



Raisin Region
Conservation Authority

Annual Report 2025



Top: Pump maintenance at the Fly Creek Flood Control in the City of Cornwall.

Left: Nature trail at RRCA's Charlottenburgh Park in South Glengarry.

Right: Tree planting at Farran Park in South Stormont through a multi-year land stewardship partnership with the St. Lawrence Parks Commission.



The RRCA's Board of Directors is comprised of eight representatives appointed by its five member municipalities. Pictured, from left:

TOWNSHIP OF NORTH STORMWALL
Adrian Bugelli

CITY OF CORNWALL
Carilyne Hébert
Claude McIntosh

TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH STORMONT
Andrew Guindon
Bryan McGillis (2025 Chair)

TOWNSHIP OF NORTH GLENGARRY
Jacques Massie
(2025 Vice-Chair)

TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH GLENGARRY
Lachlan McDonald
Martin Lang

RRCA GENERAL MANAGER SECRETARY-TREASURER
Alison McDonald

MESSAGE FROM THE 2025 CHAIR



2025 RRCA Chair Bryan McGillis.

In my 19 years serving on the Raisin Region Conservation Authority's (RRCA) Board of Directors, few years have moved as quickly as 2025. The year began on a strong note with a comprehensive update to our Strategic Action Plan. Through broad consultation with Board members, staff, municipalities, community partners, and residents across our watershed, we developed a clear vision for the next four years. This plan focuses on environmental conservation and healthy living, strong partnerships and engaged residents, financial stability, and organizational excellence.

Residents, municipalities, businesses, developers, and farmers in our watershed are fortunate to benefit from community-led natural resource management through the RRCA. I continue to be impressed by the dedication and professionalism of our expert staff, who provide fast, accessible service to our community. For example, in 2025, our average turnaround time for permit applications was five calendar days, resulting in 100% compliance with provincially mandated service standards.

Last year also brought challenges, such as unprecedented drought conditions, not just in our jurisdiction, but throughout eastern Ontario. I thank our staff for their diligence in consistently monitoring conditions and keeping our municipalities and interest-holders up to date through Ontario's Low Water Response Program.

Later in the year, the Board learned about the province of Ontario's plan to consolidate Ontario's 36 conservation authorities into several regional bodies. We communicated our concerns to the province and emphasized the importance of maintaining local knowledge and expertise. We are grateful to the province for the opportunity to provide feedback on the consolidation process, and to our municipalities, partners, and the public for their continued engagement and support.

I thank my fellow Board members for their work in 2025 and I welcome our new Chair, Jacques Massie, and Vice-Chair, Andrew Guindon, as they lead the RRCA into a year of change and new opportunities.

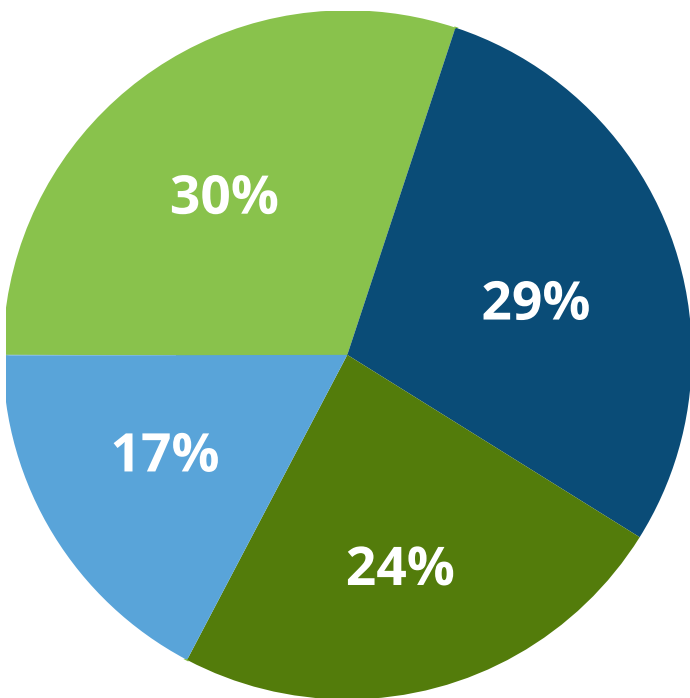


SCAN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE RRCA'S PROGRAMS AND SERVICES



For every dollar received through municipal levies, the RRCA secures an additional three dollars from other sources, including amenities like the RRCA's marina at Gray's Creek Conservation Area.

