



ELGIN CLEAN WATER PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT



2024

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Elgin Clean Water Program (ECWP) was initiated in 2012 as a collaboration between the four conservation authorities (CAs) within Elgin County: Catfish Creek CA, Kettle Creek CA, Long Point Region CA and Lower Thames Valley CA. The ECWP provides the necessary technical expertise and financial incentives for landowners that are interested in implementing environmental projects.

A Review Committee oversees the program and reviews and approves projects. The Review Committee is comprised of representatives from Elgin County, the Elgin Soil and Crop Improvement Association, the Elgin Federation of Agriculture and an Elgin County landowner.

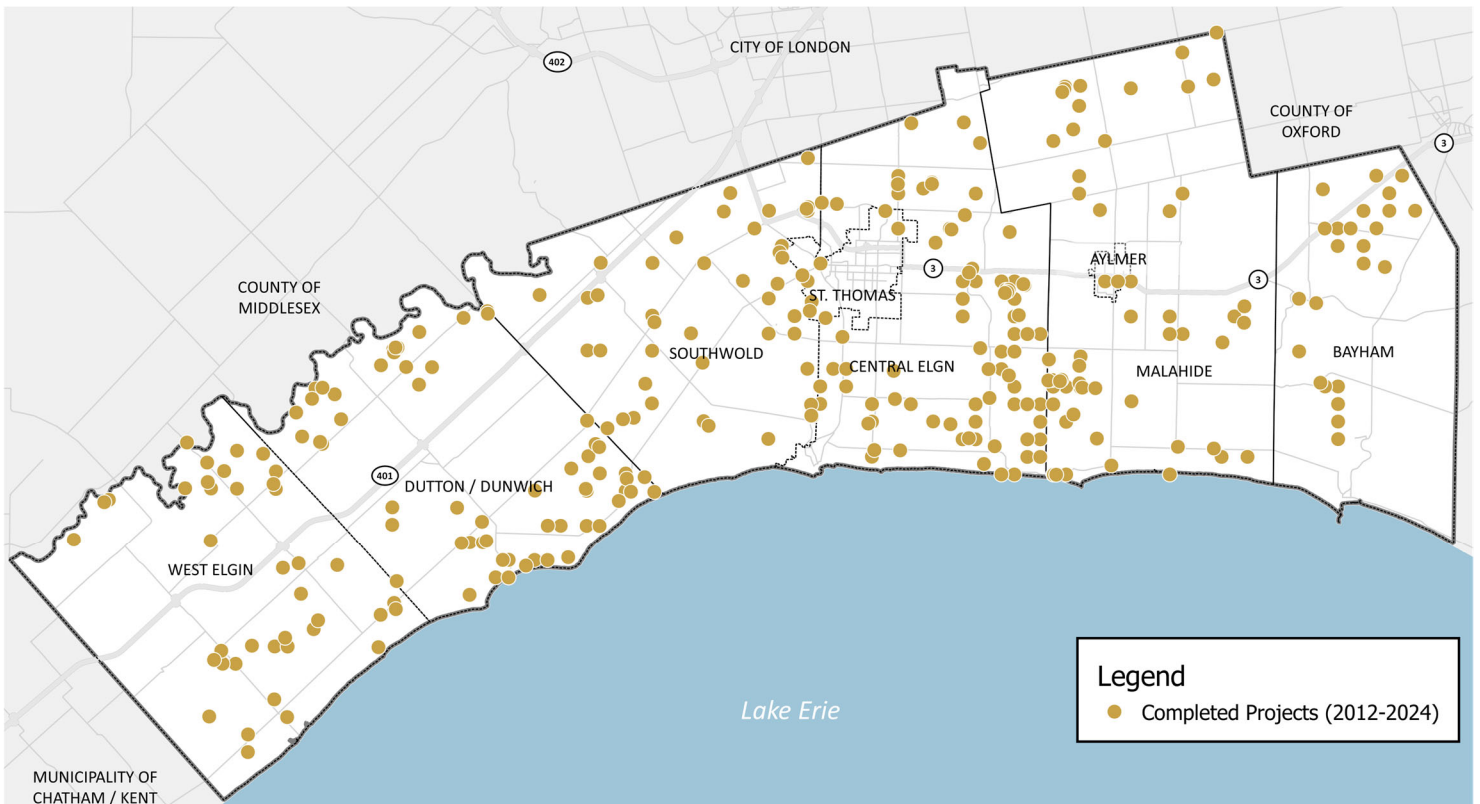
The following project categories are funded by the Elgin Clean Water Program:

- Well Management
- Erosion Control Structures
- Clean Water Diversion
- Wetland/Riparian Protection/Restoration
- Livestock Management
- Other Projects

In addition, a Cover Crop Incentive Program was established in 2017 which provides an incentive for farmers to plant cover crops on their farm in an effort to provide erosion control on agricultural fields over the winter months.

