

SOUTH NATION CONSERVATION MUNICIPAL WORKPLAN SOUTH DUNDAS



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR:

Dear South Dundas,

Conservation Authorities are community-based environmental organizations dedicated to conserv-ing, restoring, developing, and managing natural resources on a watershed scale.

South Nation Conservation (SNC) exists because of local initiatives and we recognize the importance of our continued partnership with our 16 member municipalities. In 2020, we look forward to build-ing on these relationships and continuing to deliver key programs and services on your behalf.

Please review this summary document prepared for your Municipality by SNC staff.

Bill Smirle,
Chair, South Nation Conservation



OUR VISION

Improved Water Quality for a Healthy Ecosystem: Our vision encompasses water levels which satisfy the needs of humans and the environment, healthy rivers and natural shorelines, and safe wastewater management practices.

OUR MISSION

To ensure that the management of natural occurrences, natural resources, and human activities results in the protection or improvement of water resources.

OUR EXPERTISE

Conservation is our core competency. SNC offers knowledge and experience to help our partners contribute to a healthy region.



SOUTH NATION CONSERVATION ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, FINCH

FOSTERING LANDOWNER STEWARDSHIP



WHAT WE DO:

- Plant approximately 140,000 trees per year and provide subsidies on tree purchases for landowners. SNC has planted 3.3 million trees since 1990.
- Offer free site visits and resources to woodlot owners, and offer \$500 grants to help develop forest management plans.
- Provide over \$75,000 annually in funding to landowners for projects that protect water quality through the Clean Water Program.
- Own approximately 12,000 acres of land acquired through donation or purchase, following SNC's Land Securement Strategy.
- Manage over 20,000 acres of Community Forest in Eastern Ontario; 9,467 in the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry (SDG).

TO-DATE, IN SOUTH DUNDAS:

- Planted 277,055 trees since 1990.
- Offered 15 woodlot owners our Woodlot Advisory Services since 2011, visiting 533 acres of land.
- Provided over \$113,746 in funding to local landowners for projects that protect water quality since 1998.
- Planted 1,392 trees at 10 sites in SDG as part of the SDG Roadside Tree Project.
- Planted edible buffer demonstration site in partnership with local farmer showing use of native fruit and nut trees and shrubs to protect streambanks from runoff. Opposite streambank seeded with native grasses and pollinator species to improve water quality and provide additional wildlife habitat.

2020 PRIORITIES:

- SNC continues to work with its partners through its Forest Conservation Initiative, to implement recommendations from our 2018 Report on "Protecting and Increasing Forest Cover in the South Nation Conservation Jurisdiction."
- Through the Forest Conservation Initiative, SNC will be hosting community free tree activities and has implemented new tree planting subsidies to help plant more trees along fields and watercourses.
- SNC will continue to plant trees, manage community lands, offer resources, work with partners, and help fund important water quality improvement projects.



3 MILLIONTH TREE
PLANTED SINCE 1990!



SNC HAS PLANTED OVER 3 MILLION TREES SINCE 1990

PROTECTING PEOPLE AND PROPERTY AND SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



WHAT WE DO:

- Map floodplains and other natural hazards, review construction and approve projects in and around watercourses, floodplains and wetlands.
- Conduct septic system inspections and permits for 13 municipalities.
- Work to protect drinking water through the Source Water Protection program.
- Flood Forecasting and Warning provides advance notice of flood conditions and updates on watershed conditions during flood events for the South Nation, Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers.
- Low Water Response provides declaration of drought conditions and offers guidance for reducing water consumption based on condition severity.
- Operate and maintain 7 water control structures.

TO-DATE, IN SOUTH DUNDAS:

- 23.4 km² of flood hazard maps are regulated.
- 1.9 km of unstable slope has been mapped.
- 56 properties assessed for Risk Management Plans through the Source Water Protection program.