FUNDING CONSERVATION: RRCA 2025 Funding Sources



Government Grants:
\$1,229,457

Authority Generated:
\$1,188,530

Municipal Levy:
\$967,596

Partners:
\$709,982

2025 Total:
\$4,095,564



RRCA front-line staff provide user-friendly services to guide property owners with projects requiring a permit under the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

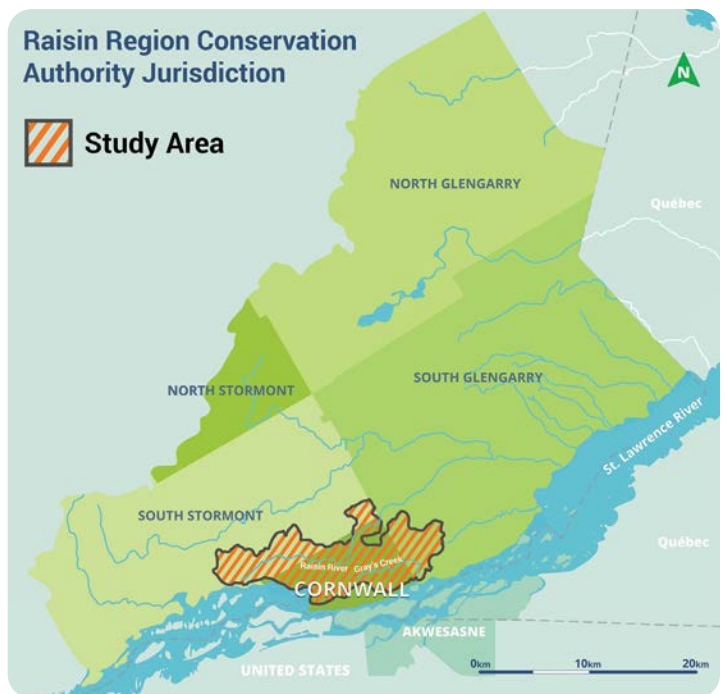
RRCA SCORES 100% COMPLIANCE ON PERMIT TURNAROUND TIMES

The RRCA hit record front-line service standards to support safe and sustainable development in 2025, with an average permit turnaround time of five calendar days, including both minor and major permit applications. The fast permit rate means the Authority marked a 100% compliance rate with provincially mandated permit timelines.

FUNDING SECURED FOR FLOOD RISK MAPPING UPDATES

In 2025, the RRCA secured grants to study the flood risk of watercourses in Cornwall, South Stormont, and South Glengarry. Updating flood risk maps using new data and the latest science helps protect future development.

The project is funded in part by the Government of Canada's Flood Hazard Identification and Mapping Program, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, and City of Cornwall.





\$330,000 PROVINCIAL GRANT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION

In 2025, the RRCA received a \$330,000 provincial grant through the Remedial Action Plan (RAP) for the St. Lawrence River (Cornwall/Akwesasne) to help restore the provincially significant Charlottenburgh Marsh, reduce eutrophication, and restore habitat. The provincial funding complements \$520,000 awarded by the Government of Canada through the Canada Water Agency in 2024 for RRCA RAP projects.



PROTECTING GROUNDWATER SOURCES FOR NEW MUNICIPAL WELL

The Raisin–South Nation Source Protection Region completed preliminary work in 2025 to protect groundwater sources for a new municipal well in Winchester in the Township of North Dundas. RRCA staff worked with the municipality, consultants, and the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to coordinate a preliminary technical review to help inform consultations and engagement in 2026. The preliminary work was completed to prepare for the amendment to the local Source Protection Plan that will be required, under Section 34 of the *Clean Water Act*, for the well to become operational.



STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

RRCA updated its Strategic Action Plan for the years 2025–2028, merging recommendations from residents, partners, and staff with official direction from the RRCA's municipally appointed Board of Directors. The document outlines key goals to advance the RRCA's mission to work with the community for a better environment and healthy future.



WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP: 56,000 TREES PLANTED

RRCA continued protecting long-term watershed health and resilience in eastern Ontario by adding 56,000 trees to the local landscape. The Authority also worked in partnership with municipalities, landowners, and farmers to facilitate the implementation of wetlands, buffers, grasslands, windbreaks, agricultural best practices, urban tree planting, and more.



NEW SURFACE WATER MONITORING STATIONS

Thanks to funding from the Government of Ontario, two new surface water monitoring sites were added in RRCA's jurisdiction – at Wood Creek and Sutherland Creek in South Glengarry – bringing RRCA's total monitoring sites for 2025 to 11. The RRCA conducts the surveys as part of Ontario's Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network, which helps monitor long-term trends in water quality across the province.

RRCA BY NUMBERS

- Established in **1963** to address local flooding, drainage, and water supply concerns
- **1,680** km² watershed jurisdiction
- Owns and protects **2,000+** acres of environmentally significant land
- **86,500** residents (approximate population)
- **5** member municipalities
- **8** municipally appointed board members
- **3** Conservation Areas

IN 2025

- **100%** of permits issued within mandated timelines
- Average permit turnaround time: **5** calendar days
- **169** development applications processed
- **56,000** trees planted
- **200,000** Conservation Area visitors
- **3** flood statements issued
- **3** low water response statements issued
- **17** summer students hired
- **2** interns hosted

SCAN TO SEE ALL RRCA NEWS





RRCA staff on a field visit to ensure a site alteration project at a South Stormont residential property is safe from flooding and erosion.

Under the *Conservation Authorities Act* and the *Planning Act*, conservation authorities review proposals for development in or near shorelines, floodplains, and erosion-prone areas in their jurisdictions. This work helps protect people, property, and infrastructure from natural hazards such as flooding and erosion. Under the *Clean Water Act*, the RRCA also screens for threats to municipal drinking water sources.

Permit review timelines under the *Conservation Authorities Act* are established by the province of Ontario: 30 days for minor applications and 90 days for major applications. In 2025, the RRCA met these standards in full, issuing 100% of both minor and major permits within the prescribed timelines. The average review time for all complete applications was five calendar days.

The RRCA also serves as the lead review agency for the Cornwall Sediment Strategy, part of the St. Lawrence River Remedial Action Plan. The Strategy aims to prevent the disturbance of sediment in designated zones along the Cornwall waterfront.

In 2025, the RRCA secured funding to study the flood risks of watercourses in Cornwall, South Stormont, and South Glengarry.



RRCA regulations and planning reviews help protect against natural hazards such as flooding.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

80 PERMITS ISSUED UNDER THE *CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES ACT*

74 *PLANNING ACT* APPLICATION REVIEWS

15 PROPERTY INQUIRIES

0 NEW RISK MANAGEMENT PLANS ESTABLISHED TO PROTECT MUNICIPAL DRINKING WATER SOURCES

0 CORNWALL SEDIMENT STRATEGY REVIEWS



SCAN TO SEE WHICH ACTIVITIES MAY REQUIRE A PERMIT FROM THE RRCA



Members of the Raisin-South Nation Source Protection Committee tour a water treatment facility in Casselman.

Under the *Clean Water Act*, the RRCA protects local sources of municipal drinking water from contamination and overuse through the Drinking Water Source Protection program.

The RRCA and South Nation Conservation form the Raisin-South Nation Source Protection Region. A Source Protection Plan for the region contains local policies to safeguard drinking water. The Raisin-South Nation Source Protection Committee (SPC) consists of municipal, public, and sector representatives. The SPC meets to discuss technical assessments and source protection policy.

In 2025, under section 36 of the *Clean Water Act*, the SPC concluded public consultation for feedback on draft changes to the Source Protection Plan that focus on addressing drinking water threats associated with the storage and application of salt; the storage of snow, waste, wastewater, and fuel; and agricultural activities. RRCA staff assembled the final submission package for the draft changes to the Plan, while also providing support to municipalities with their responsibilities to review or create Risk Management Plans. Preliminary work was also completed in 2025 for the protection of groundwater sources for a new municipal well in Winchester in the Township of North Dundas.

