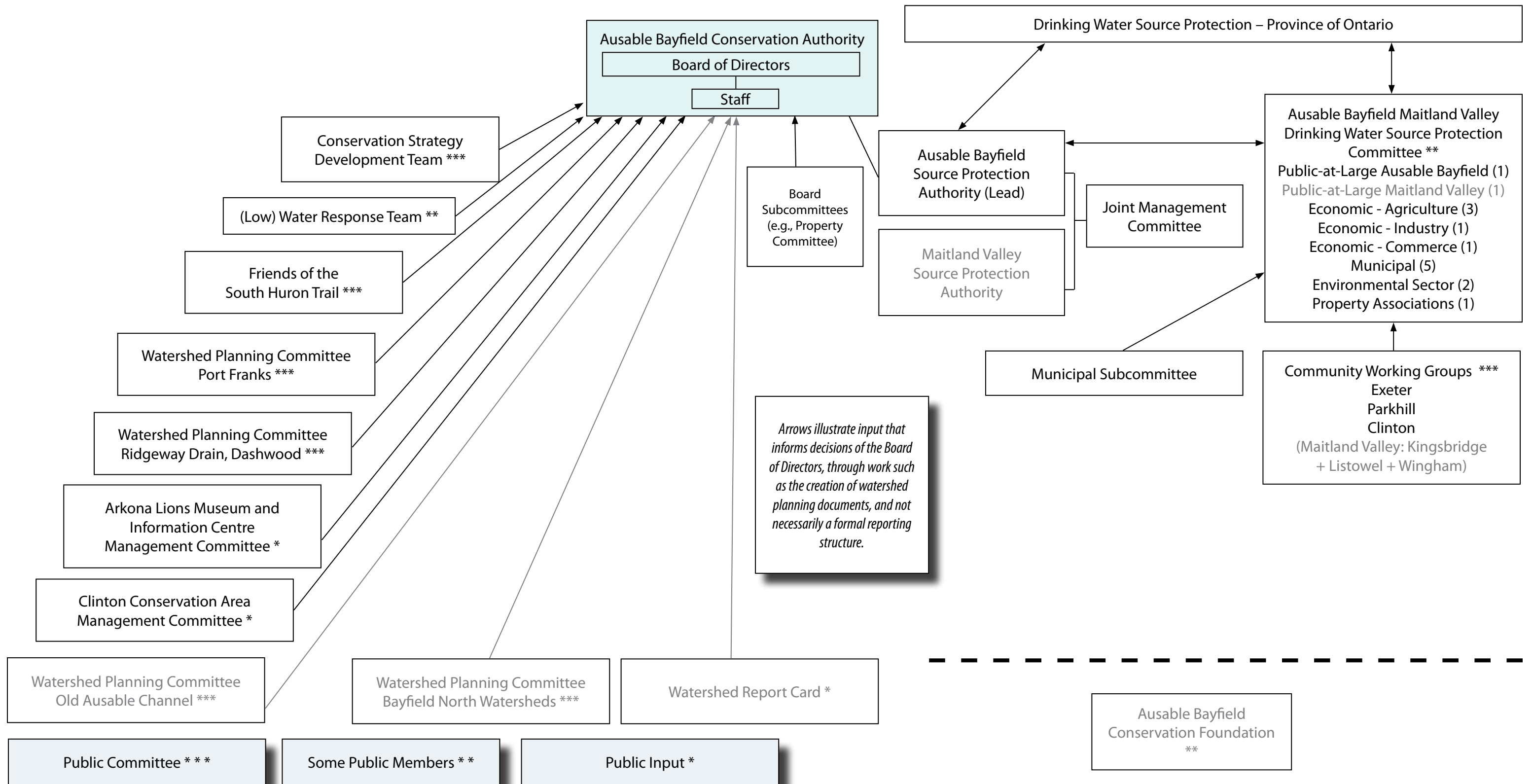


AUSABLE BAYFIELD CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (ABCA)

CURRENT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN WATERSHED DECISION-MAKING



HISTORY OF CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES IN ONTARIO

Mandate, Roles, Responsibilities

- *Protecting Life and Property*
- *Conservation Authorities Act*

Conservation authorities, created in 1946 by an Act of the Provincial Legislature, are mandated to ensure the conservation, restoration and responsible management of Ontario’s water, land and natural habitats through programs that balance human, environmental and economic needs.

