



# SOUTH NATION CONSERVATION DE LA NATION SUD

## Parched watershed weathers long dry spell

In 2012, over six months fell under drought advisories in the SNC watershed. Following a dry winter and record-breaking heat, for the first time in five years, SNC's Water Response Team issued a level 2 low water condition as stream flows decreased to about 30 per cent of monthly norms from July through October.

During a level 1 condition, the goal is to reduce water use by 10 per cent. A level 2 condition involves conservation of non-essential water use for a 20 per cent reduction. Both are implemented through voluntary measures.

SNC's drought response focused on encouraging local residents and businesses to use their water cautiously by promoting water conser-

vation by-laws, event outreach, media updates, and signage. The low water conditions impacted fish migration and mortality as well as early tree leaf discoloration and dropping. For communities around Spencerville, it was the worst crop season in decades, with meat producers bearing the brunt of losses. Even so, Statistics Canada, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and Grain Farmers of Ontario reported a successful growing season for the province overall.

Water-related problems reported to SNC included about 30 per cent more dry wells since the last time they were monitored in 2001. Long-term effects will continue to be assessed over the next two years.



*Drought conditions at the headwaters of the South Nation River in Spencerville.*



## Integrated Floodplain Management

SNC, together with the Mississippi Valley and Rideau Valley Conservation Authorities, developed a five-year plan to update floodplain mapping within the City of Ottawa. Survey work started in August 2012 in the Shield's Creek watershed which includes three flood-prone project areas: Findlay Creek, John Boyce Municipal Drain, and Osgoode Gardens Cedar Acres Municipal Drain. SNC has an important role in allowing more effective reduction of flood risk to life and property while preserving natural fish habitat through integrated floodplain management. Technical work and floodplain mapping will take place in 2013.

*Surveying for structure data on Dawn Terra Drive in Greely.*



Local youngsters mud pout fishing with bamboo poles in 1941.  
Courtesy of Mac Saunders.

## History matters:

### Preserving our watershed's heritage

History is a model of who and what we are to be. Over the years, SNC has collected fascinating photographs, rare video footage and historical accounts of events, people and natural environment in the watershed.

In early 2012, SNC implemented a new management database of these dynamic collections through a \$30,000 grant from the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Culture's Museum and Technology Fund.

The project offers watershed communities better access to their shared heritage. History plays an important role in our everyday lives. Taking lessons from what

came before us, SNC will use the archives to educate and inform local decision-making.

With over 65 years' worth of information to manage, it's important that SNC staff has quick access to all of it. The integrated file management pilot project was approved in 2012, to be completed over three years. The objective is to organize all records so information can be retrieved on a property-specific basis. These improvements will include using optical character recognition (OCR) technology which converts scanned images of paper documents, PDFs and digital camera images into editable and searchable data.

### Revisiting Lemieux

Almost 20 years have passed since 17 hectares of farmland gave way in Lemieux. SNC, in partnership with La Nation Municipality, ensured local landowners were well-informed about retrogressive landslide risks. In December 2012, area residents brought their concerns and questions to SNC and Municipal representatives at an open house. SNC is making sure that the lines that are drawn in municipal planning documents are supported by previous studies. A review of the science behind the setback lines is scheduled for 2013.

### Rescue mission: Fish edition

A 10-acre pond, an anode-equipped boat and 4,600 trapped fish set the stage for a high-voltage rescue at the Port of Prescott in April and May.

The gallant five-day effort involved electroshocking and catching the fish by a crew from Bowfin Environmental Consulting of Cornwall, SNC staff and volunteers. Thousands of representatives from 30 different species including largemouth bass, northern pike, and American eel were weighed, catalogued and released into the open water.

The temporary pond was created by installing a berm, (as part of the Port of Prescott project in Johnstown) which extended the riverfront wharf 340 metres into the St. Lawrence River.

SNC worked at the Port to ensure environmental standards were met throughout phase one of the project, which wrapped up in 2012. Compliance is regulated according to the federal *Fisheries Act* Authorization that provides for the protection of fish habitat.

