



A LAKE HURON PLAN TO PROTECT

LAND AND WATER

## The Need

Lake Huron is an irreplaceable resource that must be protected for human health and economic security. It is a source of drinking water for hundreds of thousands of people, a tourism driver that brings tourists and locals to swim in its waters, and a cornerstone of economic activities from shipping to fishing. Protecting water resources is vital for agriculture, industry, and all other sectors of the economy.



## The Issue

Lake Huron has persistent nearshore water quality issues:

- *Escherichia coli* (E. coli) levels, resulting in beach postings
- Nutrients and algal blooms
- Multiple urban and rural runoff sources

## The Plan

Lake Huron communities have developed watershed action plans for five priority watersheds along the Lake Huron shoreline with targets and actions to improve water quality.

## The Partners

The Healthy Lake Huron partnership is working to implement these watershed action plans to reduce pollutants from reaching the lake. The partners include:

- Environment Canada
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans
- Parks Canada
- Ontario Ministry of the Environment
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food
- Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- Counties – Bruce, Huron, Lambton
- Conservation authorities – Ausable Bayfield, Maitland Valley, Saugeen Valley, St. Clair Region
- Health units
- Industry, resident, agricultural organizations, and more

For more information visit [healthylakehuron.ca](http://healthylakehuron.ca)



The Healthy Lake Huron partnership was formed to address water quality issues along Lake Huron's southeast shore. Action plans have been completed for five priority watersheds (identified in legend of map above) and those plans now need to be implemented and monitored.



Local residents, such as people of the Pine River watershed (above), are implementing projects to improve Lake Huron. Working groups, in five priority watersheds of the Healthy Lake Huron initiative, have identified the costs to implement needed actions in their watershed improvement plans.

(Photo by Telfer Wegg Photography /Courtesy ruralstormwater.com).

## A Request for Support

Five watershed action plans identify practices and projects needed to ensure a healthy Lake Huron for today and tomorrow. Provincial and federal resources are required to implement local actions in the five priority watersheds.

**Communities along the southeast shore of Lake Huron are requesting \$18.8 million, over five years, from provincial and federal partners to achieve the watershed goals.**

Actions and projected costs are found in the tables below. Lessons from implementing the plans in the five priority watersheds will be used as a template to improve other areas that flow to Lake Huron.

### Watershed Action Plan Implementation Tools

Challenge	Opportunity	Actions
Urban runoff	Work with homeowners and municipalities to implement innovative stormwater management solutions that benefit water quality and sustainable urban growth.	Improve and upgrade urban infrastructure using low impact development and green infrastructure principles (e.g., buffers, rain barrels, rain gardens, permeable pavement).
Agricultural runoff	Implement site-appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create wetlands to hold water during rain events and release it during dry periods.</li> <li>• Maintain crop residue and follow nutrient management plans.</li> </ul>
Decreased forest cover	Work with landowners to improve forest cover on their land in ways that support their agricultural operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant trees on marginal land.</li> <li>• Plant windbreaks.</li> <li>• Protect and manage established woodlots for long-term benefits.</li> </ul>
Urbanization	Direct development away from areas of provincial, regional and local ecological significance including agricultural and environmental resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen existing land use policies within Official Plan documents.</li> <li>• Improve drinking water and wastewater facilities, linking the economic and environmental benefits.</li> </ul>

*Provincial and federal resources are required to implement needed local actions*

### Projected Costs for Implementing Watershed Action Plans

Priority Watersheds	Annual Expenses				Total Expenses Based on Five-year Implementation
	Project Management	Monitoring	Landowner Projects	Total	
Lambton Shores	\$70,000	\$25,000	\$400,000	\$495,000	\$2,475,000
Main Bayfield	\$37,500	\$25,000	\$1,350,000	\$1,412,500	\$7,062,500
Bayfield North	\$37,500	\$25,000	\$560,000	\$622,500	\$3,112,500
Glenn/Garvey	\$70,000	\$25,000	\$660,000	\$755,000	\$3,775,000
Pine River	\$65,000	\$25,000	\$385,000	\$475,000	\$2,375,000
<b>Total</b>	\$280,000	\$125,000	\$3,355,000	\$3,760,000	\$18,800,000

## Recent Progress

### Priority Watersheds

Community-based watershed plans for five priority areas have targets and actions to improve water quality.

