



INDICATOR: Provincial expenditure on biodiversity and charitable giving to the environment

Strategic Direction: Engage People

Target: N/A

Theme: Conservation Response – Financing Biodiversity Conservation

Previous version: [Provincial expenditure on biodiversity and charitable giving to the environment - May 2015](#)

Background Information

Biodiversity conservation is supported through public spending, charitable giving by individuals, and donations and management activities of business and industry, Indigenous communities, and conservation groups. While certain programs and activities have obvious biodiversity benefits, for example the maintenance of a provincial parks or conservation lands, others have a less direct impacts on biodiversity, however are still of importance. Some examples include pollution monitoring and prevention, environmental assessments for large projects such as highways, mitigating the effects of climate change, sustainable forest management, and the management of the agricultural landscape and support for best management practices on farms. Specific activities may protect or enhance biodiversity or monitor and assess impacts of natural and anthropogenic processes.

This indicator assesses trends in the absolute and relative amounts of resources allocated to biodiversity conservation from three primary funding sources: the provincial public sector, conservation authorities and charitable giving of individuals. As the largest funder of the environmental not-for-profit sector in Ontario, environmental grants made by the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) were also assessed (OTF 2020).

Data Analysis

For the public sector, the Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry and the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks were chosen because the majority of their programs align with activities relevant to biodiversity. Total expenditure estimates for these ministries and the Ontario government were obtained from estimates provided by the Ministry of Finance (OMOF 2019). In addition, conservation authorities also invest in a broad array of biodiversity conservation and monitoring programs across southern Ontario and parts of the north. Information on total expenditures by conservation authorities was obtained from Conservation Ontario.

Trends in charitable giving were assessed for environment—related donations based on Statistics Canada surveys conducted for 2004, 2007, 2010, 2014 and 2017 (Hall et al. 2006, 2009, Turcotte 2012, Statistics Canada 2015, 2018). Information on OTF environmental grants was obtained from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Starting in 2015 OTF moved to a new investment strategy supporting organizations through seed, capital and grow grants (OTF 2021). OTF funding for environmental funding prioritize projects that ensure more ecosystems are protected and restored and that people reduce their impact on the environment.



To place the level of support for biodiversity conservation in context, trends in Ontario’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) were examined using the Ontario Economic Accounts (OMOF 2020). To account for inflation all monetary values reported have been adjusted to 2002 dollars based on the Consumer Price Index (Statistics Canada 2021).

Any evaluation of expenditure and financial resources faces several challenges, including the possibility of double counting and the lack of a direct relationship between expenditures and benefits for biodiversity. Some of the variability in the expenditures of the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry relate to evolving mandates (loss and inclusion of some forestry-related funding) and variation in forest fire fighting expenses. It is also important to note that not all of the expenditures from the provincial ministries selected or charitable donations to the environment provide direct benefits to Ontario’s biodiversity. For these reasons, this indicator has been deliberately narrowly scoped, knowing that additional support for biodiversity management and conservation is provided through other means (e.g., businesses, academia, conservation organizations) and exists in the programs of other government ministries. Information on environment-related expenditures of federal ministries and agencies in Ontario was not available for inclusion in this indicator at this time.