PROGRAM SUCCESS

To date, 340 projects have been completed across Elgin County since the program began in 2012. Total project costs have exceeded \$3,925,000. The ECWP has contributed \$933,645 in grants to landowners to undertake projects. CA staff have assisted landowners in leveraging the ECWP funding to obtain \$1,881,444 in matching funds and landowners have contributed \$1,110,332 of their own funds, labour and equipment.

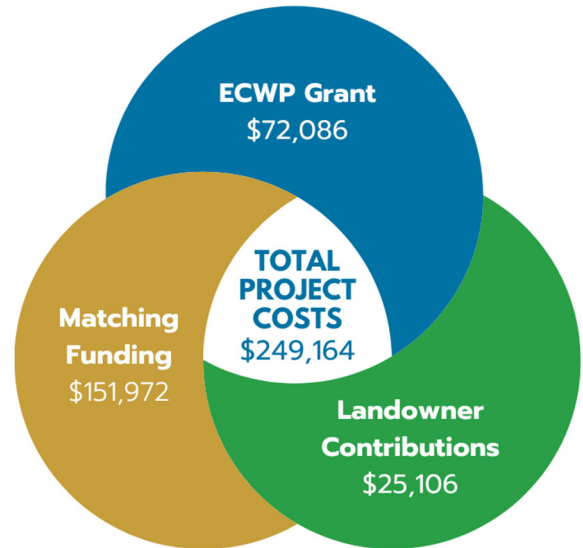


2024 PROGRAM SUMMARY

In 2024, 22 projects were completed, totalling \$72,086.09 in Elgin Clean Water Program grants.

The breakdown of completed projects was as follows:

- 5 Erosion Control
- 11 Wetland Creation
- 2 Other (Tallgrass Prairie)
- 4 Cover Crop



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

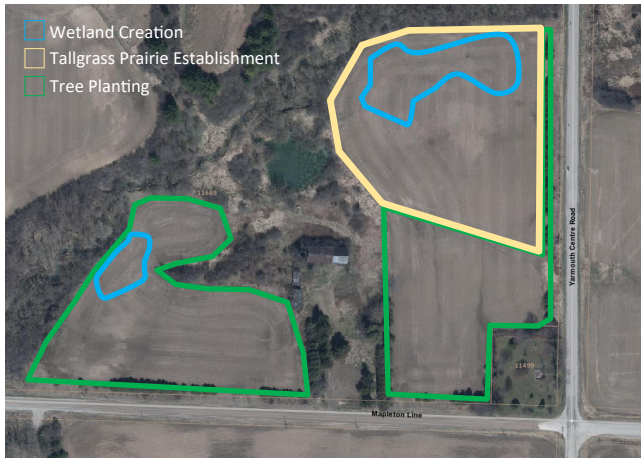
Wetland Creation

Wetland creation projects continue to be the most funded project category in 2024 with 11 projects completed. Wetland creation is important to Elgin County as less than 30 percent of the original wetlands remain in southern Ontario. Wetlands slow and store agricultural runoff, reduce flooding and soil erosion, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat.



Large Scale Restoration

This Central Elgin landowner had two fields totalling 11 acres that were difficult to farm. The agricultural lands were retired and a restoration plan was developed. ECWP supported the construction of two wetland cells and the planting of 3.5 acres into tallgrass prairie. The remaining acres were planted with 5,350 trees and shrubs.



Erosion Control

Significant gully erosion was occurring in two locations, impacting the agricultural land on this Bayham Township property. CA staff designed a solution which included the construction of berms with a drop pipe structure and overflow spillways.



Tallgrass Prairie Establishment

Five acres of tallgrass prairie was established along the Lake Erie shoreline in Dutton Dunwich to restore habitat for shoreline species and enhance biodiversity. A mix of over 15 species of native grasses and wildflowers was planted including Virginia Mountain Mint, Black-eyed Susan, Butterfly Milkweed, Wild Bergamot, Big and Little Bluestem, and Hairy Beardtongue.



2024 PROGRAM SPONSORS

Thank you to Elgin County and the Green Lane Community Trust Fund for funding the Elgin Clean Water Program.



PROGRAM PROMOTION

CA staff continue to actively promote the Elgin Clean Water Program to raise awareness of the funding available, recruit new participants and demonstrate impact. Promotion is accomplished by attending local farming organization events, advertisements placed in local papers, through social media content and showcasing projects on tours.



2024 LANDOWNER TESTIMONIALS

- “ECWP funding is extremely important, without funding this project would not have happened.”
- “CA staff looked after everything. I really appreciated how we were included in the decision making of the project from the tree planting to wetland placement!”
- “I was completely satisfied with the program and any/all interactions with the associated staff.”
- “I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Elgin Clean Water Program. Through the Cover Crop Incentive Program I have been able to protect my fields that are most at risk. I am certain that without this funding many growers would not be planting the cover crops that they do.”

The Elgin Clean Water Program is a partnership of:



www.elgincleanwater.ca