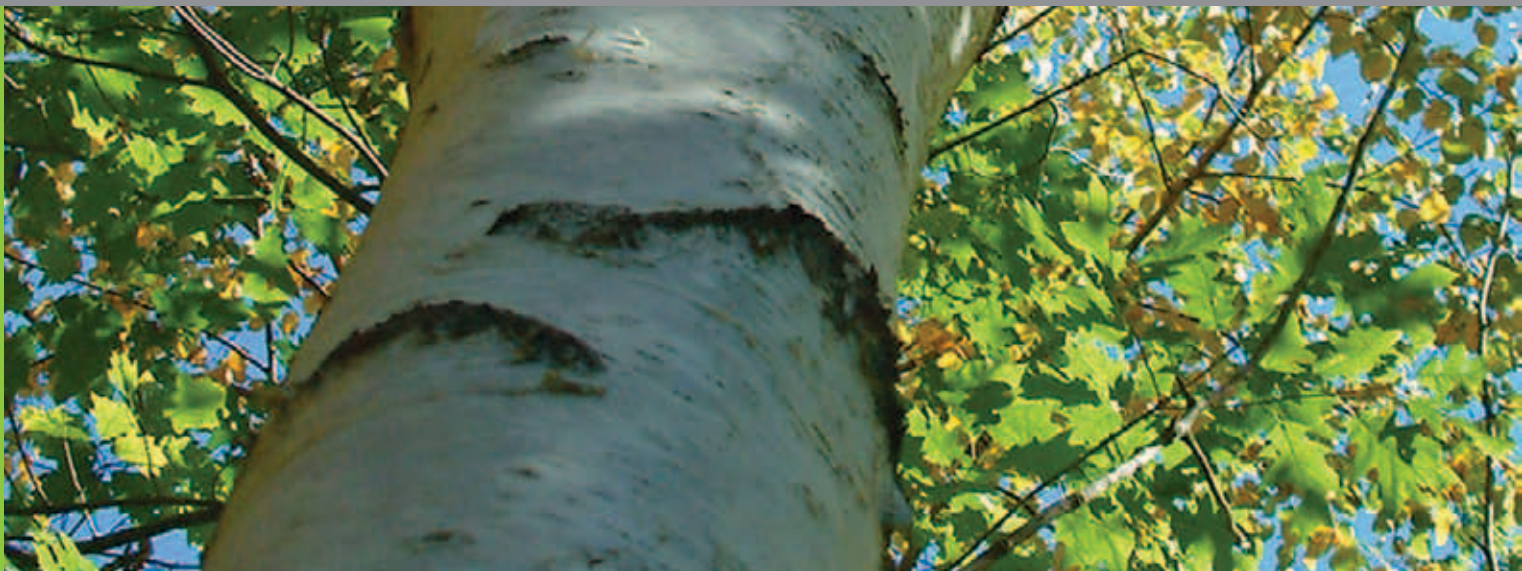




6

Land Securement

Achievements in Land Securement since the Establishment of the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation





6

Land Securement

Achievements in Land Securement since the Establishment of the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation

Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation
July, 2011

Cover photo: Catherine Marshall

Measuring Success on the Oak Ridges Moraine

This report is the sixth in a series of eight reports commissioned by the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation (ORMF or the Foundation). Started in 2010, the ORMF's *Measuring Success on the Oak Ridges Moraine* project was launched to assess how effective the provincial government, the ORMF and all other Oak Ridges Moraine (ORM or the Moraine) partners have been in meeting the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plans' (ORMCP or the Plan) purpose and objectives. This work was undertaken in preparation for the scheduled legislative review of the ORMCP in 2015.

The ORMF was created to provide support and encouragement for activities that preserve, protect and enhance the environmental integrity of the ORM as well as to support the maintenance of a trail along its length. The ORM is a unique and irreplaceable landscape that covers approximately 190,000 hectares and stretches 160 km from the Trent River to the Niagara Escarpment. Shared and enjoyed by millions of people, it is the source of water for many river systems, home to a wealth of natural habitats and an enormous groundwater recharge system for south central Ontario. It is often described as a rain barrel since its permeable sands and gravels absorb and collect rain and snow melt, which then slowly filters into the deep aquifers below the ground. It is estimated that more than 250,000 people rely on the Moraine to provide them with clean drinking water. Boasting 273 km of trail and countless outdoor recreational activities, the ORM offers something for everyone. It is a vibrant place for people to live, work and play in harmony with nature.

The Foundation has been in place now for over eight years and so it seemed appropriate that a comprehensive evaluation of its achievements as well as those of its numerous partners be undertaken.

