



**Grey Sauble**  
CONSERVATION

# 2027 | DRAFT BUDGET COMPANION REPORT







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ADMINISTRATION  
SERVICES | 3.9 FTEs  
OPERATING \$849,115  
CAPITAL \$247,349

INFORMATION  
SERVICES | 4.5 FTEs  
OPERATING \$564,569  
CAPITAL \$29,800

CONSERVATION  
LANDS | 9 FTEs  
OPERATING \$1,069,476  
CAPITAL \$264,000

DRINKING WATER  
PROTECTION | 2.2 FTEs  
OPERATING \$328,842

PLANNING &  
PERMITS | 5.5 FTEs  
OPERATING \$634,495

FORESTRY | 2 FTEs  
OPERATING \$397,900

WATER & ENGINEERING  
SERVICES  
| 1.5 FTEs  
OPERATING \$181,029  
CAPITAL \$25,000

WATER QUALITY  
| .25 FTEs  
OPERATING \$52,197

STEWARDSHIP  
| 1 FTE  
OPERATING \$202,713

# 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 2025 - 2035 STRATEGIC PLAN IDENTIFIES SEVERAL GOALS THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE REALIZATION OF GSCA'S VISION.



Goal 1: Achieve Organizational Excellence



Goal 2: Effectively Monitor and Manage the Risk of Natural Hazards



Goal 3: Enhance GSCA Land Management



Goal 4: Improve Watershed Health



Goal 5: Strengthen Environmental Education and Communication



# VISION

A vibrant watershed, supported by GSCA, where ecosystems thrive, and communities are healthy safe and prosperous.

# MISSION

To champion a healthy and safe watershed through innovative conservation efforts, sound planning and inspiring education initiatives, now and in the future.







# 2027 BUDGET SUMMARY

Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSCA) continues to deliver watershed management, environmental stewardship, and community services through a strong foundation of partnerships, fiscal responsibility, and strategic planning. Our dedicated staff work closely with municipalities, provincial agencies, community organizations, landowners, donors, volunteers, and residents to support healthy watersheds, resilient communities, and sustainable natural resources.

The proposed 2027 budget reflects both continuity and transition. GSCA remains focused on implementing the priorities identified in its Strategic Plan through annual work planning, asset management, financial sustainability initiatives, service delivery improvements, and investments in conservation lands and infrastructure. Strong community engagement continues to be a hallmark of our organization and help to connect people with the natural environment. These efforts are supported by strong partnerships and collaborative relationships that extend across our watershed and contribute directly to the success of our natural hazard, source protection, conservation, recreation, education, and stewardship programs.

GSCA remains committed to responsible financial management and maintaining a balanced funding model. Municipal levies continue to support core conservation authority services, while 50 percent of revenues are generated through planning and permit services, forestry operations, conservation area fees, land management contracts, stewardship agreements, education programs, and other cost-recovery services. The proposed 2027 operating budget totals approximately \$4.28 million and reflects ongoing investments in watershed monitoring, flood forecasting, environmental planning, stewardship, conservation lands, source water protection, communications, education, and corporate services. Total operating budget reflects a 0.80 percent increase over 2026.

The proposed 2027 capital budget totals \$566,149 and includes investments in flood forecasting infrastructure, conservation area improvements, trail development, fleet and equipment replacement, information technology renewal, and ongoing Administration Centre financing commitments. Key projects include improvements to the Arboretum Trail, a structural review of the Inglis Falls Bailey Bridge, infrastructure improvements at Eugenia Falls, long term infrastructure funding, fleet replacement, and information technology investments that support operational efficiency and service delivery. 57 percent of capital budget funding is from non-levy sources, with the majority of the levy portion (77 percent) assigned to ongoing debt servicing of the Administration Centre renovations.





Total change in levy apportionment over 2026 is \$69,722 or 3.36 percent.

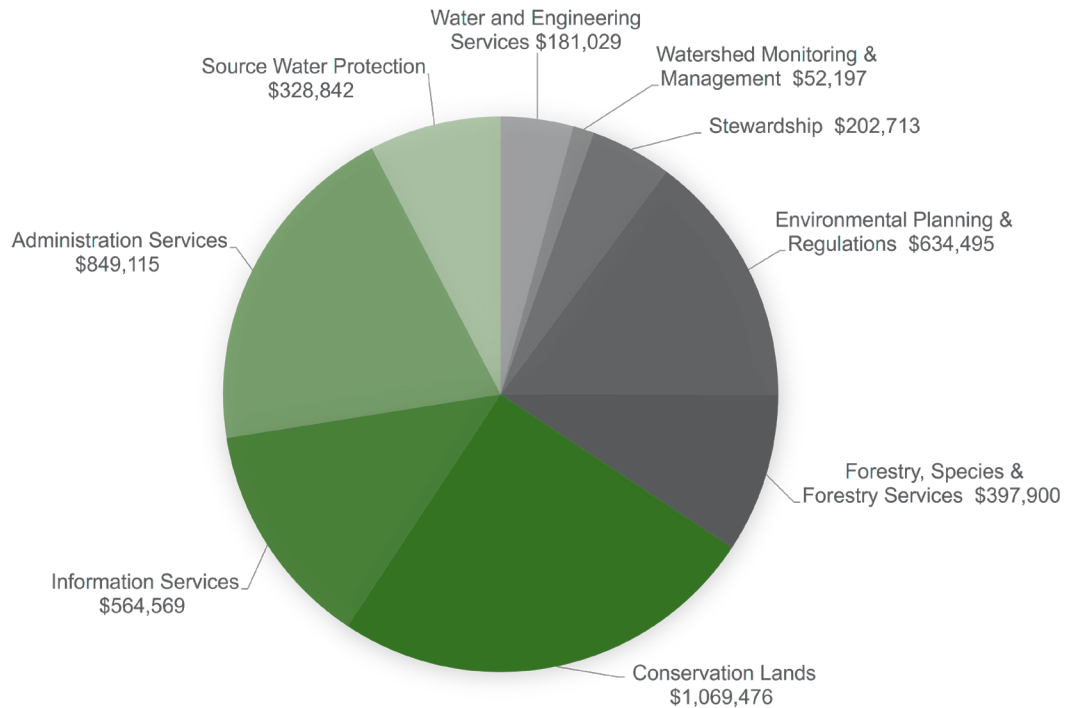
Looking ahead, 2027 will be a significant year for conservation authorities across Ontario. Proposed changes to the Conservation Authorities Act will result in the consolidation of Ontario's 36 conservation authorities into nine regional organizations effective February 1, 2027. Under the proposed model, Grey Sauble Conservation Authority will join with five neighbouring conservation authorities to form the Lake Huron Regional Conservation Authority. Governance responsibilities will transition from lower-tier municipalities to upper-tier municipalities on the noted transition date. Lower-tier participating municipalities will continue to be apportioned levy costs during 2027, with the funding model transitioning to upper-tier municipalities beginning in 2028. Throughout this period of change, GSCA is working closely with neighbouring conservation authorities, municipalities, provincial partners, and stakeholders to support a coordinated transition while maintaining uninterrupted service delivery across the watershed. GSCA is committed to playing a leadership role in transition planning and ensuring that local priorities, strong community relationships, and watershed-based decision making remain central to the future regional organization.

This budget demonstrates GSCA's ongoing commitment to balancing fiscal responsibility, service delivery, and environmental stewardship while maintaining the partnerships, community engagement, and long-term planning necessary to support healthy watersheds and resilient communities throughout the region. Through disciplined work planning, GSCA remains well positioned to meet current needs while preparing for the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

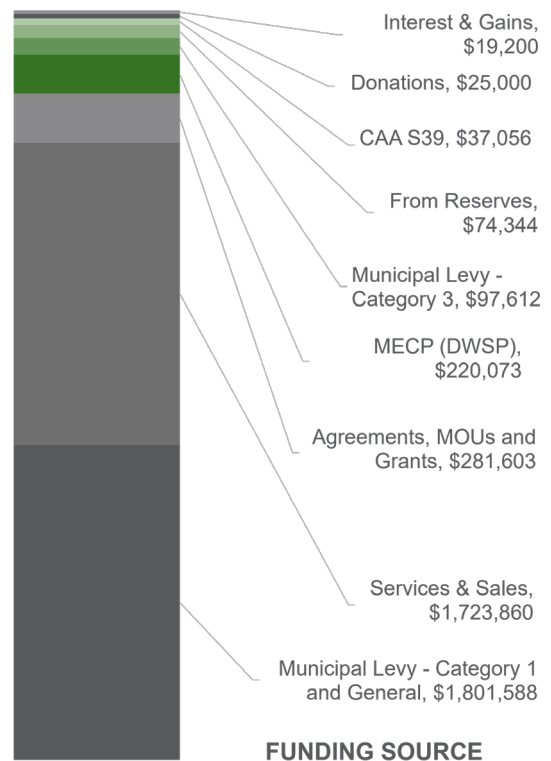
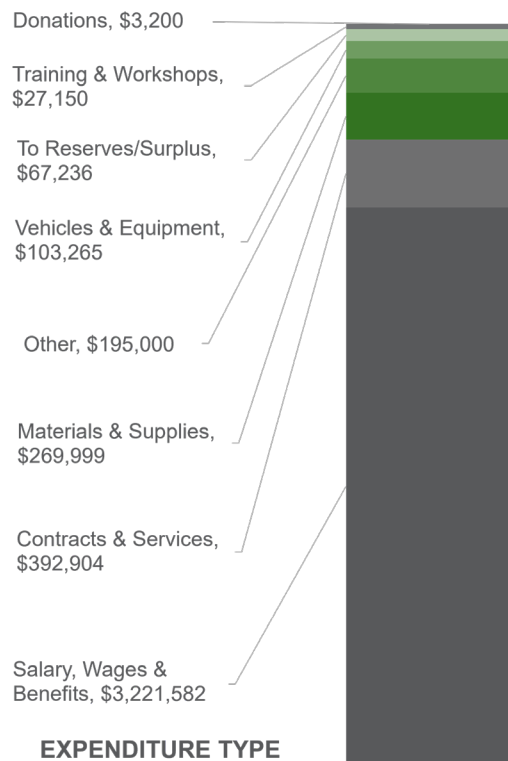


