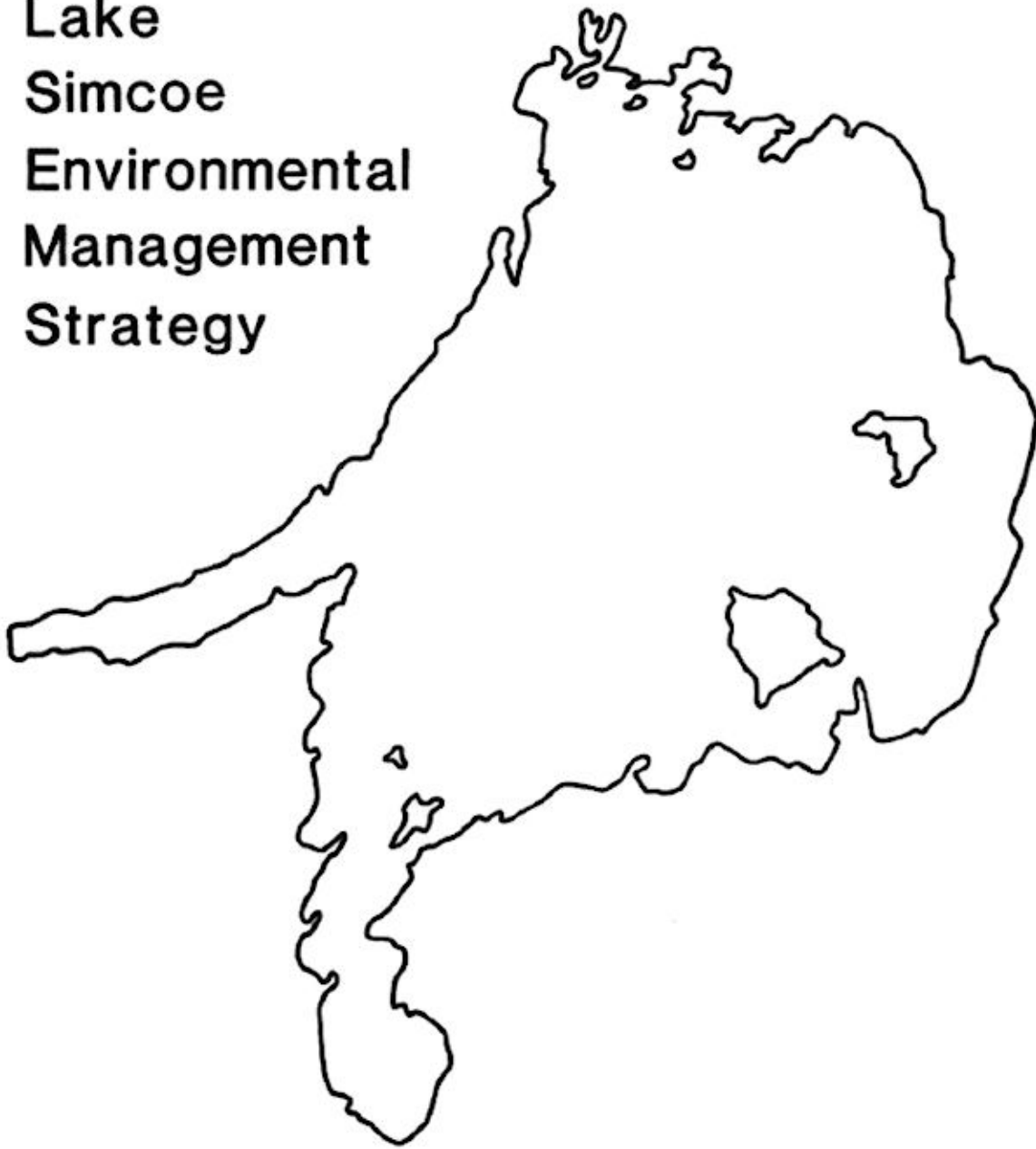


Lake  
Simcoe  
Environmental  
Management  
Strategy



**COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT**

**1985**



Ontario





LAKE SIMCOE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT**

Prepared for the Steering Committee of the  
Lake Simcoe Environmental Management Strategy

by

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September 1986

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# LAKE SIMCOE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

## FOREWORD

This report is one of a series of technical reports prepared in the course of the Lake Simcoe Environmental Management Strategy (LSEMS) studies. These studies were initiated in 1981, as directed by the Cabinet Committee on Resources Development, to investigate methods of reducing phosphorus loadings from the Holland Marsh.

