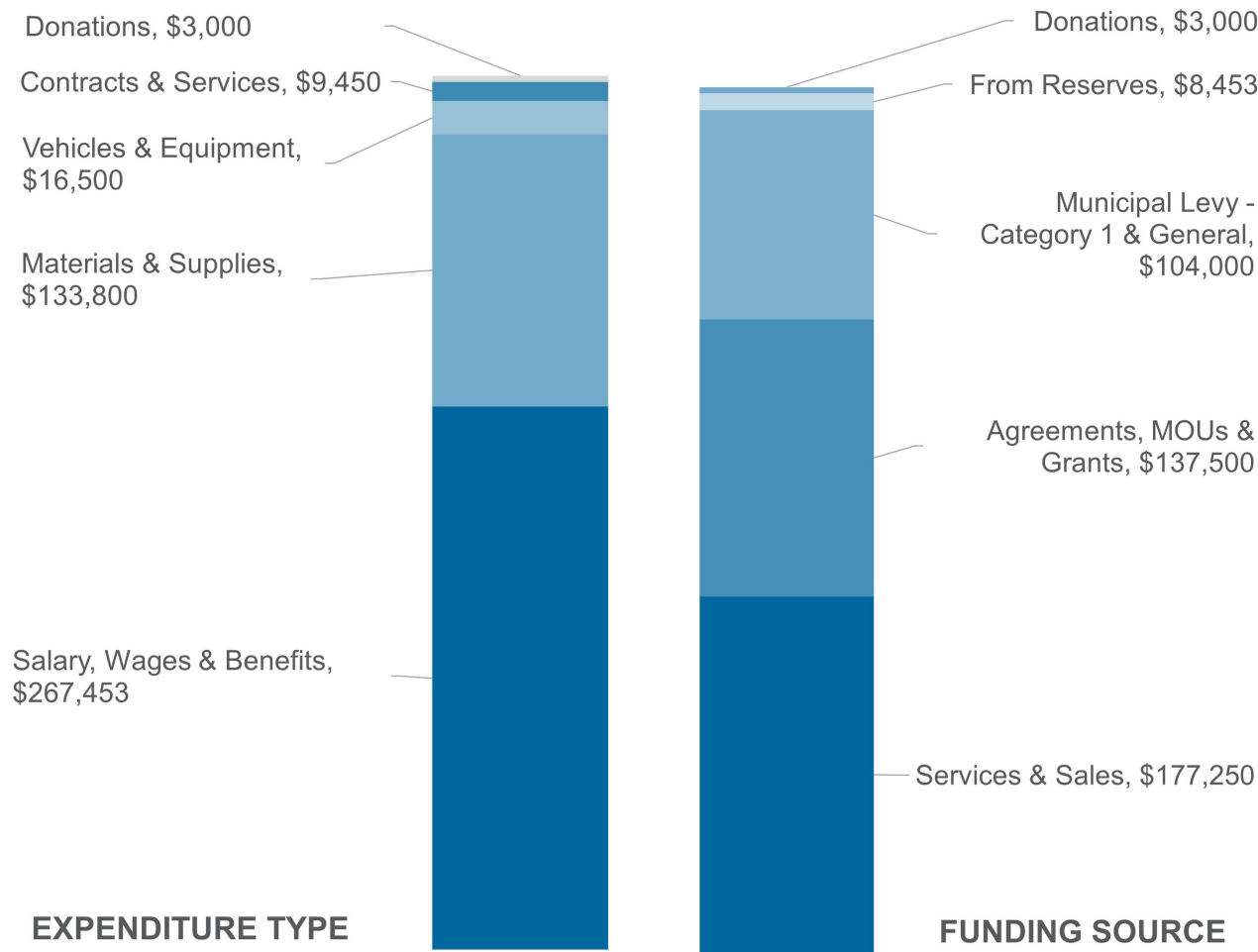
FORESTRY

GSCA's Forestry Department sustainably manages the forests on all GSCA lands 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 and improving wildlife habitat, reducing the impacts of severe weather events, improving water quality, and increasing soil retention.

FORESTRY



FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES
TOTAL \$430,203





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 the forests.

Forest management activities include the sustainable harvesting of trees. Forest management activities aim to mimic the natural disturbances that affect the forests of GSCA's watersheds. By mimicking these natural disturbances, GSCA can sustainably harvest its forested lands while still providing numerous benefits such as wildlife habitats, carbon absorption and sequestration, and the production of forest products such as firewood and lumber.

2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Completed two sustainable forest harvest operations on GSCA lands.
- Created signage explaining how sustainable forest management is conducted on GSCA lands.
- Completed measurements of two long-term forest growth and yield (G&Y) plots in conjunction with MNRF G&Y staff.
- As part of GSCA's forest management program, marked over 190 acres of GSCA's forested land in preparation for a sustainable harvest operation.
- Held a Forestry Committee meeting with members of the Board of Directors.
- Initiated Invasive Species Strategy on GSCA lands to control spread of invasive species. This project includes staff from the Forestry, Stewardship, Lands, and Operations departments.



2024 FOCUS

- Engage a consultant to analyze growth and yield data.
- Continue to provide relevant forest-related information for the GSCA website.
- Investigate new and developing methods of managing GSCA's forests to provide numerous ecosystem services throughout the watershed.
- Continue to manage and control invasive species on GSCA lands.

INTERESTING FACTS

- Harvesting operations in GSCA's forests are sustainably executed and meet and/or exceed all local and provincial legislation.
- The goal of GSCA's Forest Management Program is to balance the environmental, social, cultural, and economic values of the forest.
- At least 50% of an 80-year-old tree is composed of carbon.



GREY SAUBLE FORESTRY SERVICE

The Grey Sauble Forestry Service (GSFS) 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 planting trees; Forest Management Plans; and the sale of affordable native trees and seedlings.

Trees provide numerous benefits to landowners and the entire community, such as improved air and water quality; increased resilience to the impacts of flooding; and reduced household energy bills. The GSFS offers reduced pricing of trees to landowners through bulk purchasing. The GSFS is also able to offer tree planting grants to landowners to help offset some of the cost of these projects. 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.

2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Completed over 20 Forest Management Plans for private landowners throughout the GSCA watershed, helping them to gain a deeper understanding of their forested land. Plans are in compliance with the MNRF's Managed Forest Tax Incentive Plan (MFTIP) standards.
- Sold over 1950 landscape trees, 15,000 tree seedlings and 1,500 shrub seedlings to approximately 240 clients through the pre-order tree sales program.
- Hosted the first in-person tree sale for the public to attend since 2019 due to COVID-19.
- Planted over 54,000 tree seedlings, creating more than 35 hectares (87+ acres) of future forests.
- Secured and distributed over \$110,000 in funding to help offset tree planting project costs for private landowners.



