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CONSERVATION SUDBURY

2023 Annual Report on Section 28 Timelines

Reporting period of January 1 to December 31, 2023

Conservation Sudbury is committed to improving client services and increasing accountability, as per the Conservation Ontario Client Service and Streamlining Initiative. As part of this commitment, Conservation Sudbury will publish an annual report of the Section 28 permit applications and the timelines for approval.

Conservation Sudbury issues permits and permissions under Section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*. Section 28 requires a Conservation Authority (CA) to regulate development activities in or adjacent to natural hazard areas. This includes river or stream valleys, along shorelines of inland lakes, watercourses, within and adjacent to wetlands and other hazardous areas (e.g., unstable soil, bedrock, and slopes). Under the *Conservation Authorities Act*, development includes the placement or removal of fill or other materials, site grading, and the placement of structures. The CA also regulates the straightening, changing, diverting or interfering in any way with the existing channel of a watercourse or for changing or interfering in any way with a wetland.

Conservation Sudbury assigns projects to one of four categories that take into account the size, scope and impacts of the proposal on natural hazards and the landscape. They are: Major, Large, Standard and Small Projects. Information about what sorts of projects fall into each of these categories can be found in the [2023 Section 28 Fee Schedule](#).

In 2023, Conservation Sudbury issued 94 section 28 permits. These included:

- 21 permits in the small category
- 55 permits in the standard category
- 14 permits in the large category
- 1 permit in the major category

Service standards for Section 28 permit applications were specified by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) in the "[Policies and Procedures for Conservation Authority Plan Review and Permitting Activities](#) (2010)".

As part of the commitment to improve client service, accountability and increase speed of approvals, Conservation Ontario has created the [Client Service Standards for Conservation Authority Plan and Permit Review](#) guideline (endorsed by Conservation Ontario Council in June, 2019 and amended December, 2019(TBC)). The guideline recommends new service standards for S.28 approvals, initially focused on high-growth CAs.

As a best practice, Conservation Sudbury endeavours to be consistent with the timelines laid out by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and Conservation Ontario. Conservation Sudbury is in the midst of developing its own service standards document and this should be in place by the end of this year.

The table below shows the permits approved and how they met the two service standards discussed above. Conservation Sudbury met permit Conservation Ontario issuance targets for 84% of permits issued in 2023. Some permits did not meet guideline timelines due to the complicated nature of the permit or staff workloads.

Conservation Sudbury	Number of Permits Issued Within MNRF Policy and Procedure timeline ⁱ			Number of Permits Issued Outside of MNRF Policy and Procedure Timeline ⁱⁱ		
	Major	Minor		Major	Minor	
	18	71		0	5	
	Number of Permits Issued Within CO Guideline timeline			Number of Permits Issued Outside of CO Guideline timeline		
	Major	Minor	Routine	Major	Minor	Routine
	18	47	14	0	8	7

ⁱ Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. *Policies and Procedures for Conservation Authority Plan Review and Permitting Activities*. 2010

ⁱⁱ Conservation Ontario. *Client Service Standards for Conservation Authority Plan and Permit Review guideline*. 2019