In carrying out this assessment, the Foundation adopted a comprehensive approach that looked at overall effectiveness of the Plan and not just those elements that related to the responsibilities of the Foundation. In this way the final product would be useful for both the Foundation and the many stakeholders engaged in various aspects of the implementation of the ORMCP. Accordingly, the Foundation identified a wide range of matters worthy of investigation and further discussion. The results are captured in the following reports:

1. An Assessment of Stakeholder Awareness, Support and Concerns for the Implementation of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan
2. Assessing Compliance of Policy and Regulatory Agencies to the Requirements of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan
3. Assessing the Health of the Oak Ridges Moraine within a Watershed Context
4. Assessing the Health of the Oak Ridges Moraine within a Landscape and Municipal Context
5. Achievements in Land Stewardship since the Establishment of the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation
6. Achievements in Land Securement since the Establishment of the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation
7. Achievements in Research and Education since the Establishment of the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation
8. Improvements to the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail since the Adoption of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan

Enviroscape Consulting Services prepared reports 1 to 4 and 8 under the direction of the Measuring Success Steering Committee, an ad hoc group that drew on expertise from government, university and non-government organizations. The remaining reports were prepared by the ORMF in consultation with the steering committee. The draft reports were released on March 9, 2011 for a 90-day commenting period; there was excellent feedback and constructive comments received from numerous groups and individuals.

These eight reports will continue to be shared with stakeholders to promote discussion and to facilitate the development of improved approaches for the long-term protection of the Moraine. Their contents represent the opinions and advice of the consultant and steering committee that prepared them and do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the ORMF Board of Directors or its members. The objective is that the results of this project will aid in the implementation of the ORMCP and related initiatives on a number of fronts, including:

- Insights into the perceptions of stakeholders on the significance and effectiveness of the Plan and its associated initiatives;
- The identification of areas where future investigation is required in preparation for the 2015 review of the ORMCP;
- The identification of opportunities for improvement to the current implementation process that can increase the effectiveness of the Plan;
- The demonstration of approaches that can be used for the establishment of a monitoring program for the ORM;
- The promotion of greater awareness and appreciation of the considerable achievements of the Foundation and its partners in the protection and enhancement of the environmental integrity of the ORM;

- The identification of areas where the Foundation may wish to focus its program efforts in the future; and
- The identification of additional partnership opportunities the Foundation may wish to pursue.

Resolving some areas of concerns will likely require approaches that go beyond simply amending the ORMCP or funding the ORMF but instead may require a re-examination of implementation in other areas such as broader provincial water management programs, monitoring programs and provincial audit responsibilities.

Measuring Success Steering Committee

- David Burnett, Conservation Authorities Moraine Coalition
- Joyce Chau, EcoSpark
- Debbe Crandall, Save the Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition (STORM)
- Kim Gavine, Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation
- Lisa Grbinicek, Niagara Escarpment Commission
- Fred Johnson, Enviroscape Consulting
- Dan McCarthy, University of Waterloo
- John Riley, Nature Conservancy of Canada
- Lisa Turnbull, Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation

Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation Board of Directors (2011)

- Caroline Schultz – Chair; Executive Director, Ontario Nature; nominee of the Government of Ontario
- Gayle Wood – Vice-Chair; Chief Administrative Officer, Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority; nominee of Conservation Ontario
- Don Prince – Secretary; Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust; nominee of the Federal Government
- Graham Whitelaw – Treasurer; Queen’s National Scholar and Assistant Professor, Queen’s University; nominee of Save the Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition
- Michael Jolliffe – Director; Vice President, Business Development and Corporate Relations, Tetra Tech; nominee of the Government of Ontario
- Marolyn Morrison – Director; Mayor, Town of Caledon; nominee of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario
- Rick Smith – Director; Executive Director, Environmental Defence; nominee of the Government of Ontario

Past Members of the Board of Directors of the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation

- Bob Barnett
- John Burke
- Debbe Crandall (past Chair)
- Steve Gilchrist
- Richard Grant
- Jim Kelleher
- David Love
- Claire Malcolmson
- James McKellar
- Marilyn Pearce
- J. R (Russ) Powell (past Chair)
- John Riley
- Deborah Schulte
- Erin Shapero
- Vito Spatafora
- Mark Stabb
- Ric Symmes (past Chair)

We would also like to thank the following who have provided various types of support during the production of these reports: Sarah Chartrand, Michele Donnelly, Janet Friskney, Megan McRae, Talya Moshinsky, Ken Mott, Sasha Lambrinos, Kathy Padgett and Judith Reda.

