

Short Hills Conservation Action Plan



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.

Short Hills Natural Heritage



- The Short Hills CAP covers approximately 20,000 ha (200 km²) along the southwest shore of Lake Ontario west of the Welland Canal and the City of St. Catharines east to include the Jordan Marsh, lower portions of the Twenty Mile Creek watershed, south to natural areas in the Pelham area. The Niagara Escarpment bisects the central portion of the CAP in an east-west orientation, and major stream systems (Twelve Mile, Fifteen Mile, Sixteen Mile, Eighteen Mile and Twenty Mile creeks) cross the CAP, emptying northward into Lake Ontario through lakefront marshes and ponds.
- 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 adjacent urban areas are intensively developed, the Short Hills area contains some of the most extensive natural areas in the Golden Horseshoe, Canada's most densely-populated region. At least 30 federally- and provincially-designated Species At Risk (SAR) have been recorded in the Short Hills CAP within the past 30 years, with several others having occurred historically. The Short Hills CAP has among the highest percentages of forest cover in southwestern Ontario and several Provincially Significant Wetlands.

- CAP completed in 2010.



Conservation Targets:

1. Marshes and Shorelines
2. Upland Deciduous Forests
3. Swamp / Lowland Forests
4. Lakes, Rivers & Streams
5. Prairies, Savannahs, Dry Oak Woodlands
6. Edges, Thickets, Fields
7. Ecological Services on Rural Lands



Major Impacts:

Development; Perception, Values; Incompatible Land Management & Use; Incompatible Water Management, Contamination, Effluents & Sedimentation; Property economics (land values, profiteering, tax laws, grants); Terrestrial & Aquatic Invasive Species; Fire suppression in prairie & woodland habitat & early season mowing of grasslands; Problematic Native Species (e.g. White-tailed Deer)

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.

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.

Conservation Objectives & Strategic Actions



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 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.

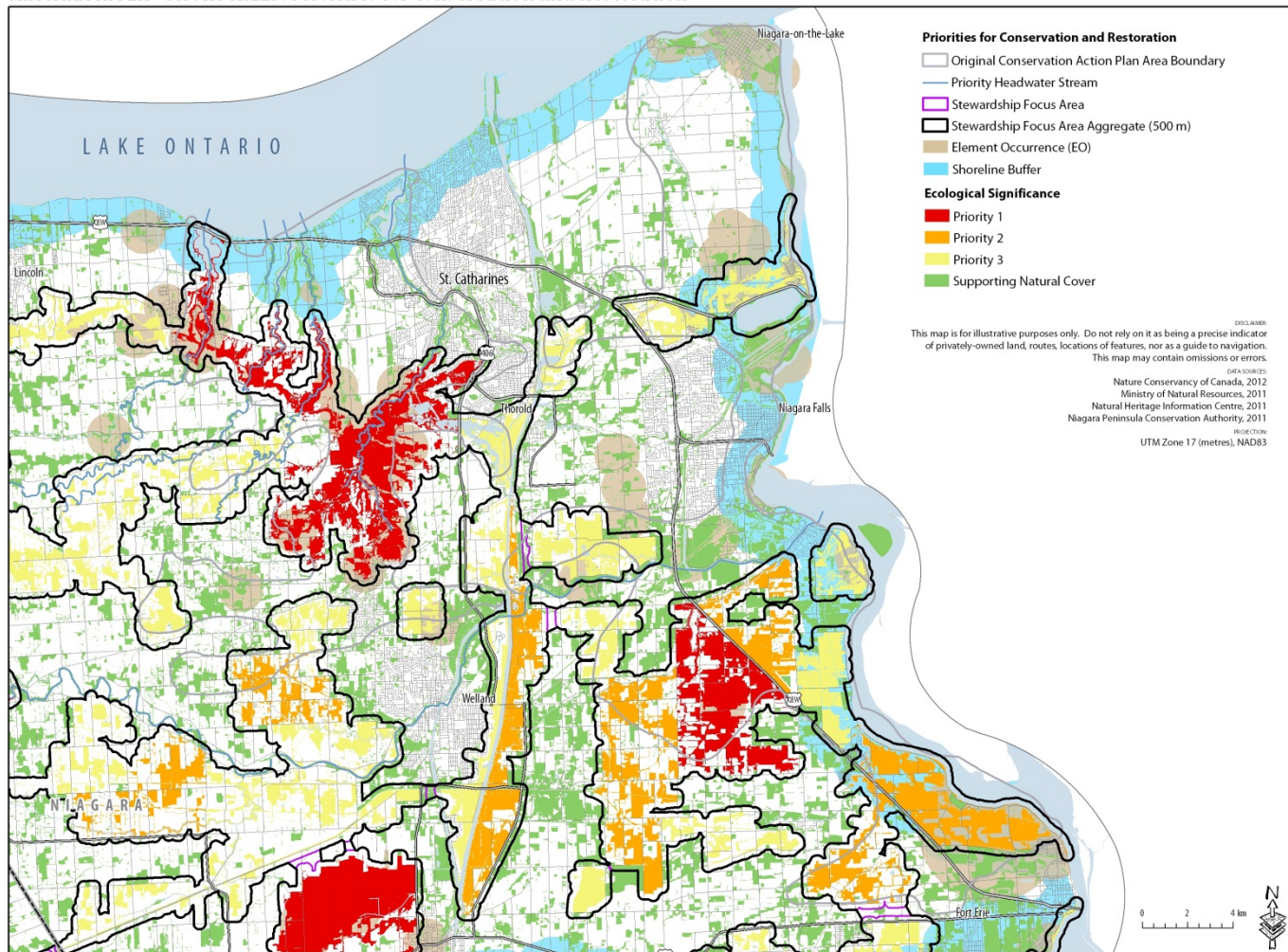
Actions: Identify priority natural creeks for riparian restoration, support and encourage landowners undertaking riparian restoration projects, develop and communicate ecologically friendly maintenance for drains.

11. Increase the extent of lowland swamp forest cover in CAP area.

Actions: Identify key wetland sites for restoration, engage private landowners, implement and monitor restoration projects.



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 Parks

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

CAROLINIAN
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*Collaborating
for a
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For more information about Conservation Action Planning and how you can be involved please visit www.carolinian.org

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