## 2027 OPERATING BUDGET BY SERVICE AREA

TOTAL BUDGET \$4,280,336



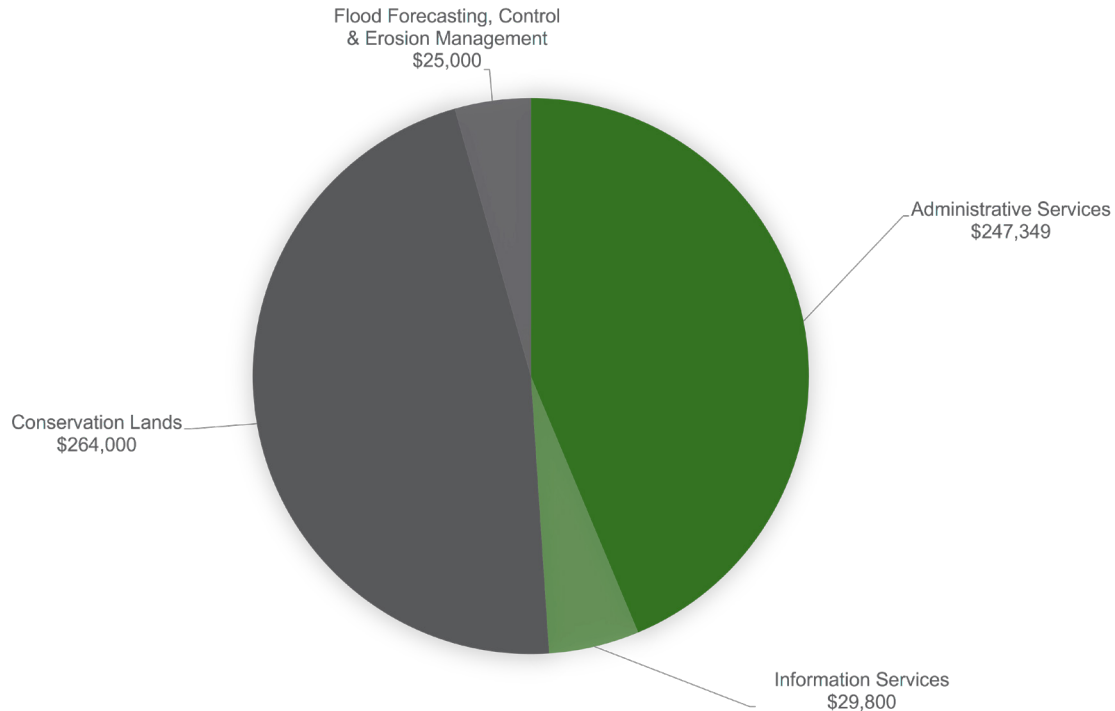
## FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES



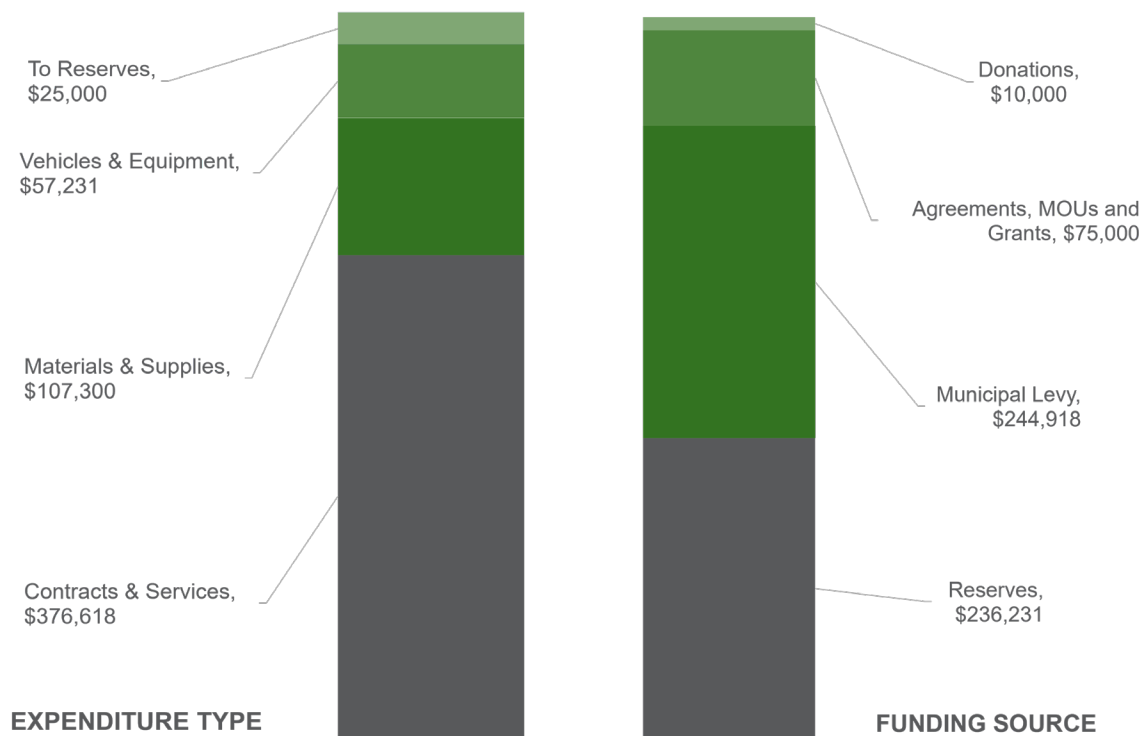


## 2027 CAPITAL BUDGET BY SERVICE AREA

TOTAL BUDGET \$566,149

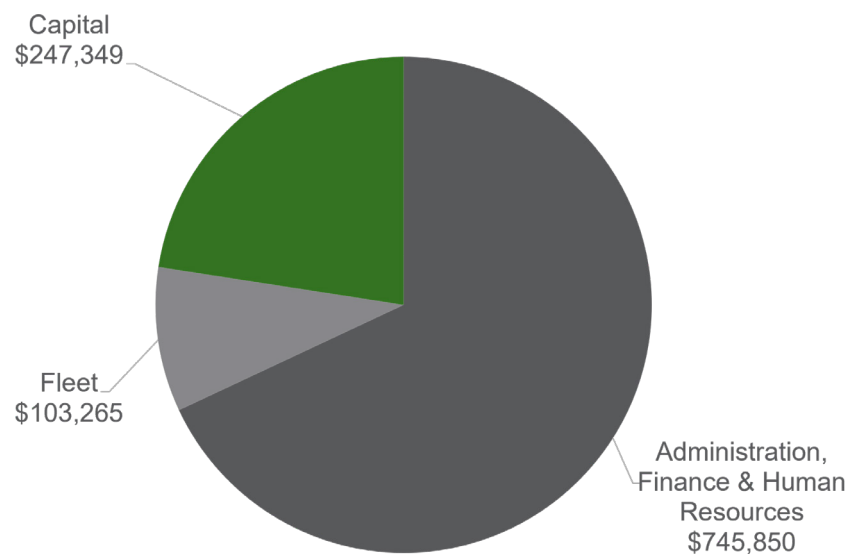


## FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES

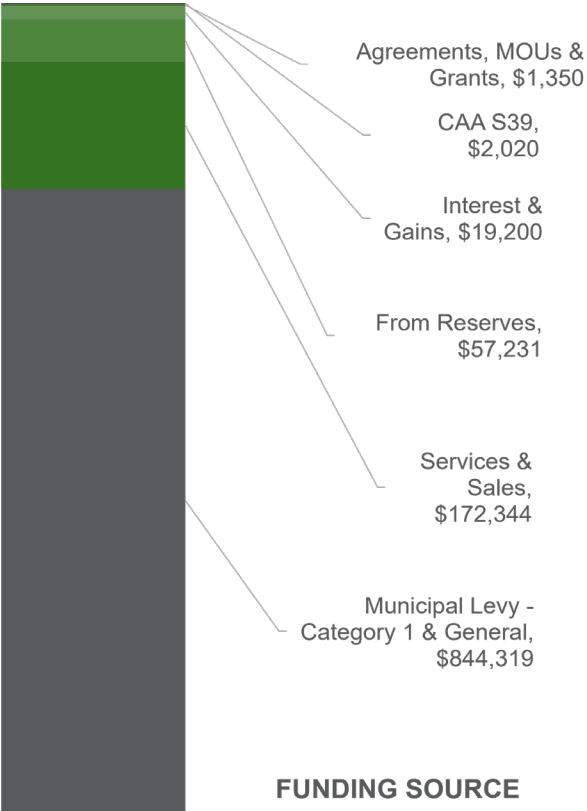
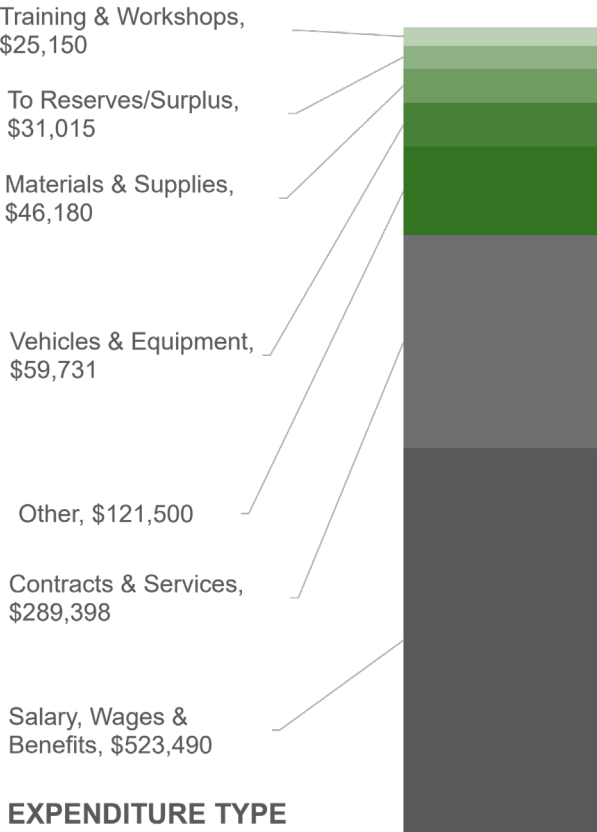




# ADMINISTRATION SERVICES



## FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES TOTAL \$1,096,464







## ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE & HUMAN RESOURCES

Administration Services provides the leadership, strategic direction, financial management, governance, human resource management, and organizational support required to deliver GSCA's programs and services. The department continues to focus on fiscal sustainability, service excellence, partnership development, staff support, and implementation of the Authority's Strategic Plan through annual work planning and continuous improvement initiatives.

The 2027 budget reflects the continued operation of core corporate services while also preparing the organization for significant sector-wide changes proposed under the Conservation Authorities Act. On February 1, 2027, GSCA will transition into the Lake Huron Regional Conservation Authority as part of the provincial consolidation of conservation authorities. Throughout 2027, Administration Services will play a key role in supporting transition planning, coordinating with neighbouring conservation authorities and municipal partners, and ensuring continuity of service delivery while maintaining focus on local watershed priorities and community relationships.

The 2027 Administration, Finance & Human Resources budget includes modest increases primarily associated with salaries, contracts, services, training, and corporate operating costs. These investments support ongoing governance requirements, strategic planning, employee development, and organizational readiness as GSCA prepares for future legislative and governance changes. Municipal levy funding has increased to support these corporate functions, while revenues from services and sales are projected to be lower than in 2026 due to a reduced draw from Environmental Planning and Regulations.





# FLEET & EQUIPMENT MANAGEMENT

The Fleet & Equipment Management program is responsible for the administration, maintenance, replacement planning, and operation of GSCA's fleet and equipment assets. Revenue within this program is generated through internal chargebacks to operating departments based on vehicle and equipment usage, ensuring that fleet costs are distributed across the programs that utilize these resources.

The 2027 budget reflects a modest increase in fleet-related operating costs, including vehicle maintenance, fuel, and materials, while revenues from internal chargebacks are projected to increase slightly compared to 2026. The resulting contribution to the fleet reserve supports GSCA's long-term vehicle and equipment replacement strategy and helps ensure the organization can maintain reliable and efficient equipment to support field operations across the watershed. A capital allocation has also been included in 2027 for replacement of a pickup truck, consistent with the Authority's asset management and lifecycle replacement planning objectives.





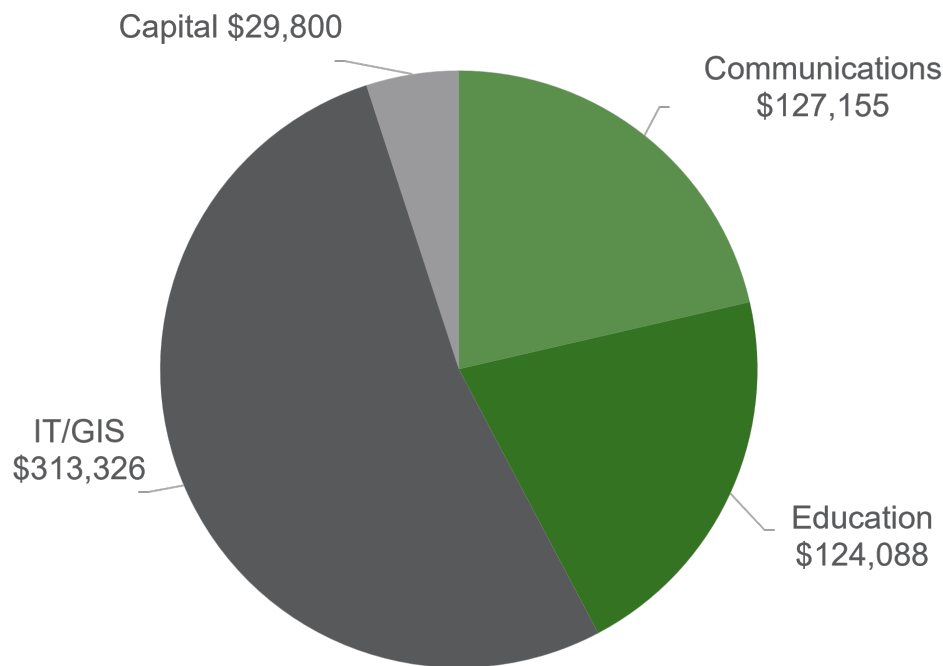
## INFORMATION SERVICES

Information Services oversees the management, delivery, security, communication, and stewardship of information assets across the organization. The service area supports both internal operations and public-facing programs through technology, data management, communications, education, and digital service delivery. Information Services plays a critical role in supporting informed decision-making, regulatory compliance, public engagement, organizational efficiency, and implementation of GSCA's Strategic Plan. The service area consists of three core departments: Geographic Information Systems (GIS) & Information Technology, Communications, and Environmental Education.

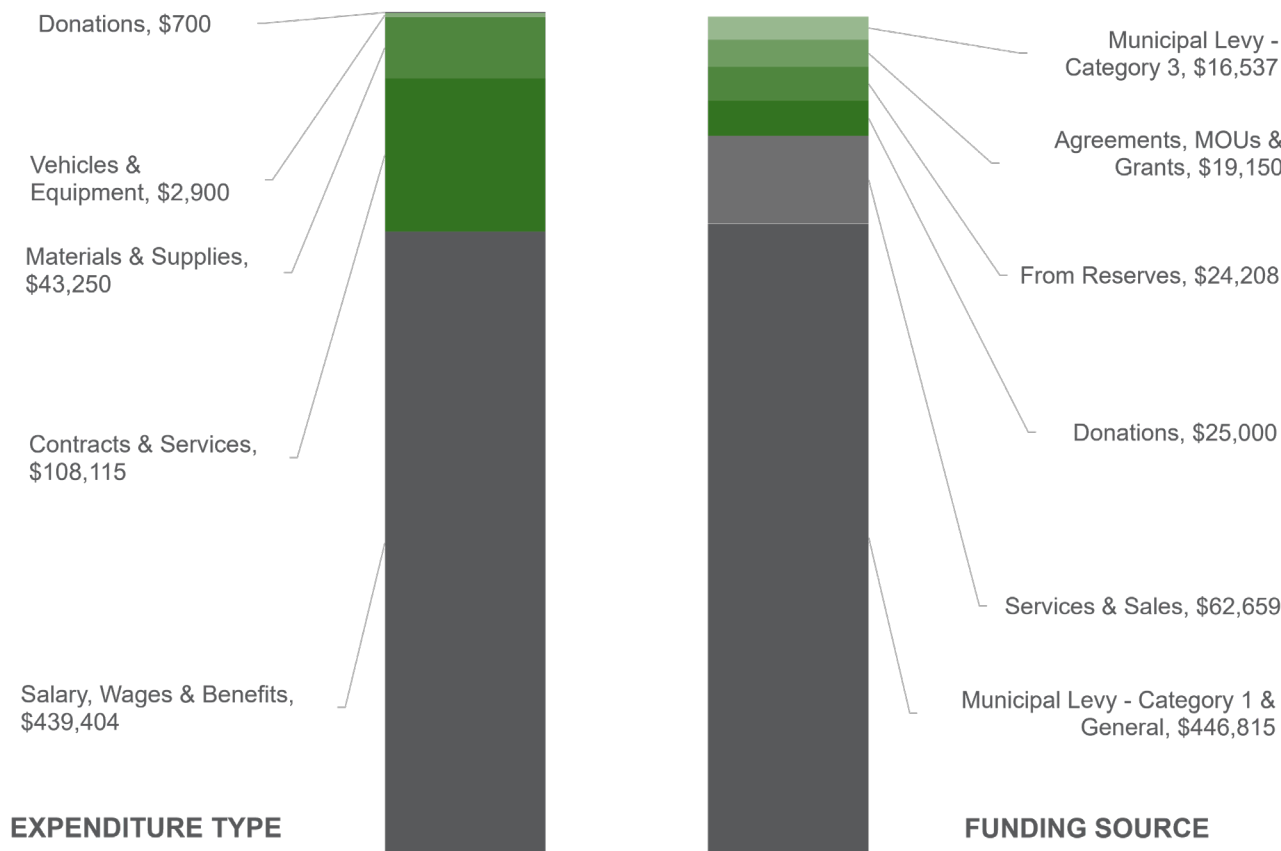
As GSCA prepares for significant changes proposed under the Conservation Authorities Act, Information Services will play an increasingly important role in supporting organizational transition activities, information management, data integration, communications planning, and stakeholder engagement. These functions will help ensure a coordinated approach to future regional service delivery while maintaining strong local connections and public accessibility throughout the transition to the Lake Huron Regional Conservation Authority.



