

# SOUTH NATION CONSERVATION

## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Partners gathered to plant  
and Remember the Children  
at The Healing Place in the  
Township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal



SOUTH NATION  
**CONSERVATION**  
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## SNC Highlights Importance of Indigenous Partnerships Through Land and Water Stewardship

The Healing Place - a community green space located on the traditional territories of the Algonquin and Mohawk Nations in Eastern Ontario



*The Healing Place, Township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal*



*SNC Staff planting trees at the "Remembering the Children" Event*

As an organization dedicated to the health and protection of land and water resources, South Nation Conservation (SNC) has a deep respect and appreciation for the history and knowledge of our First Nation partners. Working together, we have undertaken many successful, impactful projects that would not have been possible without our partners and the Traditional Knowledge that they've shared.

Some of the very first partner projects included Black Ash Management and Medicinal Plant Projects. During this time, a working group was formed to ensure close collaboration with partners on the ground within shared territories. The Eastern Ontario First Nations Working Group now works together to join efforts on issues that affect all of us, including the sustainable management of public forests and community lands.

More recently, as the result of a commitment made at the 2019 Climate Change Summit hosted by the Assembly of First Nations in Whitehorse, Yukon, the Working Group, through a collaborative partnership, has worked since 2020 to create The Healing Place - a community green space located on the traditional territories of the Algonquin and Mohawk Nations in Eastern Ontario.

The Healing Place represents an important step forward in the journey towards reconciliation. It's centered around creating and maintaining a safe, physical space of healing to help restore land, language, and relationships with community members from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous backgrounds.

This 89-acre site is located on an SNC property in Shanly, Ontario and is home to several grassland Species at Risk, including the Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, and locally significant Gorgone Checkerspot butterfly. Project support was provided by members of the Eastern Ontario First Nations Working Group, Forests Ontario, Ontario Power Generation, and various government and industry partners.

# SNC Partners with Ducks Unlimited Canada to Restore Wetlands Across Eastern Ontario

The revitalization of lost and degraded wetlands is the focus of a three-year, \$375,000 restoration project

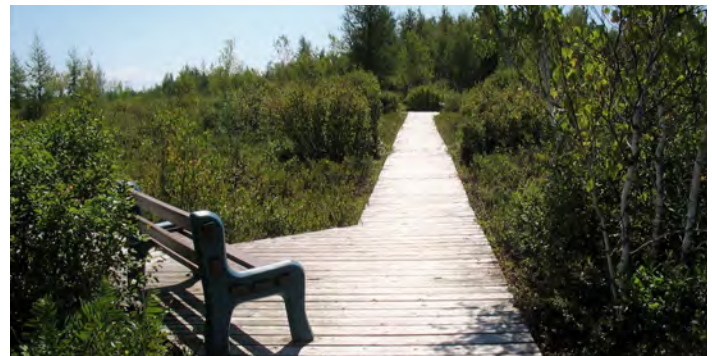


*A priority region for waterfowl conservation (Photo credit: Bill Kendall)*

A partnership between SNC and Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) will complete wetland restoration projects on approximately 225 acres within the jurisdiction, primarily on SNC properties.

SNC has an existing partnership in place with DUC to provide support and expertise for DUC wetland restoration projects under the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks' Wetlands Conservation Partnership Program. SNC's local expertise and partnership led DUC to request SNC support with the implementation of wetland restoration projects under the Federal Government's Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund.

SNC is also pleased to report that the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) has acquired 200 acres of wetland that is surrounded by the proposed Alfred Bog Provincial Park. Visitors are encouraged to visit the Alfred Bog walk that was constructed by SNC in the 1990s to explore this ecosystem.



*The Boardwalk at the Alfred Bog, Alfred and Plantagenet*



*The Alfred Bog, Alfred (Photo credit: NCC)*

## Virtual Education and Outreach

### SNC takes education programs virtual with record numbers

With the ongoing Pandemic preventing in-person field trips, SNC adapted to provide schools with opportunities to learn outside the four walls of classrooms, helping students step outside and into nature through educational videos.

SNC successfully delivered two Virtual Field Trip Projects: Maple Syrup Education (two videos for Grades 1-3 and 3-6) and the Ottawa and St. Lawrence River Virtual Field Trip for high school students.

Maple videos took viewers on a tour of the Oschmann Forest and allowed families to revisit the site to immerse themselves in a self-guided interpretive tour. The videos were tailored to curriculum objectives, and reached over 25,000 students within the Ottawa Catholic School Board through a paid partnership.

Ottawa and St. Lawrence River modules included a virtual tour of local shorelines; discussed issues facing freshwater supplies and offered guidance on how to be part of a sustainable solution. This provincial partnership project also included several chapters for teachers to use the local environment for various teaching objectives.



*An interview with Julie Vachon at Remic Rapids, Ottawa about the importance of water, how to connect with water, and what people can do to protect water.*



*SNC Forester filming Maple Syrup Education videos*



*Oschmann Forest, Township of North Dundas*

# Protecting Natural Legacy Through Natural Heritage Systems

SNC Partners with Counties to complete planning study on Natural Heritage Systems



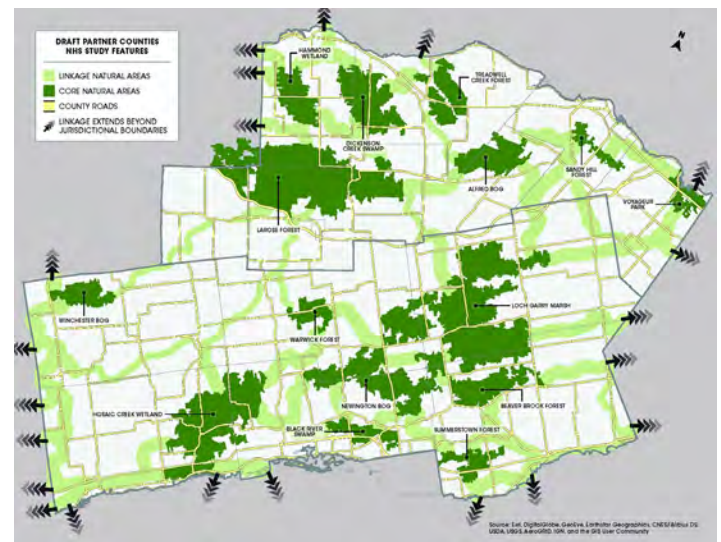
*One of the main goals of the NHS is to recognize local linkages and wildlife corridors*

SNC partnered with Prescott and Russell and Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry to complete a Natural Heritage Systems (NHS) study in Eastern Ontario.

An NHS is a network of interconnected natural features and areas such as forests, lakes, rivers, agricultural lands, and wetlands.

Strong natural heritage systems protection is necessary to maintain and enhance long-term quality of life, environmental health, and economic prosperity in the region.

The Province of Ontario requires municipalities to identify Natural Heritage Systems and preserve the diversity and connectivity of these features. This requirement is translated into policies that inform development, stewardship actions, climate change resiliency, environmental studies, and conservation efforts. Through a unique partnership, SNC will help ensure these policies remain appropriate, effective, and implementable.



*Draft Partner Counties NHS Study Features*

## SNC Approvals Programs: Planning and Development Reviews, Conservation Authority Regulations, and Municipal Septic Services

The way we plan and build our communities affects our natural environment. Environmental planning is an important part of protecting our land and water resources.

SNC's Approvals Team ensures people and property are protected from natural hazards by participating in local planning and development review to support member municipalities.

With expertise in natural hazards and natural heritage, municipal drinking water source protection, and private servicing, the team also supports development projects and environmental studies.



SNC's Septic Program through the *Ontario Building Code* (Part 8 - Sewage Systems) is delivered in 13 municipalities; working with landowners and contractors to ensure proper installation and repair of septic systems.

