

Feds give \$1.6 million to Lake Simcoe projects

The federal government is pouring another \$1.6 million into cleaning up Lake Simcoe.

A series of eight projects – ranging from \$50,000 for a pollution-tracking study in Orillia to \$760,000 for decommissioning leaky septic systems along the shoreline – make up the latest phase of the Conservative government's \$30-million Lake Simcoe Clean Up Fund.

"We rely on partnerships. Today's announcement demonstrates the spirit of co-operation with our federal government," said Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) chair Virginia Hackson.

"The LSRCA has taken on more than 60 projects and the list is simply too long to list. We all have a role to play to improve the ecological health of the watershed."

The conservation authority will receive \$760,000 to help with a \$1.8-million septic system decommissioning program throughout the Lake Simcoe watershed.

"There are more than 6,000 homes and cottages within 300 metres of the lake. Most have older septic systems – and that's dangerous because they send phosphorous and other contaminants into the lake. This project will help avert three-quarter kilograms of phosphorous per year per household," noted Barrie MP Patrick Brown.

Another septic decommissioning project in Ramara Township will receive \$190,250 from the Fund. The township is working to decommission 13 residential septic systems in Lagoon City – a project that will avert 36 kilograms of phosphorous from reaching the lake each year.

The LSRCA will also receive \$180,000 for a near-shore ecology monitoring program, while the Toronto Region Conservation Authority is receiving \$110,000 for a headwaters drainage study. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources is examining how much phosphorous the rivers and creeks that flow into Lake Simcoe can handle. The \$962,000 project will receive \$235,000 in federal funds.

"Lake Simcoe clearly plays an important role in (our) health and in our ecosystem. It plays an equally important role in our economy and in tourism," said Simcoe North MP Bruce Stanton. Project details dating back to when the Fund was first announced in October 2007 can be found online at www.our30million.ca .

More than 60 projects have been approved throughout the watershed to date, including local initiatives to create new spawning habitats and stabilize the banks of the Beaver River.

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