

Niagara River Corridor Conservation Action Plan

© J. Jalava

What is Conservation Action Planning?

- Conservation Action Planning (CAP) is an effective and efficient way to conserve many species and habitats at the same time.
- CAPs in Carolinian Canada focus on Biodiversity Hotspots – areas of high concentration of species and habitat diversity, and often home to many rare species.
- Local groups work together to develop and implement a plan, with common goals and strategies.

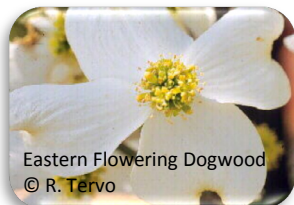
Niagara River Corridor Natural Heritage



© Lailey Vineyard



© Trees Unlimited



Eastern Flowering Dogwood
© R. Tervo

- The Niagara River Corridor CAP area covers approximately 20,000 ha (200 km²) extending between Lake Ontario in the north and Lake Erie in the South. The Welland Canal and the Niagara River form its western and eastern boundaries, respectively. Forest is the dominant ecosystem in the CAP but rivers, wetlands and prairies of high conservation value also occur.
- The rich soils and warm climate have given the region its designation as Ontario's "fruit belt". The area is particularly well known for its vineyards and tender fruit orchards, though a diversity of other land uses abound.
- Although its urban areas are intensively developed, the Niagara River Corridor includes some of the most biologically diverse natural areas in the Golden Horseshoe, Canada's most densely-populated region. Within the CAP are a number of Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSWs) and Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSIs), conservation authority areas, and about 300 ha of natural area protected by the Niagara Parks Commission.
- The area supports plants and animals characteristic of the Carolinian life zone, many of which are provincially, nationally and globally rare. At least 24 federally- and provincially-designated Species At Risk (SAR) have been recorded in the area within the past 30 years, with an additional 14 or more having occurred historically. The CAP is also home to rare ecosystems such as the Buttonbush Mineral Thicket Swamp, tallgrass prairies and savannahs.
- CAP completed in 2010.



Conservation Targets:

1. Marshes and Shorelines
2. Upland Deciduous Forests
3. Lowland Swamp Forests
4. Lakes, Rivers, Streams and Riparian Ecosystems
5. Edges, Thickets and Fields
6. Dry Oak Woodlands, Prairies, Savannas and Seepage Fens
7. Ecological Services on Rural Lands
8. Habitat in Drains



Major Impacts:

Development; Incompatible Water Management; Contamination, Effluents & Sedimentation; Incompatible Land Management & Use; Perception, Values; Property economics (land values, profiteering, tax laws, grants); Terrestrial Invasive Species

Conservation Objectives & Strategic Actions



1. Establish and ensure ongoing public and stakeholder support for the CAPs.

Actions: Secure funding to hire an outreach/education/social marketing coordinator. Work with nature clubs and other stakeholders to implement outreach activities (e.g., landowner contact, dissemination of materials, workshops, etc.) and protection.

2. Create series of natural heritage (NH) system maps using existing information compiled from all key sources.

Actions: Synthesize updated NH data and mapping, create publicly-available on-line NH mapping, and create a restoration and opportunities map to identify conservation targets, priority sites, activities and appropriate methods necessary to enhance SAR recovery and protection.



3. No net loss of early-successional communities (fields, thickets) from 2009 levels.

Actions: Support existing programs and reprint educational materials. Research and promote positive incentive approaches for farmers to conserve biodiversity on their land.



Conservation Objectives & Strategic Actions

4. Top 10 sources of water pollution identified and appropriate actions developed.

Actions: Identify the key local stresses for each SAR found in the CAP, link these to local sources and develop strategies to reduce these impacts.



5. Control invasive species in natural areas.

Actions: Identify key invasive species and priority areas, develop and implement a plan for control, and engage in outreach to the public and the horticultural community about the impact of use and sale of invasive species.

6. Promote and increase land securement for conservation.

Actions: Engage community, increase awareness of Niagara Land Trust and the benefits of land donation and conservation easements, increase land securement.

7. Increase amount of private lands owned by corporations within the CAP area that have conservation or restoration programs in place.

Actions: Develop strategy to engage corporate and industrial landowners in conservation within CAP area, assess landowners currently participating, hold workshops for businesses.

8. Increase the extent of upland and lowland forest cover in CAP area.

Actions: Identify key public and private sites for restoration, develop incentive program for private landowners, implement and monitor restoration projects.