Conservation Authorities work in partnership with municipalities to protect life and property through the development of programs that minimize or prevent the impact of disasters such as flooding and erosion.

Responsibility for managing natural resources rests with the Province of Ontario but the scale of deforestation, erosion, flooding water problems, and loss of wetlands, in the 1940s required a new approach. The *Conservation Authorities Act* enabled natural resource management at a watershed scale, with support of municipal councils and watershed stewards.

Renewable natural resources of the province were in an unhealthy state as a result of intensive land use practices during the 1930s and 1940s. The combined impacts of drought and deforestation, and the loss of wetlands, led to extensive soil loss and flooding. Conservation authorities have since achieved an enviable record in wetland protection and management, conservation information and education, provision of local and regional recreational opportunities, forest management and heritage conservation, among other programs.

Three fundamental concepts were embodied in the *Conservation Authorities Act*:

- 1. Watershed Jurisdiction** – Conservation Authorities were to have jurisdiction over one or more watersheds. This stewardship was to cover all aspects of conservation in the area. This has meant that a conservation authority has been able to handle such problems as flood control in a complete and rational basis. By its power to establish regulations, an authority has been able to protect life and property, river valleys from building encroachment and erosion problems.
- 2. Local Initiative** – A conservation authority in any area could only be formed when the desires of the residents reached the point where they were willing to request the government of Ontario to form an Authority. Responsibilities are similar to the running of a municipality.
- 3. Cost Sharing** – The Conservation Authorities Act stipulated that the costs of projects should be shared.

Range of Program Development

Each conservation authority’s watershed management program is geared to its own special needs and conditions.

Decisions made by boards of directors reflect the resource management concerns of local residents, member municipalities and the Province of Ontario

The following list offers an idea of the range in program development, but it must be kept in mind that all Authorities do not implement all programs.

- Watershed Strategies
- Wetlands
- Flood Control
- Floodplain Management
- Flood Warning
- Streamflow Monitoring
- Erosion Control
- Outdoor Recreation
- Conservation Education
- Municipal Plan Review
- Forest Management
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Management
- Great Lakes Shoreline Management
- Provincial Water Quality Monitoring
- Ground Water Monitoring
- Community Relations
- Private Land Rural Extension Services, for example:
 - Reforestation
 - Soil erosion/sedimentation
- Windbreaks and Shelterbelts
- Rural Drainage
- Heritage Conservation
- Tourism
- Urban Stormwater Management
- Natural Area Preservation
- Waterfront Development Flow
- Water Supply/Low Flow
- Augmentation
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- Drinking Water Source Protection (around Municipal wells, intakes)
- Source water protection (broader protection of watershed sources)

Acts and Regulations

The *Conservation Authorities Act* and the *Clean Water Act, 2006* are among the pieces of legislation that give conservation authorities certain authority and responsibilities. There are also accompanying regulations that give the local agencies authority and responsibilities.

The ‘Fill, Construction and Alteration to Waterways’ Regulation was replaced with the current ‘Regulation of Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses.’

The *Conservation Authorities Act* was amended, in 1998, as part of the *Red Tape Reduction Act* (Bill 25), to ensure regulations under the law were consistent across the province and complementary to provincial policies.

Ontario Regulation 97/04 outlines the content that each conservation authority’s regulation would contain. Amendments required all conservation authorities to regulate Great Lakes shorelines, interconnecting channels, large inland lakes and wetlands, in addition to the areas and features each conservation authority historically regulated. The regulation for Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA), is *Ontario Regulation 147/06*. These are examples of laws and regulations pertaining to conservation authorities.

What is regulated?

Conservation authorities are empowered to regulate development and activities in or adjacent to river or stream valleys, Great Lakes and large inland lakes shorelines, watercourses, hazardous lands and wetlands. They ensure conformity of wording across all conservation authorities and complement municipal implementation of provincial policies under the *Planning Act* such as hazardous lands and wetlands. Development taking place on these lands may require permission from the conservation authority to confirm that the control of flooding, erosion, dynamic beaches, pollution or the conservation of land are not affected. They also regulate the straightening, changing, diverting or interfering in any way with the existing channel of a river, creek, stream, watercourse or for changing or interfering in any way with a wetland.

