

REMARKS FOR

**DONNA CANSFIELD
NATURAL RESOURCES MINISTER**

TO

**KAWARTHA CONSERVATION
ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 30TH
ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

**LINDSAY GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB
282 LINDSAY STREET SOUTH,
LINDSAY**

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2009
5:00 p.m.**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

- **Good afternoon everyone.**
- **I'm delighted to be with you today.**
- **This is the part of my job I like best ... getting out and meeting the dedicated people who are making a positive difference every day in restoring, protecting and managing Ontario's natural resources.**
- **And this is certainly a special year for Kawartha Conservation.**
- **Your focus since 1979 on "abundant clean water within a healthy landscape" has made a difference across the broad expanse of your watershed.**
- **As you celebrate your 30th anniversary, you can take justifiable pride in all that you have accomplished.**
- **Today I want to talk about some of the challenges we face together as partners in conservation to maintain a healthier natural environment ... fight climate change ... and move forward with stronger protection for essential greenspace, habitats and species.**
- **Meeting these challenges is a responsibility our province shares with the rest of the world – and a responsibility Ontario readily accepts.**
- **Everyone here appreciates the increasing demands on our natural environment and knows firsthand the value of conservation, stewardship and community responsibility.**

- We need to make all Ontarians more aware of the value of this work and why we must all do more to advance natural heritage protection.
- That's why the Premier has asked me to lead the government's efforts in communicating the importance of greenspace, natural heritage protection and local stewardship – as well as to coordinate our efforts with those of our partners to achieve even greater results.
- Part of our plan is to strengthen our longstanding and productive partnerships with all 36 conservation authorities.
- This includes doing more stewardship work ... more public education and more outreach efforts.

CLIMATE CHANGE

- Climate change is the single biggest challenge to a sustainable global future that we face in the 21st century.
- As a society, it is changing the way we live, work and play.
- It's forcing us to re-think our traditional ways of doing business as resource managers.
- And it will have increasingly significant implications on the work carried out by conservation authorities – particularly around source water protection, flood and erosion control, and habitat restoration and protection.

- **For many years, scientists in my ministry have been leaders in research on climate issues – putting us in a key position now to help the province implement a climate change policy.**
- **I'm proud of our ongoing work to support Ontario's clean energy and climate change goals ...**
- **Goals that include the development of renewable energy sources such as wind and water power ... and planting 50 million trees in southern Ontario by 2020 with the help of our partners.**
- **Planting 50 million trees of the right species in the right places will help reconnect southern Ontario's fragmented landscape, enlarge core forest areas and restore the integrity of our ecosystems.**
- **The most ambitious project of its kind in North America, it is the single largest commitment supporting the United Nations Billion Tree Campaign to fight climate change globally.**
- **Re-greening southern Ontario is one of many steps we must take to reduce or offset carbon emissions.**
- **Climate change is already affecting our environment, and it poses future risks to the health and safety of people, wildlife, forests, farms and water supplies.**
- **In Ontario, we can expect average temperatures to rise by three to eight degrees Celsius over the next century.**

- **Fortunately, this is a situation where we can work together in finding ways to mitigate the impacts.**
- **We need to replace old systems and technologies with cleaner ones.**
- **We need to eliminate waste and conserve as much as we can, whether we're talking about energy, water or land.**
- **We need to protect and enhance the natural features and landscapes that store carbon and help us combat climate change.**
- **And we need to prepare for and adapt to the effects of climate change we can't avoid.**
- **As we meet the challenges posed by the effects of climate change, we are pleased to have conservation authorities as valued partners.**
- **With the reality of climate change, it is very likely we will see more extreme weather in the future.**
- **In fact, meteorologists are telling us that climate change will bring longer dry spells and droughts, as well as more intense short periods of rainfall.**
- **The work that we do – together – to ensure that our communities are prepared for floods will be even more important in the future.**

NEW FLOOD GUIDELINES

- **We are constantly developing better ways to carry out that vital work.**

- **One recent improvement was the development of the Ontario Flood Forecasting and Warning Implementation Guidelines.**
- **Finalized last year, the guidelines are key to our efforts to address flooding in the province.**
- **They clearly outline our respective roles and responsibilities.**
- **They also set standards in a number of important areas, such as business continuity, planning, forecasting, communications and flood operations.**

FLOOD MONITORING WEBSITE

- **Our flood monitoring website, launched last year, is another improved tool in meeting the threat posed by extreme weather and flooding.**
- **Water managers, municipalities and interested members of the public can access the site and be alerted to Provincial Flood Advisories.**
- **The site also provides information on Flood Safety Bulletins and Flood Warnings issued by conservation authorities and MNR districts.**
- **The Flood Monitoring website is a useful source of information for a whole range of individuals and organizations.**

- **We appreciate ongoing input from conservation authorities into the content of the site.**

LOW WATER RESPONSE

- **While Ontario has been blessed with abundant fresh water, at times low water conditions and drought are also a reality in many parts of the province.**
- **I appreciate the great work that your organization did in completing the Watershed Background Report this year as part of Ontario's Low Water Response.**
- **It provides an excellent overview of the characterization of your watershed, an analysis of water use, tools for communications and public outreach, as well as useful information on the Water Response Team.**
- **The information in the report will go a long way in supporting the conservation authority's efforts through the Water Response Team to mitigate the impacts and reduce adverse effects of drought.**

KAWARTHA CONSERVATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **There are a number of important initiatives Kawartha Conservation has undertaken and I would like to take a moment to highlight a few.**
- **I am pleased to support your work on major projects, such as the partnership with the Region of Durham, the Township of Scugog and**

- I am also aware of your work on the Oak Ridges Moraine, which includes fisheries and watershed management plans, as well as the acquisition of ecologically sensitive lands.
- The management practices you employ provide a balanced approach in the protection of sensitive natural habitats, while also setting aside areas that are open to the community for low-impact recreational activities.
- I am also impressed by the innovative ways in which your organization reaches out to the public in the region.
- *Kawartha Water Watch* and *Check your Watershed Day* are great ways to get the public involved in monitoring conditions in the watershed and in raising awareness about our effect on the environment.
- These programs also provide valuable data that contribute to our land use planning and the development of stewardship initiatives that help conserve watershed resources.
- Your creative outreach efforts also include the Blue Canoe team on Lake Scugog, the Haliburton-Muskoka Children's Water Festival, and tree planting and clean-up events in conservation areas and along shorelines, among many other wonderful initiatives.

- **You have also helped support lake-based management planning – a stewardship process spearheaded by local lake or cottage associations.**
- **These plans aim to protect the lakes’ special features through a range of activities, including community stewardship, land use planning, and a variety of policy approaches and working groups.**
- **And the best part is that the plans are developed by the local people who know the area better than anyone.**
- **They see a need to solve lake issues in a different way – one that is proactive and cooperative – and they organize the resources to make it happen.**
- **Of course, my ministry’s staff are pleased to provide advice and guidance, and to work with local associations on such activities as fish and habitat protection and restoration, as well as protecting species at risk.**

CONCLUSION

- **When the Conservation Authorities Act was passed in 1946 it signaled the beginning of a new era of resource management in our province that placed a new focus on watershed management and community involvement.**
- **That focus is just as relevant today as we adjust to global environmental pressures and increasing demands on our resources.**

- **As Ontario's population continues to grow, the importance of conservation authorities and the essential services you provide will also increase.**
- **Services that include public health and safety ... drinking water source protection ... flood control and shoreline management ... stewardship outreach and education ... and so much more.**
- **Thank you for everything you do to protect your diverse and expansive watershed and to protect our natural heritage.**
- **You are making a difference to the local environment ...**
- **And you are contributing to the fight against climate change...to protecting our biodiversity, greening the region, as well as keeping our water and air clean.**
- **I congratulate you on your impressive record of achievement over the past three decades and your outstanding leadership.**
- **And I look forward to continuing to work with you as a partner in protecting our natural resources.**
- **Thank you for giving me the opportunity to join you in celebrating 30 years of outstanding work.**

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