- Partnered with the Municipality of Meaford on a community tree planting event as part of National Forest Week.
- Helped to organize and execute the Bruce Grey Forest Festival for grade 7 students throughout Bruce and Grey Counties.
- Continued to support community outreach efforts by being involved with boards and committees, including: Grey Bruce Woodlands Association, Grey Bruce Woodlot Conference, Bruce County Forest Management Plan Advisory Committee, and the Inglis Falls Arboretum Alliance. Working collaboratively with these groups results in productive relationships and an increased understanding of the many benefits of sustainable forest management.

2024 FOCUS

- Plant 60,000 trees throughout the GSCA watershed.
- Support and expand the Bruce Grey Forest Festival.
- Offer quality trees and shrubs to residents at reasonable prices through GSCA's tree sales.

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.

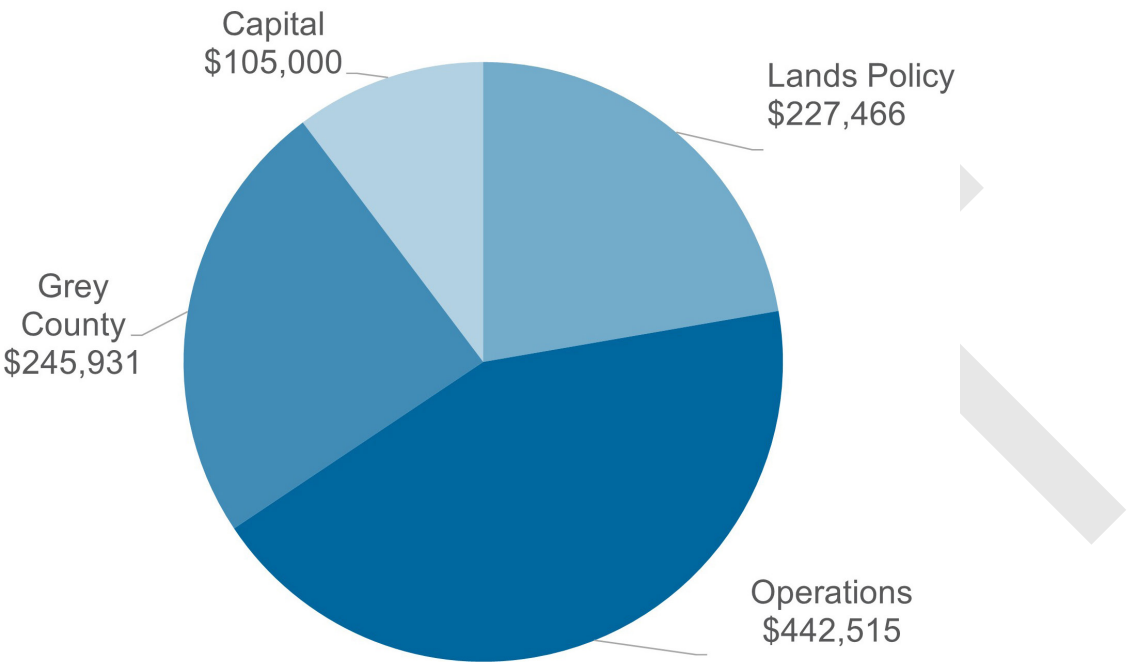


CONSERVATION LANDS

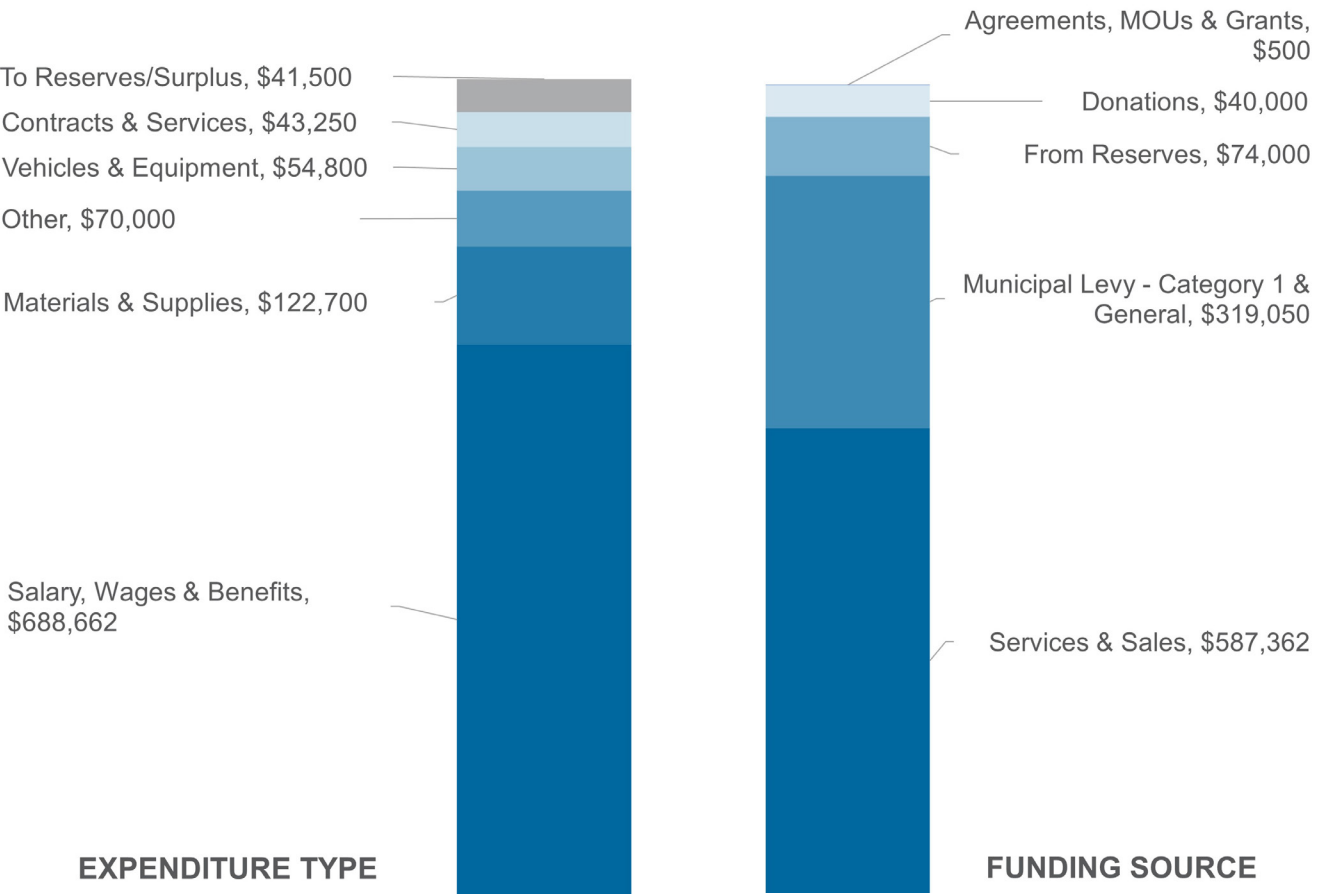
GSCA has been actively protecting the natural landscape of Grey and Bruce Counties for over 60 years through property acquisition and sustainable land management efforts. GSCA lands have been divided into three classifications based on the reason for acquisition, conditions on title, or management objectives, 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 \$1,020,912