The local conservation authority can be contacted for information about the permit and approval process.

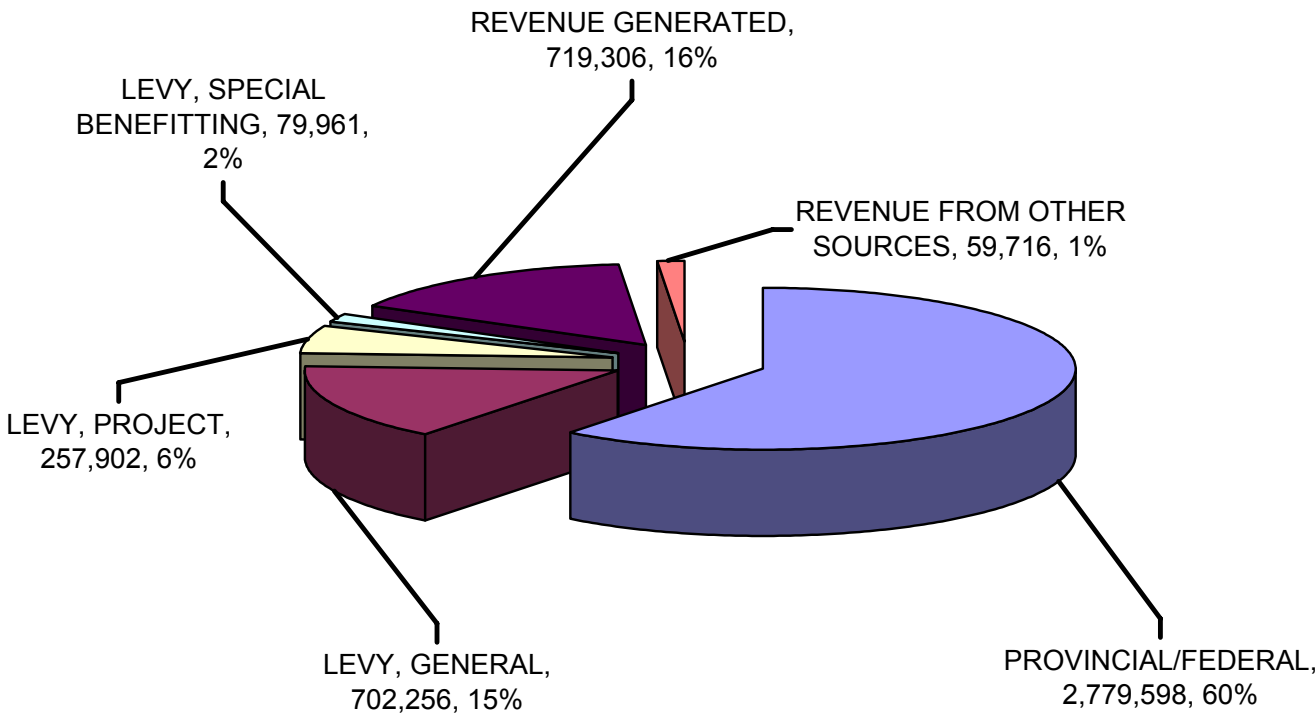
Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority

Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) was created in 1946 as the Ausable River Conservation Authority, the first conservation authority in Ontario. Loss of trees and wetlands in this watershed was one of the reasons local municipalities decided a conservation authority was needed here. There are 12 municipalities in the ABCA area: Adelaide Metcalfe, Bluewater, Central Huron, Huron East, Lambton Shores, Lucan Biddulph, Middlesex Centre, North Middlesex, Perth South, South Huron, Warwick, West Perth.

