



Raisin Region
Conservation Authority

Strategic Action Plan 2025–2028



Setting priorities.
Achieving results.

Fostering landowner stewardship.

Photo: RRCA full-service tree planting in North Glengarry.



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Conserving environmentally significant land.
Photo: Lakeview Marsh in South Stormont.



Protecting municipal drinking water at the source.



Protecting people and property from natural hazards.
Photo: Watercourse work site visit in North Glengarry.

I am proud to present the Raisin Region Conservation Authority's (RRCA) updated Strategic Action Plan; an important guide to help us protect people and property from natural hazards like flooding and erosion, conserve environmentally significant land, protect municipal drinking water sources, foster land stewardship, and provide recreation opportunities.



This document was carefully assembled from candid and meaningful discussions between the RRCA's municipally appointed Board of Directors, its professional staff, and from recommendations by community partners and residents.

For over 60 years, the RRCA has played a vital role in strengthening the health and resilience of our local watersheds. Our Board envisioned this updated Strategic Action Plan as a practical and realistic roadmap towards achievable goals for environmental conservation, healthy living, engaged residents, strong partnerships, financial sustainability, and organizational excellence.

As one of the approximately 86,500 residents living in the RRCA's 1,680 km² jurisdiction, I take great pride in the work of our conservation authority. Our community-led, watershed-based approach to conservation and natural resource management continues to inspire hope for a better environment and healthy future.

Bryan McGillis
Chair, RRCA Board of Directors

CONSULTATION HIGHLIGHTS



282

**PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE
RESPONSES**

23

**PARTNER QUESTIONNAIRE
RESPONSES**

11

**STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE
RESPONSES**

2

**ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS
WITH THE RRCA BOARD
AND SENIOR TEAM**

1

**ENGAGEMENT SESSION
WITH THE RRCA BOARD
AND ALL STAFF**

This Strategic Action Plan is the RRCA Board's direction to staff. The involvement of staff, partners, and the public was a key component of identifying goals and action items.

This involvement was accomplished through one-on-one interviews, engagement sessions guided by an external consultant, and sector-specific questionnaires.

We asked the public what the RRCA should focus on achieving in the next 4–7 years and the top answers were:



Protect people and property from flooding and erosion hazards



Protect municipal drinking water at the source



Conserve environmentally significant land



Maintain/enhance outdoor recreation experiences



Tree planting

We asked our partners what the RRCA does really well and the top answers were:



Communications and public education



Collaboration and partnerships



Water and floodplain management



Conservation Areas
(Especially trails/camping)



Community events
(Especially the Raisin River Canoe Race)



RRCA staff said their colleagues have high levels of motivation and enthusiasm.



Staff expressed interest in growth and learning opportunities as part of their professional development.

Photo: RRCA staff record data from the Raisin River in South Stormont.

OUR STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

MISSION

Working with our community for a better environment and healthy future.

VISION

To guide 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.

GOALS



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
AND HEALTHY LIVING



STRONG PARTNERSHIPS
AND ENGAGED RESIDENTS



FINANCIAL STABILITY



ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND HEALTHY LIVING

GOAL: Protect people and property from natural hazards; support environmental conservation and safe drinking water; and provide exceptional outdoor experiences.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

1. Embracing a science-based approach to watershed management and environmental stewardship.

- a) Review RRCA land stewardship initiatives to ensure they are aligned with the SDG Counties' Natural Heritage System Study. (Fall 2026)
- b) Collaborate with local partners and all levels of government to develop strong science-based strategies for the St. Lawrence River and tributaries. (Ongoing)
- c) Expand involvement in supporting private property ecosystem enhancements. (Ongoing)

1.2 Protecting from flooding and erosion hazards.

- a) Improve the online geoportal by expanding available data and making it more user-friendly. (Fall 2025)
- b) Improve permitting process to ensure people and property are safe from water-related hazards. (Winter 2026)
- c) Develop an outreach plan to provide valuable training for land development professionals working in lands near municipal drinking water systems and adjacent to and within RRCA regulated areas. (Fall 2026)
- d) Acquire state-of-the-art floodplain mapping for four priority watersheds as identified in the RRCA Flood Priority Report. (Summer 2028)

