

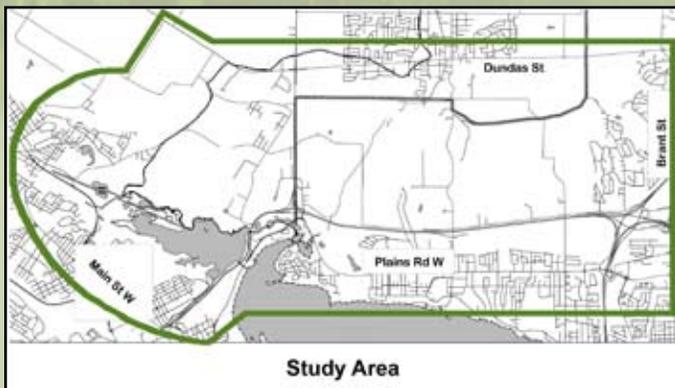
Cootes to Escarpment Park System

A Conservation and Land Management Strategy

Protecting Our
Green Paradise

What is the Cootes to Escarpment Study Area?

The Study Area is a unique ecological corridor in the Hamilton and Burlington area of Ontario's Greenbelt stretching from Cootes Paradise Marsh to the Niagara Escarpment. It features the watersheds of Grindstone Creek and Spencer Creek and is one of the richest biological areas in Canada. It provides habitat for a diversity of wildlife, including many rare species and species at risk of disappearing. It is also the only remaining contiguous area of habitat from Lake Ontario to the Escarpment not broken by a 400 series highway. The Study Area was selected because the ecological features of this special area are under pressure from human activities.



Highlights of the Study Area

- Cootes Paradise Marsh
- Niagara Escarpment
- Borer's Falls Conservation Area & Rock Chapel
- Clappison Escarpment Woods
- Bridgeview Valley
- Grindstone Creek Escarpment Valley
- Waterdown Escarpment Woods
- Sassafras Woods
- Royal Botanical Gardens
- Kerncliff Park



Marsh Marigold

Photo: Karen Abel

What is the Strategy?

The Strategy is a cooperative initiative to address threats and challenges facing natural lands within the Study Area. It outlines a vision to protect ecologically significant natural areas through a Park System of protected areas owned by the participating organizations. The Strategy provides guidance on how to protect and expand natural areas while providing public recreation and education opportunities. The Strategy has two main components:

Conservation: protecting and linking existing natural areas.

Land Management: environmental stewardship and maintenance of natural areas.

Photo: Royal Botanical Gardens



Cootes Paradise

What is the Cootes to Escarpment Park System?

The Park System is the proposed future vision of protected land within the Study Area. An important component of the Park System is the protection and restoration of natural connections between the Niagara Escarpment and Lake Ontario through Cootes Paradise. The long term health of natural areas currently protected in the Study Area requires that these lands be connected to adequately support ecological communities.



Photo: Royal Botanical Gardens

Community wetland restoration

Vision

Our vision for the Cootes to Escarpment Park System is that it will be known internationally as a protected, permanent and connected natural lands sanctuary from the Harbour to the Escarpment that promotes ecosystem and human health within Ontario's Greenbelt.

Mission

Our mission will be to collaboratively continue preserving and enhancing the natural lands using a sustainable approach that balances natural ecosystem health with responsible human appreciation and activities to achieve the vision.

Photo: Conservation Halton



Hidden Valley Park



Canoeists on Cootes Paradise

Photo: Royal Botanical Gardens

Who is Involved?

- Royal Botanical Gardens
- Conservation Halton
- Hamilton Conservation Authority
- City of Burlington
- City of Hamilton
- Region of Halton
- Hamilton Naturalists' Club
- Bruce Trail Conservancy
- Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan

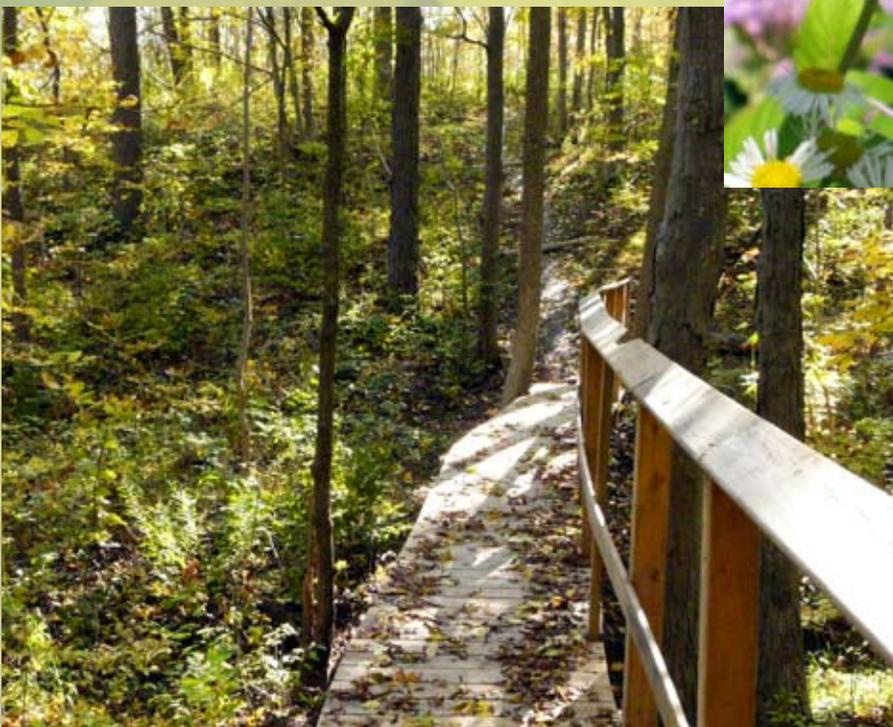
Why Do We Need a Strategy?

Urban growth expected over the next 20-25 years in Hamilton and Burlington threatens the environmental health of the area. By 2031 the regional population is expected to grow to 1.4 million, an increase of 37%. This increase in population will result in greater demand on natural areas for respite, recreation and education. As a result, conserving ecological integrity will become a greater challenge without large areas of connected habitat to protect the significant biodiversity and natural heritage of our region.



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail

Photo: Gord Leaver



Cartwright Nature Sanctuary

Photo: Royal Botanical Gardens

How Will the Strategy Work?

The Strategy focuses on over 1,500 hectares of natural lands in the Study Area owned by the organizations listed above. These groups, with the advice of stakeholders, interest groups and local citizens, will work cooperatively to carry out the Strategy to preserve and protect the natural areas for the long term.



Birding at Cootes Paradise

Will the Strategy Affect My Property Rights?

No. While the Greenbelt Plan has been developed to guide land-use planning in Ontario, the Strategy is not a land-use plan. It is a conservation vision for public natural areas that are characterized by environmentally significant features. The Strategy does identify existing land-use planning policies that can support the vision. Implementation of the Strategy will rely on the partners to work co-operatively with communities in the region using existing legal and stewardship practices.

Photo: Royal Botanical Gardens

Questions or Comments?

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Fall Colours

Photo: Royal Botanical Gardens



Red Elderberry

Photo: Karen Abel

Further Information

Please visit www.rbg.ca/greenbelt/ to view the Strategy and access regular updates about the project.

Produced by the partners of the Cootes to Escarpment Park System Conservation and Land Management Strategy, with generous funding support from the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation.