

Ontario Taking Action to Further Protect Lake Simcoe

Province invests over \$500,000 as part of ongoing work to improve the health of the lake

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BARRIE — The Ontario government announced today that it is investing \$581,000 in four new projects to help find better ways to reduce the amount of pollutants, such as phosphorus, from entering Lake Simcoe. Local projects like these are key to restoring and protecting Lake Simcoe and its watershed and support the province's commitment to protect our air, land and water, as outlined in the [Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan](#).

These projects will build on the significant progress already made. A report released today by the Ontario government shows the health of Lake Simcoe is improving as a result of actions taken to protect and restore the lake and its watershed.

"Ten years ago, local environmental and conservation organizations, advocates and all levels of government came together as a community to restore the Lake Simcoe watershed, resulting in the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan," said Jeff Yurek, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. "Today, we are celebrating the progress we have made together to protect and preserve this vital region, and I look forward to continuing this work."

The 10-year report on Lake Simcoe shows the restoration of more than 15 kilometres of degraded shorelines, the planting of more than 55,000 trees and shrubs, and the creation and restoration of 120 hectares of wetlands have resulted in encouraging signs of recovery including:

- A 50 per cent reduction in phosphorus loads from sewage treatment plants entering the watershed;
- Decreased amounts of algae over time; and
- The successful reproduction of cold water fish such as lake trout, lake whitefish and cisco.

"The results of the 10-year report are very encouraging, but there is more work to be done," said Andrea Khanjin, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and MPP for Barrie-Innisfil. "We all have a role to play to restore and protect the lake and I am proud Ontario will continue working to keep Lake Simcoe clean."

Protecting and restoring the health of Lake Simcoe requires collaboration with key partners, including local conservation authorities, Indigenous communities, municipalities, agricultural and commercial sectors and residents. This fall, the government is inviting all its partners, including the general public, to participate in a 10-year review of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan to see if it needs to be updated.

QUOTES

" We're so pleased that our provincial government is continuing their commitment, both financially and through critical policies, to support the work of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA)," said LSRCA's Chair, Wayne Emmerson, Chairman and CEO of The Regional Municipality of York. "For the last 70 years, through the collaborative support of our governments and our communities, LSRCA has remained focused on protecting and restoring the Lake and watershed so that it remains a vital and thriving region for generations to come. We look forward to continuing to work with the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks as we strive to achieve this collective vision."

- Wayne Emmerson LSRCA's Chair, Chairman and CEO of The Regional Municipality of York

QUICK FACTS

- The restoration of Lake Simcoe and its watershed is a key commitment of the Ontario Government's Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan.
- Since 2009, the province's actions to protect and restore Lake Simcoe have been guided by the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, which focuses on the lake's water quality, reducing phosphorus levels, caring for natural heritage, and addressing the impacts of invasive species and other emerging threats.
- In the lake, total spring and ice-free (May through October) phosphorus concentrations have been consistently low since the 2015 Five-Year Report and have dropped significantly from 1980 to 2018.
- Over the long term, the amount of algae in the lake has decreased, and deep water dissolved oxygen has improved, supporting the potential recovery of cold water fish.
- Cisco, a cold water fish whose population was once in steep decline, are continuing to show positive signs of recovery. After a 13-year closure, the cisco winter fishery was reopened in 2015, and cisco continues
- Over 450,000 people living in 22 municipalities depend on the Lake Simcoe watershed every day

LEARN MORE

- [Lake Simcoe 10-Year Report](#)
- [Protecting Lake Simcoe](#)

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