INFORMATION SERVICES



FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES  
TOTAL \$594,369







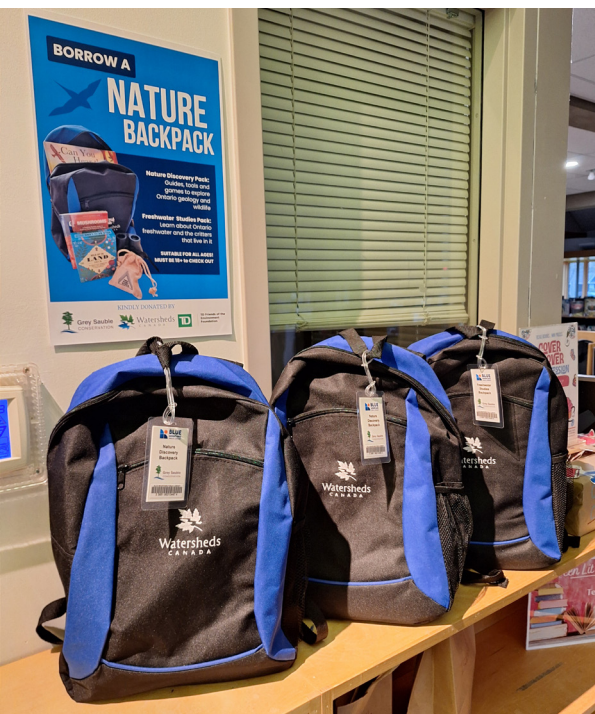
# GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS) & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

GIS and Information Technology supports the organization's information management systems, mapping services, digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, records management, hardware, software, and technical support requirements. These services support all conservation authority programs, including watershed management, planning and regulations, forestry, stewardship, conservation lands, and corporate services. The 2027 budget includes ongoing investments in technology infrastructure, software licensing, information management, and cybersecurity, as well as capital investments in workstation replacement and GIS equipment renewal to support operational efficiency and service excellence.

# COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications program supports public awareness, stakeholder engagement, community outreach, branding, and organizational transparency. Through a variety of digital and traditional communication channels, the program promotes conservation authority programs, conservation areas, stewardship initiatives, educational opportunities, and partnership activities. The 2027 budget reflects continued investment in community engagement and communications services to ensure residents, municipal partners, stakeholders, and visitors remain informed about GSCA's programs, projects, strategic priorities, and upcoming organizational changes.





# ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Environmental Education provides hands-on learning opportunities that foster environmental awareness, stewardship, and appreciation for local natural resources. Programs are delivered through schools, community partners, conservation areas, camps, and special events, helping connect people of all ages to the watershed and the natural environment. The 2027 budget reflects continued support for educational programming through grants, sponsorships, donations, user fees, and municipal contributions, while maintaining a strong focus on community engagement and environmental stewardship. The department continues to rely on partnerships, sponsors, volunteers, and community organizations to enhance program delivery and expand outreach opportunities throughout the watershed.







# FORESTRY

GSCA's Forestry Services program sustainably manages forest resources on conservation authority lands while providing professional forestry services, tree planting programs, forest management expertise, and stewardship support to private landowners, municipalities, and partners throughout the watershed. These programs contribute to healthier forests, improved wildlife habitat, enhanced water quality, increased carbon storage, reduced soil erosion, and greater resilience to the impacts of climate change and severe weather events. Through active forest management and ongoing stewardship initiatives, GSCA helps ensure that forests continue to provide important environmental, economic, and social benefits across the region.

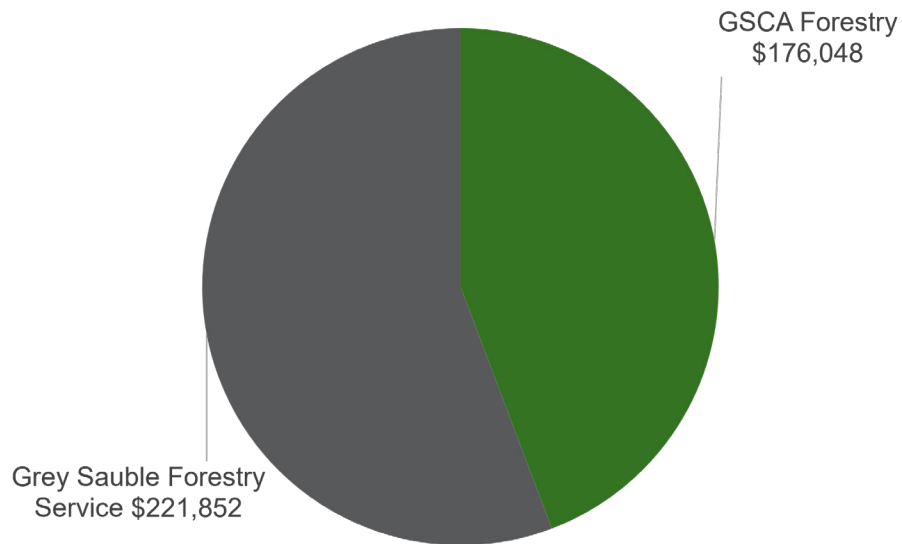
Forestry Services continues to be delivered through strong partnerships with landowners, municipalities, conservation partners, community organizations, and funding agencies. These partnerships support tree planting, habitat restoration, species-at-risk initiatives, forest management activities, and broader watershed health objectives. Community interest in stewardship and environmental sustainability remains strong, contributing to ongoing participation in GSCA's forestry and habitat enhancement programs.

The Forestry Services program consists of two primary areas: GSCA Forestry and the Grey Sauble Forestry Service. The GSCA Forestry program supports forest management activities on conservation authority properties, species-at-risk initiatives, habitat enhancement projects, stewardship programming, and technical assistance to landowners. The 2027 budget reflects modest increases associated with salaries and program delivery costs while continuing to leverage service revenues and reserve funding to support operations.

The Grey Sauble Forestry Service provides seedling and landscape stock, planting services, technical assistance, and forestry management expertise to private landowners and partners throughout the watershed. The 2027 budget reflects continued demand for forestry services and tree planting programs, supported primarily through agreements, grants, and user-fee revenues. These programs play an important role in supporting watershed health, increasing forest cover, improving biodiversity, and advancing local and regional environmental objectives.