LAST YEAR, IN SOUTH DUNDAS:

- 31 septic approvals issued.
- 12 Planning Act application reviews.
- 15 permits processed.
- 2 low water advisory memos issued.
- 43 watershed conditions and flood statements issued.
- Developed planning tools and monitoring guidelines for stormwater facility management.
- SNC acquired state-of-the-art aerial imagery (LiDAR) with high resolution topography to delineate the existing 100-year flood hazard line along the St. Lawrence River.
- The Emergency Management Toolkit improved SNC's Flood Forecasting and Warning Program, enhancing SNC's ability to predict floods and provide municipalities with the ability to prepare and respond quickly and efficiently to save lives, prevent or limit property damage, and relieve local financial burdens.

2020 PRIORITIES:

- Provide engineering services to member municipalities as needed.
- Continued maintenance and operation of erosion and water control structures.
- Continue working in the Emergency Management Toolkit consisting of an automated alert system, which provides advanced notice of watershed conditions.



SURVEYS FOR FLOODPLAIN MAPPING

PROVIDING NATURAL SPACES AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



WHAT WE DO:

- Own and manage over 12,000 acres of public, natural spaces.
- Operate 15 day-use parks and trails, including 9 public river access points.
- Protect environmentally significant properties and accept land donations.
- Protect over 7,000 km of fish habitat which support 72 fish species, offering endless recreational fishing opportunities.

RECREATIONAL PARKS AND TRAILS IN SOUTH DUNDAS:

In South Dundas, SNC owns and manages 1,981 acres of community land, and manages 2 Conservation Areas encouraging residents to enjoy local nature:

- **Williamsburg Forest:** This 400-acre forest was acquired by SNC in 2014 and includes: over 25 acres of spruce plantations, 12 acres of provincially significant wetland and a large forested area which provides prime habitat for wildlife.
- **Robert Graham:** Rich with diverse tree species and wildlife, this 140-acre Conservation Area has 6.5 km of trails; it's the perfect place for recreational hiking, birding, and offers great photography opportunities for visitors. In 2019, approximately 700 visitors enjoyed the trails and several newly created wildlife ponds providing seasonal habitat for birds.
- **Two Creeks Forest:** This Conservation Area is home to some of the highest biodiversity in the region thanks to its unique coastal ecosystem, grassland flood plains, and lowland forests. This 457-acre area has 4.5 km of marked trails, interpretive signage, picnic facilities and had over 3,050 visitors in 2019.