RAISIN-SOUTH NATION SOURCE PROTECTION PLAN

6,900 km² area covered in the Plan

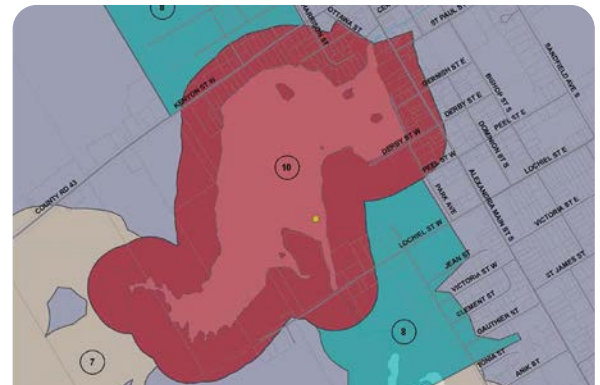
274,000 residents living in the Source Protection Region
(approximate population)

25 municipal drinking water systems

50% of residents, approximately, depend on municipal drinking water sources

100% of significant threats to municipal drinking water sources removed or mitigated through risk management measures

100% of source protection policies have been implemented, are in progress, or have been evaluated and determined to require no further action



This map shows part of the water intake protection zones for drinking water sources in the town of Alexandria in North Glengarry.

SCAN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION





NEW SURFACE WATER QUALITY MONITORING SITES IN 2025

- Existing site
- New site



The RRCA manages a jurisdiction spanning 1,680 km² across eastern Ontario, encompassing multiple watersheds and tributaries that drain into the St. Lawrence River.

The RRCA's watershed management includes the operation and maintenance of eight water control structures, water quality and quantity monitoring, and Flood Forecasting and Warning and Low Water Response programs, which assess watershed conditions to provide advance notice of potential flooding or drought to municipalities and residents.

During the summer and fall of 2025, eastern Ontario experienced a significant drought. Through its Water Response Team, RRCA provided timely updates to municipalities, residents, and interest-holders as conditions evolved. A RRCA survey asking private well users to report water issues provided key insights on the drought's local impacts.

In 2025, the RRCA was contracted by Fisheries and Oceans Canada to conduct fish sampling for select drains in South Stormont. The work will help streamline authorizations for municipal drain maintenance. The RRCA also added two new Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network survey sites in its jurisdiction for 2025.



Municipal drain fish population survey in South Stormont.

MONITORING NETWORKS

10

STREAM GAUGE MONITORING SITES

11

PROVINCIAL SURFACE WATER QUALITY MONITORING SITES

9

PROVINCIAL GROUNDWATER MONITORING WELLS

2

SNOW SURVEY MONITORING SITES

FLOOD AND DROUGHT MESSAGES

- 2 Water Safety Statements
- 0 Flood Outlook Statements
- 0 Flood Watches
- 1 Flood Warning
- 1 Low Water Response Level 1
- 1 Low Water Response Level 2
- 1 Low Water Response Level 3

WATER CONTROL STRUCTURE PROJECTS

ST. ANDREWS DYKE

- Valve and culvert maintenance

FLY CREEK FLOOD CONTROL

- Pump maintenance



SCAN TO SEE RRCA'S CURRENT FLOOD STATUS INDICATOR



RRCA planting at the St. Lawrence Parks Commission's Farran Park in South Stormont.

To support healthy, resilient watersheds, the RRCA facilitates landowner stewardship across its jurisdiction through a range of programs and partnerships. These efforts include offering tree planting services and financial incentives, leading projects within the St. Lawrence River Area of Concern (AOC), and hosting the ALUS Ontario East (Alternative Land Use Services) Coordinator. RRCA also supports the implementation of on-the-ground stewardship initiatives, such as wetland and grassland creation and enhancement, erosion control measures, and agricultural best management practices.