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.

2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Began work on the *Conservation Authority Act* requirements pertaining to CA Lands: Land Strategy and Land Inventory.
- Finalized the Inglis Falls Management Plan.
- Completed Phase 3 of the Eugenia Falls Management Plan.
- Completed GSCA property operational reviews.
- Acquired one new property on Isaac Lake.
- Facilitated the creation of a trailhead sign at Inglis Falls Conservation Area and wayfinding signage at Inglis Falls Conservation Area, the Arboretum, and Clendenan Conservation Area.
- Began management of wild chervil at Inglis Falls Conservation Area and phragmites at Bognor Marsh Management Area.
- Created a new 600-metre snowshoe trail at the Arboretum & Administration Centre in partnership with Outdoor Adventures.
- Worked with Owen Sound Cross Country Ski Club, Grey County and the Bruce Trail Conservancy to begin the implementation of parking lots at several GSCA management areas.
- Successfully tendered seven GSCA agricultural leases for five-year terms.
- Coordinated a garbage clean up at West Rocks Conservation Area with a class from Owen Sound District Secondary School.



2024 FOCUS

- Finalize work on the *Conservation Authority Act* requirements pertaining to CA Lands: Land Strategy and Land Inventory.
- Manage GSCA properties land use leases, agreements, and easements.
- Implement projects as per Inglis Falls Management Plan: complete renovation of the Inglis Falls washroom, improve/expand the overflow parking lot and install bike trail signage.
- Facilitate the design and installation of wayfinding signage at West Rocks Conservation Area.
- Facilitate the design and installation of interpretive signage at St. Jean's Point in collaboration with the local Indigenous community.
- 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 200,000 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!
- The Inglis Falls Arboretum is now home to a sweat lodge, in partnership with M'Wikwedong Indigenous Friendship Centre.
- Annual property taxes are \$59,168.52 which is \$13,418.17 less than last year. Over the last 3 years lands and forestry staff have been diligently finding cost savings through CLTIP and MFTIP applications.



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, implementation of Capital Projects, building and repairing infrastructure, landscaping, snow removal, snow surveys, addressing compliance issues, overseeing the Grey County CP Rail contract, installation, removal and maintenance of dams, working closely with partners to enhance properties, and managing the Ambassador Parking Program.





2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Met net parking revenue budget target.
- Built and installed new, more visible entrance signage for Conservation Areas.
- Updated lookouts at various properties to enhance visitor experience.
- Completed various stone repointing projects including the Spirit Rock Corran.
- Built twelve new custom stoplogs for Clendenan Dam.
- Decommissioned and removed the old privy at Feversham Gorge - Madeleine Graydon Memoiral Conservation Area.
- Decommissioned and removed the change rooms at Christie Beach Conservation Area.
- Coordinated Grey County's Rail Trail resurfacing project, consisting of the final 15.5 km to Dundalk.
- Worked with GSCA partners to implement property upgrades, such as the removal of five Norway Maple trees in the Inglis Falls Arboretum, updating boardwalks, and trail maintenance.
- Supported Lands Staff with the Operational Review of fifteen GSCA properties.
- Addressed complaints and provided prompt responses to inquiries from the public.
- Installed wayfinding signage at Inglis Falls and Clendenan Dam Conservation Areas.
- Supported the Friends of Hibou's 50-year celebration at Hibou Conservation Area.
- Updated the parking lot at Kemble Mountain Management Area.



- Implemented a new trail inspection system with support from the GIS Department.
- Secured A new partnership with 32 Combat Engineer Regiment for the rebuild of a foot bridge at Inglis Falls Conservation Area.

2024 FOCUS

- Renovate the washrooms at Inglis Falls Conservation Area.
- Install wayfinding signs at West Rocks Management Area.
- Continue to manage Grey County's CP Rail Trail.
- Remove old, dilapidated stairs at the Administration Centre staff entrance.
- Build and install an interpretive sign at St. Jean Point Nature Preserve.
- Investigate repaving the main parking lot and improve the overflow parking lot at Inglis Falls Conservation Area.
- Oversee the installation of various gates on GSCA properties.
- Start the process of replacing old stop logs with new ones at Clendenan Dam.
- Ongoing Operations of Conservation Lands.

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 over \$300,000 in 2023 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.

