

Theme: Natural Assets



Eels Creek in North Kawartha.

Where Are We Now?

Likely its best known feature and greatest draw, the Greater Peterborough Area is blessed with an abundance of natural assets. From the Oak Ridges Moraine in the Southwest to the Kawartha Highlands Signature Site in the Northeast, and the lakes, wetlands, alvars, drumlins, and wildlife in between, the community is rich in diverse natural features.

This natural wealth is valued by those both within and outside our community, and maintaining these natural assets is paramount to a Sustainable Peterborough. However, our natural assets are facing many threats, including development pressures, diminishing biodiversity, climate change, and invasive species, and we must work as a community to ensure the splendour that we so greatly value is there for future generations to enjoy as we do.

Where Do We Want to Be in 25 Years?

Our Goal: We will preserve, enhance and restore our natural assets to maintain ecological health.

How Are We Going to Get There?

By following our *Strategic Directions*:

- Design and manage public green spaces in such a way as to maximize the presence and functions of natural systems.
- Conserve, manage and enhance our natural areas to foster a diversity of native species and habitat.
- Develop an understanding and appreciation of the significance of our natural assets.
- Maintain and enhance the quality of our air.

Priority Actions

- Adopt the ‘Kawarthas...Naturally Connected” Natural Heritage System and integrate it into Official Plans.
- Identify and help access financial incentives for environmentally sound land stewardship practices.

Note: Greater details of the *Priority Actions* are outlined in Appendix A. Additional short- and long-term Actions are offered in the List of Potential Initiatives (Appendix B).

Toolbox Resources

- **Tax Exemptions for Conservation** – Encourage environmental conservation and stewardship through implementation of municipal property tax exemptions for approved practices.
- **Protecting Natural Heritage** – Adopt a Natural Heritage System and/or promote land trust programs.
- **Alternative Land Use Services For Farmers** – Establish a program that assists farmers in their voluntary efforts to return marginal, environmentally sensitive, or inefficient farmland to native vegetative cover and wetlands.
- **Community Stream Stewardship Program** – Join the program as a member and learn how to conserve and restore streams thereby protecting our natural heritage and our water.

Sustainability in Action

- The Kawartha Highlands Signature Site, located in the Townships of North Kawartha and Galway-Cavendish & Harvey, was designated a Provincial Park in 2003. This means that this significant area of natural splendour is protected from the sale of crown land, over-development, and new commercial activities.
- Through the Community Foundation for Greater Peterborough, a Kawartha Heritage Conservancy Stewardship Fund has been established to support the KHC’s program to acquire and steward significant natural and cultural lands in our region. Donations made to this fund may be matched.
- The City of Peterborough has had an urban forestry policy since 1989. The City recently updated the urban forestry policy with the Urban Forest Strategic Plan, integrating best management practices that will benefit our urban forest and community.
- Fleming and Trent jointly launched a new degree program (Honours BSc) in Ecological Restoration in 2008. The first graduating class will cross the stage in June 2012.

THEME: NATURAL ASSETS (A)

Goal

We will preserve, enhance and restore our natural assets to maintain ecological health.

Strategic Direction Supported

Conserve, manage and enhance our natural areas to foster a diversity of native species and habitat.

Priority Action

Adopt the ‘Kawarthas...Naturally Connected” Natural Heritage System and integrate it into Official Plans.

Description

The Kawartha Heritage Conservancy (in partnership with the City of Peterborough; the County of Peterborough; Victoria Stewardship Council; City of Kawartha Lakes; Kawartha Conservation; Clear, Ston(e)y, White Lake Environmental Plan Council, Parks Canada, and the Ministry of Natural Resources) is leading a regional effort to develop a Natural Heritage System for the Kawarthas. The project is based on watershed boundary and includes all of the County of Peterborough and the City of Kawartha Lakes. A Natural Heritage System, once implemented, can help to ensure that key natural areas and features remain on the landscape, for our health and enjoyment and that of future generations. It can be a useful tool to help individuals, organizations, and communities make informed and coordinated decisions about: stewardship activities, land restoration, conservation land purchases, land use planning, and research projects.