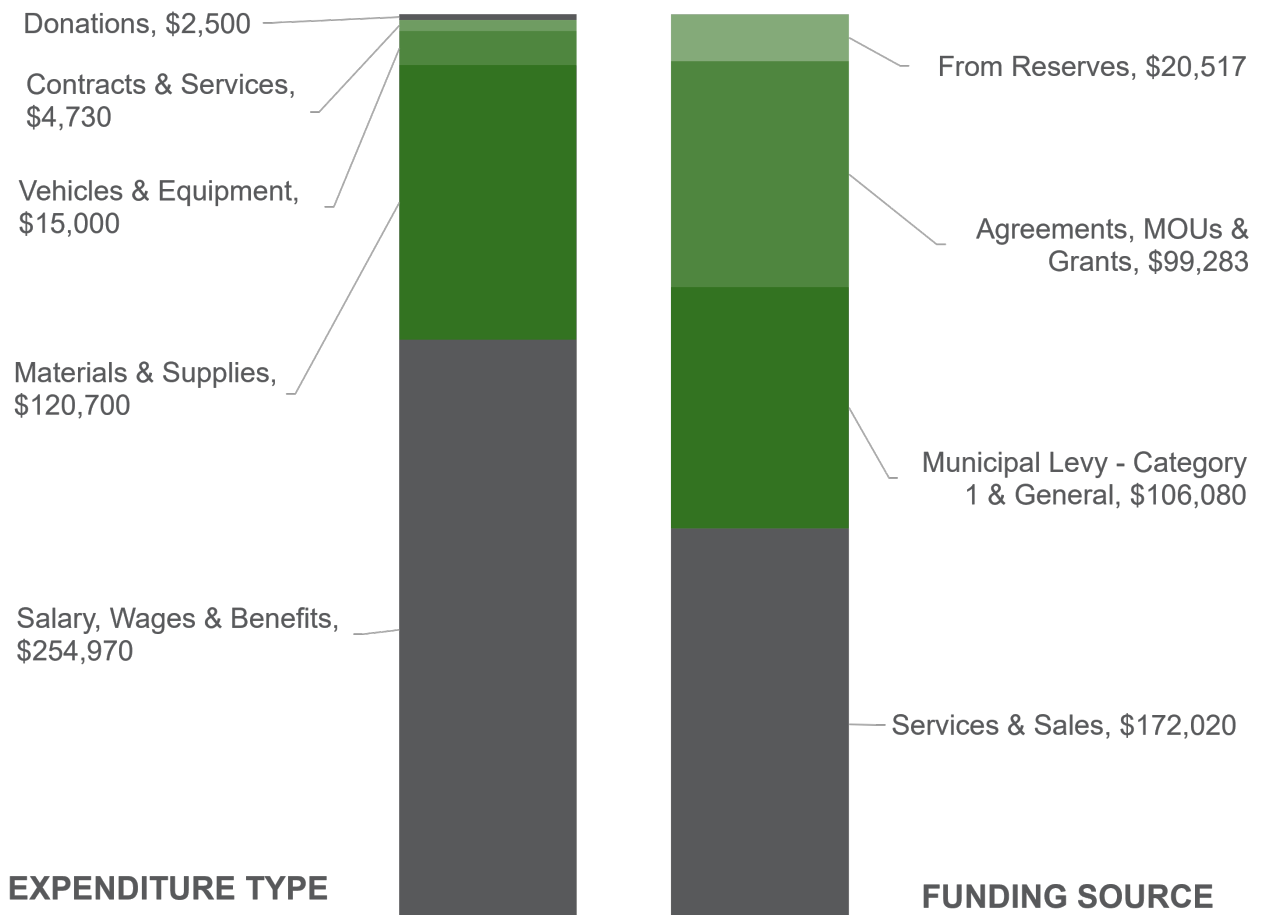


## FORESTRY



## FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES

TOTAL \$397,900







# CONSERVATION LANDS

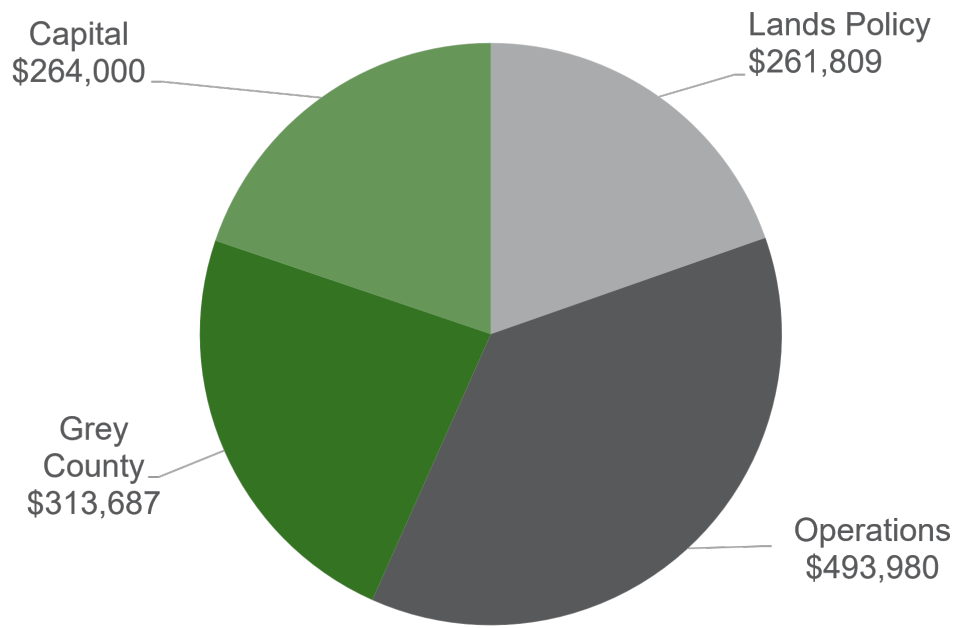
GSCA has been protecting and managing the natural landscapes of Grey and Bruce Counties for nearly seven decades through land acquisition, conservation stewardship, and sustainable resource management. Today, GSCA manages more than 11,000 hectares of land and over 150 kilometres of trails that provide significant environmental, recreational, economic, and social benefits to residents and visitors. These lands help protect water resources, reduce the impacts of flooding and drought, store carbon, support biodiversity, provide wildlife habitat, and offer opportunities for outdoor recreation, tourism, and environmental education. The value of these ecosystem services continues to demonstrate the important role conservation lands play in supporting healthy and resilient communities.



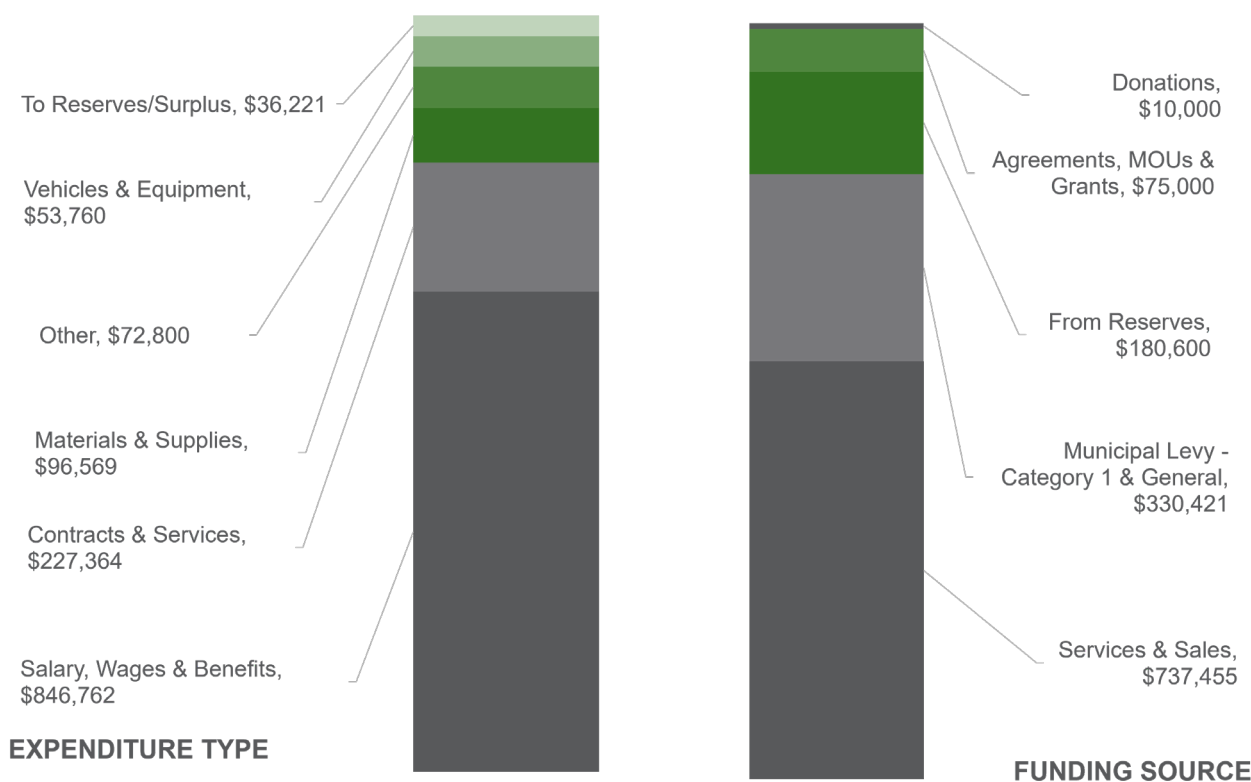
The Conservation Lands program encompasses the management of conservation areas, nature preserves, management areas, trails, recreational facilities, and associated infrastructure across the watershed. Through ongoing investment, strategic planning, and active land stewardship, GSCA works to ensure these lands remain accessible, environmentally sustainable, and responsive to the needs of residents and visitors. The program also supports numerous partnerships with municipalities, community organizations, volunteers, donors, and user groups, that help enhance recreational opportunities and conservation outcomes across the region.



CONSERVATION LANDS



FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES  
TOTAL \$1,333,476







# GSCA LANDS, POLICY & STRATEGY

Conservation Lands Policy & Strategy provides leadership and direction for GSCA's land management activities, including strategic planning, policy development, resource management, partnership coordination, asset management, and long-term conservation planning. The department helps ensure that conservation lands are managed in a manner that balances environmental protection, recreation, public access, infrastructure needs, and long-term sustainability. The 2027 budget includes continued investment in conservation land planning and management, supported through a combination of municipal levy, conservation area revenues, and reserve funding.





# CONSERVATION LANDS OPERATIONS

Conservation Lands Operations is responsible for the day-to-day management, maintenance, and operation of GSCA's conservation areas, trails, recreational infrastructure, and related facilities. The department maintains visitor amenities, trail networks, parking facilities, signage, natural areas, and operational infrastructure while supporting public safety and visitor experience. The program also oversees the Authority's parking fee program, seasonal installation and removal of dam infrastructure, and maintenance services delivered under agreement with Grey County, including ongoing operations and upkeep of the CP Rail Trail from Owen Sound to Dundalk. Revenue generated through parking fees helps support ongoing operations and reduce reliance on municipal levy funding.