Results

Trend: No Change **Data Confidence:** Medium **Geographic Extent:** Provincial

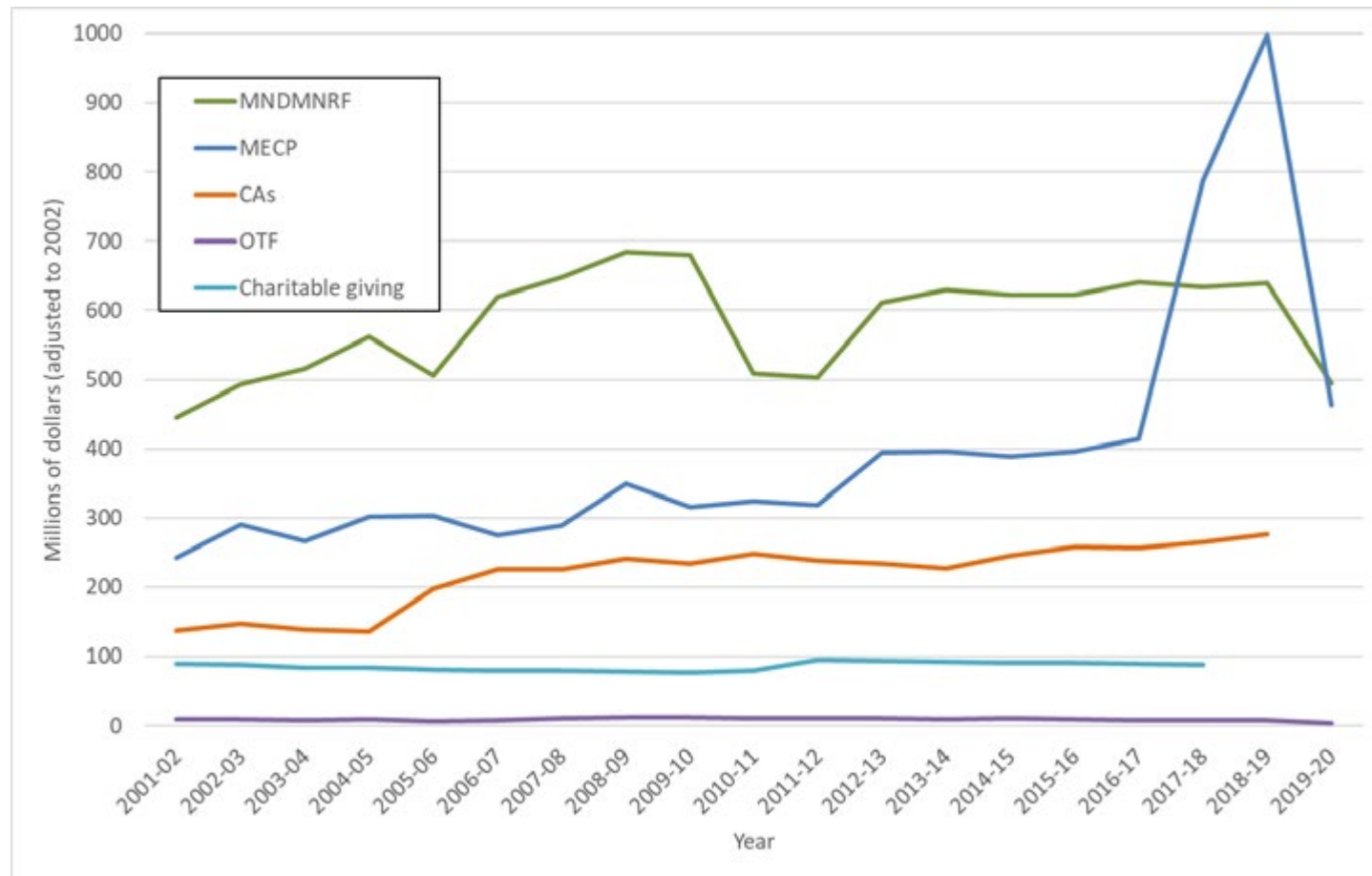


Figure 1. Provincial expenditures (adjusted to 2002 dollars) of Ontario ministries with biodiversity mandates, conservation authorities, charitable giving to the environment and environmental grants by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

