



Sydenham River © E. Carroll

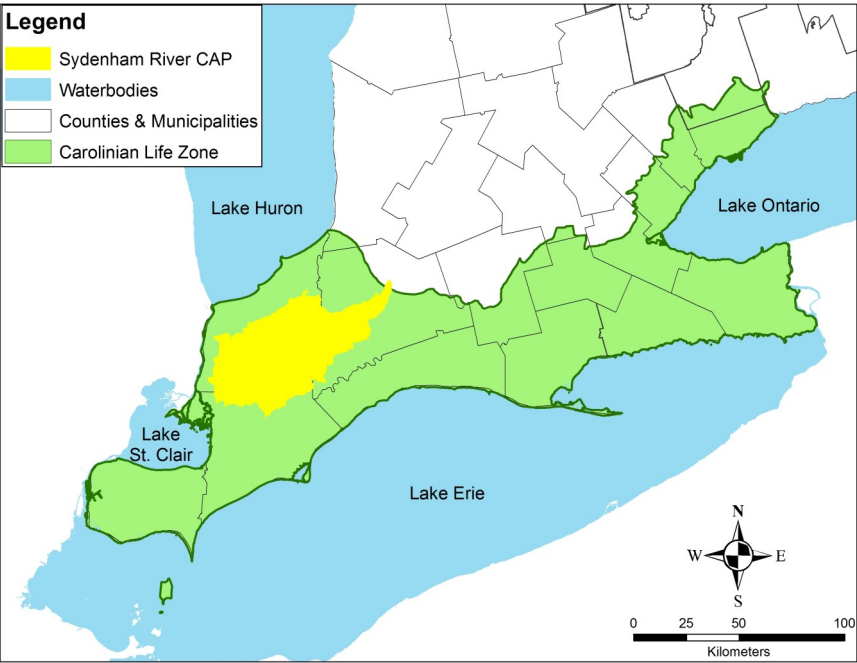
Sydenham River Conservation Action Plan

The Sydenham River Conservation Action Plan (CAP) area is located in the Carolinian Life Zone, an ecoregion rich in many species and habitats found nowhere else in Canada. The Sydenham River CAP area’s forests, riparian systems and wetlands are an important part of Carolinian Canada’s natural heritage. These habitats support a remarkable diversity of species, many of them provincially, nationally and globally rare. The extraordinary diversity of this area has evolved over millennia, but the health and existence of this diversity depends on conservation actions taken by people who care about the unique nature of the Sydenham River CAP area and the many essential services its ecosystems provide.

What is Conservation Action Planning? Used throughout the world, Conservation Action Planning is an effective and efficient way to conserve many species and habitats at the same time. The approach brings together local partners to set conservation objectives and strategies through sharing of knowledge, collaboration and consensus.

Conservation Action Plans (CAPs) in Carolinian Canada focus on biodiversity hotspots—areas with a high concentration of biological and ecological diversity that are home to many rare species and habitats.

CAPs provide a common vision and strategy to protect biodiversity that communities can implement together.



To view the full Sydenham River Conservation Action Plan please visit our website at: caroliniancanada.ca/caps-carolinian-canada

You can also view Conservation Action Plans for neighbouring areas such as:

- Lake St. Clair Coastal CAP
- Rondeau—Lake Erie Coast CAP
- Elgin Greenway CAP

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Threatened Blanding's Turtle © P.A. Woodliffe



Threatened Mapleleaf Mussel © C. Mesher



Provincially endangered Butler's Gartersnake © S. Gillingwater

Vision Statement

The Sydenham River Conservation Action Plan (CAP) aims to protect natural treasures, improve biodiversity through restoration of habitat to create healthy and sustainable ecosystems, enhance ecosystem services such as water quality for local communities, provide opportunities for economic viability, and engage citizens to work together toward a common, mutually-beneficial cause: a healthier environment for all.

What makes the Sydenham River CAP area special?

- It covers nearly the entire Sydenham River watershed.
- It supports an array of southern flora and fauna many of them at the northern limits of their ranges.
- Habitat for over 55 species listed as provincially Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern.
- A number of Provincially Significant Wetlands.
- Several large wetland complexes exist in the CAP area including Bickford Oak Woods Wetland Complex.
- Twenty different types of vegetation communities are present within the CAP area.
- Less than 1% of this region is protected in conservation lands. No regulated national or provincial parks are present in the area.
- 153 species of breeding birds have been recorded in the watershed.

Conservation Targets

- Upland Forests
- Wetlands (Deciduous and Coniferous Swamps, Inland Marshes)
- Thickets, Hedgerows, Fencerows, Shelterbelts, Abandoned Fields
- Streams, Drains and Riparian Habitat
- Prairies and Savannahs
- Reptiles
- Fish and Mussels
- Sustainable Agricultural Practices



Endangered Eastern Foxsnake © C. McCreary



Threatened Dense Blazing Star © H. Giethoorn



Federally threatened Red-headed Woodpecker
© P.A. Woodliffe



Provincially threatened Wavy-rayed Lampmussel
© S. Staton



Endangered Drooping Trillium © P.A. Woodliffe



Special Concern Northern Map Turtle © S. Gillingwater



Sydenham River © E. Carroll



Special Concern Milksnake © S. Gillingwater

Conservation Objectives

1. Communicate the reasons for the Conservation Action Plan, its goals and objectives, and get input from stakeholders and landowners on how to best implement the CAP.
2. Establish an outreach program to communicate “good news stories” about SAR and habitat diversity.
3. Protect, maintain and enhance natural heritage features through positive incentives, stewardship, securement, restoration, habitat creation and policy support.