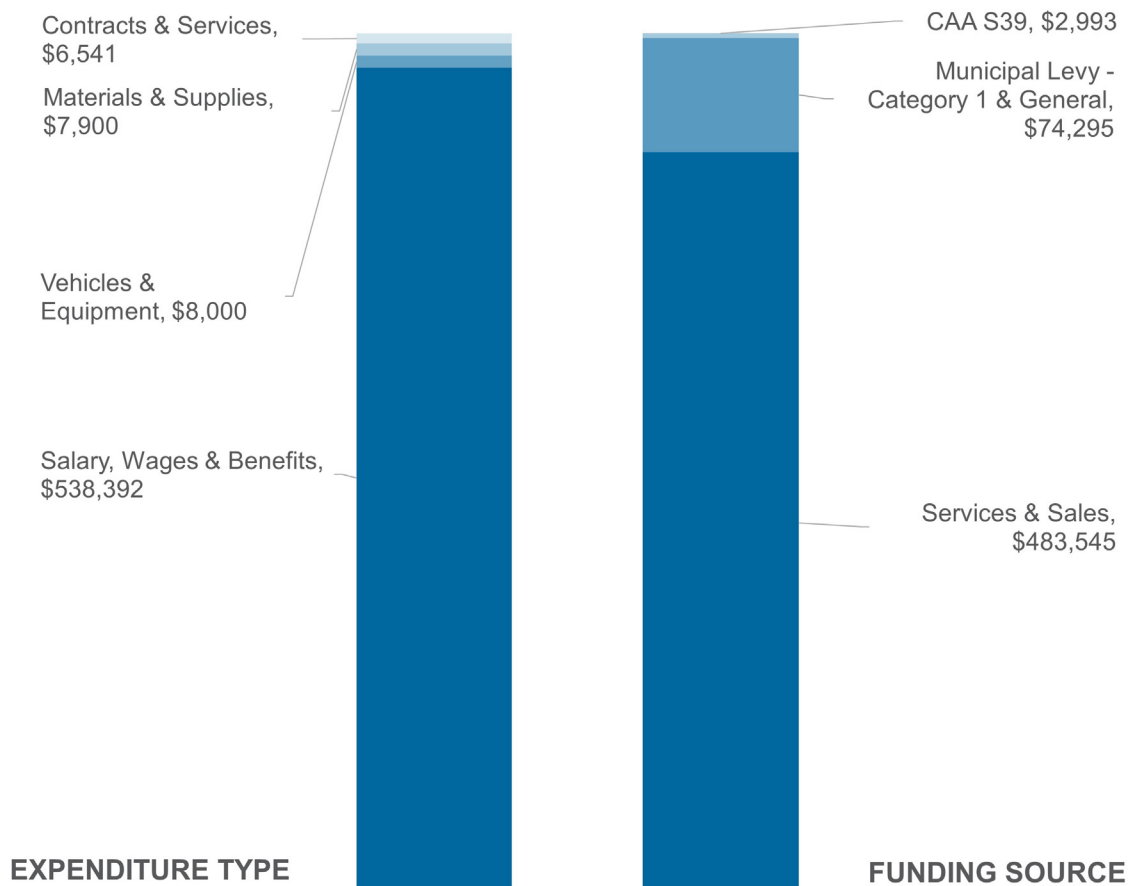


ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING & REGULATIONS

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 responsible manner away from natural hazards for the protection of people and property.



ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING & REGULATIONS FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES TOTAL \$560,833





2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Enhanced technical review services with the addition of the Manager of Engineering position.
- Adjusted program services in response to legislative changes brought on by Bill 23.
- Provided input and mapping on the Town of Collingwood Official Plan and the Municipality of Grey Highlands Zoning By-law.
- Responded to a high volume of inquiries, planning applications, and permit applications.

2024 FOCUS

- Continue to respond and adjust program services associated with Provincial legislative changes.
- Renew program service agreements with partner municipalities.
- Undertake regulation policy review to be consistent with changes to Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act.
- Continue to provide input and mapping for municipal planning documents.
- Strive for continued service excellence in delivery of planning and permit functions.

INTERESTING FACTS

From January 1, 2023 to October 18, 2023 staff:

- Received over 249 submissions through the online planning and permit inquiry form.
- Processed 294 permits under Ontario Regulation 151/06.
- Reviewed 187 Planning Act applications and (blank) NEC applications.
- Completed 124 pre-consultations, regulation inquiries, and site review letters.

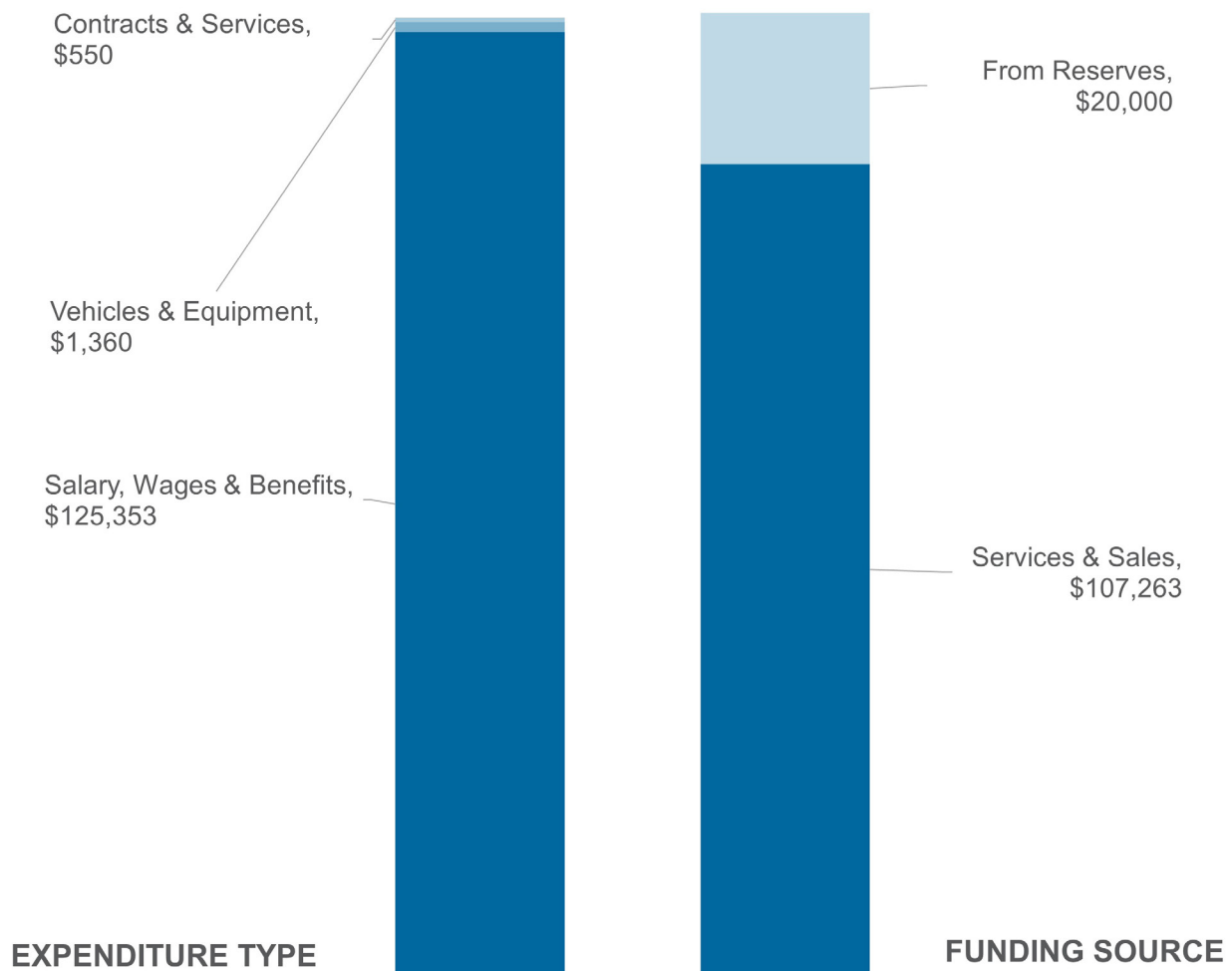


ENGINEERING SERVICES

The Engineering Services Department was established in 2023 and works to provide technical review, advice and direction to GSCA. The main priority of this Department is to provide technical review of natural hazards for the Environmental Planning Department related to planning and permit application submissions. Additionally, this new department will be responsible for establishing and updating flood line mapping for watercourses within the watershed to provide more accurate regulation mapping to help guide safe development, and to help make our communities safer.