SNC's Regulations Program is delivered under Section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* and enables staff to work with municipal and agency partners, developers, landowners, and contractors, to safeguard human life and property from natural hazards.

The following summary identifies the number of development applications processed by SNC in 2021.

### Planning and Development Reviews

- 579 development applications
- 85 property inquiries
- 196 technical reviews
- 9 applications reviewed for threats to municipal drinking water
- 1 risk management plan established to protect municipal drinking water

### Conservation Authorities Act: Section 28 Permits

- 245 permits
- 25 occurrence reports investigated
- 69 drain maintenance requests

### Sewage Systems Review

- 500 permits
- 130 septic record searches
- 83 renovation reviews
- 24 occurrence reports investigated

For all planning applications, timelines are established by municipalities depending on the type of development, applicable legislation, and municipal policies.

Timelines for *Conservation Authorities Act* permits are established by the Province of Ontario. The following summary notes the number of permits issued within established timelines.

### Permits Issued Within Provincial Timeline

Major (90 days)	Minor (30 days)
7	163

### Permits Issued Outside Provincial Timeline

Major (90 days)	Minor (30 days)
0	20

As part of Conservation Ontario's new Client Service Standards, SNC works to achieve the following service standards:

- 21 days for minor applications,
- 28 days for major applications, and
- 14 days for routine applications.

Additional time is provided for resubmissions.

# 2021 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## Endless Recreational Opportunities At SNC Conservation Areas

In 2021, SNC's network of 14 Conservation Areas (CA) welcomed approximately 200,000 recorded visitors to hike, geocache, picnic, kayak, canoe, launch their boat, bird watch, fish, and enjoy their local outdoor environment.

### The most popular destinations?

#### Year-Round Sites:

- W.E. Burton CA in Russell (40,470 visitors)
- J. Henry Tweed CA in Russell (39,281 visitors)
- Oschmann Forest CA in North Dundas (10,445 visitors)

#### Seasonal Sites:

- Jessup's Falls CA in Alfred and Plantagenet (26,042 visitors)
- High Falls CA in Casselman (23,705 visitors)
- Cass Bridge CA in North Dundas (13,981 visitors)

Residents and visitors continued to explore SNC Conservation Areas in record numbers in 2021 to step outdoors and into nature, as a respite from the ongoing Pandemic.

In 2021, SNC was able to create a new Conservation Area, implement several trail improvement projects while also addressing dead Ash trees infected with the Emerald Ash Borer. Several Conservation Areas experienced temporary day-closures throughout the year to facilitate tree management needs.



*SNC is committed to securing investments in our local environment and working with partner municipalities to maintain, conserve, and restore public natural spaces, and to ensure accessible and safe recreational opportunities.*

*SNC completed year 2 of a 3-year restoration project at the J. Henry Tweed Conservation Area with funding support from Ontario Power Generation.*



*Jessup's Falls Conservation Area, Township of Alfred and Plantagenet*



*Robert Graham Conservation Area in South Dundas underwent significant trail upgrades as part of SNC's continued commitment to maintain and improve its public parks.*



*The Mill Run Conservation Area is a 9-acre property on McCrea Road recently donated by Augusta Township and developed in part thanks to funding received from the Federal Government.*



*Installing maple taps for the upcoming maple season*

## Land Partnerships Support Local Economy

SNC partners with area businesses and community members to sustainably harvest locally sourced products.



### HUNTING

Nearly 9,000 acres of SNC land is used by hunters; 115 permits issued in 2021.



### HONEY

SNC is gifted 10 lbs of honey annually from local beekeepers; 1 land lease in 2021.



### MAPLE SYRUP

In 2021, 2,600 gallons of sap was collected from the Oschmann Forest and sold to a local producer.



### TRAPPING

Nearly 9,000 acres of land is used by trappers; 4 permits issued in 2021.



### CROP PRODUCTION

30 acres of SNC land is leased to local farmers.