In 2025, the RRCA helped manage invasive phragmites through a collaborative project supported by the Ontario Phragmites Action program's Invasive Phragmites Control Fund, signed a multi-year land stewardship partnership with the St. Lawrence Parks Commission, and helped deliver a funding initiative for farm stewardship projects in eastern Ontario through the Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program – Marginal Lands Initiative. This project is funded in part by the Governments of Canada and Ontario under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a five-year, federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

The RRCA currently owns and manages over 2,000 acres of environmentally significant land to enhance forest cover, conserve ecological habitat, provide recreational opportunities, and secure green infrastructure for natural hazard resilience. Landowners looking to leave a natural legacy may consider donating their land to the Authority for perpetual preservation and management. The RRCA is a qualified recipient under Canada's Ecological Gifts Program.



Biocultural survey with Mohawk Council of Akwesasne staff prior to open water restoration work within the Charlottenburgh Marsh in South Glengarry.

**1.3M TREES
PLANTED SINCE 1994**



**56,000
TREES
PLANTED
IN 2025**

STEWARDSHIP PROJECTS

54 NEW ACRES DEDICATED TO ALUS PROJECTS	135 ACRES RENEWED FOR ALUS PROJECTS	44 ALUS AGRICULTURAL STEWARDSHIP PROJECTS
28 LANDOWNERS PARTICIPATING IN ALUS PROJECTS	11 ADVISORY SERVICE GRANTS TO LOCAL FARMERS & LANDOWNERS	

**SCAN TO LEARN
MORE ABOUT RRCA
STEWARDSHIP SERVICES**





Farmers visit a riparian buffer planting site during a RRCA farm stewardship tour in Cornwall hosted with ALUS Ontario East.

In 2025, RRCA engaged the local community in conservation through various outreach and recreation opportunities, including workshops and presentations, a long-term virtual bioblitz, a family fishing afternoon, a canoe race, free tree giveaways, guided hikes at Cooper Marsh Conservation Area, an ongoing geocaching tour, a farm stewardship tour, soil health workshop, and more.

OUTREACH

4,000

ESTIMATED OUTREACH & EDUCATION PARTICIPANTS

7

COMMUNITY EVENTS ATTENDED

35

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS, PRESENTATIONS & OUTREACH EVENTS DELIVERED

3

COMMUNITY TREE PLANTING EVENTS

5

TREE GIVEAWAYS

1

FARM STEWARDSHIP TOUR



Tree Giveaway in North Stormont.



Raisin River Canoe Race start line in South Stormont.



SCAN TO ACCESS THE RRCA EVENTS CALENDAR



200,000 TOTAL VISITORS IN 2025



Staff wrap up fall maintenance at RRCA's Charlottenburgh Park.



Self-guided tour signage at Cooper Marsh.

RRCA's three Conservation Areas provide recreation and eco-tourism opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Amenities include park and picnic areas, wildlife viewing blinds and platforms, a marina, campground, interpretive centre, and over 20 kilometres of nature trails. In 2025, the RRCA completed and initiated several outreach enhancements and habitat improvements at its Conservation Areas thanks to funding from the Canada Water Agency, the Government of Ontario, TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, TC Energy, and an education partnership with the River Institute.



Visitors explore Cooper Marsh during an education workshop led by the River Institute.



An endangered monarch caterpillar feeds on swamp milkweed in RRCA's native plant demonstration site at Gray's Creek Conservation Area.

GRAY'S CREEK

- 128,500** visitors
- 4** km of trails available
- 128** boat slips available
- 250** native trees planted
- 108** native plants added to demo site
- 454** iNaturalist observations logged
- 244** species observed
- 0.5** acres of invasive phragmites managed

COOPER MARSH

- 42,500** visitors
- 11** km of trails available
- 1** self-guided tour launched
- 1** trailhead sign installed
- 13** acres of invasive phragmites managed
- 1,339** iNaturalist observations logged
- 432** species observed
- 15** River Institute workshops & camps
- World Wetlands Day celebration hosted with Mohawk Council of Akwesasne
- Multiple outreach enhancements at the Visitors Centre