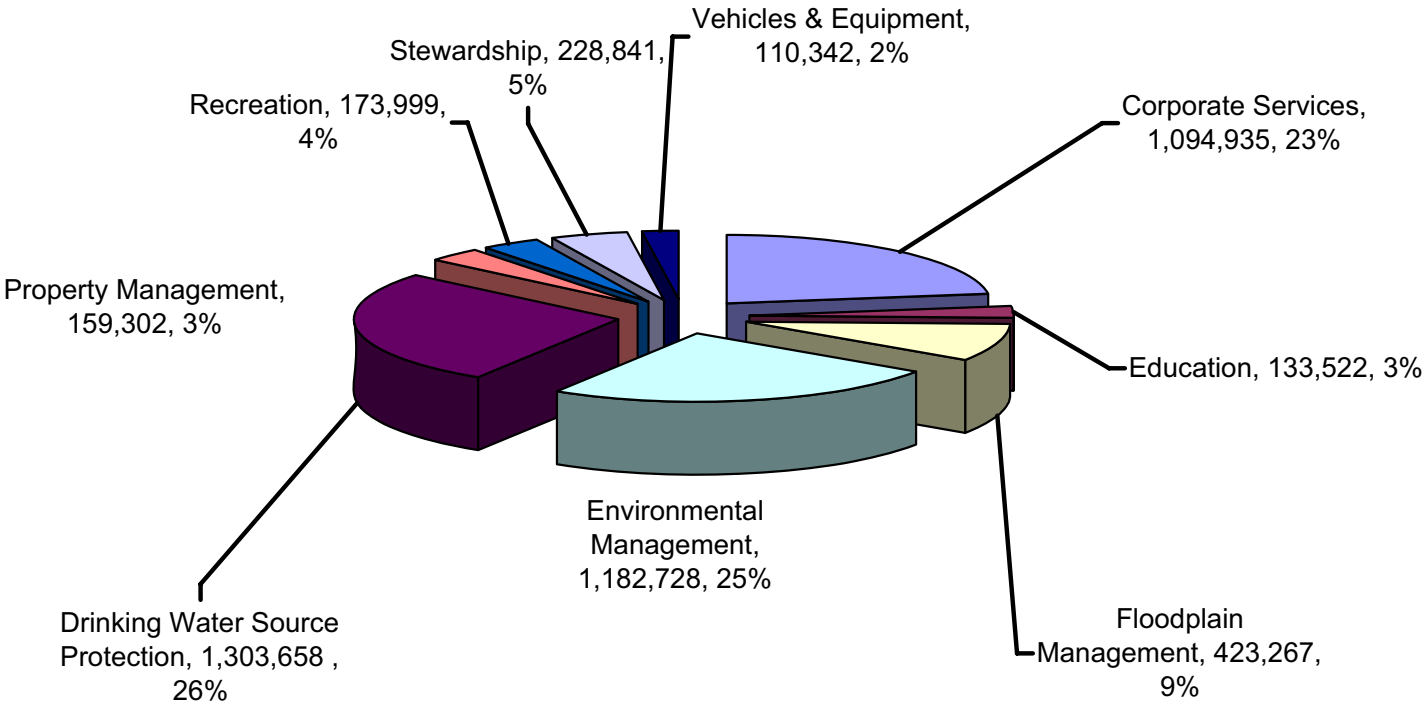
AUSABLE BAYFIELD CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (ABCA)

FUNDING

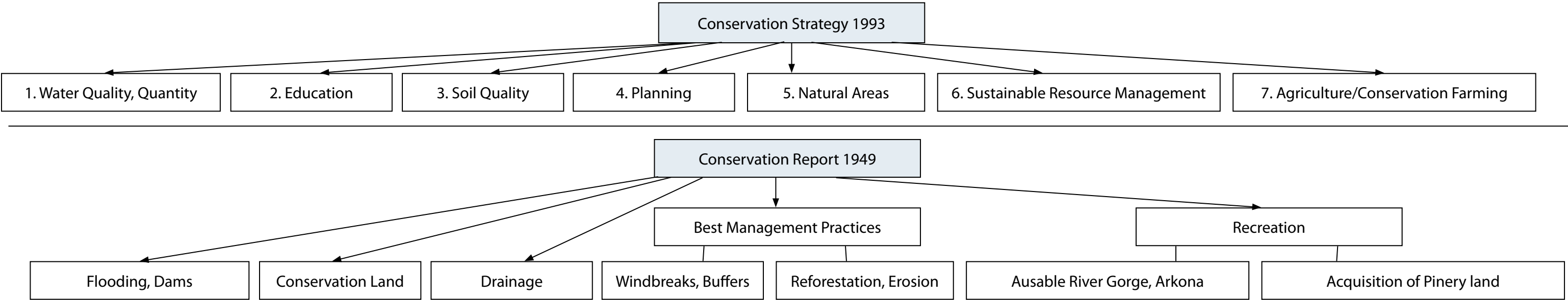
2009 Sources of Revenue - Total Revenue \$4,598,739 (Unaudited figures)



