In 1987, Canada and the United States signed a joint agreement whereby each country pledged their commitment to restore and protect the environmental integrity of the Niagara River. In order to do this, separate Canadian and US Remedial Action Plans (RAP) were developed. This update focuses on the Canadian RAP for the Niagara River.

The first task of the RAP was to examine the environmental problems in the Niagara River Areas of Concern (AOCs).

Over the years, poor land management and stewardship as well as industrial, agricultural, and urban practices have resulted in a variety of water quality related problems.

These include toxic chemical discharges from industrial facilities, contaminated sediments, stormwater runoff, habitat degradation, and non-point source pollution, including urban and rural runoff.

Once the problems were identified, a strategy was developed to provide remedial action plans. This strategy involved numerous participants from many walks of life.

The remedial action plan process has been a consultative, consensus building process involving numerous participants from many walks of life.

The RAP stage I report identified the need for a comprehensive, consensus building process involving numerous participants from many walks of life.

The RAP implementation annex, 2000.

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The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority in partnership with the provincial and federal governments coordinates the implementation of the Niagara River RAP.

Partners In Action

To successfully restore and protect the Niagara River everyone’s involvement, including all governments, local agencies, organizations, industries, and the public is critical. Land stewardship is something that everyone can participate in to improve the health of our natural environment. The Conservation Authority has funding grants available to landowners living within the Niagara River drainage area, which includes all of the Welland River. This landowner grant incentive program has a number of eligible project items that focus on implementing best management practices for agriculture, habitat creation and preservation of sensitive lands.

The Conservation Authority has a number of volunteer and education programs that everyone can be a part of. You can make a difference in your community, and we encourage you to get involved.

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority wishes to acknowledge our watershed partners for their contribution in the implementation of the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan projects and activities.

This publication was prepared in October 2002 by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. Funding generously provided by: Environment Canada, Ontario Ministry of the Environment, and TD Friends of the Environment Foundation.

Program Success Story

Niagara River Toxics Management Plan (NRTMP):

In February 1987, Environment Canada, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation formed the NRTMP. The goal of the program was to reduce the concentrations of toxic pollutants in the Niagara River.

Significant reductions in the loading of toxic chemicals to the Niagara River have been achieved to date. Actions to remediate hazardous waste sites have resulted in a reduction of potential inputs to the river from these sites. This program is a great example of two countries pulling together and working in cooperation to improve and protect our shared water resources.

The RAP partners are committed to providing strong leadership in the wise use and stewardship of our natural resources to achieve and maintain a healthy and sustainable environment.

In order to move towards a clean and healthy Niagara River, a number of targeted actions are necessary:

- Continued reduction of urban pollution and persistent toxic loadings to better control the hydrological and socio-economic participations in the Niagara River Toxics Management Plan (NRTMP)
- Continued reduction of non-point source pollution through landowner compensation programs for Best Management Practices (BMPs)
- Protection and restoration strategies to encourage landowners to increase forest, wetland, and riparian cover
- Strategies to reduce barriers to fish passage, non-treatment, sediment delivery and nutrient cycling
- Continued monitoring and reporting to ensure success

The continued involvement and cooperation of these partnerships and the commitment of the local community to the restoration process will provide added strength to these initiatives.

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority has long recognized the importance of partnerships to assist in addressing the challenges facing the ongoing restoration efforts within the Niagara River AOC. Our strength lies in the number of organizations, community groups, area residents and all levels of government that contribute to our success.

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