CHARLOTTENBURGH PARK

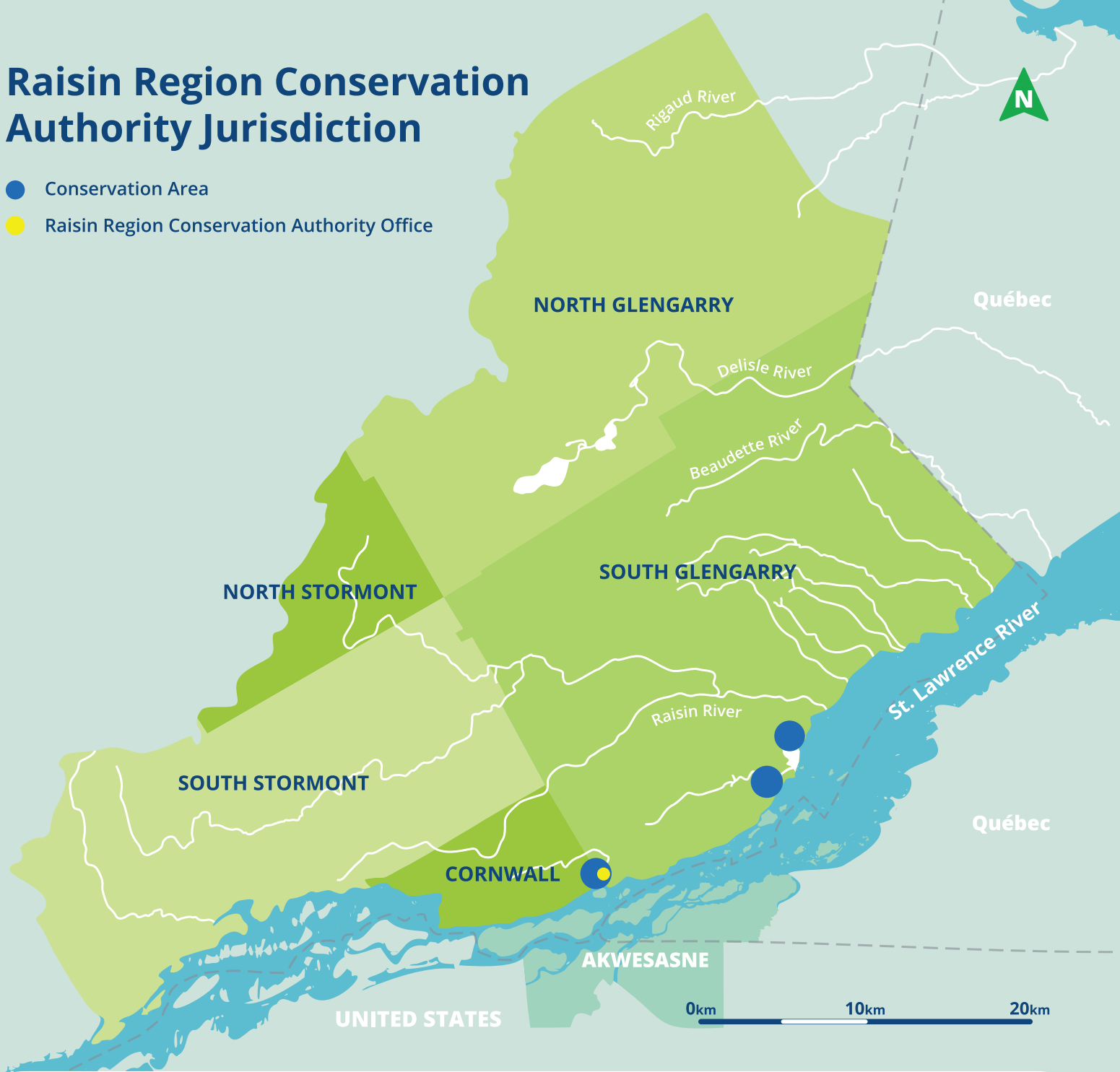
- 29,000** visitors
- 6** km of trails available
- 207** campsites available
- 290** iNaturalist observations logged
- 176** species observed
- South Glengarry Haunted Drive hosted by the Optimist Club of Lancaster

SCAN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT RRCA'S CONSERVATION AREAS



Raisin Region Conservation Authority Jurisdiction

- Conservation Area
- Raisin Region Conservation Authority Office



Raisin Region
Conservation Authority

Guiding our community in the protection, enhancement, and restoration of our natural environment through programs that balance human, environmental, and economic needs for a sustainable future.

 @raisinregion



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