The studies are under the direction of the LSEMS Steering Committee, which is comprised of representatives of the following agencies:

- ▶ Ministry of Agriculture and Food
- ▶ Ministry of the Environment
- ▶ Ministry of Natural Resources and
- ▶ South Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority

This Committee expanded the SCOPE of these studies to include the total Lake Simcoe basin. This change in study mandate was made to place all sources of phosphorus loadings to Lake Simcoe into perspective. Thus the following sources were investigated:

- ▶ agricultural and rural runoff
- ▶ urban runoff
- ▶ streambank erosion and
- ▶ sewage treatment facilities.

In order to develop practical abatement measures to minimize such inputs, studies were initiated to inventory, quantify and target areas with respect to soil loss, livestock and farming operations, streambank erosion and urban runoff.

The Committee also approved Lake Simcoe studies to establish current information on lake water quality and aquatic plant growth. Such studies were required to establish baseline conditions to compare future water quality conditions. These are expected to improve, because of the following:

- ▶ municipal and provincial efforts to reduce phosphorus loadings from sewage treatment facilities and
- ▶ because of expected changes to more environmentally acceptable land use practices by developers and farmers to reduce inputs from non-point sources.

Questions with respect to the contents of this report should be directed to:

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## **DISCLAIMER**

The material presented in these reports is analytical support information and does not necessarily constitute policy or approved management priorities of the Province and/or the South Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority. Interpretation and evaluation of the data and findings, should not be based solely on this specific report. Instead they should be analysed in light of other reports produced within the comprehensive framework of this environmental management strategy.

Reference to equipment, brand names or suppliers in this publication is not to be interpreted as an endorsement of that product or supplier by the authors, the Ministry of the Environment or the South Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Conservation Corner	2
Soil Conservation Slide Show	2
Soil Conservation Newspaper	3
Rural Implementation Advisory Committee	3
Soil Conservation Survey	4
Displays	5
Presentations To Local Groups	7
Community Conservation Projects	8
Summary And Recommendations	11
References	13



## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Lake Simcoe Display	6
Muck Soil Conservation Display	6
Community Conservation Project	10

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Lake Simcoe Environmental Management Strategy (L.S.E.M.S.)-Community Relations Program is an ongoing program which began in early 1982.

The main purpose of the Community Relations Program is to promote awareness about the environmental problems of Lake Simcoe and the aims, objectives and programs of L.S.E.M.S. The program is designed to inform landowners about the long term benefits of erosion control in terms of improved land productivity and better stream and lake quality.

The program is directed towards residents in the Lake Simcoe watershed, particularly landowners and students.

A number of public awareness programs designed around these objectives have been carried out since 1982.

## **CONSERVATION CORNER**

Conservation Corner is a biweekly newspaper column that began in 1983. It appears in five community, farm and real estate newspapers on a regular basis and six others occasionally. Topics include erosion control, water quality, measures everyone can take to improve water quality, economic benefits of soil conservation and staff profiles. Positive comments have been received from readers in Aurora, Bradford, Newmarket and as far away as Georgian Bay.

## **SOIL CONSERVATION SLIDE SHOW**

An automated one projector slide show was produced in 1985. The slide show discusses the causes and results of erosion in terms of land productivity and water quality in the South Lake Simcoe watershed. Erosion control programs of the Conservation Authority, joint Conservation Authority-O.M.A.F. programs and landowner's own projects help demonstrate the benefits of soil conservation.

The slide show is aimed at high school and adult audiences, particularly landowners in the South Lake Simcoe watershed. It will be used in agricultural, community and school presentations.

## **SOIL CONSERVATION NEWSPAPER**

A soil conservation newspaper, "Soil . . . life of the land, peril of the lake", describing the benefits of soil conservation in terms of land productivity and improved water quality, was prepared in 1983. It was distributed to libraries, public information centres, municipal and other government offices, private businesses (e.g. feed stores), tourist centres, schools and agricultural fairs.

## **RURAL IMPLEMENTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Meetings were held in 1984 to discuss the formation of a Rural Implementation Advisory Committee. The committee was formed in early 1985 with staff from the Conservation Authority, the Ministries of Agriculture and Food, Environment, and Natural Resources as well as with the directors of the local Soil and Crop Improvement Associations. The committee has two main objectives: to use the findings of L.S.E.M.S. to effectively co-ordinate the soil conservation programs of various agencies and to promote practical soil and water conservation measures through education and demonstration programs.

## **SOIL CONSERVATION SURVEY**

The purpose of this survey was to determine the attitudes and willingness of landowners within the Lake Simcoe watershed to participate in measures that reduce soil loss on both the land they own and rent. These measures also help to ensure better water quality in nearby streams and the lake.

In August 1984, the survey was mailed to 381 landowners in high potential erosion areas in the portions of York and Durham Regions that lie within the Lake Simcoe watershed. Forty-one per cent of the questionnaires received by landowners were completed and returned by mail.