Maple taps at the Oschmann Forest, Township of North Dundas

The guidance, wisdom, and holistic perspectives shared through partnerships with First Nations ensure the protection of culturally-significant species.

## Living Natural Legacy: SNC Land Securement

SNC's Land Securement Strategy, which is supported by 16 member municipalities, has helped guide the securement of 1,400 acres of land since 2014, adding to the over 12,000 acres of land owned by SNC.

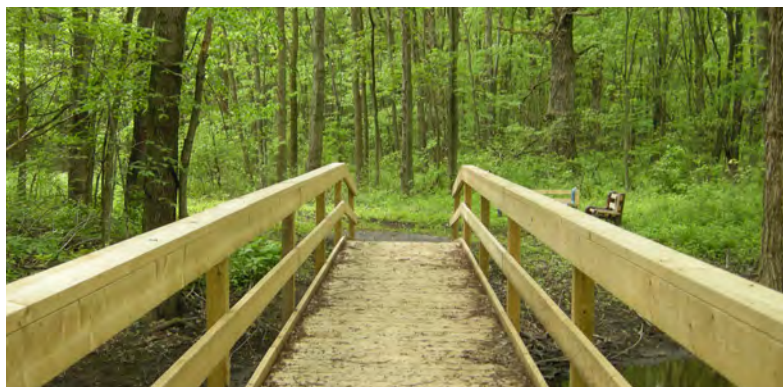
The strategy identifies the need for public land securement in Eastern Ontario and has provided a framework for recommending land acquisition decisions to SNC's Board of Directors.

SNC is an associate member of the Ontario Land Trust Alliance and is approved to accept donations of land through Canada's Ecological Gifts Program. SNC's Land Donation Program continues to offer donors a way to preserve the past and provide hope for the future by leaving a natural legacy.

In late 2020 and throughout 2021, SNC acquired 277.41 acres of land on 7 properties through partial purchase and donation in the municipalities of: North Stormont, South Dundas, Augusta, Nation, and Alfred and Plantagenet.



Pictured: Hennie Velema and the late George Velema in 2015. Since 2003, the Velema's have contributed over 380 acres to SNC through Canada's Ecological Gifts Program, including 65 acres in 2020/2021.



Two Creeks Forest Conservation Area, Township of South Dundas





*SNC Staff planting trees on private property in the City of Ottawa*



*SNC Staff completing water quality demonstration for local scouts during the J. Henry Tweed CA Community Day*



*Sustainable harvest on SNC and SDG Forests, Township of North Stormont*



*SDG Roadside Tree Planting Program*



*SNC works with partners to keep trails groomed for winter use*



*Beaver Lodge in the Ottawa River Floodplain Study Area, City of Clarence-Rockland*



*SNC staff providing trees during the Free Tree Campaign, City of Clarence-Rockland*



Warwick Forest Conservation Area, Township of North Stormont



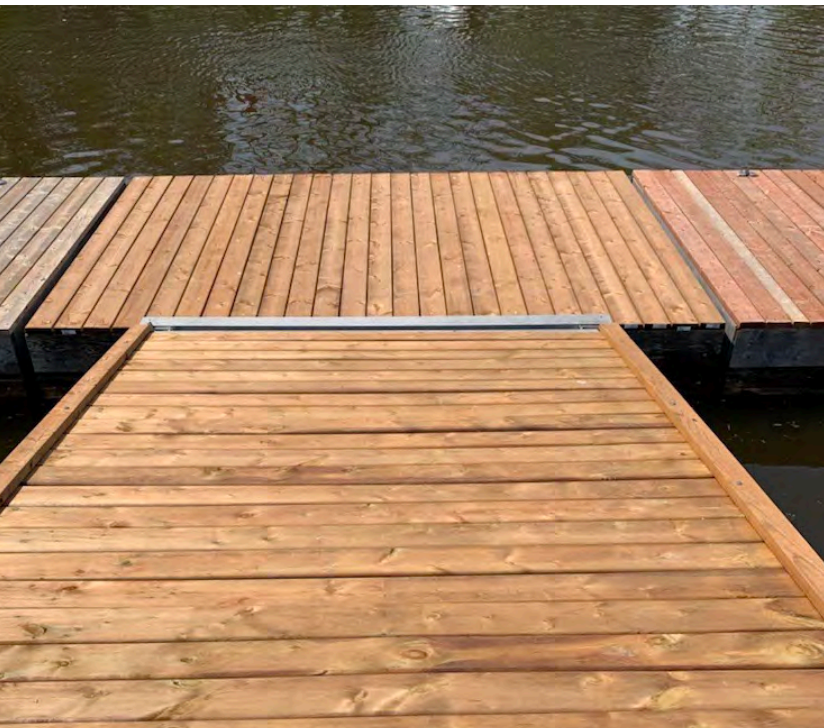
Tree planting project through the 50 Million Tree Program, Township of Alfred and Plantagenet