**ENGINEERING SERVICES
FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES
TOTAL \$127,263**





2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Established Engineering Services Department in July 2023 with the hiring of a Professional Engineer.
- Provided technical support to assist the Environmental Planning Department with the review of natural hazards.
- Assisted Flood Forecasting and Warning Department with monitoring activities.
- Expanded GSCA's network of expertise by connecting with engineering staff across the province.
- Initialized the process to update flood line mapping in flood prone areas and flood damage centres.

2024 FOCUS

- Provide technical support for natural hazard review for the Environmental Planning Department.
- Work with the Flood Forecasting and Warning Department to calibrate and correlate flood line models to observed flooding events.
- Prepare internal flood line models for watercourses within the GSCA watershed and to update flood line regulation mapping as necessary.
- Assist the Flood Forecasting Duty Officer.
- Consult with Municipal Staff regarding the development of GSCA Engineering Standards.

INTERESTING FACTS

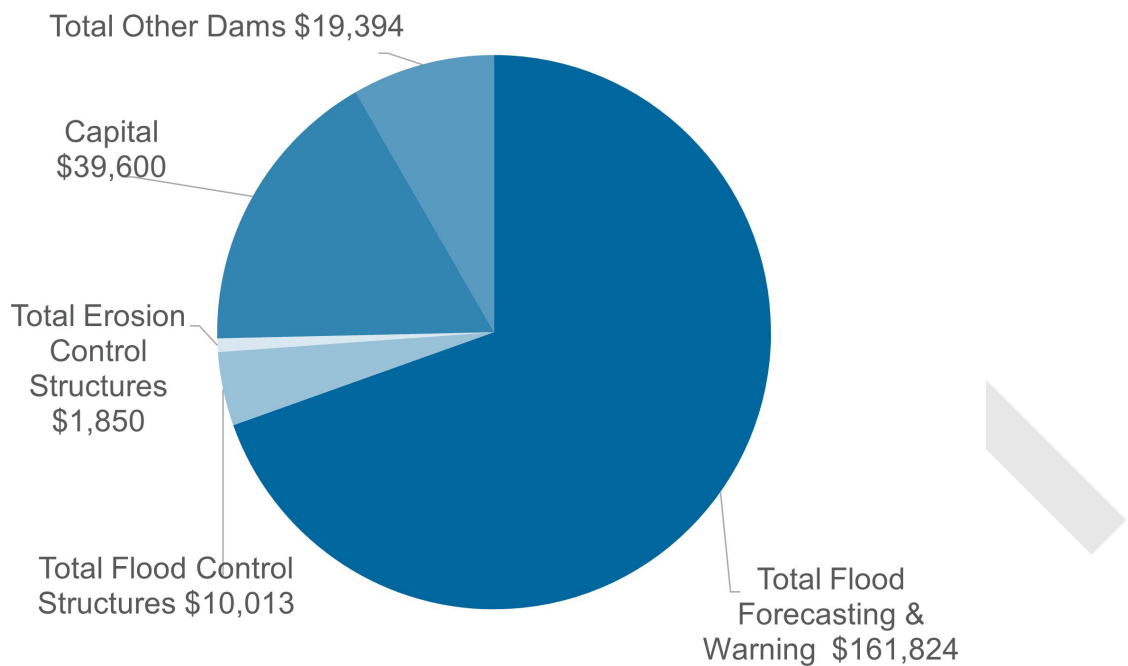
- There are currently nine (9) identified flood damage centres within the GSCA watershed with historic flood line mapping. Flood modelling in these areas should be updated every 10 years and they are due for updating.