You can become a Landowner Leader and protect and enhance habitat for rare species on your property.

4. Promote and plant native-, multi-species windbreaks.
5. Prevent and control the spread of new populations of high priority terrestrial and aquatic invasive species at critical sites.
6. Establish buffers of native vegetation along open watercourses and include in all new engineers’ reports.
7. Include habitat and water quality enhancements in all new drain projects and drain improvement projects.
8. Maintain and enhance water quality monitoring programs on an ongoing basis.

You can learn more about rare species and habitat and help protect the unique nature of Carolinian Canada.

9. Develop partnerships to support objectives and actions identified by the Sydenham River Recovery Program.
10. Promote road sides as habitat.
11. Reduce the road mortality of reptiles.
12. Establish and implement program to identify prairie remnants, existing prairies and potential prairie restoration sites.



Endangered American Chestnut seeds
© P.A. Woodliffe



Federally threatened Hooded Warbler
© P.A. Woodliffe



Endangered Kidneyshell Mussell © S. Staton

Since 1984, Carolinian Canada Coalition (CC), now a registered charity, has been a leading ecoregional group in Canada. Stretching from Toronto to Windsor, the Carolinian Life Zone of southern Ontario is among North America's most vibrant and fragile ecoregions. CC brings together diverse sectors, people and governments to collaboratively steward southern Ontario's unique habitat network, the green infrastructure needed to support thriving wild and human communities in harmony for generations.



Special Concern Snapping Turtle © M. Caron

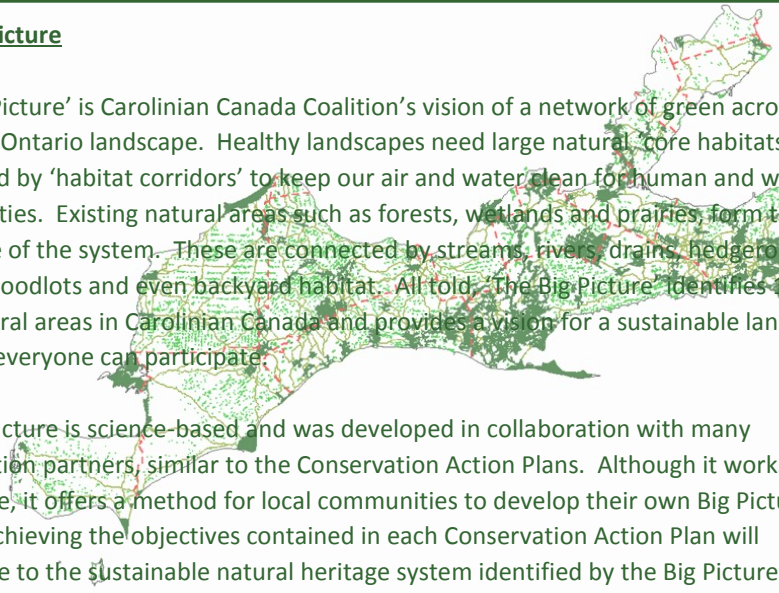


Threatened Eastern Hog-nosed snake
© S. Gillingwater

The Big Picture

The 'Big Picture' is Carolinian Canada Coalition's vision of a network of green across the southern Ontario landscape. Healthy landscapes need large natural 'core habitats' connected by 'habitat corridors' to keep our air and water clean for human and wild communities. Existing natural areas such as forests, wetlands and prairies, form the backbone of the system. These are connected by streams, rivers, drains, hedgerows, smaller woodlots and even backyard habitat. All told, 'The Big Picture' identifies 140 core natural areas in Carolinian Canada and provides a vision for a sustainable landscape in which everyone can participate.

The Big Picture is science-based and was developed in collaboration with many conservation partners, similar to the Conservation Action Plans. Although it works at a large scale, it offers a method for local communities to develop their own Big Picture vision. Achieving the objectives contained in each Conservation Action Plan will contribute to the sustainable natural heritage system identified by the Big Picture.



To find out how you can assist with meeting the CAP Conservation Objectives visit the Landowner Leaders section of our webpage at: <https://caroliniancanada.ca/landowner-leaders>

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



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Many thanks to our partners who were involved in the development of the Sydenham River Conservation Action Plan:

- Allen Woodliffe
- Canada South Land Trust
- Carolinian Canada Coalition
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Lambton Wildlife Inc.
- Lambton Woodlot Owners Association
- Middlesex Stewardship Council
- Ministry of Environment
- Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
- Municipality of Chatham-Kent
- Ontario NativeScape
- Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement Association
- Rural Lambton Stewardship Network
- St. Clair Region Conservation Authority
- Sydenham Field Naturalists
- Township of Dawn-Euphemia
- University of Western Ontario