9. Increase the extent of upland deciduous forest interior.

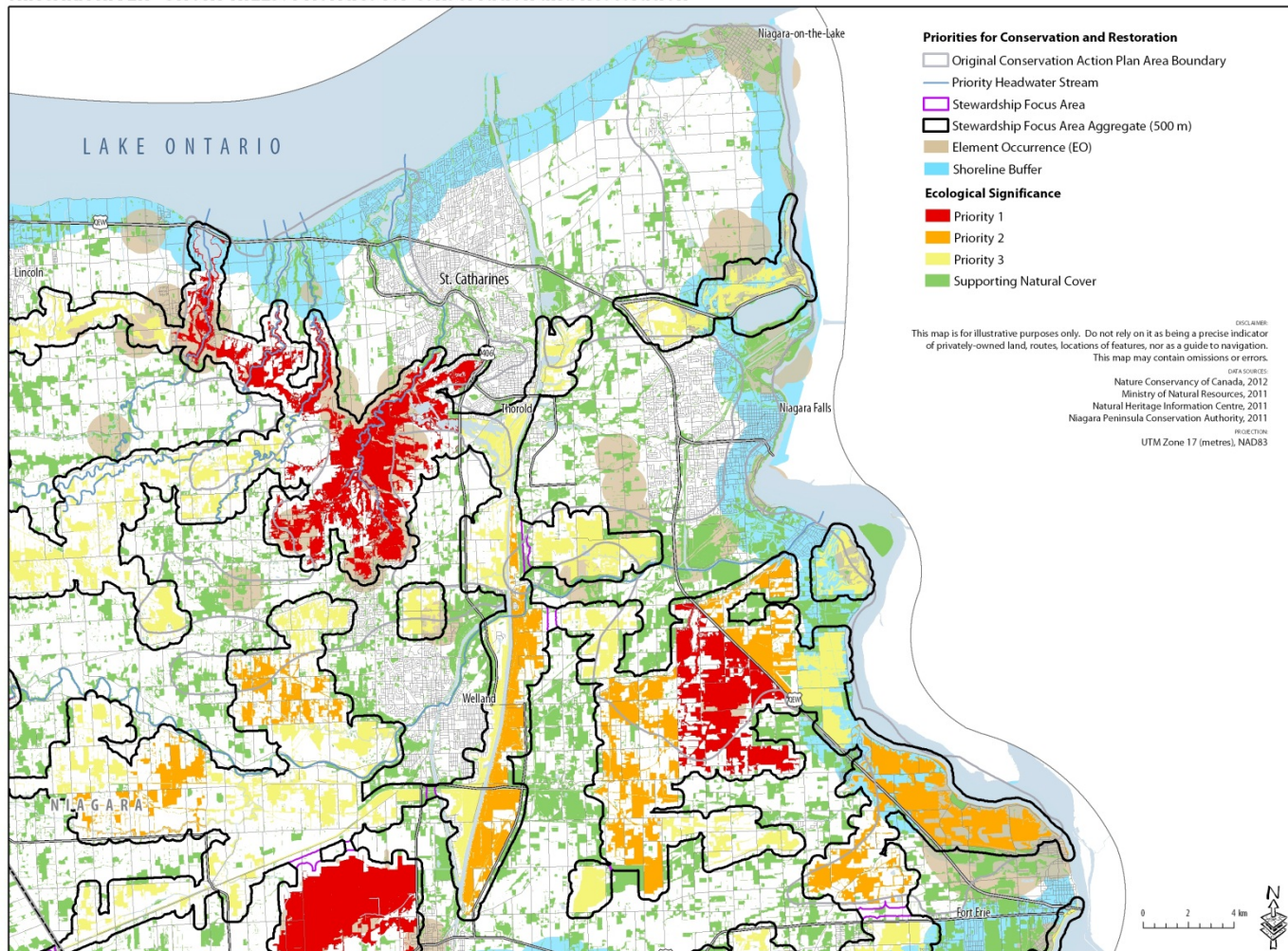
Actions: Identify optimum sites to increase forest interior, develop plans for restoration and securement of adjacent land.

10. Buffer and restore riparian habitat.

Actions: Identify priority natural creeks for riparian restoration, support and encourage landowners undertaking riparian restoration projects, develop and communicate ecologically friendly maintenance for drains.



NIAGARA RIVER - SHORT HILLS: Priorities for Conservation and Restoration



Partners

Bert Miller Nature Club
Bird Studies Canada
Bruce Trail Conservancy
Carolinian Canada Coalition
Department of Fisheries and Oceans
LandCare Niagara
Niagara College

Niagara Land Trust
Niagara Parks Commission
Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
Niagara Restoration Council
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
Ontario Power Generation

Peninsula Naturalists Club
Regional Municipality of Niagara
The Nature Conservancy of Canada
Trees Unlimited
Welland River Keepers

CAROLINIAN
CANADA
COALITION



*Collaborating
for a
Healthy Ecoregion*

For more information about Conservation Action Planning and how you can be involved please visit www.carolinian.org

Assistance for this project was provided by the Government of Ontario & Environment Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program



Ontario



Environment
Canada

Environnement
Canada