The results of this survey are useful to those who are planning and implementing remedial measures.

Survey responses indicate the following:

- ▶ landowners are concerned about soil erosion on the land they own and rent
- ▶ most are either willing to participate in an erosion control project or require more information before deciding whether to participate
- ▶ most prefer to receive soil conservation information from field staff, farm newspapers and magazines
- ▶ most prefer to deal with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and their local Soil and Crop Improvement Association on soil conservation matters.

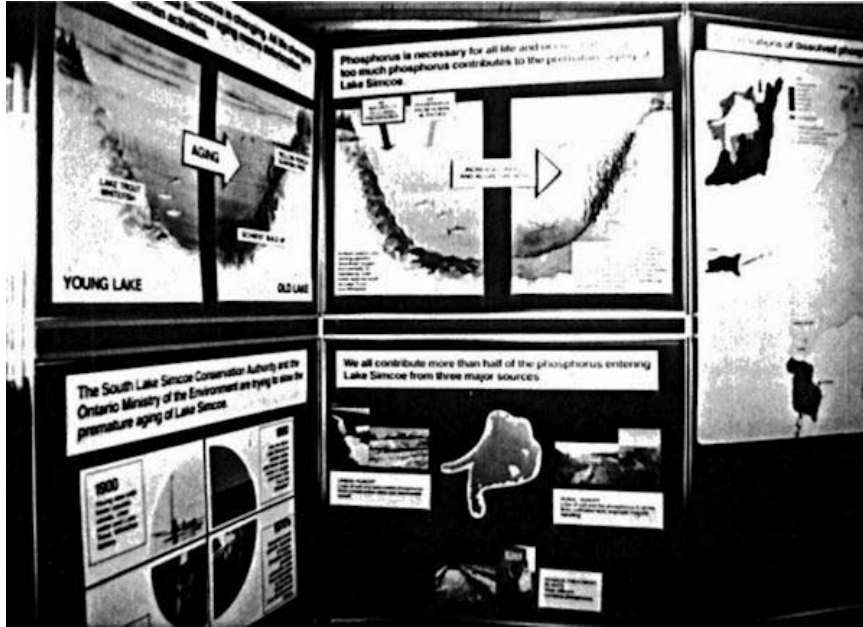
## **DISPLAYS**

An eight panelled Lake Simcoe Display was produced jointly by the Conservation Authority and the Ministry of the Environment in 1982 and updated in 1984 (Figure 1). It was designed for a general audience and was circulated through agricultural fairs, libraries, schools and community events.

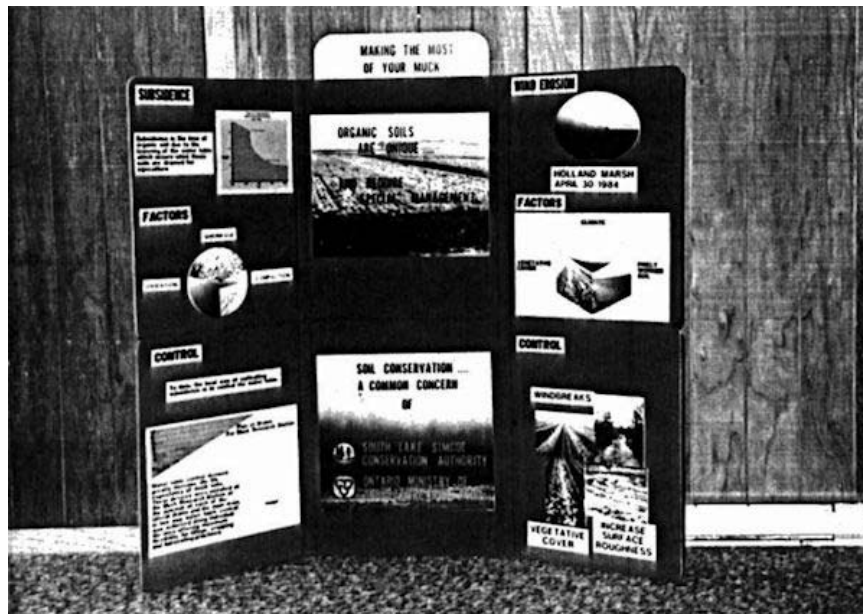
Two portable Soil Conservation Displays were produced in 1983 and circulated through libraries, schools, township offices and agricultural fairs in 1983 and 1984.

A portable display describing the benefits of soil conservation on muck soil was produced in early 1985 in co-operation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. The display, as shown in Figure 2, was set up at the Annual Muck Vegetable Growers Conference and the Muck Research Station in the Holland Marsh.