Contents

08	1.0 PURPOSE
08	2.0 BACKGROUND
	2.1 Establishment and Role of the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation in the Protection and Enhancement of the Oak Ridges Moraine
	2.2 Specific Goals, Objectives and Targets of the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation in Land Securement
10	3.0 LAND SECUREMENT ACTIVITIES PRIOR TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OAK RIDGES MORaine FOUNDATION
12	4.0 LAND SECUREMENT ACTIVITIES SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OAK RIDGES MORaine FOUNDATION
	4.1 Overview
	4.2 Lands Containing Significant Natural and Hydrological Features and Values
	4.3 Lands within Natural Core and Linkage Areas
	4.4 Lands that Serve Important Ecological Functions
	4.5 Lands Identified in the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail Strategy
	4.6 Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation Grant Listing
	4.7 Leveraged Funds
	4.8 Leveraged Programs
18	5.0 EFFECTIVENESS OF THE OAK RIDGES MORaine FOUNDATION'S LAND SECUREMENT PROGRAM: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES
	5.1 Strategic Coordination
	5.2 Restoration Imperative
	5.3 Open Spaces and Park System
	5.4 ORM Securement Plan
	5.5 Funding Needed for Future Securement Activities
19	6.0 CONCLUSIONS
20	7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS
21	REFERENCES

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to evaluate how successful the ORMF has been in meeting its program goals in relation to land securement. The effectiveness of grant funds is evaluated and recommendations made for further work that needs to be completed. More specifically, this report examines:

- ORM land securement initiatives undertaken prior to the establishment of the ORMF;
- ORM land securement initiatives since the establishment of the ORMF;
- effectiveness of the ORMF in meeting land securement challenges and opportunities;
- observations and conclusions pertaining to land securement on the ORM; and
- recommendations for future work in the area of land securement.



Photo: Nancy Dickson

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Establishment and Role of the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation in the Protection and Enhancement of the Oak Ridges Moraine

The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP or the Plan) was established in 2002 by the Province of Ontario to protect and conserve the ecological and hydrological values of the ORM through the provision of resource management direction. Some of the key objectives set out in the ORMCP include:

- To protect the ecological and hydrological integrity of the Oak Ridges Moraine Area;
- To ensure that only land and resource uses that maintain, improve or restore the ecological and hydrological functions of the Oak Ridges Moraine Area are permitted;
- To maintain, improve or restore all of the elements that contribute to the ecological and hydrological functions of the Oak Ridges Moraine Area, including the quality and quantity of its water and its other resources; and
- To ensure that the Oak Ridges Moraine Area is maintained as a continuous natural landform and environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

In 2002, the Province provided \$15 million for the establishment of the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation (ORMF or the Foundation). Recognizing the need for non-regulatory actions to complement the policies of the ORMCP, the founding directors of the ORMF undertook a broad consultation of Moraine stakeholders to determine priority actions. The ORMF's Strategic Plan (2003) identified five key areas of program funding: land securement, land stewardship, the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail (ORMT or the Trail), education and public awareness and research. Since 2003, the ORMF, comprised of an independent board of directors, has distributed diligently in excess of \$14 million in grants to 177 projects and working closely with ORM partners has leveraged an additional \$35.8 million.

2.2 Specific Goals, Objectives and Targets of the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation in Land Securement

Land securement was identified in the 2003 Strategic Plan as one of the ORMF's five key areas of program funding. Expenditure guidelines were set for each of the grant program areas with 25-30% of the \$15 million proposed to be spent on ORM-based land securement with a desired funding ratio of 2 parts partner funds, 1 part ORMF funds (2:1).

In this report, land securement refers to fee simple purchase, donation and/or conservation easements that are either held by public agencies, e.g., conservation authorities, or a private, not-

for-profit environmental organization, e.g., Nature Conservancy of Canada [NCC]. Putting lands that are rich in ecological and hydrological value into the holdings of conservation groups and public agencies dedicated to managing them for these values offers a high level of assurance that the properties will be managed effectively over the long term.



Photo: Robert Brown

The *Land Securement Strategy* (2003) (the Strategy) was developed by the ORMF as an appendix to its strategic plan. The Strategy detailed the Foundation's strategic focus and has provided guidance around the elements evaluated in grant proposals.

The ORMF identified four categories of land that were priorities for the Foundation. These were:

- Lands containing significant natural and hydrological features and values;
- Lands within Natural Core and Natural Linkage areas;
- Lands that serve important ecological functions; and
- Lands identified in the ORMT Strategic Plan as part of the Optimal Trail Alignment.

In order for the ORMF to make balanced judgments based on the best available information, the following factors were considered when assessing grant applications:

Partnership Support: As stated above, the ORMF required a 2:1 (proponent:Foundation) funding ratio for the overall cost of all projects. It was recognized that some groups and some geographic areas would have difficulty achieving this ratio, so the ORMF took a judicious and case-by-case approach to applying this requirement.

Viability/Condition of Habitat and Restoration Potential: The ORMF looked to proponents to assess the ecological viability and condition of the property. Properties that offered potential for restoration, i.e., those containing high proportions of

forest, savanna, prairie, sand barren, wetland and other natural cover, were considered. However, those properties in poor ecological health, i.e., that contained lots of invasive species and hazardous waste, were considered only with great caution given the cost and viability of their restoration.