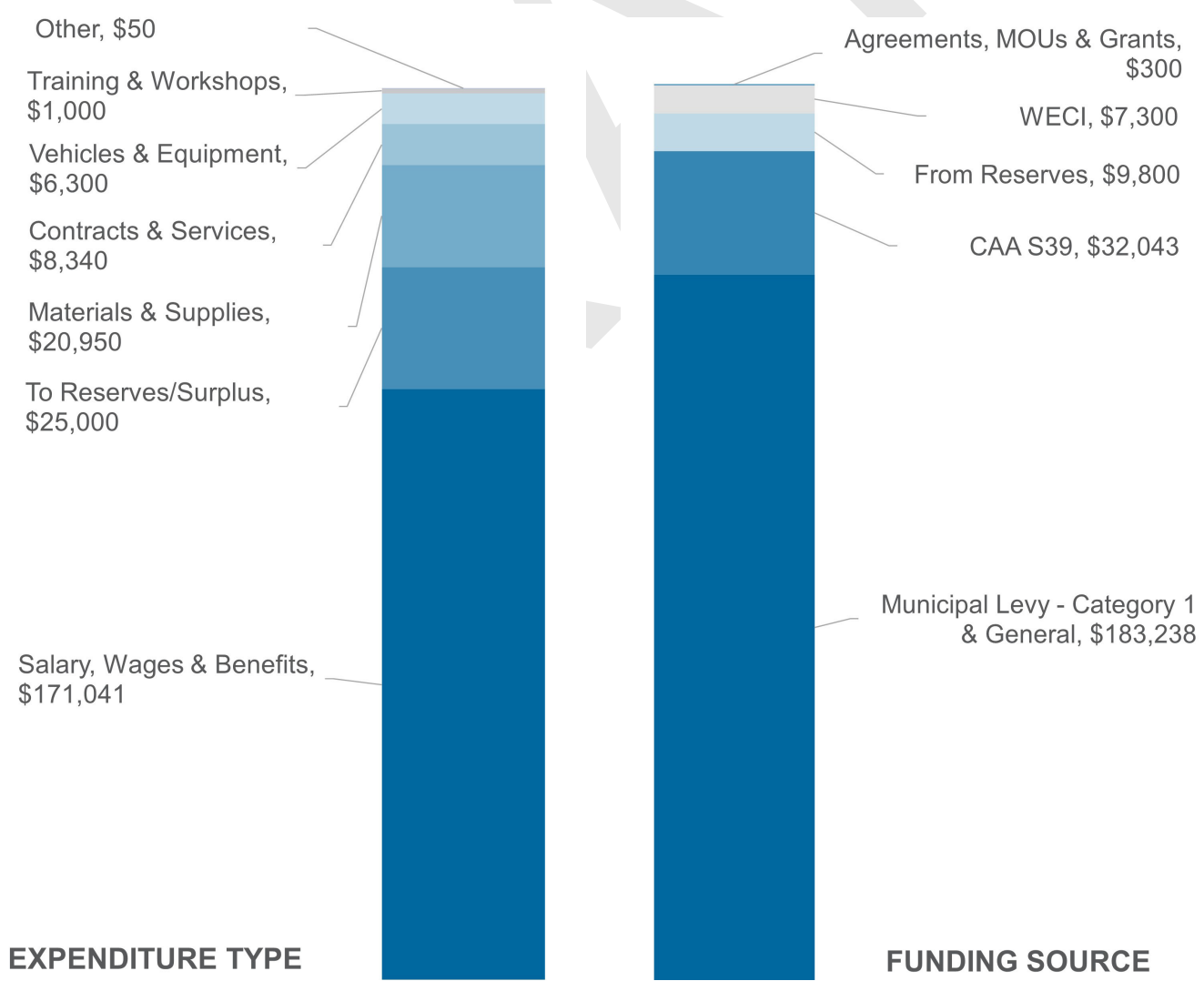
WATER MANAGEMENT

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.

WATER MANAGEMENT



FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES
TOTAL \$232,681





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.





2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Maintained 8 precipitation gauges and 7 snow survey sites.
- Added 1 new water level gauge and maintained 17 existing water level gauges.
- Worked continuously to inform municipal partners and community members of extreme rainfall events and high flow conditions.
- Continued to partner with volunteers to maintain a network of 18 online weather stations (Wunderground Network).
- Recruited 5 new CoCoRaHS rain gauge volunteers, totaling 25 active participants.
- Continued to fine-tune snow melt to flow models to better predict spring runoff conditions.
- Accessed 122 on-line, real-time rain gauges, which increased from 115 in 2022.

2024 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.

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.



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.

2023 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 log installs, log removals, plugs, and beaver debris elimination.
- Received 50% Provincial funding for the replacement of logs at the Clendenan Dam.

2024 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.
- Complete Ice Management and Erosion Control Structure Operational Plans.

INTERESTING FACTS

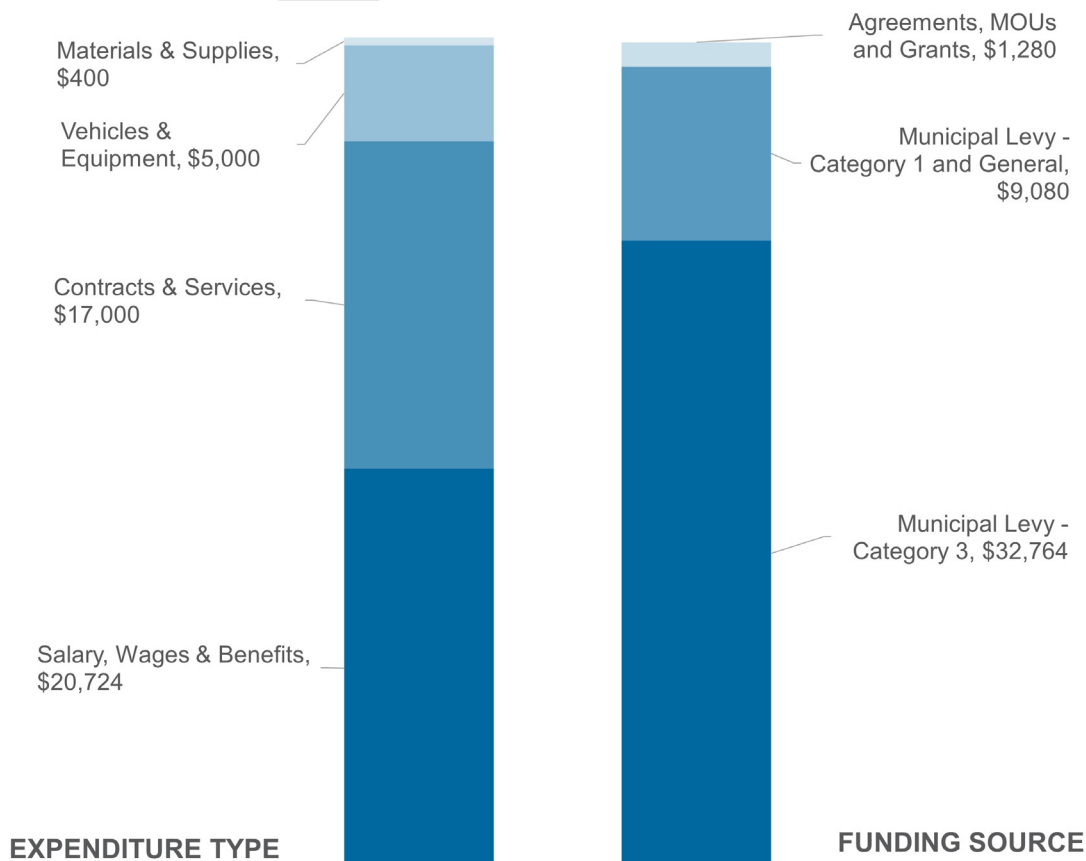
- Most of GSCA's dams are drawn down for the winter to prepare for the spring freshet.
- Clendenan Dam is designed to capture sheet ice to reduce ice jamming and flooding in Clarksburg.
- GSCA has real-time water level gauges at three dams, including Rankin Dam, Skinner's Marsh Dam, and the Owen Sound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



WATER QUALITY MONITORING & WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES

TOTAL \$43,124





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.





2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Sampled 35 water sites 8 times and sampled 15 benthic sites to support GSCA's Watershed Report Card evaluations.
- Completed Watershed Report Cards for all our larger watersheds (5 year review).
- Expanded our online benthic identification training to staff of all the Conservation Authorities.

2024 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.

