

Conservation in Carolinian Canada

Vision and Priorities



Workshop Report

November 5, 1996

London, Ontario

A Project of the Carolinian Canada Committee

Conducted by:

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Conservation in Carolinian Canada

Vision and Priorities

PHASE II WORKSHOP

This workshop benefited from a diverse group with a common interest in conservation within the Carolinian Zone.

The Phase II Workshop provided an opportunity for a wide range of individuals to meet and discuss a vision for conservation in the Carolinian Zone. The same group was asked to suggest priorities, where we could make the greatest difference in the next few years, for the total Carolinian Zone, and subgroups recommended additional priorities for four distinctive regions within the Zone:

"Sun Parlour"	-- Essex, Lambton, Kent
"Heartland"	-- Middlesex, Oxford, Brant
"Lake Erie North Shore"	-- Elgin, Haldimand-Norfolk, Niagara
"Golden Horseshoe"	-- Hamilton Wentworth, Halton, Peel, Metro

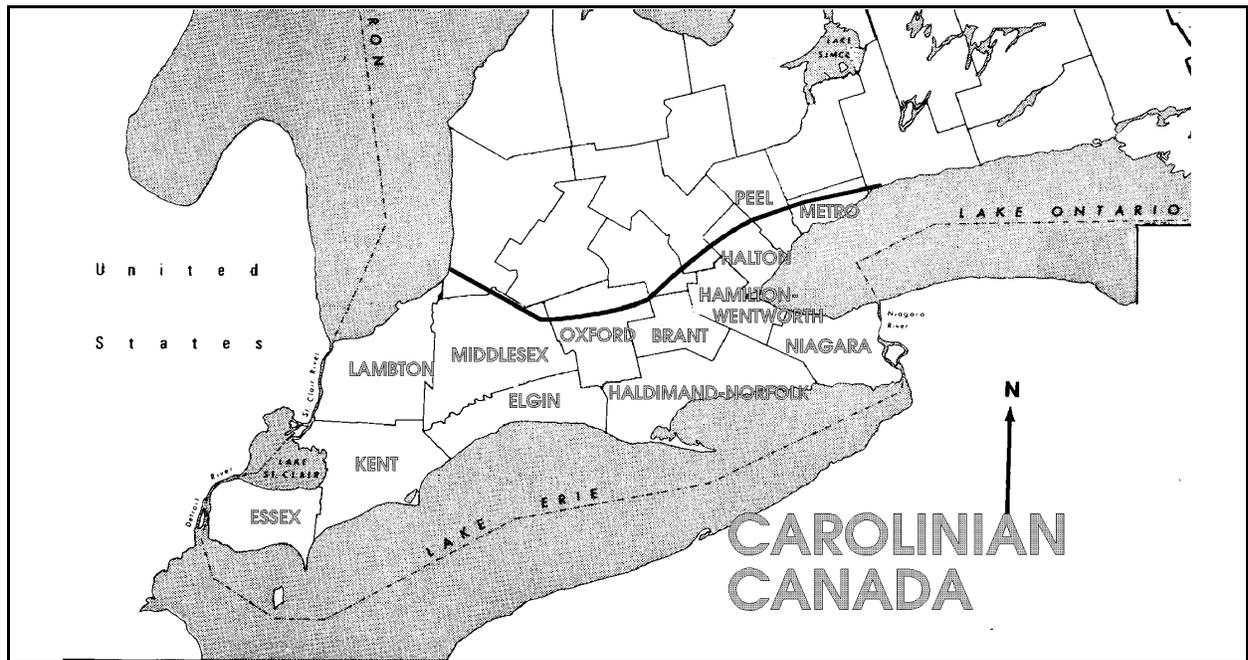
Workshop participants included staff from the Ministry of Natural Resources, several Universities and Conservation Authorities, members of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, naturalists and urban conservation groups, municipal and First Nations representatives and Carolinian landowners. There were 65 registered participants. Each received a Workbook containing questions and spaces to note comments and weights for different ideas. At the suggestion of the workgroup, additional categories were added to the preprinted lists as we went along. Participants used the workbooks to organize their thoughts and verbal comments. In addition to recording responses, an occasional show of hands was requested to identify preferences. Subsequently, participants turned in their workbooks for review and tabulation.

This summary is based on both the information recorded in on flip charts and notes in the individual workbooks. These notes represent the author's "sense of the meeting" but cannot capture all of the ideas and interchange that took place. The purpose of this summary is to describe the vision and priorities used by the Panel charged with completing the draft goals, strategies and action plans.

The Agenda for the November 5th Workshop was as follows:

9:00	Welcome-Carolinian Canada Committee	Anne Redish, Doug van Hemessen
9:05	Introductions, Explanation of the Process and Objectives for the Day	Ric Symmes
	Issues and Options Report--Highlights	Ron Reid
	Summary from Latornell discussion of Issues & Options Report (included in Appendix A)	Ric Symmes
	Workshop Introduction, Participant Introductions	Ric Symmes
Break		
	What is our Vision for Conservation in the Carolinian Zone	Plenary
	What is the Current Reality--and the Gap	
12:00	Lunch	
1:15	Priorities --Where can we make the greatest difference -next few years	Plenary
	--for the Total Carolinian Zone	Small Groups
	--for Regions within the Zone	Small Groups
	--Report Back--discussion	
	Biodiversity--Describe this Goal	
	Opportunities and Barriers we must overcome to achieve those goals	Workbooks
Break		
	Strategies to Achieve our Strategic Goals	Plenary
	Wrap Up and Next Steps	Ron Reid
4:00	Adjourn	

Carolinian Canada Counties



Vision

Conservation in the Carolinian Zone

Participants in the November 5th Workshop were asked to describe their vision of conservation in the Carolinian zone, a challenging but realistic and achievable condition that would be their preferred future. Preserving biodiversity is the over-arching scientific and ethical issue for many in Carolinian Canada. A vision to address this issue could be summarized as :

No further loss and a substantial increase in the size and quality of natural communities characteristic of Carolinian Canada.

In addition to biodiversity, there are other valid reasons for conservation of native ecosystems including:

- < economic (e.g. tourism, land values);
- < social (community pride, healthy communities, sense of place);
- < scientific (study, understanding); and
- < aesthetic (scenery, flowers, etc).

Combined, all these motivations led to a "Vision for Conservation" that emerged from a discussion of how our preferred future will differ from today:

- < the kind of landscape we want;
- < the approaches we prefer--how will conservation be achieved and biodiversity protected;
- < the organization preferred--who will do what, and how will this be coordinated;
- < the ways conservationists work together; and
- < funding for conservation.

Landscape

All elements of the landscape require some attention. However a shift in focus from past projects was proposed in response to new information about forest fragmentation and interior forest, threats to rural water quality and opportunities in urban greenspace. The group recommended greater emphasis on:

- < forest cover, particularly interior forest;
- < stream water quality and protection of wetlands;
- < native species and nature in urban areas; and
- < prairies and savannah (in the southern counties).

Approach

In the past, Carolinian programs focussed on securement and protection of 38 priority sites and the landowners within them. With this essential work well advanced, a much broader application of conservation measures is recommended to strengthen the remainder of the ecosystem. Expanding attention from "priority sites" to streams, wetlands, forests, and prairie requires a broad landscape approach and involves a much larger client group. New strategies are needed to reach this larger client group and new resources are needed to support these initiatives.

New strategies include finding common cause with landowners. 75 percent of the land base in Carolinian Canada is dedicated to farming. Too often, farmers and other landowners have participated late in the development of conservation programs. Clearly, to achieve significant progress in the broad landscape, farmers must be involved from the outset and more cooperative approach will be essential.

New programs will need local funding, volunteers and political support. To secure these resources there must be broad community understanding of the issues and benefits of conservation and biodiversity. Only through better informed landowners and general public can programs expect better funding. Consequently, three principles underlie the proposed actions in this strategy:

- < **Education:** undertake extensive education and communication about biodiversity, endangered species and natural communities in the Carolinian Region, including greater use of native species in urban greenspace;
- < **Cooperation:** find common cause with farmers to develop programs that benefit both agriculture and nature; and
- < **Community:** spark local community action through a range of stewardship opportunities and activities.

Organization for Conservation

Federal and Provincial purchases of land and direct action for conservation are being reduced. These decreases may be offset by increased regional, local and private efforts and investment. However, some functions cannot be assumed by others. Federal and Provincial governments must continue these essential functions including: enforcement of laws, international negotiation, tax incentives and programs of data collection, analysis, technical advice and research that support sound decision making by all sectors.

The following groups are forecast to play increased roles in conservation:

- < **conservation authorities**, because of their watershed perspective, land management experience and expertise and their community base;
- < **stewardship councils**, because of their local landowner representation;
- < **municipal governments**, because of increased planning responsibilities; and
- < **land trusts** and other private community based land protection organizations.

Roles and Responsibilities

The participants developed a *partial* list of suggested roles and responsibilities, in our preferred future:

Federal Government

- < incentives--such as tax breaks for conservation activities/investments
- < representation of natural areas through national parks system;
- < convening and coordinating discussion on issues of national or international scope;
- < international and interprovincial conservation measures such as international treaties, water quality goals and improvement programs and funding, air quality programs, endangered species legislation; and
- < funding and managing basic research as a basis for sound science based decision making

First Nations

- < continue to protect and manage conservation on First Nation lands; and
- < provide some models and teaching of First Nation approaches to nature.

Provincial Government

- < data management, collect and manage information, identify significance;
- < protect areas of provincial significance through a system of protected areas;
- < provide legislative framework enabling conservation and enforce existing and future laws and regulations;
- < support for various conservation programs (with a sound science base), including tax arrangements for conservation lands, fruitlands etc--"carrots" and incentives
- < land use policy and enabling legislation to support conservation;

- < partnerships, convening and facilitation support (but avoid duplication), convening discussion on matters of provincial significance or coordination;
- < education for the general public and through an enhanced curriculum that ensures broad understanding and appreciation of biodiversity and Carolinian species within the zone.

Conservation Authorities

- < continue to protect representative lands and areas of regional significance, although acquisition of new land may be less common;
- < achieve conservation through increased support for land stewardship, information, education;
- < play a key role in the protection and enhancement of water quality in their assigned region through a variety of approaches;
- < play a key role in regional and municipal planning to protect water resources (and consequently many key habitats) and to integrate water related policies across the region;
- < contribute to regional planning data resources, including GIS mapping and services;
- < provide regional perspective and provide technical expertise in the protection of water resources and related conservation measures to support municipalities and educate the general public;

Regional/County Government

- < will control "the pipes", water and sewage services that guide and stimulate when and where development will occur;
- < will use good (conservation minded) models for land use planning; and
- < will be creative in bringing citizens as well as municipalities into the planning process.

Local Government

- < will increase public support through greater grass roots involvement and skilful use of participation tools;
- < will use creative planning to advance the community interest including conservation, such as development charges, density transfer, surcharges et
- < improved design standards to support conservation, e.g. car pools, bike paths, etc; and
- < build conservation into other projects.

Private Land Owners

- < will be better educated about conservation and land stewardship;
- < lead by good example;
- < good examples provide leadership;
- < better links to non-governmental support sources (NGO's);

Non-Government Organizations

This group includes farm organizations, tourism organizations, land trusts, nature clubs, hunting and fishing groups as well as others with conservation as one of their interests.

- < good team players, sometimes leading, sometimes supporting as required;
- < more land trusts to protect areas, local priorities=local support;
- < stepping in to carry out some roles formerly taken by central government;
- < networking effectively, strategic

Stewardship Councils

- < bringing landowner interests to the table;
- < promoting and encouraging resolution of issues amongst landowners and finding common ground for conservation--particularly with farmers.

Scientists

- < providing sound science base for strategies and actions;
- < communicating in terms public can understand, clarity;
- < putting data to work, working on subjects that provide needed information
- < providing interpretation and conclusions--"what do it all mean?"
- < not waiting for absolute academic certainty to speak up.

Educational Institutions

- < providing a setting for research on subjects relevant to conservation and biodiversity;
- < providing basic research as well as applied research; and
- < providing education through a variety of vehicles/media so information reaches all levels of the community on Carolinian species, importance of habitat, so that understanding and appreciation is widespread.

Industry

- < not always the enemy, sometimes an important community source of funding and expertise both technical and management;
- < responding to incentives, supporting conservation using a broad interpretation of their interests

General Public

- < these will be a better understanding of conservation issues and priorities as well as biodiversity;
- < as a result of this broader understanding, starting from the children, there will be broad community and political support for conservation at the local and individual level;
- < there will be broader volunteer participation in conservation projects.

Working Together

In the past, conservation depended on a few organizations and individuals with a strong interest in some aspect of nature. This new vision requires a much wider participation and support, including: landowners, municipal councils, service clubs, chambers of commerce, health councils, farming and educational organizations. Everyone concerned with conservation should reach out and enlist groups not traditionally involved.