A portable Ministry of the Environment Display about Lake Simcoe was also circulated through libraries, schools and township offices.



**Figure 1:** The Lake Simcoe Display as it was set up in the Conservation Authority trailer for agricultural fairs, open houses and special events.



**Figure 2:** The Muck Soil Conservation Display that was developed in co-operation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food in early 1985.

## PRESENTATIONS TO LOCAL GROUPS

As part of the Community Relations Program, audio-visual presentations have been given to students, teachers and members of community and agricultural groups (see Table 1). Through these presentations, groups are introduced to the environmental problems of Lake Simcoe and measures that are being taken by government, individuals and groups to help the lake.

**Table 1:** Audio-Visual Presentations.

PROGRAM	AGE LEVEL
Warmwater Stream Improvement	teen, adult
Coldwater Stream Improvement	teen, adult
Soil Conservation Slide Show	teen, adult
Lake Simcoe Water Quality and Fisheries	teen, adult
Lake Simcoe Program	teen, adult
Water Quality Program	ages 6 to 9
Water Quality Program	ages 9 to 11
Lake Simcoe Children's Program	ages 11 to 13



A presentation given to campers during the summer of 1983 and 1984 at Sibbald's Point Provincial Park included a skit about the changes in Lake Simcoe's water quality. This was shown through the eyes of two people using the lake for over seventy years. The skit was followed by the 1980 National Film Board of Canada's water management film "S.P.L.A.S.H.".

Feedback from all of these presentations indicate that most landowners, farmers and students are aware of the importance of soil conservation. As well, they are surprised that one of the main pollutants entering the lake is soil and the phosphorus it carries from urban and rural areas.

## **COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PROJECTS**

These projects involve local community groups in reforestation, erosion control, stream clean-up or community awareness programs.

The purpose of the projects is to make people aware of the Conservation Authority's policies and programs, local conservation issues and concepts such as watershed, erosion control and floodplain. Through these projects people are informed that they can control erosion and runoff in their own community, thereby improving the quality of the land, the neighbouring stream and even the lake.

Two projects were completed in 1985. One was a streambank erosion control project at Scanlon Creek Conservation Area, north of Bradford. The project was completed by seven members of the Baha'i Youth Group of Simcoe and staff of the Conservation Authority.

The other project involved cleaning up a section of a coldwater stream, the Uxbridge Brook in Uxbridge. Seven members of the 1st Uxbridge Rangers and Conservation Authority staff removed debris and log jams from the sensitive headwater section of this stream (Figure 3).

These two projects reduced erosion and improved the stream habitat. As well, both groups felt their work was worthwhile.



**Figure 3:** Members of the 1<sup>st</sup> Uxbridge Rangers assist Conservation Authority Biologist in removing debris from the Uxbridge Brook as part of a Community Conservation Project.

## **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Community Relations Program has played an important role in the Lake Simcoe Environmental Management Strategy. It has had a two pronged approach of both informing and educating Lake Simcoe area residents about the lake's environmental problems as well as the findings and recommendations of L.S.E.M.S.

Positive responses have been received from readers of "Conservation Corner". For some, it has become a way of keeping up-to-date on local conservation issues, particularly those relating to Lake Simcoe.

Responses to the 1984 soil conservation questionnaire indicate that most landowners in potential high soil loss areas are concerned with soil conservation. As well, they are either willing to participate in an erosion control project or require more information before deciding whether to participate.

Feedback from presentations given to local groups indicates that most people are aware of the adverse effects of erosion, but seem unaware of its impact on long term land productivity and water quality. As well, most people seem aware of the poor water quality in Lake Simcoe but seem unaware of the causes.

The 1985 Community Conservation Projects were a successful way of involving community groups in erosion control and stream improvement. The groups felt that they contributed to a better stream environment, which was indeed the case.

It is, therefore, recommended that the Community Relations Program continue. These educational and informational programs should continue to stress the contribution residents can make to better the lake environment.

It is further recommended that the following programs be continued:

- ▶ "Conservation Corner"
- ▶ presentations to local groups
- ▶ working with community groups on local conservation projects.

As well, it is recommended that these programs be initiated:

- ▶ the production of an L.S.E.M.S. newspaper
- ▶ the production of a soil conservation poster
- ▶ the production of a radio/television advertisement for soil conservation.

These programs will help increase public awareness of the findings and recommendations of the Lake Simcoe Environment Management Strategy and the environmental problems of Lake Simcoe.

Those who live in the Lake Simcoe watershed play a key role in determining the fate of the lake. Clearly, keeping them well informed should play an important role in implementing the Lake Simcoe Environmental Management Strategy.

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