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).



STEWARDSHIP

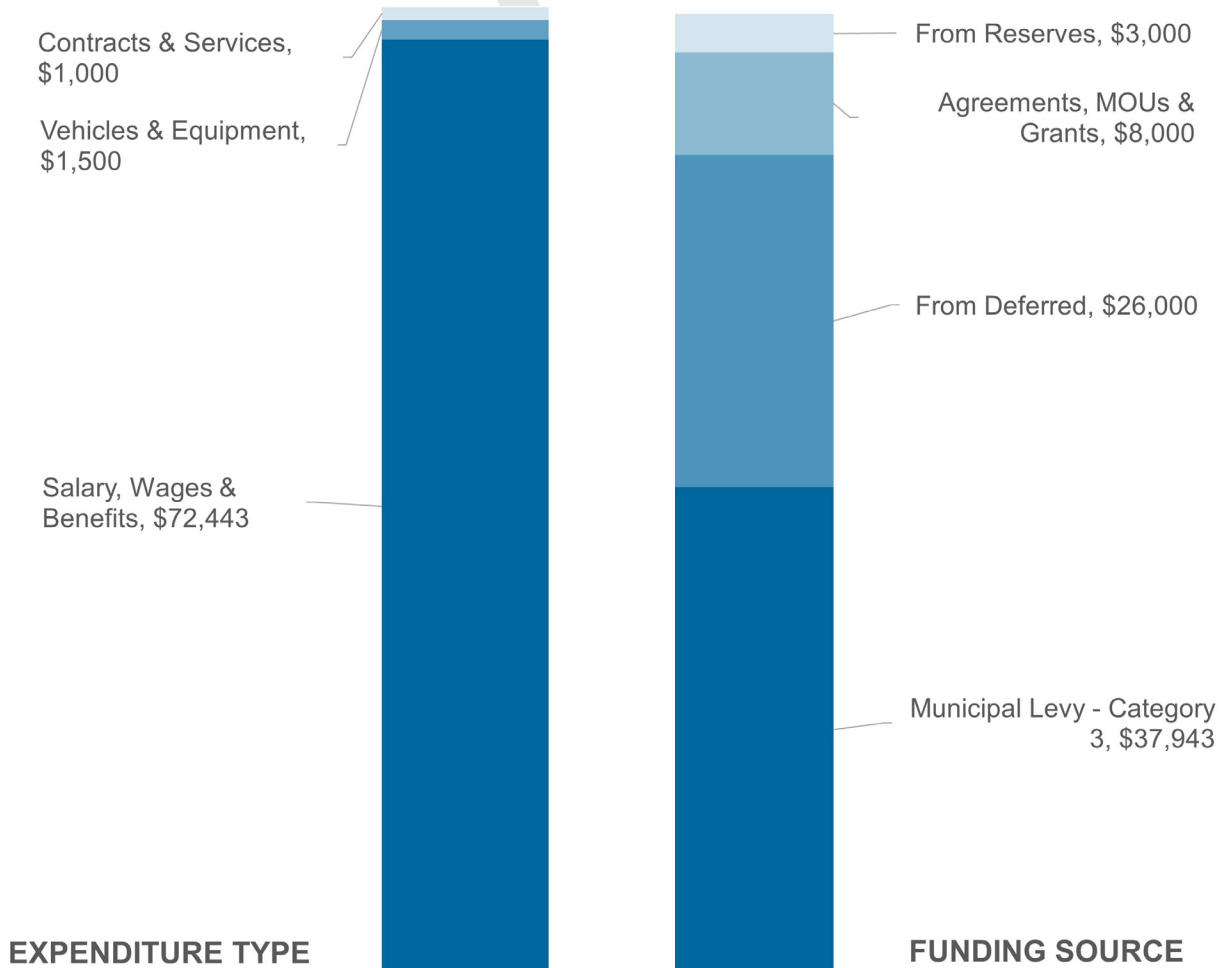
The focus of the Stewardship program is to inspire and enable others to become stewards of their land by making environmentally conscious decisions and implementing projects that will provide positive environmental benefits.

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 5 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 \$74,943





2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Investigated how to mitigate erosion control project such as cover crops, water buffers (trees or grassed), and other Best Management Practices (BMPs) using Healthy Lake Huron (HLH) phase II funding.
- Worked with drainage contractors and drainage superintendents to further the use of BMPs.
- Conducted a survey of beef producers within the GSCA watershed to better understand their challenges and ways to support them, such as promoting maintaining permanent cover on fields to help reduce erosion and nutrient loss.
- Worked with staff from OMAFRA to investigate the possibility of including on-ground BMPs into AgriSuite software.
- Completed three Agricultural Advisory Committee meetings with members of the Board of Directors and local leaders within the Agricultural sector.
- Represented GSCA on the Board of Directors for Stewardship Grey-Bruce.
- Developed Invasive Species Fact Sheets to inform the public about their impacts as well as actions that can be taken.
- Created an online application form for the public to apply for stewardship project funding.
- Developed Landowner/Producer Champion website content to highlight the positive actions being undertaken by members of the agricultural community to improve watershed health.



2024 FOCUS

- Seek external funding to support rural landowners to install and complete stewardship projects on their properties.
- Continue to build momentum with GSCA's Agricultural Advisory Committee to further relationships with the agricultural community and share knowledge.
- Continue building relationships with land drainage contractors, municipal officials, engineers, landowners, and experts in other watershed regions.
- Gain insight into challenges, encounters, and opportunities for success through diverse BMPs and projects.
- Collaborate with HLH to deliver educational outreach and key messaging regarding potential erodible landscapes to individuals and groups within the watershed.
- Continue to provide resources, support, and education to landowners about invasive species management and manage areas of concern on GSCA lands.

INTERESTING FACTS

In 2023, staff:

- Successfully acquired cover crop funding that facilitated approximately 81 hectares (200 acres) of soil coverage on vulnerable landscapes.
- Worked with 15 producers to develop and implement BMPs and acquire offset funding to support BMPs infrastructure costs.
- Promoted stewardship programs to approximately 600 people at outreach events.