An inclusive program with participants joined by common conviction and objectives is very different than one dependent on a chain of command and control. Consequently, future working relationships should be:

- < broadly based, reflecting the benefits of biodiversity and a healthy region;
- < reaching out to other individuals and interest groups, e.g. health, tourism, commerce, industry, educational institutions;
- < more local involvement, local "ownership", more "friends of..." groups;
- < more collaborative, less directive, based on improved understanding and mutual interest;
- < better networked, avoiding duplication, more shared projects;
- < forward looking, goal driven rather than program or crisis driven; and
- < working with a sound scientific base, but action oriented when the balance of evidence supports, avoiding both "analysis paralysis" and emotional choices.

Bringing in more volunteer, community and cooperative participation will require a different structure and relationships. Coordination will be very important and challenging, but should be somewhat different than in the initial program led by the Carolinian Canada Steering Committee. A networking and facilitating organization is proposed, tentatively named the "Carolinian Canada Coalition" with membership and function as described in the "*Implementation*" section of this report.

Funding

Despite recent constraints on government funding programs, it is crucial that governments continue to address their responsibilities in this threatened region. There is no practical substitute for adequate funding of conservation by federal, provincial and municipal governments.

However, funding of future programs will change. Decentralization of planning and conservation should stimulate *increased* funds from:

- < corporate programs to benefit the community;
- < philanthropic individuals and organizations;
 - existing foundations
 - new groups formed to fund community projects (e.g. "Friends of...")
 - individual planned giving, tax planning and bequests;
- < user-pay/donations from tourists and others who benefit from using conservation facilities;
- < voluntary effort in aid of conservation; and
- < tax breaks and incentives for conservation through the Federal and Provincial governments.

Regional Priorities

The participants broke into four subgroups based on their normal area of work and discussed separately any special emphasis within their regions:

"Sun Parlour"	-- Essex, Lambton, Kent
"Heartland"	-- Middlesex, Oxford, Brant
"Lake Erie North Shore"	-- Elgin, Haldimand-Norfolk, Niagara
"Golden Horseshoe"	-- Hamilton Wentworth, Halton, Peel, Metro

Many ideas were exchanged within the groups. Several particular regional priorities were noted.

"Sun Parlour" -- Essex, Lambton, Kent

Within this region there is very little forest--less than 3 % in some counties and much of that is highly fragmented. A *forest and interior forest* initiative seemed highly desirable.

The *stream and riparian habitat* issue is particularly important in this region where water quality is seriously degraded.

Tall grass prairie is present in this region, and is very threatened. Particular emphasis on this element should be added.

"Heartland" -- Middlesex, Oxford, Brant

Urban habitat improvement and rehabilitation projects represents opportunities to secure support from urban dwellers. The importance of community based initiatives was noted to secure local support. Changing our approach to emphasize *common cause with farm land owners* was identified as particularly important in this region.

"Lake Erie North Shore" -- Elgin, Haldimand-Norfolk, Niagara

Within this region, developing *more interior forest* should be a particular priority. Also mentioned were *oak-savannah sites* and sustainable crop practices.

"Golden Horseshoe"-- Hamilton Wentworth, Halton, Peel, Metro

Within this urbanizing region, the *rural non-farm* population owns and occupies a much larger proportion of the land than in the rest of Carolinian Canada. Working with this group represents a particular opportunity in the Golden Horseshoe. This group pointed out that education efforts must be directed beyond "preaching to the converted" to secure participation and dollars from a broad spectrum of new supporters.

Priority Goals

Having described a new vision for conservation in the Carolinian region, it is apparent that considerable change will be required. In order to make the most progress in the next few years, it is important to focus limited resources. In addition to the over-arching biodiversity goal, the workshop participants identified five "priority goals" based on the vision described above. These goals, shown in the form developed by Panel review, were designed to provide a coordinated approach to conservation in the Carolinian Region

Education Goal:	Achieve broad awareness of the importance of ecosystems, communities and endangered species in the Carolinian region by the general public and particularly by landowners, and gain their support for measures to protect biodiversity.
Community Action Goal:	Achieve broad community level action in support of biodiversity and conservation of native ecosystems, communities and endangered species throughout the Carolinian region, including the urban landscape.
Forest Goal:	Achieve no further loss of native forest cover and a substantial increase including an appropriate proportion of interior forest.
Stream/Wetlands Goal:	Achieve no further loss and a substantial increase in stream water quality and wetland quantity.
Prairie/Savannah Goal:	Protect all significant remaining prairie/savannah habitats and restore the full range of native prairie/savannah communities in appropriate locations.

From Goals to Action

This large workshop group established some broad goals and priorities for the Carolinian Region. The next step was to recruit a 12 member multi-stakeholder panel from the workshop participants to refine the goals, develop objectives and action plans and make recommendations for implementation.