The proposed 2027 operating and capital budgets include several important investments that support the long-term sustainability of GSCA's conservation lands and infrastructure. Planned capital projects include improvements to the Arboretum Trail to provide accessible nature to the community, a structural review of the Inglis Falls Bailey Bridge, infrastructure rehabilitation at Eugenia Falls, replacement of stone fencing, signage improvements, and other asset renewal initiatives identified through ongoing capital and asset management planning. These projects will help enhance visitor experiences, improve accessibility and safety, and protect the long-term value of conservation authority assets.





# ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING & REGULATIONS

The Environmental Planning & Regulations program provides technical expertise to local municipalities to support responsible land-use planning and development throughout the watershed. The department also administers permits under Ontario Regulation 41/24 – Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits, helping ensure development occurs safely with consideration for flooding, erosion, and other natural hazards.

Planning and permit review services continue to operate largely on a cost-recovery basis, with service fees offsetting a significant portion of operating costs. The proposed 2027 budget reflects continued demand for planning and regulatory services, supporting timely reviews, technical expertise, and strong customer service for municipalities, developers, consultants, and property owners.

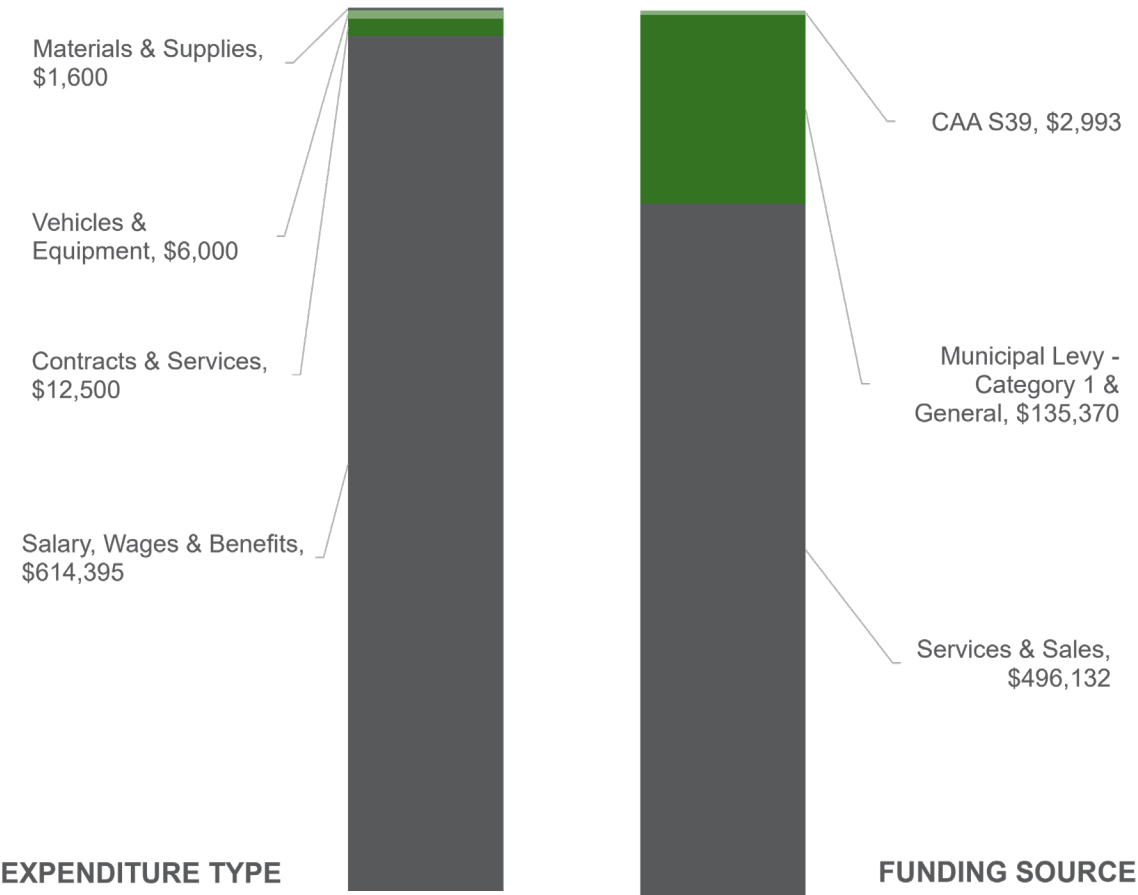
As the conservation authority sector prepares for the proposed transition to the Lake Huron Regional Conservation Authority, Environmental Planning & Regulations will continue to focus on delivering consistent, high-quality service while supporting municipal partners and ensuring watershed-based knowledge remains an important part of land-use decision-making throughout the region.





ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING & REGULATIONS

FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES  
TOTAL \$634,495







# WATER & ENGINEERING SERVICES

The Water & Engineering Services program helps protect residents, communities, and infrastructure from flooding and other natural hazards through watershed monitoring, flood forecasting, flood warning services, and water management activities. GSCA works closely with municipal partners, provincial agencies, emergency management officials, and other stakeholders to support proactive planning and informed decision-making during changing weather and watershed conditions.

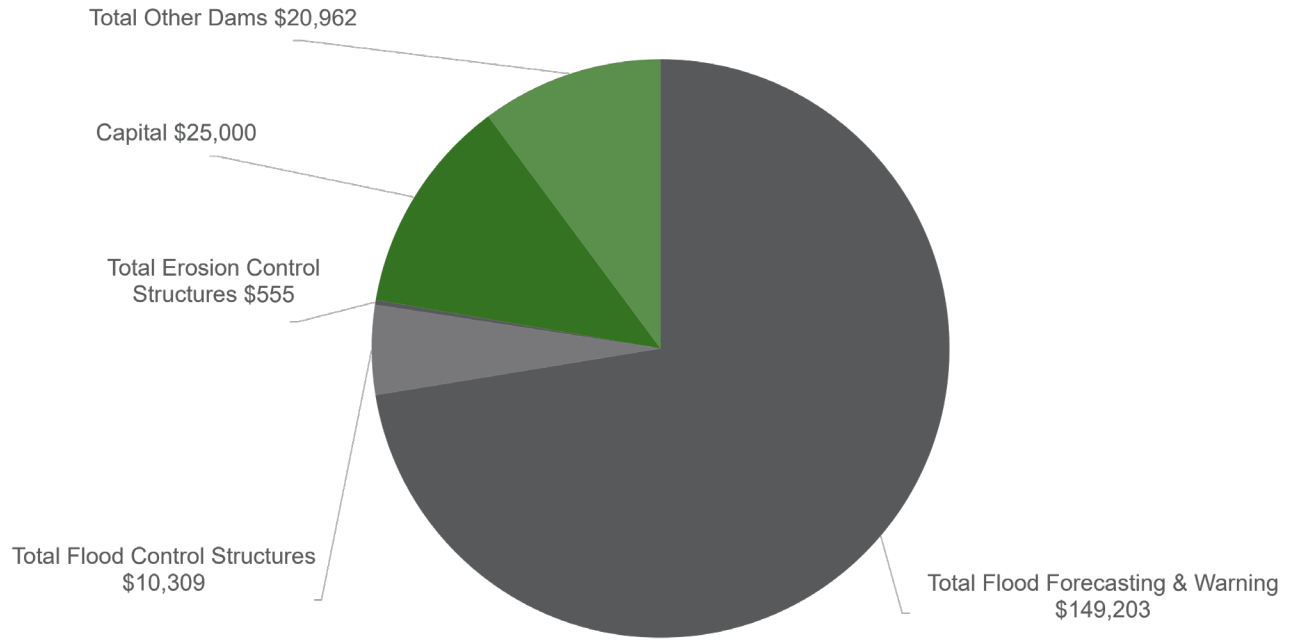
The program includes flood forecasting and warning services, watershed monitoring, and the maintenance and operation of flood and erosion control infrastructure. Through ongoing monitoring of weather, stream flows, water levels, and watershed conditions, GSCA provides early warning information that helps reduce risks to people and property while supporting community resilience.

The proposed 2027 budget includes continued investment in core water management services and supporting infrastructure, including long-term investment in flood and erosion control infrastructure reserves. These investments help ensure GSCA can continue delivering reliable flood forecasting and hazard management services throughout the watershed.

As the conservation authority sector prepares for the proposed transition to the Lake Huron Regional Conservation Authority, Water & Engineering Services will continue to focus on maintaining high levels of service, supporting municipal partners, and delivering the watershed-based science and technical expertise that communities rely upon to manage natural hazards and protect public safety.