1.3 Connecting people with nature through positive outdoor experiences.

- a) Complete a business case – with location options, timelines, and costing – for the creation of a new Conservation Area. (Fall 2025)
- b) Negotiate new lease for Charlottenburgh Park. (Spring 2026)
- c) Implement maintenance standards for all RRCA properties based on an asset maintenance/replacement strategy. (Winter 2028)



STRONG PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGED RESIDENTS

GOAL: Pursue meaningful and creative opportunities to collaborate with partners and engage residents.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

2.1 Strengthening relationships with community partners.

- a) Establish a list of annual priority community events for RRCA staff to participate in. (Fall 2025)
- b) Introduce annual working sessions with the Algonquin Nation and the Mohawks of Akwesasne to identify needs/priorities and explore partnering opportunities for the upcoming year. (Fall 2026)
- c) Facilitate annual engagement sessions with each member municipality to identify their needs/priorities and explore partnering opportunities (including Category 2 agreements) for the upcoming year. (Summer 2025)
- d) Partner with a member municipality on a “one-window” development application pilot project. (Fall 2026)

2.2 Embracing meaningful community engagement.

- a) Develop a communications plan – including a social media strategy – that establishes priority messages, target audiences, and metrics; provide quarterly Board updates on communication activities and achievements. (Winter 2026 / ongoing)
- b) Review the use of RRCA spaces and identify opportunities to enhance community use of these spaces; establish community use policies and rates. (Summer 2026)
- c) Develop a RRCA Achievements online dashboard on the RRCA website to profile RRCA achievements. (Spring 2027)



Community engagement helps foster landowner stewardship.

Photo: Riparian restoration planning in the City of Cornwall.



FINANCIAL STABILITY

GOAL: Build a strong financial foundation to support infrastructure renewal and operational excellence.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

3.1 Demonstrating financial accountability.

- a) Form a board subcommittee – Corporate Services Working Group – to work with RRCA management to review and provide recommendations to the Board on accounting/finance and human resource-related processes. (Summer 2025)
- b) Provide detailed statement of operations at monthly Board meetings. (Summer 2025 / ongoing)
- c) Develop a long-term financial plan that includes an asset maintenance/replacement strategy and an infrastructure reserve policy. (Summer 2026)

3.2 Diversifying revenue sources.

- a) Submit joint grant application with the Township of North Glengarry to rehabilitate Garry River water infrastructure. (Spring 2025)
- b) Investigate the feasibility of creating an RRCA Foundation. (Spring 2026)
- c) Investigate grant management technology to improve the grant application process. (Winter 2027)



Visitors enjoy the boardwalk at Cooper Marsh Conservation Area.

Photo by Stephany Hildebrand



ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

GOAL: A cohesive team achieving positive results in a respectful and professional working environment.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

4.1 Continuously improving day-to-day operations to become more effective, efficient, and customer focused.

- a) Enhance the Frequently Asked Questions checklist to support front-line staff in responding to common inquiries. (Fall 2025)
- b) Refresh and document Standard Operating Procedures, including health & safety and the purchasing process. (Fall 2026)
- c) Provide technology training (e.g., artificial intelligence, cyber security) for staff as required. (Fall 2026)
- d) Improve file/document management system and process and identify who is responsible for ongoing file management. (Spring 2028)
- e) Complete a main office space optimization plan including physical layout with options, timelines and estimated costs. (Summer 2026)

4.2 Empowering our team and fostering a culture of excellence, inclusion, and professionalism.

- a) Complete an organizational review to clarify roles/responsibilities; identify skillset gaps and duplication of effort; enable succession planning; support effective career path and professional development; and identify opportunities to achieve enhanced operational effectiveness. (Spring 2026)
- b) Enhance opportunities for training and professional development by developing annual career planning/development plans for RRCA employees. (Fall 2025)
- c) Introduce an annual Board–staff session to celebrate wins and encourage collaboration. (Fall 2025 / ongoing)
- d) Enhance onboarding process for Board members and staff. (Summer 2026)
- e) Review and update the Employee Manual, including employee benefits. (Fall 2026)

RRCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025



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

**TOWNSHIP OF
NORTH STORMONT**
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)

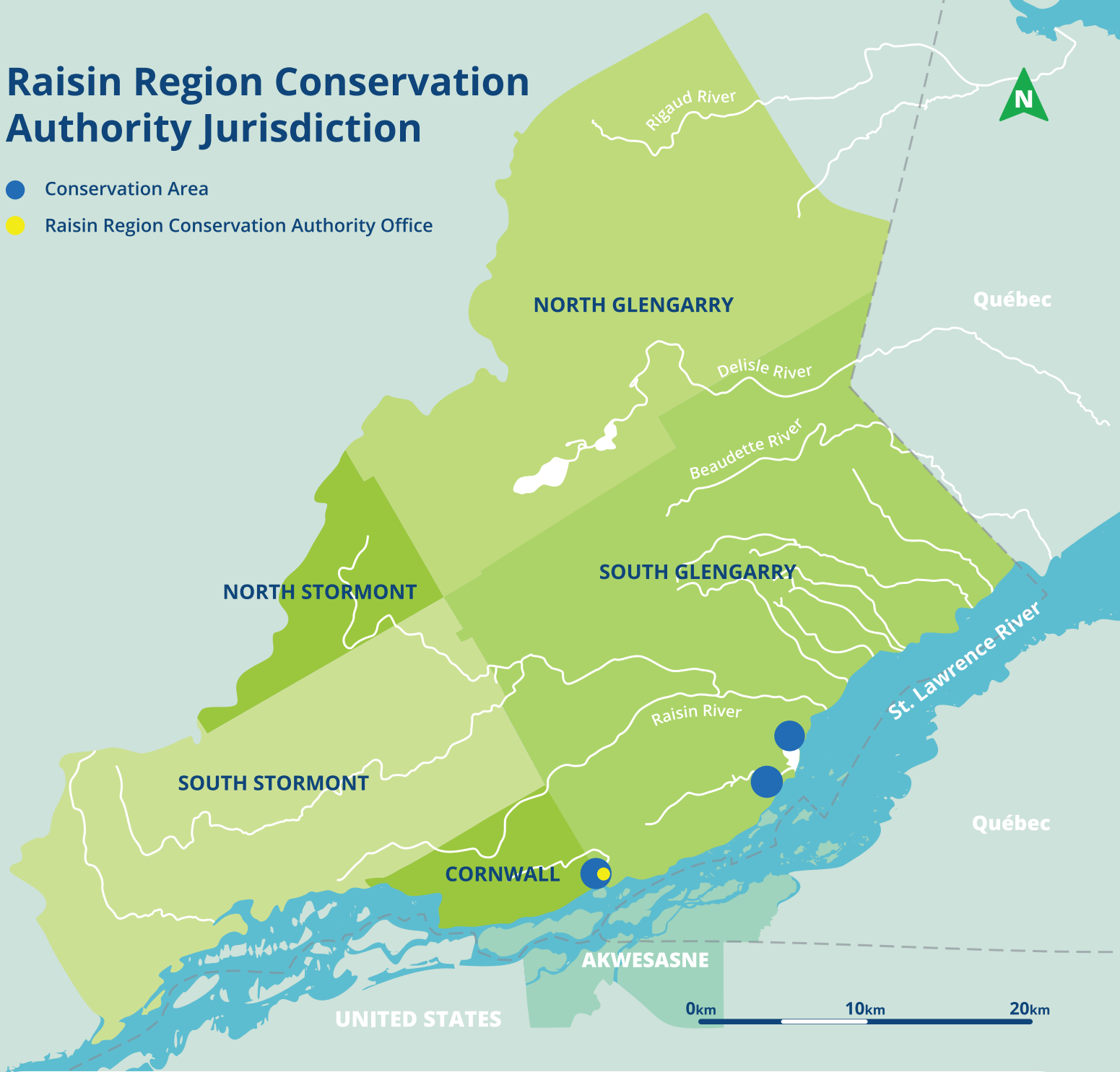
**TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH
GLENGARRY**
Lachlan McDonald
Martin Lang

**RRCA
GENERAL MANAGER
SECRETARY-TREASURER**
Alison McDonald

**WORKING WITH OUR COMMUNITY
FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT
AND HEALTHY FUTURE.**

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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