Water sampling at J. Henry Tweed CA, Township of Russell



Shrub giveaway at a Findlay Creek Clean Up event, City of Ottawa



New decking at the Chesterville Waterfront Docks, Township of North Dundas



Two Creeks Forest Conservation Area, Municipality of South Dundas

# Conservation Authorities: Protecting People and Property from Natural Hazards

## Floodplain and Erosion Mapping

SNC updates floodplain and erosion maps (or natural hazard maps) on behalf of its partner municipalities when requested, specifically in areas facing increased development pressures.

In 2021, SNC updated hazard mapping for its jurisdiction along the Ottawa River shoreline within Prescott-Russell and the Bear Brook within the City of Ottawa with financial support from the Federal Government and partner municipalities.

Projects will be completed after public consultations in 2022.

## Flood Forecasting and Warning Program

SNC is continuously enhancing water resource monitoring programs to advise municipalities and residents of potential flood emergencies. Updates were made to climate stations in 2021 to support SNC's watershed model.

Under the Flood Forecasting and Warning program, which advises of potentially unsafe conditions due to flooding, SNC issued 6 notices in 2021.

Under the Low Water Response Program, which advises of possible drought conditions, SNC issued 5 notices in 2021.

## Water Control Structure Management

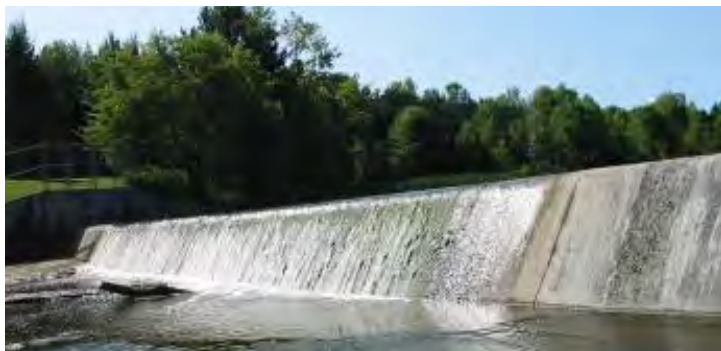
SNC operates several water control structures including dams, weirs and berms to reduce risk to life and property from natural hazards. In 2021, SNC successfully obtained Water Erosion Control Infrastructure funding for 2 projects: Chesterville Dam gate electrical and heater update and Chrysler Dyke Assessment.



*Floodplain Mapping Infrastructure Surveying at Bear Brook, City of Ottawa*



*New Pedestrian Walkway Gates, Chesterville Dam, Township of North Dundas*



*Dam Inspection, Township of Russell*

## Woodlot Management And Tree Planting

In 2021, SNC:

- Planted a record 230,000 seedlings, adding to the 3 million trees planted since 1990.
- Provided \$202,616 in grants through Forests Ontario's 50 Million Tree Program to help plant trees on private land.
- Completed free Woodlot Advisory Service site visits and provided \$32,000 in grants to 64 property owners to create forest management plans for 4,388 acres of land.
- Continued management of the SNC Forest (over 12,000 acres) and the SDG County Forests (over 9,000 acres). Sustainable harvest operations provided \$21,990 for SNC and \$26,293 for SDG.
- Worked with 18 Forest Stewards to monitor forest activity on 45 SNC properties.
- SNC partnered with municipalities to provide over 10,000 free tree seedlings to watershed residents. \$6,500 was fundraised to support this Forest Conservation Initiative.