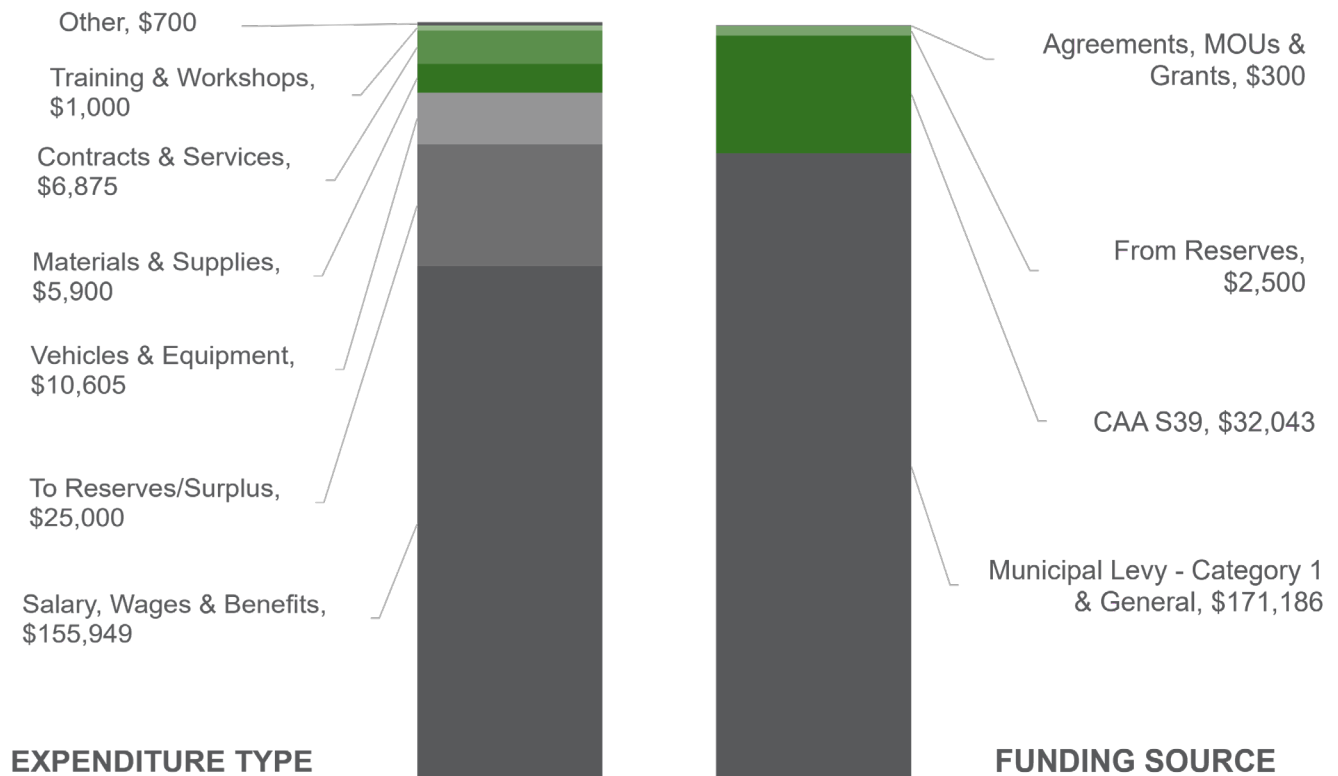


## WATER & ENGINEERING SERVICES



## FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES

TOTAL \$206,029







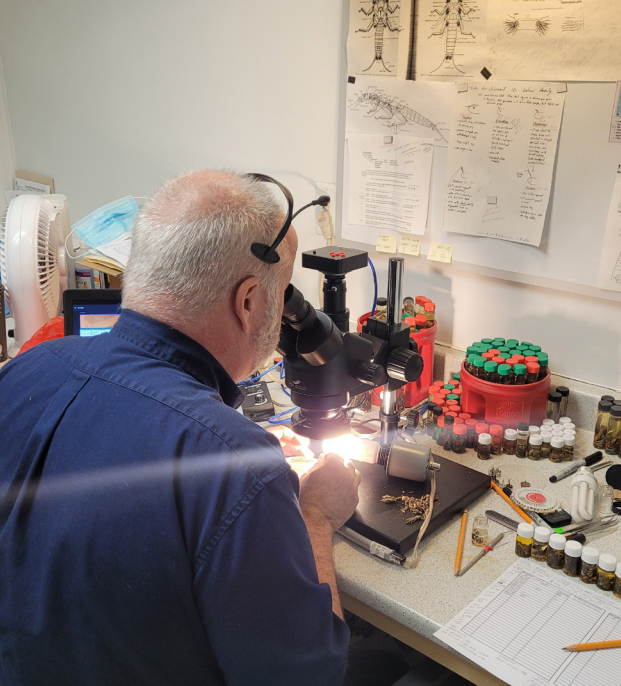
# WATERSHED MONITORING & MANAGEMENT

The Watershed Monitoring & Management program collects and analyzes long-term environmental data that supports informed decision-making, watershed planning, and environmental stewardship throughout the region. Monitoring information forms the foundation of GSCA's Watershed Report Cards and helps track changes in watershed health over time.

The program includes surface water quality monitoring, benthic macroinvertebrate ("stream bugs") assessments, groundwater monitoring, and data management activities. Information collected through these programs supports watershed management, source water protection, stewardship initiatives, municipal planning, and broader environmental research and reporting. Data collected by GSCA also contributes to regional and provincial environmental programs and helps guide decisions related to water resources, watershed health, and land management practices.

The proposed 2027 budget reflects continued investment in core monitoring activities and partnerships that support long-term environmental data collection across the watershed. Through collaboration with municipalities, provincial agencies, community partners, and other conservation organizations, GSCA continues to provide valuable scientific information that supports healthy watersheds and resilient communities.

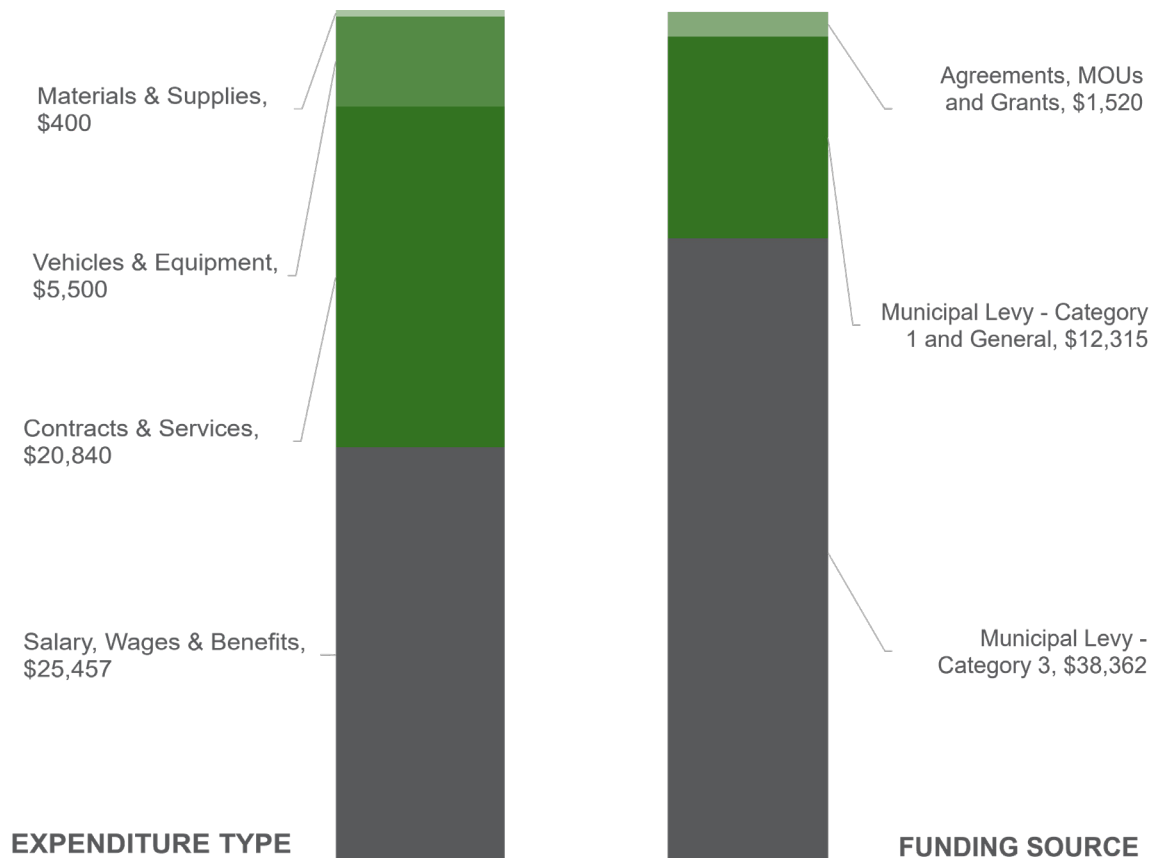




## WATER QUALITY MONITORING & WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

### FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES

TOTAL \$52,197







# STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship Program works with landowners, municipalities, agricultural producers, community organizations, Indigenous communities, funding agencies, and conservation partners to promote and implement projects that improve watershed health and environmental sustainability. The goal of the program is to inspire and support voluntary stewardship actions that protect and enhance water quality, soil health, biodiversity, climate resilience, and natural habitat throughout the watershed. The program is a key component of GSCA's commitment to community engagement and partnership-based conservation.

Stewardship staff actively secure external grant funding and partnership support to assist landowners in implementing environmental projects that provide measurable benefits to the watershed. These projects may include livestock exclusion fencing, riparian habitat enhancement, tree planting, cover crop initiatives, and other best management practices that support healthy ecosystems and sustainable land use.

Invasive species management remains an important component of the Stewardship Program. Staff continue to support monitoring, prevention, education, and management efforts related to invasive species throughout the watershed, including Phragmites and Wild Chervil.