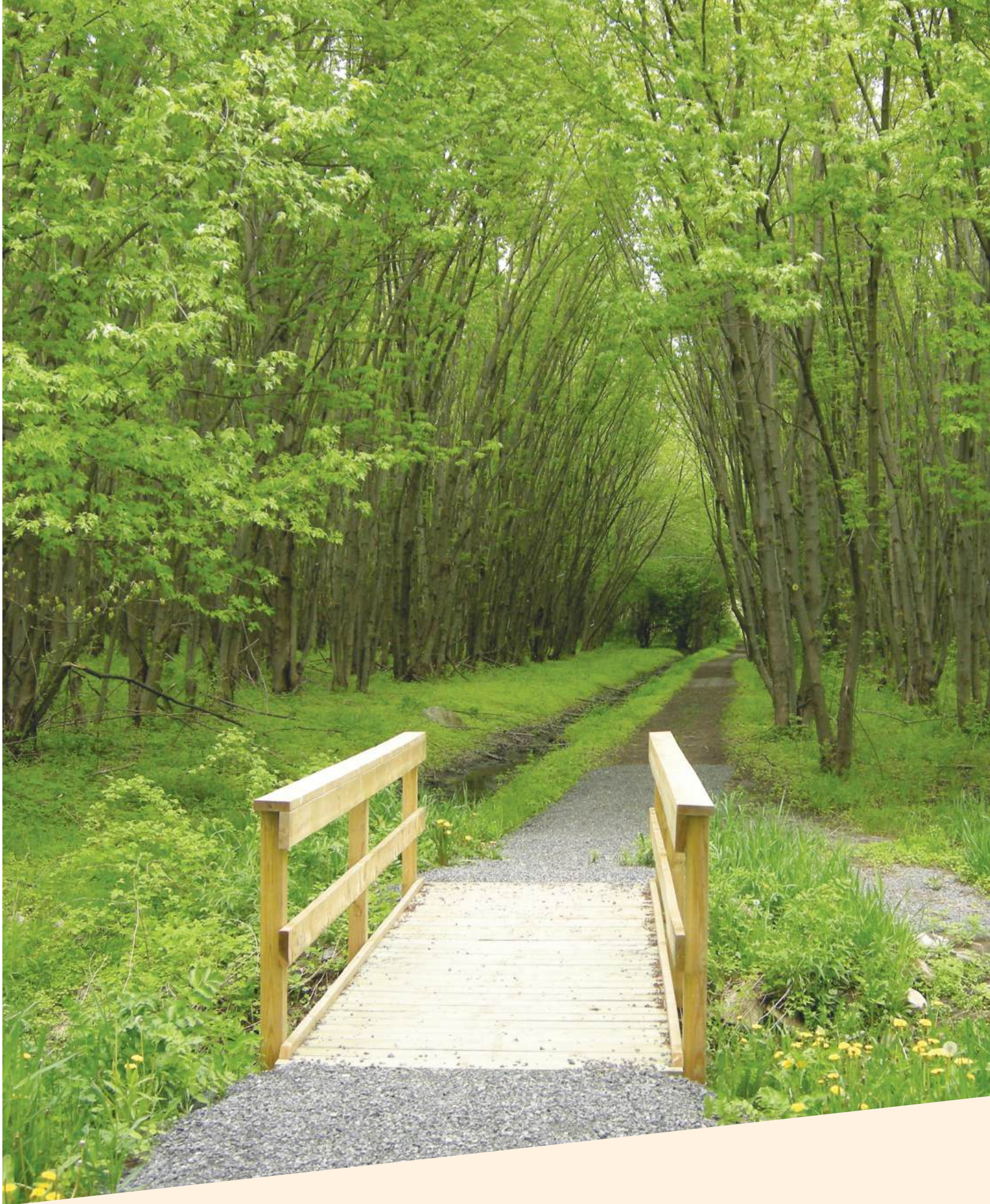
LAST YEAR, IN THE SNC JURISDICTION:

In 2019, SNC's network of 15 Conservation Areas welcomed over 92,800 visitors to hike, geocache, picnic, kayak, canoe, launch their boat, bird watch, fish, and enjoy their local environment.

- SNC installed 100 new signs across its Community Lands to identify ownership and promote sustainable, proper management of forests.
- SNC completed an emergency preparedness inventory to assign civic numbers at all Conservation Areas.

2020 PRIORITIES:

- SNC will continue to work with partner municipalities to increase visitor safety and enhance emergency preparedness at Conservation Areas.
- SNC is committed to regular maintenance and upkeep of parks and trails to ensure accessible recreation for residents. This includes grooming year-round to ensure safe trails during every season.



TWO CREEKS FOREST CONSERVATION AREA IN MORRISBURG

MAKING SCIENCE BASED DECISIONS



WHAT WE DO:

- Collect water quality and quantity, stream health, fisheries and forestry data to support stewardship programs and guide sustainable development.
- Invasive species management and species at risk habitat assessments.
- Produce Subwatershed Report Cards and other reports on environmental health.
- Monitor weather and water data at groundwater and surface water monitoring stations.

LAST YEAR, IN SOUTH DUNDAS:

- 38 sites monitored through the Ontario Stream Assessment Protocol (OSAP).
 - Over 1.4 km of stream has been evaluated for channel morphology, bank stability, stream flow, water quality, invertebrate composition, and fish community composition. Data guides habitat restoration priorities.
- 3 groundwater monitoring stations located at Pleasant Valley Road, Beckstead Road, and Froatburn Road.
- In 2019, SNC completed the Upper South Nation Subwatershed Report Card. This report provides information on the state of forest, wetland and surface water quality conditions within the headwaters of the South Nation River and the South Branch of the South Nation River.
- SNC has developed a new hydrological model for the South Nation Watershed which enhances Flood Forecasting and Warning and Low Water Response Programs. Recent updates to the model have improved its simulations of future hydrological conditions using soil moisture and groundwater data.
- 2 municipal drains assessed to provide a classification based on flow and fisheries data.
- SNC continues to monitor invasive species on our lands and has carried out targeted control projects for Phragmites, European and Glossy Buckthorn, and Dog-Strangling Vine.
- In 2019, SNC in partnership with Environment and Climate Change Canada completed the construction of 5 vernal pools on SNC properties. The vernal pools provide important amphibian breeding habitat, including for species at risk.