## Watershed Monitoring And Reporting

Our environmental monitoring programs focus on quality and quantity of our land and water ecosystems including: surface and ground water; native, invasive, and at-risk species; stream assessments; and municipal drains.

SNC collects and provides scientifically accurate data for stakeholders and municipalities to make informed decisions; data also helps guide SNC stewardship projects and programs.

## Clean Water Program

Provided \$70,960 in cost-share grants to residents for 32 projects that improve water quality within the SNC jurisdiction.

Provided \$188,293 in cost-share grants for 72 projects within the City of Ottawa. The Ottawa Rural Clean Water Program is delivered by the Rideau, Mississippi, and South Nation Conservation Authorities on behalf of the City of Ottawa.

## Ottawa Ash Tree Replacement Program

Provided \$146,100 in cost-share grants for 65 projects on private property that helped replace 591 Ash trees and control the invasive Emerald Ash Borer (EAB).

SNC remains committed to controlling EAB within its forest properties through research partnerships and tree management activities within Conservation Areas.



*SNC Staff ground water sampling at Séguin Road well station*



## Grassland Stewardship

Thanks to years of successful industry partnerships to restore grassland habitat for Species at Risk birds, SNC partnered with Grasslands Ontario to administer their Grassland Stewardship Initiative Funding Program locally.

Grasslands Ontario also provided funding for habitat enhancements at the Healing Place. SNC will prepare a management plan for the improvement of grassland bird habitat and create a bird-friendly hay harvesting schedule to improve the productivity and overall effectiveness of the habitat.

*SNC is undertaking a 5-year grassland bird habitat enhancement and hayfield rejuvenation project in the Township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal*

# 2021 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## SNC YOUTH FISH CAMP

Nearly 100 youth baited a hook at SNC's Youth Fish Camps, when it made its return for a 12th season after a hiatus in 2020 due to COVID-19. These popular camps deliver an invaluable outdoor learning experience for youth and help familiarize young people with the natural environment through responsible and sustainable fishing. Special guests from the Water Rangers were also on-site to teach youth about water quality through citizen science testing kits, while members from the Ottawa Flyfishers Society provided participants with the basics of fly fishing.



*Youth Fish Camp, Cass Bridge Conservation Area*



*Catch of the day at the Jessup's Falls Conservation Area Fish Camp*



*First catch of the day at SNC's Youth Fish Camp*



## SNC'S MUNICIPAL SEPTIC PROGRAM

SNC septic officials conduct septic inspections for 13 municipalities. In 2021, 500 septic permits were issued to residents across the jurisdiction, marking the most septic permits issued by SNC in 1 year to date.

*SNC Staff conducting septic inspections*

## ONLINE WOOD AUCTION

The Online Auction raised \$3,000 to support tree planting initiatives across the jurisdiction. Building on the success of the Art for Trees auction that was held in 2020, in lieu of the postponed annual SNC Golf Tournament, the Wood Auction featured many wood ware products such as furniture, displays, art, signs, and charcuterie boards from local artisans.



*Donation from Larry Begin of Begins Bounty & Boards*



*Donation from Roger Mattiuz of Hoople Creek Woodcraft*



*Donation from the Sheds and Gazebos Warehouse in Alexandria*



## ENHANCING EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS IN THE SNC JURISDICTION

SNC has expanded its climate station network to support flood forecasting and warning and low water response. Funding support was provided through the Eastern Ontario Water Resources Program.

