

# Media Release

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## **CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES PARTICIPATE IN ADVISORY PANEL**

NEWMARKET (SEPTEMBER 21, 2006) Ontario's Conservation Authorities will participate on a provincial panel that will provide advice on a new government program to assist farmers and non-farm landowners to protect sources of drinking water in parts of rural Ontario.

Earlier this week, the provincial government announced \$5 million to protect municipal drinking water sources and a further \$2 million to go towards supporting education and outreach related to source water protection planning.

"This new program, with its initial funding levels, is a good step in the right direction," said Dick Hibma, Chair of Conservation Ontario. Conservation Ontario represents Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities, local watershed management agencies that have been working with the province and other stakeholders since the Walkerton Inquiry in 2002 to ensure Ontario's drinking water sources are protected.

"I think farmers and other rural residents have been loud and clear in their request for assistance. This is a good step towards looking at how the government and other agencies can help them."

Conservation Ontario will have two representatives on the provincial government's advisory panel. They include Russ Powell, Chair of the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation and Chief Administrative Officer for the Central Lake Conservation Authority as well as Conservation Ontario's General Manager, Don Pearson.

Conservation Authorities have been developing and delivering a variety of watershed stewardship programs in partnership with other local agencies and municipalities for many years.

They currently deliver approximately \$20 million in watershed stewardship funding towards projects that protect rural water quality and quantity, create healthy fish and wildlife habitat and controls or prevents erosion and flooding. Watershed stewardship programs can help avoid expensive water treatment costs by keeping our drinking water sources as clean as possible before they enter private treatment systems.

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For More Information, [www.conservation-ontario.on.ca](http://www.conservation-ontario.on.ca)

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