2020 PRIORITIES:

- Subwatershed Report Cards are produced annually in different regions following a year of monitoring, reporting on surface and groundwater quality along with forest and wetland cover. The recently published report on the Upper South Nation Subwatershed highlights conditions in southern municipalities; SNC will be working on the Castor River Subwatershed Report Card in 2020. Reporting is based on a 5-year rotation of monitoring programs.
- The newly created vernal pools will be monitored for amphibians through the use of acoustic recording devices provided by Environment and Climate Change Canada. The devices record frog calling at set intervals throughout the Spring so that staff can later identify which species are using the pools for breeding.
- Work with municipal partners to evaluate the sustainability of municipal the water supplies.



ELECTROFISHING ON THE SOUTH NATION RIVER

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES AND YOUTH



WHAT WE DO:

- Deliver curriculum-based education programs to over 2,000 local youth every year; including Youth Fish Camps, Youth Hunt Apprenticeships, the Stream of Dreams Community Art and Environmental Education Program, and the Maple Syrup Education Program.
- Regularly attend community events and fairs to network with residents and highlight SNC's programs and services.
- Offer over \$10,000 in Community Environmental Grants to non-profit community groups.
- Partner with school boards to deliver environmental high school program certifications.

LAST YEAR, IN THE SNC JURISDICTION:

- SNC worked closely with partner agencies to sponsor or cohost river races along the South Nation River, Ottawa River and St. Lawrence River.
- SNC hosted high school students at various project sites for Specialist High Skills Major certifications towards their high school diplomas.
- SNC delivered the Stream of Dreams program to over 1,000 local students.
- Thanks to support from Federal and Provincial funding agencies, SNC hires several local summer students every year from across its 4,384 square-kilometer jurisdiction in Eastern Ontario.
- SNC hosted dozens of local youth at its annual Fish Camps and Hunt Apprenticeship Programs.
- SNC worked with its local partners to help organize and host community events across the jurisdiction.
- SNC relaunched its Maple Syrup Education Program for the 18th season at the Oschmann Forest in North Dundas. The not-for-profit education program hosted over 500 local students in 2019, providing them with a hands-on environmental learning experience at a local sugar shack.
 - Students learn about the process of maple syrup production as it has evolved from First Nations traditions through to modern day production techniques. The program supplements the Ontario science curriculum and includes key teachable moments in areas of natural heritage, forest management, and ecosystem habitats.

2020 PRIORITIES:

- SNC will work with municipalities and partner agencies to adapt and create new ways to connect with local communities and youth during Covid-19 such as online campaigns, 'Nature at Home' live educational facebook series and digital media learning opportunities.
- SNC will continue to work with its regional partners and member-municipalities to deliver meaningful environmental education and host community events across the jurisdiction.
- SNC will work with partners to create a new strategic vision and plan to position the Authority beyond the year 2020.