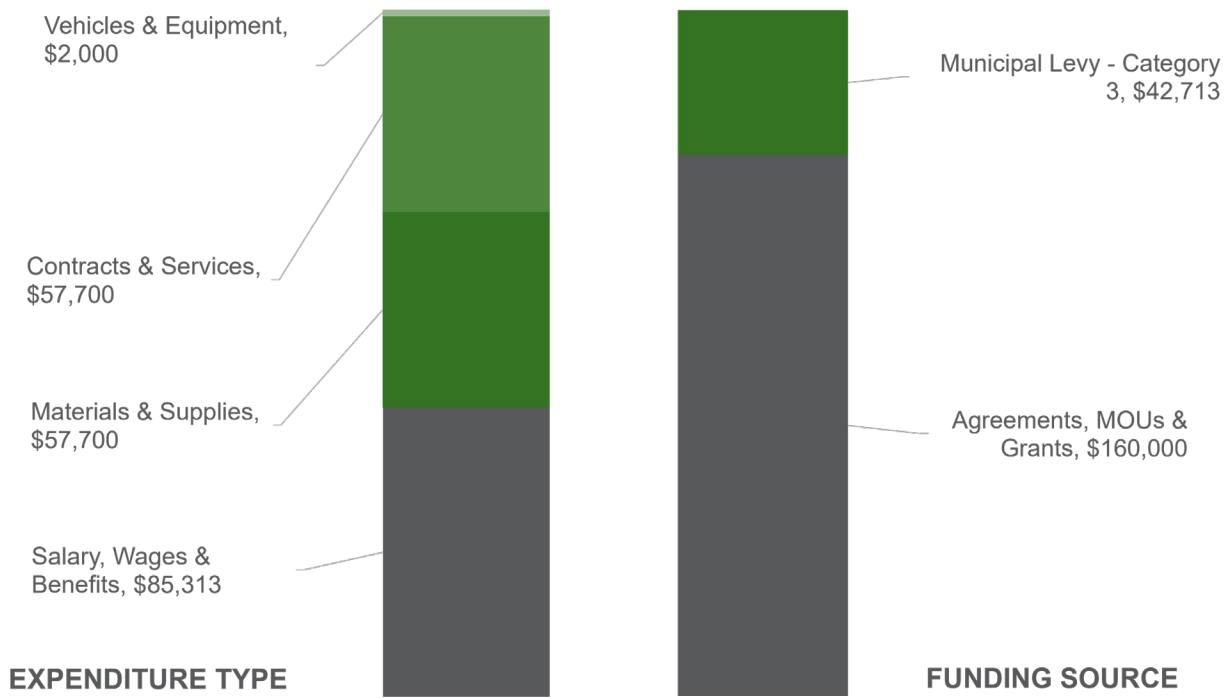
The proposed 2027 budget reflects significant growth in stewardship programming, supported by increased grant and partnership funding. This funding will allow GSCA to continue expanding environmental restoration projects, stewardship outreach opportunities, and collaborative conservation initiatives across the watershed while delivering on the priorities identified in the Strategic Plan.





**STEWARDSHIP**

**FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES**  
**TOTAL \$202,713**







# DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION

The Drinking Water Source Protection program helps ensure that municipal drinking water sources remain safe, reliable, and sustainable for current and future generations. Through watershed-based planning, technical assessments, monitoring, and policy implementation, the program supports the protection of municipal drinking water supplies throughout the region. The Drinking Water Source Protection program is funded entirely through provincial grants and does not impact the municipal levy.

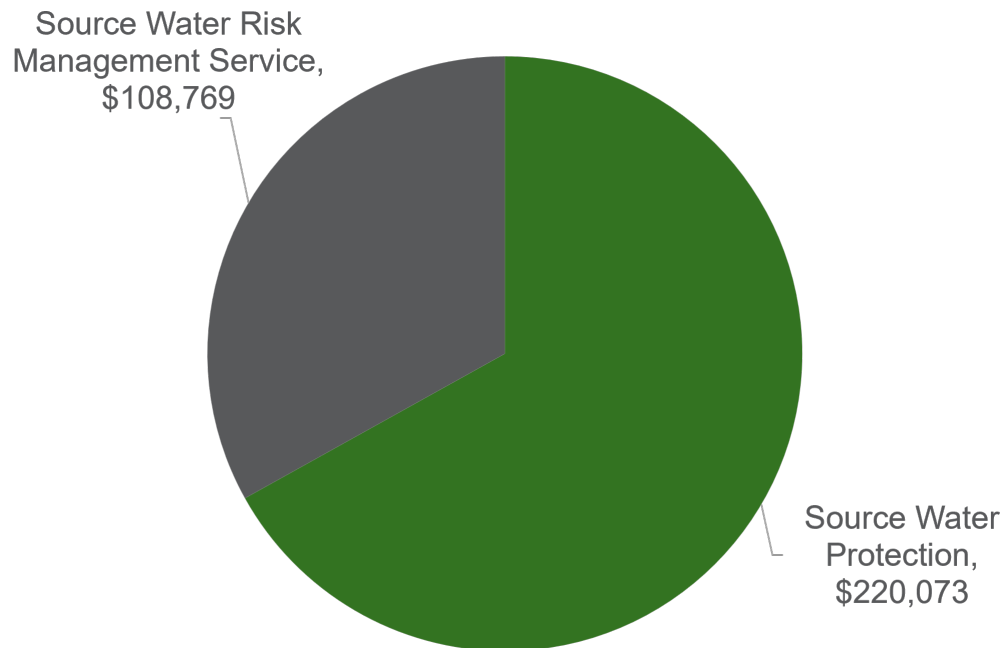
The Source Water Risk Management program supports participating municipalities through the administration of source protection policies and risk management requirements under the Clean Water Act. These services are delivered on a fee-for-service basis through municipal agreements and do not result in a municipal levy impact.

The 2027 budget reflects continued investment in source water protection activities, including ongoing technical studies, policy implementation, and municipal support services. This work helps ensure municipal drinking water systems remain protected while providing the science-based information needed to support long-term water resource management and planning decisions.

As the conservation authority sector prepares for the proposed transition to the Lake Huron Regional Conservation Authority, Drinking Water Source Protection services will continue to provide the technical expertise, regulatory support, and collaborative partnerships necessary to protect municipal drinking water sources and support participating municipalities across the region.

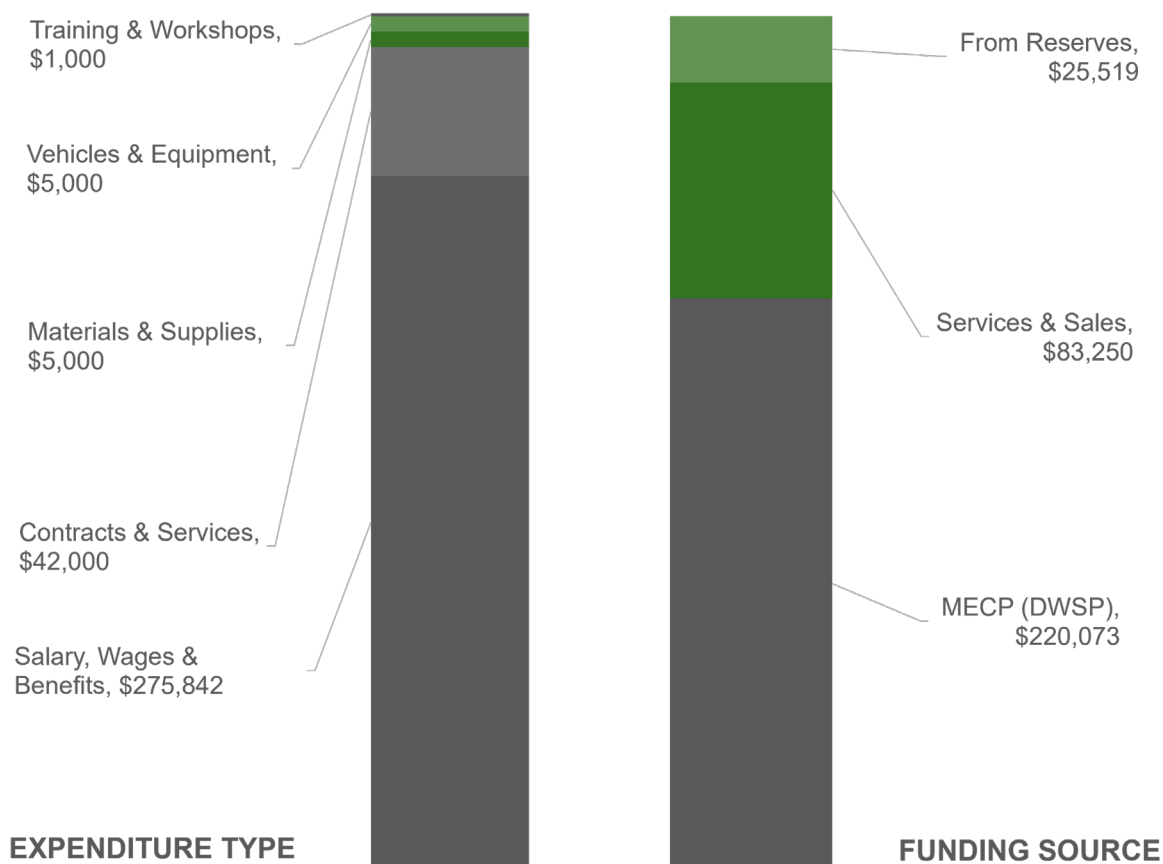


## DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION



## FUNDING SOURCES & EXPENSE TYPES

TOTAL \$328,842







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