2009 Expenses - Total Expenses \$4,810,594 (Unaudited Figures)

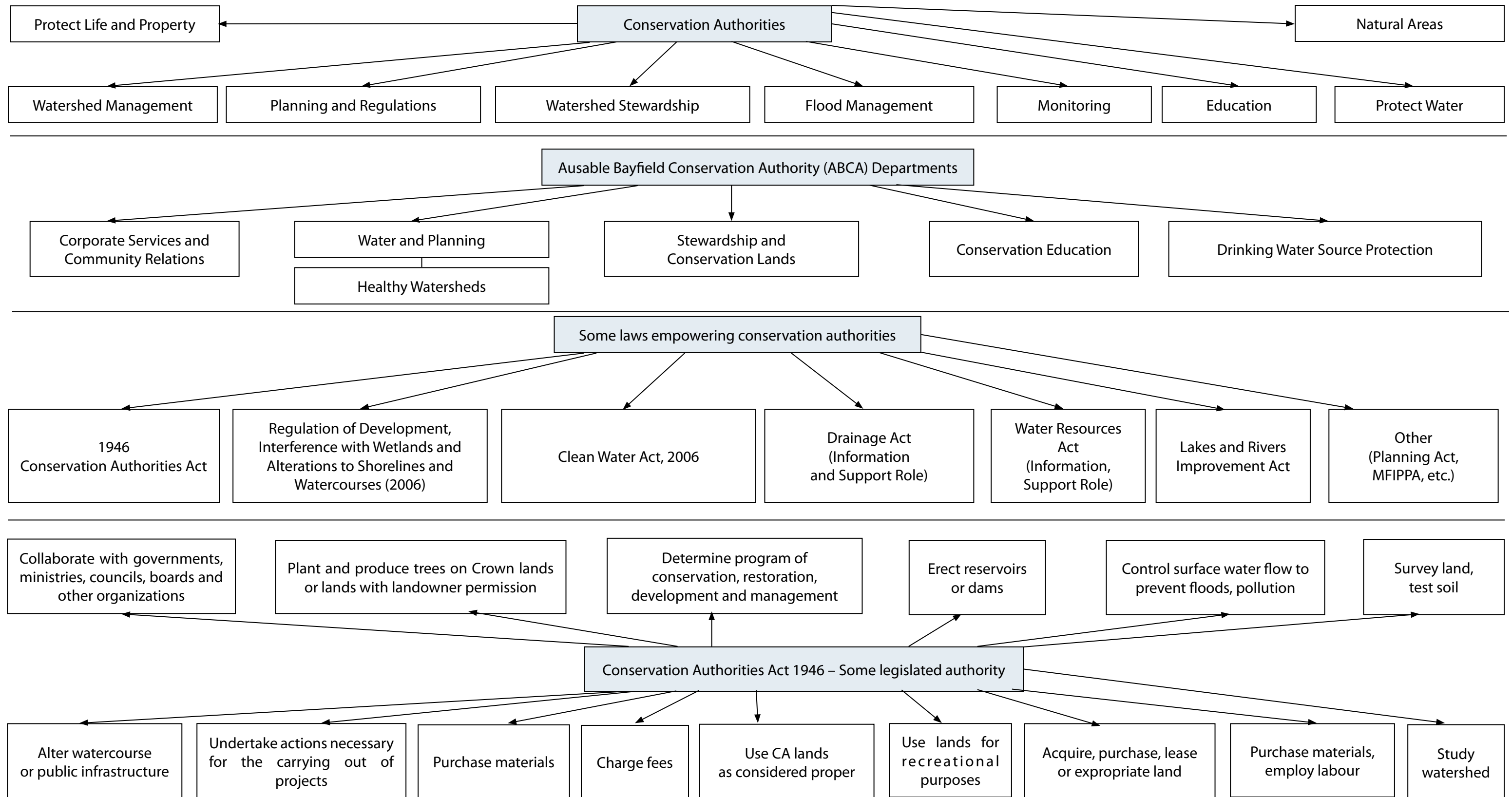


LOCAL GUIDING DOCUMENTS



AUSABLE BAYFIELD CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (ABCA)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



CONSERVATION STRATEGY'S INFLUENCE ON AUSABLE BAYFIELD CONSERVATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