SNC SUPPORTS LOCAL RIVER EVENTS ANNUALLY

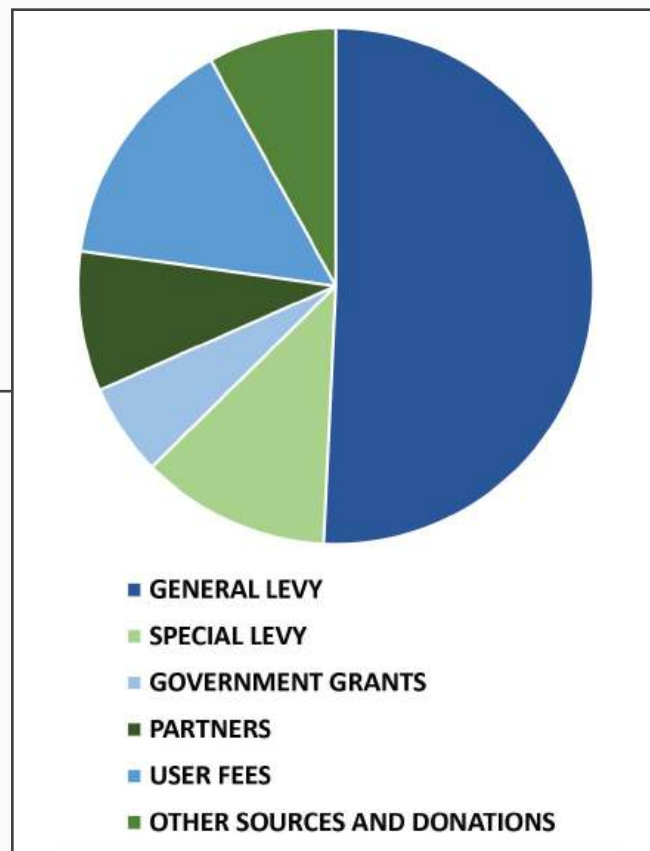
YOUR PARTNER IN CONSERVATION

South Nation Conservation (SNC) contributes to the local environment thanks to the funding support of SNC's 16 member municipalities and self-generated revenue from donations, partnerships, and government grants.

2020 SNC BUDGET SUMMARY

Budget: \$6,855,520

- General Levy: \$3,478,942
- Special Levy: \$815,394
- Government Grants: \$395,294
- Partners: \$600,968
- User Fees: \$1,012,670
- Other Sources and Donations: \$552,252



For every \$100,000 in household assessment, your municipality contributes \$5.58 on average to South Nation Conservation. These contributions allow SNC to provide programs and services that promote watershed management, sustainability, and the protection of people and property.