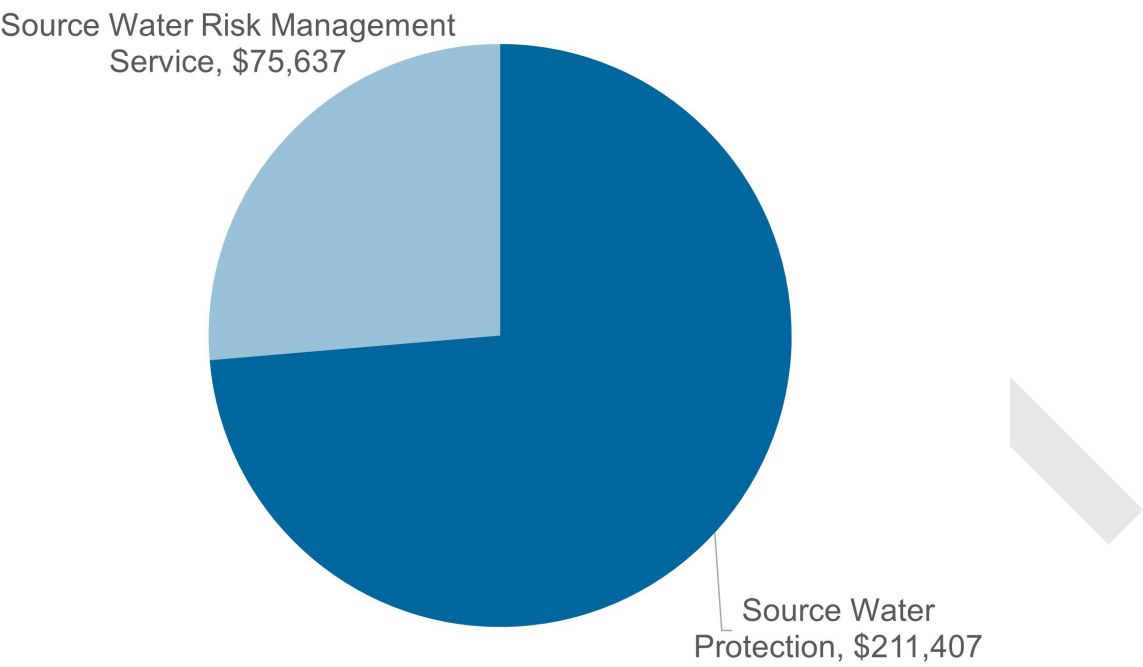


DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION

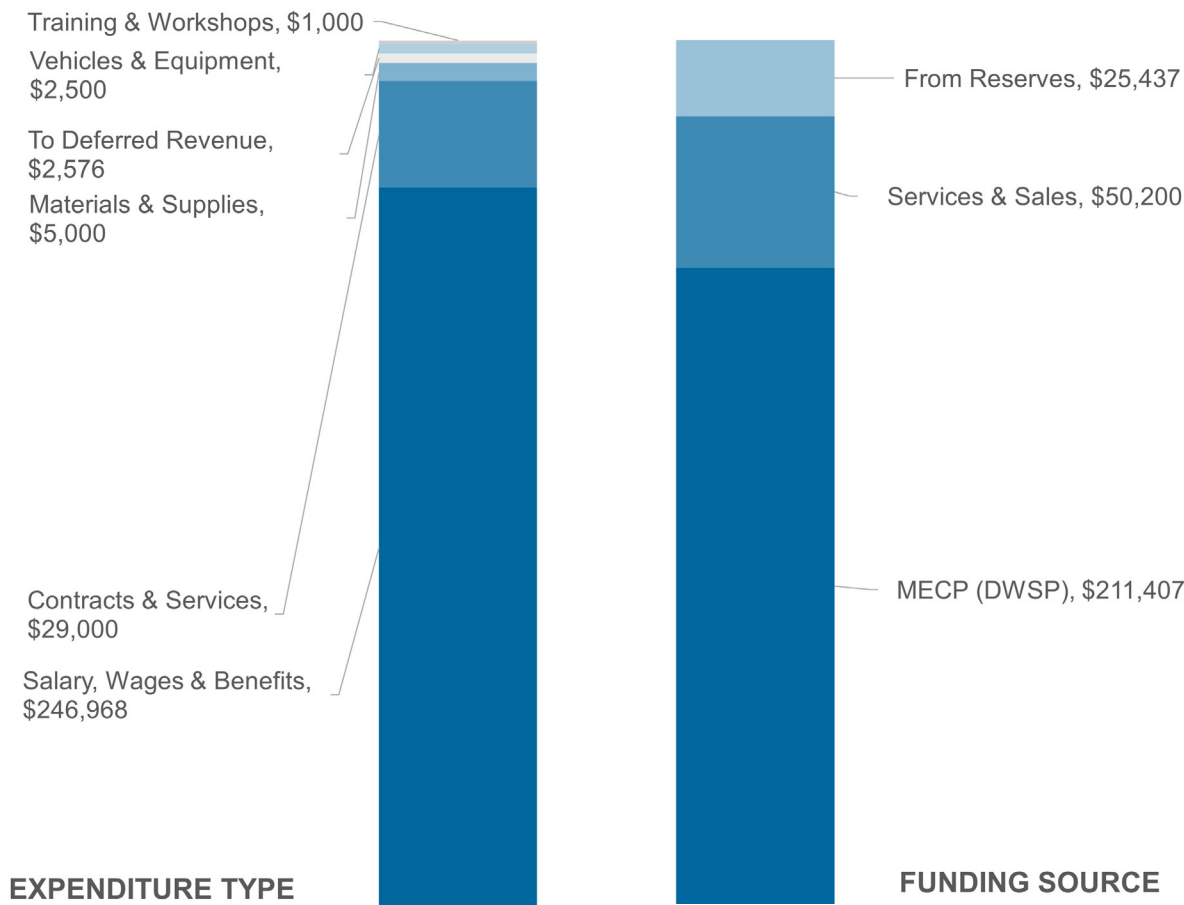
Water is critical to all aspects of life and it is important to ensure there is a safe and reliable source of water for all uses – now and in the future. Drinking Water Source Protection is a resource planning process that aims to keep sources of drinking water safe and usable.

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. 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 either budget.

DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION



FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES
TOTAL \$287,044





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.

2023 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.
- Appointed and trained 6 new/renewed Source Protection Committee Members (out of a 12-person Committee).
- Currently working with affected landowners and municipalities on implementing Source Protection Plan amendments, namely Salt Management Plans and revised fuel storage requirements.



2024 FOCUS

- Secure source water protection program funding extensions from the Province for the next 2 fiscal years (2024-2026).
- 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/updated 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 165 Risk Management Plans were established in the Source Protection Region (since July 2016) and 245 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 fiscal years (April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2024).



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.

2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Over 50 Risk Management Plans were renewed (5-year renewal cycle), 5 new Risk Management Plans negotiated, and 60 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 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.



2024 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.

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.



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