SNC's weekly monitoring included ensuring sediment and erosion control measures were in place, and that equipment re-fuelling was conducted away from the water course. When in-water work was performed, SNC was on site three times a week to monitor turbidity levels.

SNC will continue its environmental project management commitment until final construction phases, targeted for 2016, are complete.



## Source water protection: A clear plan

Protecting our municipal drinking water is important to safeguard human health and ensure there is an adequate clean supply for the future. The Raisin-South Nation Source Protection Plan does just that.

Months of report writing, public consultation, and municipal council meetings wrapped up in August with the celebrated submission of SNC's proposed Source Protection Plan to the Ministry of the Environment (MOE).

The 145-page policy document outlines actions to address land-use activities that may threaten municipal drinking water wells and intakes.

The Source Protection Committee developed the plan by drawing on a community approach to identify pragmatic solutions that make sense locally. SNC expects approval of the plan by the MOE in fall 2013, with implementation in 2014.

To protect municipal water sources, MOE provided cost-share grants under the Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program to property owners who voluntarily took on improvement projects such as well upgrades and septic replacements. By the end of 2012, SNC delivered over \$285,000 in grants to 38 landowners for 10 municipal water systems. The majority of projects were well and septic upgrades, with several shoreline erosion control projects and a few agricultural best management practices rounding out the accomplishments to date.

## Protecting natural spaces

A concerted effort to preserve our open spaces is a vital link to our cultural, educational and ecological legacies. SNC acquired three properties in 2012 to protect what we have for present and future generations.

The Reveler family managed 100 acres of land for its natural heritage value and wished to maintain this property as a conservation area for the public through a donation to SNC. Reveler's attributes make it ecologically significant and qualifies under Environment Canada's Ecological Gifts Program. Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark birds, and Butternut, a species of walnut, are species at risk found on-site. The ecological character is dominated by a field of open grassland, shrub cover and mature forest. SNC is committed to an ecosystem-based approach in the management of its land holdings.

The MacLeod vacant land parcel was donated to SNC in December. The 50-acre Berwick property along the Payne River is a mix of forest and cultivated land. SNC plans to restore the natural heritage features through reforestation.

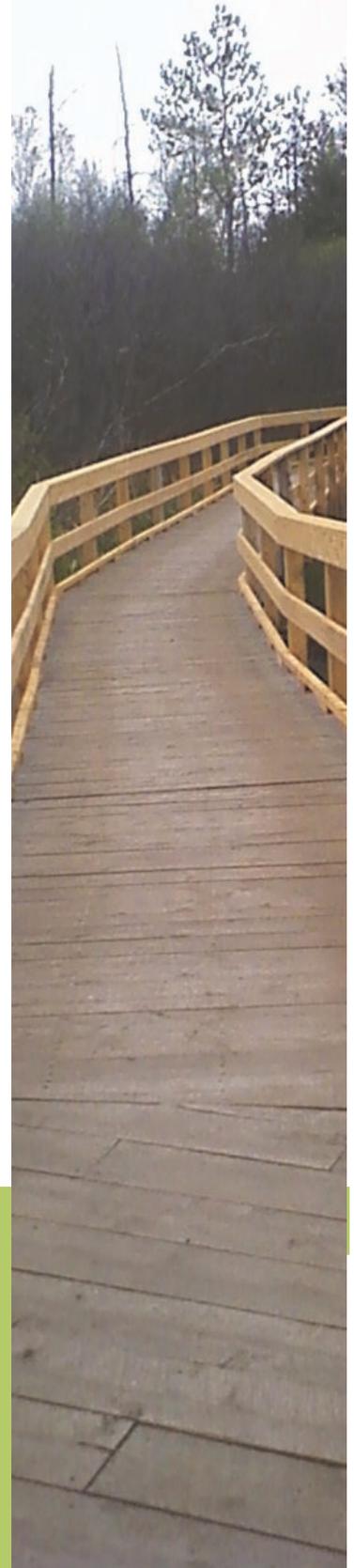
The forested Tessier property was purchased by SNC in a potential retrogressive landslide zone. The undevelopable 0.59 acres in the former Township of Cambridge is adjacent to other SNC land and consolidates SNC's holding in the area.