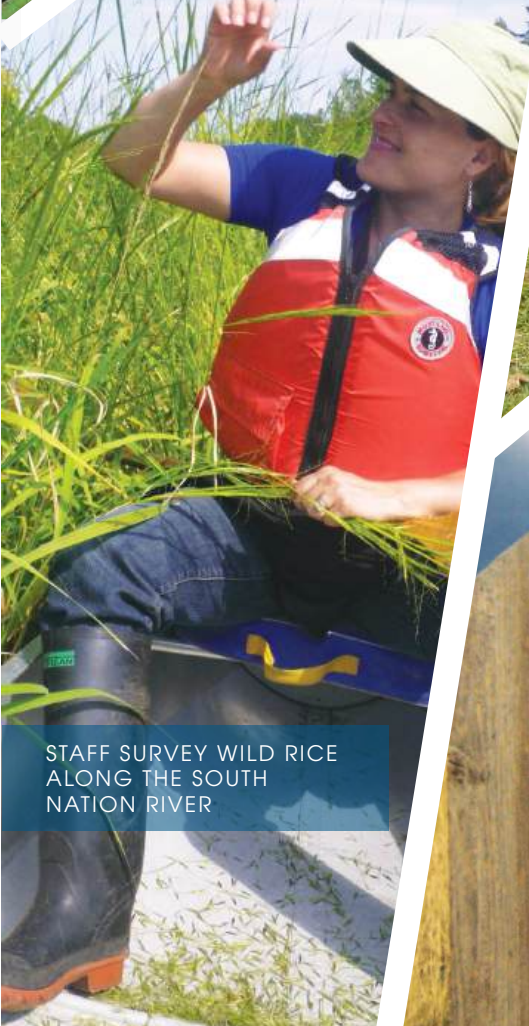
SNC STAFF TREE PLANTING AT WARWICK FOREST



HOOP NETTING FISH SURVEYS ON THE SOUTH NATION RIVER



SNC'S FIRST STREAM OF DREAMS IN ROCKLAND



STAFF SURVEY WILD RICE ALONG THE SOUTH NATION RIVER



BEE-KEEPING ON SNC COMMUNITY LANDS AT AMBROSIA APIARIES IN BERWICK

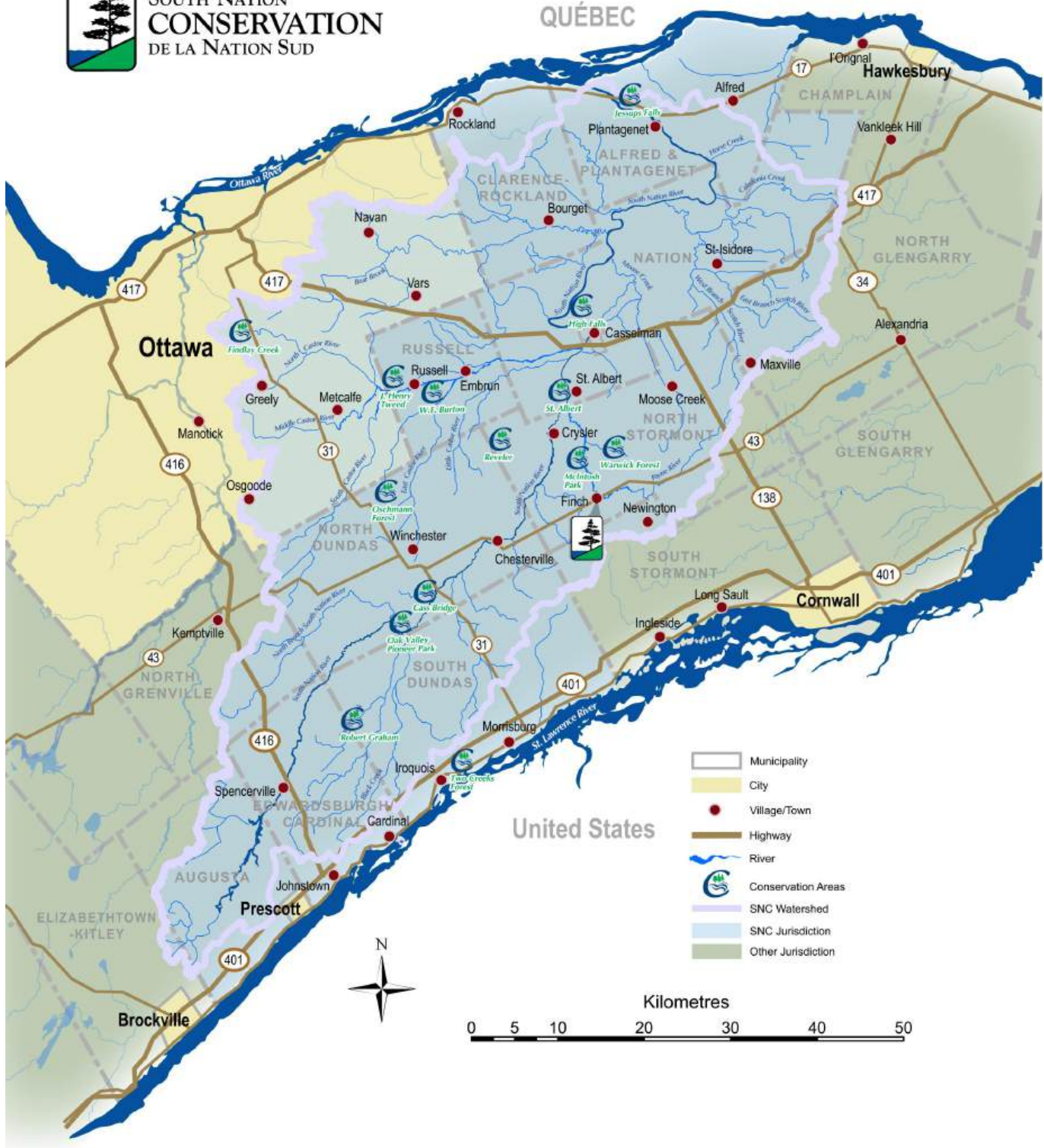


SNC RAIN GAUGE FOR COLLECTION OF PRECIPITATION DATA

OUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT; WE'RE IN IT TOGETHER.



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