Early warning systems are key to enhancing resilient communities, especially when considering the impacts of a changing climate. These stations collect information on water and weather, including air temperature, rain, snow, well water levels, and soil moisture. Stations transmit information in near real-time on an hourly basis and are used in SNC's water resource management programs.

*New climate station at South Bear Brook in the City of Ottawa*



*National Nurses Week tree seedling donation*

## SNC DONATES TREES TO FRONTLINE HEALTHCARE WORKERS

SNC donated 1,100 tree seedlings to hospital nurses for National Nurses Week. Staff at the Glengarry Memorial Hospital, Winchester District Memorial Hospital, and the Cornwall Community Hospital received special thank you gifts of free trees. Donated Norway Spruce seedlings were sourced from the Ferguson Forest Centre. In the face of tragedy, trees can become a symbol of resilience, perseverance, and hope.



*SNC staff providing free trees at the Winchester District and Glengarry District Memorial Hospitals*



Flood Vulnerability Assessment Methodology  
for the  
Mohawk Council of Akwesasne

## FLOOD MANAGEMENT/MITIGATION STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

SNC provided services to the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne to support the development of a flood management strategy across Akwesasne. These services included GIS training, creation of key data sets to support the development of Early Warning Systems and Floodplain Mapping services, and a methodology for completing Flood Vulnerability Assessments.

Throughout the project, SNC collaborated with Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and the St. Lawrence River Institute.

## 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*SNC's Board of Directors consists of 13 appointed representatives from SNC's 16-member municipalities who govern and provide direction for all the work completed by SNC staff.*



### The 2021 Board of Directors include:

George Darouze, Chair, City of Ottawa; Pierre Leroux, Vice-Chair, Prescott-Russell;  
Bill Smirle, Past Chair, Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry

#### City of Ottawa:

Gerrie Kautz, Michael Brown, Catherine Kitts

#### United Counties of Prescott-Russell:

François St. Amour, Mario Zanth / Guy Desjardin

#### United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry:

Steve Densham, Archie Mellan

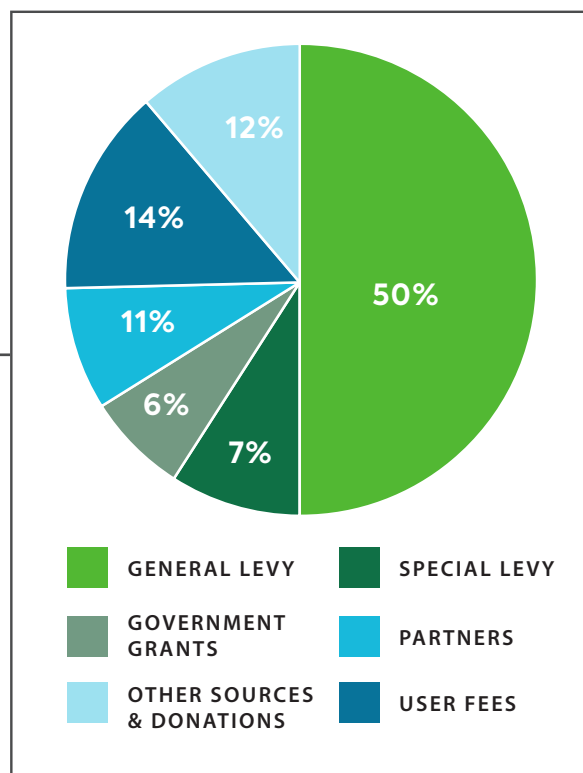
#### United Counties of Leeds and Grenville:

Dana Farcasiu, John Hunter

## 2021 SNC BUDGET SUMMARY

**2021 Budget:** \$7,226,080

- General Levy: \$3,629,611
- Special Levy: \$507,133
- Government Grants: \$496,407
- Partners: \$744,792
- User Fees: \$997,754
- Other Sources and Donations: \$850,383



OUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT; WE'RE IN IT TOGETHER.  
 NOTRE ENVIRONNEMENT LOCAL, PROTÉGEONS-LE ENSEMBLE.