### Huron County Clean Water Project

Since 2004, Huron County has granted \$2.27 million to landowners for water-quality projects. This has leveraged \$5.8 million more in value, for 1,500 projects completed.

### Huron-Kinloss Septic Inspection

The Township of Huron-Kinloss, in Bruce County, launched a septic inspection program, in 2007, to require regular inspection of septic systems.

### Best Management Practices Evaluation

Huron County Federation of Agriculture, Ontario

Ministry of Agriculture and Food, and Ausable Bayfield Conservation, have worked with landowners to evaluate the environmental and economic effectiveness of watershed-based best management practices at the site and watershed scale. Preliminary findings suggest practices to address runoff from storm events.

### Rural Stormwater Management

Ontario Ministry of the Environment has provided \$700,000, through the Showcasing Water Innovation program, to the work to create a model to reduce runoff in rural areas. Other partners are providing an additional \$200,000 to this project that is improving water quality monitoring and will help determine which projects have the most benefit, at the ideal scale, and the best location.

## A Sustainable Approach to Economic Development

## Lake Huron needs ...

### Reliable extension services

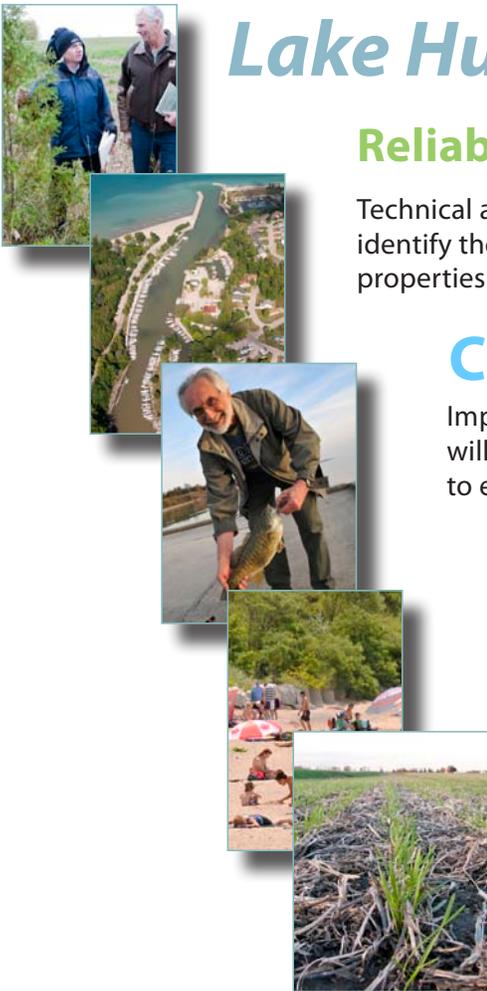
Technical and funding support can assist landowners to identify the most effective projects that improve their properties and their community's land and water resources.

### Climate change preparedness

Implementation of strategic actions in the community plans will contribute to ecosystems and economies that are resilient to extreme weather.

## A strong economy

The economic base of Lake Huron's southeast shore depends on food production, manufacturing, and tourism. Agricultural production requires healthy soils and good water management to be sustainable. Healthy, clean water attracts many people to the area for swimming, cottaging, boating and fishing. The cost of protecting Lake Huron and its watersheds is much less than the cost of remediation of degraded environments. Local agencies, farm and industry groups, and landowners along the Lake Huron shoreline, are using a cooperative approach to build a sustainable economy. We are asking for the financial support needed to implement this plan for the future.



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