## Getting acquainted with the Leitrim Wetland

The Leitrim Wetland is a complex ecosystem and one of Canada's biodiversity gems. SNC, in partnership with Tartan and Tamarack Homes and the City of Ottawa, is enabling the community to appreciate the surrounding landscape with a 460 metre boardwalk. Trail preparation and boardwalk construction began in May 2012. A snapping turtle nest discovered by SNC staff was protected from predators and machinery

until hatching in August. Awareness is key to ensuring the long-term survival and sustainable use of our natural spaces. This SNC project is igniting interest in the wetland and encourages residents to explore the natural world in their neighbourhood.

A launch is scheduled for May 2013.





Financial Summary 2012

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Committees

SNC works with four committees that provide program direction:

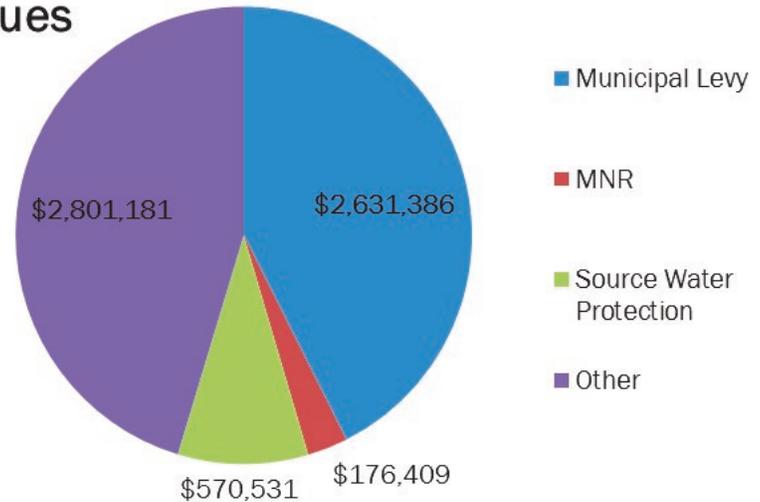
- Clean Water Committee
- Communications Committee
- Forestry Committee
- Fisheries Committee

Members are residents, farmers, community groups, industry, and government. For information on memberships and activities, please contact our office.

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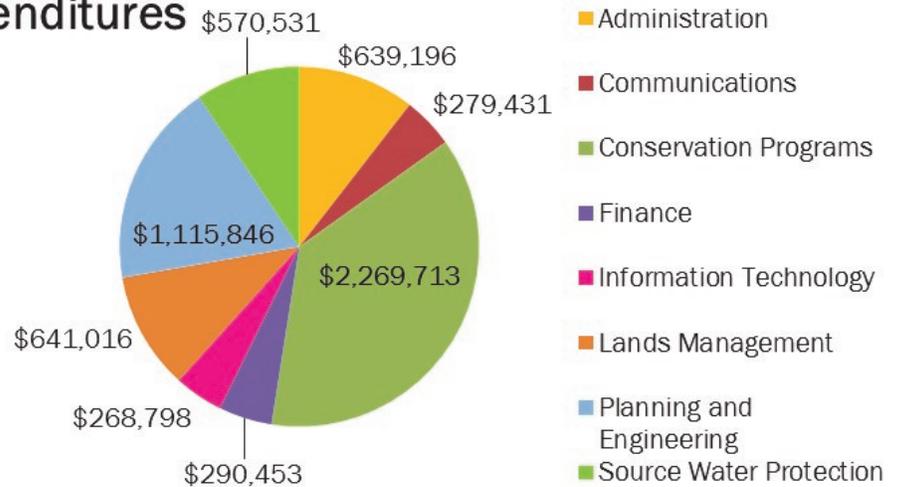
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Revenues



TOTAL \$6,179,507

Expenditures



TOTAL \$6,074,984

In 2012, the total revenue was \$6,179,507. The general levy for 2012 was \$2,631,386, representing approximately 43% of the total revenues.

Copies of the 2012 Audited Financial Statements may be obtained by contacting South Nation Conservation's Team Lead, Corporate Services.