Activities

- Complete the development of the Natural Heritage System
- Incorporate the Natural Heritage System and policies into Official Plans and other tools

Results from this action will support *Strategic Directions* under the following additional *Themes*:

- Land Use Planning

Toolbox Resources

- **Protecting Natural Heritage** – Adopt a Natural Heritage System and/or promote land trust programs
- **Alternative Land Use Services For Farmers** – Establish a program that assists farmers in their voluntary efforts to return marginal, environmentally sensitive, or inefficient farmland to native vegetative cover and wetlands
- **Community Stream Stewardship Program** – Join the program as a member and learn how to conserve and restore streams thereby protecting our natural heritage and our water

Potential Lead and Coordination

- Kawartha Heritage Conservancy

Potential Partners

- City of Kawartha Lakes
- City of Peterborough
- Clear, Ston(e)y, White Lake Environmental Plan Council
- County of Peterborough
- First Nations
- Fleming College
- Kawartha Conservation
- Ministry of Natural Resources
- Peterborough County Stewardship Council
- Parks Canada
- Townships
- Trent University
- Victoria Stewardship Council

Measure of Success

- Completion of the Natural Heritage System
- Number of area Official Plans that incorporate the Natural Heritage System

THEME: NATURAL ASSETS (B)

Goal

We will preserve, enhance and restore our natural assets to maintain ecological health.

Strategic Direction Supported

Conserve, manage and enhance our natural areas to foster a diversity of native species and habitat.

Priority Action

Identify and help access financial incentives for environmentally sound land stewardship practices.

Description

The idea of providing financial incentives for land stewardship is not a new one. For example, in times past, the County of Peterborough has administered provincially funded programs for farmers to undertake environmentally sound land stewardship practices on their properties. Indeed, the work of local organizations such as the Peterborough County Stewardship Council, the Kawartha Heritage Conservancy, Peterborough Green-Up, and many more involves working with landowners to protect and even enhance the natural features found on their property. By pursuing funding sources to administer incentive programs for land stewardship, property owners in the Greater Peterborough Area will be afforded the opportunity to sustain and protect their piece of nature, providing many tangible benefits for the community and for wildlife.

Results from this action will support *Strategic Directions* under the following additional *Themes*:

- Climate Change
- Water
- Economic Development & Employment

Activities

- Review models of support for land stewardship
- Engage in discussion with potential funding sources
- Establish mechanisms to flow financial support for project work through to existing delivery agents
- Share results, best practices, and lessons learned within and beyond the community (e.g. demonstration sites of sustainable practices, associated economic benefits, etc.)
- Undertake a full cost benefit analysis to assess program worth

Toolbox Resources

- **Tax Exemptions for Conservation** – Encourage environmental conservation and stewardship through implementation of municipal property tax exemptions for approved practices
- **Ten Ways to Save Your Local Woods** – List of 10 strategies you can use to protect and save your woods

- **Incentive Programs For Stewardship Initiatives** – Ontario Stewardship’s listing of financial and incentive programs

Potential Lead and Coordination

- Peterborough County Stewardship Council

Potential Partners

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Stewardship Stream Program • County of Peterborough • Crowe Valley Conservation Authority • Ducks Unlimited • Farms at Work • First Nations • Fleming College • Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority • GPA EDC • Kawartha Conservation • Kawartha Heritage Conservancy • Lakeland Alliance • Ontario Crop and Soil Improvement Association | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ontario Federation of Agriculture • Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters • Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs • Otonabee Conservation • Peterborough County Federation of Agriculture • Peterborough Field Naturalists • Peterborough Green-Up • Peterborough Social Planning Council • Townships • Trent University |
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Measures of Success

- Support gained
- New funding secured from local sources
- Number of projects completed (total sites and total acreage)
- Program inquires into demonstration sites
- Meeting site specific objectives