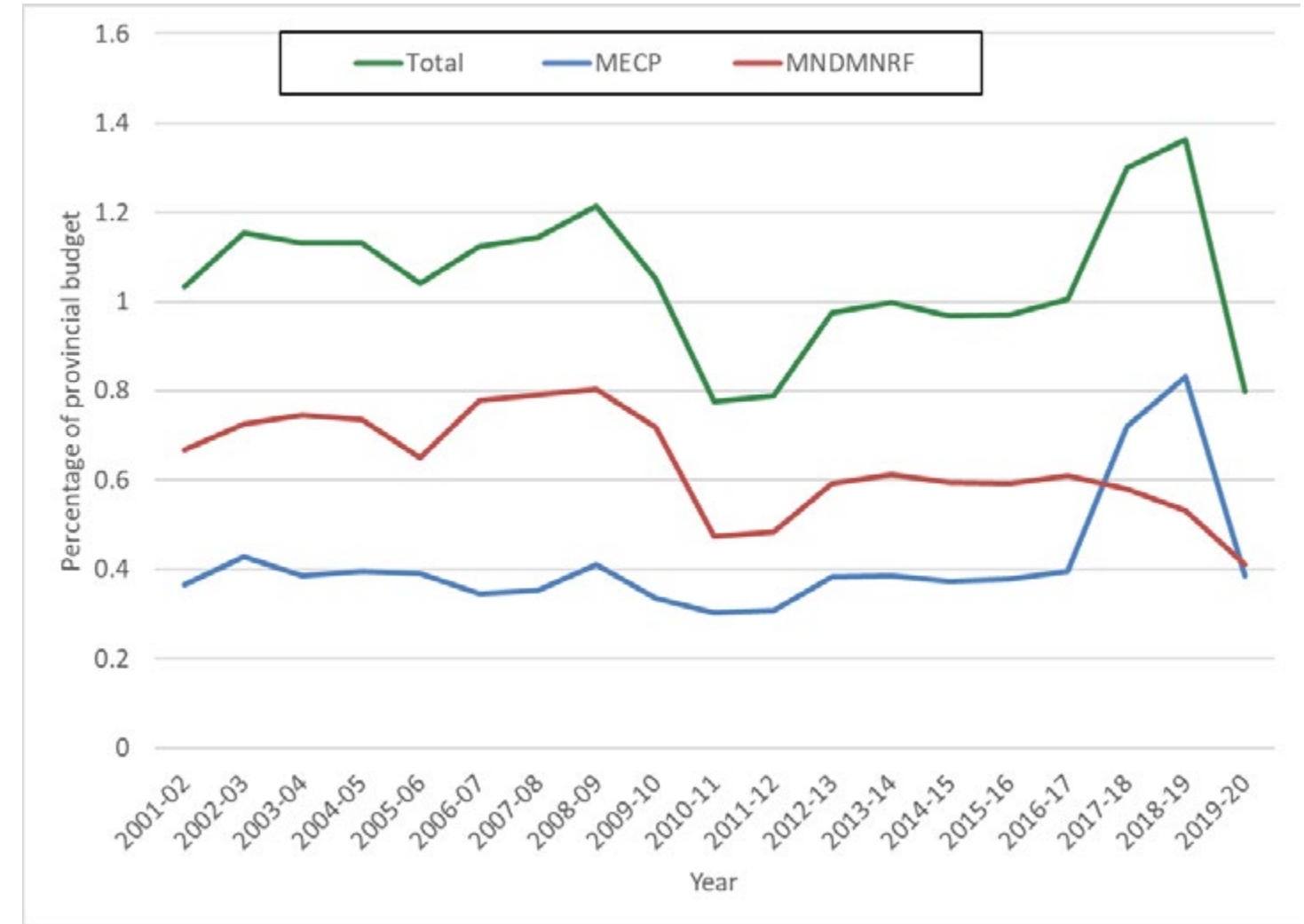


Figure 2. Percent of total provincial budget allocated to Ontario ministries with biodiversity mandates.

Status

- From 2001–02 to 2019–20, expenditures of the biodiversity-related provincial ministries increased by 39% when adjusted to 2002 dollars (\$688 million to 1.6 billion). The total provincial budget decreased by 23% during this period.
- Inter-annual and inter-ministry variability is found as budgets and ministries change over time.
- Over the last 5 years, indexed expenditures of these ministries have decreased by 6% while the provincial budget has increased by 14%.
- Between 2001-02 and 2019–20, the provincial ministries most directly involved in biodiversity conservation and management were allocated between 0.8–1.3% of the total provincial budget (average 1.05%). This is very similar to the results from the 2015 indicator report which showed allocations between 0.8–1.2% and an average of 1.0%.
- Total expenditures by conservation authorities increased by 100% between 2001–02 and 2018–19 and have remained relatively steady over the most recent 5-year period. Conservations authorities



budgets are funded through a numbers of sources including municipal levies(53%), self-generated revenue (35%), provincial grants and special projects (8%), and federal grants and projects (4%). (Conservation Ontario, 2021)

- Based on surveys conducted in 2014 and 2018 charitable donations by Ontarians to environmental activities amount to \$88 million annually with a decrease in adjusted value in each successive survey.
- OTF environmental grants have decreased by 19% between 2001-02 and 2019-20 when indexed to 2002 for inflation (from \$9.9 million to \$8.0 million).
- For perspective, it is important to note that over the period 2001 to 2019, Ontario's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased from \$474 billion to \$655 billion in constant (consumer inflation-adjusted) dollars. Allocation of resources to biodiversity management and conservation from the provincial public sector, conservation authorities, the OTF and charitable giving averaged 0.19% of Ontario's GDP over this period.

Links

Related Targets: N/A

Related Themes: N/A

Web Links

Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-environment-conservation-parks>

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-natural-resources-and-forestry>

Conservation Ontario <https://conservationontario.ca/Ontario>

Ontario Trillium Foundation <http://www.otf.ca/en/>

References

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Hall, M., D. Lasby, S. Ayer, and W.D. Gibbons. 2009. Caring Canadians, involved Canadians: highlights from the 2007 Canada survey of giving, volunteering and participating. Statistics Canada, Ottawa, ON.

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OTF (Ontario Trillium Foundation). 2020. Annual report and financial statements. Ontario Trillium Foundation, Toronto, ON.[Available at: <https://otf.ca/our-impact/annual-report-and-financial-statements> (date accessed: February 17, 2021)].

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Turcotte, M. 2012. Charitable giving by Canadians. Statistics Canada — Catalogue no. 11-008, Ottawa, ON.

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Citation

Ontario Biodiversity Council. 2021. State of Ontario's Biodiversity [web application]. Ontario Biodiversity Council, Peterborough, Ontario. [Available at: <http://ontariobiodiversitycouncil.ca/sobr> (Updated: October 1, 2021)].