Proportionality: The proportion of a property that contained a desired feature such as a portion of a trail route or a key natural heritage feature was considered when deciding whether or not to fund a specific project. In some cases, where acquisition of a larger parcel was the only option, consideration was given to disposing of surplus portions after the title was acquired.

Degree of Threat: The degree of threat, based on professional and practical judgment, was considered in the evaluation of land securement proposals. Depending on the location within the Moraine area, threats ranged from development pressures to specifics related to ownership or land uses such as older-growth forests vulnerable to cutting or a wetland being impacted through grazing. In some cases, the nature of the threat may have argued for its securement, while in others, the property may have been sufficiently protected by the provisions of the ORMCP.

Synergy: Proposals that aimed to secure lands that provided a synergy with adjacent lands containing other values were strongly considered. Lands that provided multiple benefits, such as a combination of protecting natural values and securing a portion of the Trail, were also given a higher consideration, as were proposals that dealt with larger land securement projects or ecological assemblies.

Managing Agency: The ORMF has the authority through its Charter to hold and manage property, however, it made the decision not to exercise this authority except where absolutely necessary and only on a short-term basis. In every case of land secured through use of ORMF funding, the ORMF sought partners to hold the title or easement and asked partners to address the question of longer-term property management.

Form of Securement: Since the ORMF wished to achieve best value for its funds, it favoured proposals that included land donations with the Foundation's contribution including costs for appraisals or legal assistance.

Stewardship Endowment/Reserve: The cost of owning and managing a property was an important consideration when undertaking land securement. The ORMF required that stewardship budgets for securement projects be calculated to address the long-term stewardship needs for the property. Where

Securement of significant lands is a strong form of protection.

appropriate, the budgets included practical proposals for raising funds for stewardship endowments or reserves that would be formally set aside for future property stewardship. The ORMF favoured proposals that included such considerations, especially in the case of easements, which are subject to annual inspections and possible legal defenses.

Opportunities: The ORMF strove to seize opportunities when they arose, which meant reserving the right to favour some criteria more strongly than others.

Regional Balance: The ORMF attempted to make decisions around land securement in a manner that ensured benefits across all parts of the Moraine.

3.0 LAND SECUREMENT ACTIVITIES PRIOR TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ FOUNDATION

At the same time that the ORMCP was being put together, the Province of Ontario was collecting statistics on the ownership of public lands on the ORM. In 2001 the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) produced a paper entitled *Oak Ridges Moraine Public Natural Heritage Lands*. Public natural heritage lands were described as “lands that contain natural features or landforms”; lands with major structures or formal parks were not included. This inventory provided a baseline of public lands on the ORM prior to the establishment of the ORMCP.

See Table 1 – Public Natural Heritage Lands by Ownership on the Oak Ridges Moraine in 2001

Although many groups undertook land acquisition on the ORM prior to the release of the ORMCP, they were limited by a lack of funding. One of the most active groups working on the ORM at this time was the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust (ORMLT or the Trust). The organization was formed in 1999 by concerned citizens who wanted to protect the ORM; it was formalized as an incorporated non-profit group in 2001. The ORMLT has played a significant role in the protection of ecologically sensitive lands on the ORM. Within three years of its creation, the Trust had already secured a 6.86-hectare (17 acre) property, registered a 287-hectare (711 acre) conservation easement and engaged many other landowners in discussions about land protection on the ORM.

Land trusts like the ORMLT received valuable support in 1997 when the Ontario Land Trust Alliance (OLTA) was formed. The OLTA “promotes voluntary private land conservation to benefit communities and natural heritage systems”; this body represents over 42 community-based land trusts across Ontario, three of which are linked to the ORM, i.e., the ORMLT, Kawartha Heritage Conservancy and Northumberland Land

Trust. In 2010 the “OLTA’s 42 member trusts represented some 120,000 individuals who were engaged in protecting over 70,000 acres across the Province for the benefit of their local communities, local species and the people of the Province of Ontario” (Ontario Land Trust Alliance website).

Conservation Agreement: a legally binding agreement voluntarily entered into between a landowner and a conservation organization (including a land trust, the federal, a provincial or municipal government) to restrict the use of subject real property to protect the heritage values of the property, and may include a servitude for the use and benefit of dominant land, a covenant or an easement.

Definition courtesy of the Canadian Land Trust Alliance



Photo: Gary Hall

**Table 1 – Public Natural Heritage Lands by Ownership
on the Oak Ridges Moraine in 2001**

Landholder	Land holdings Totally/Partially in the ORM in Hectares (acres)
Conservation Authorities	9,493 (23,458)
Regional and County Forests	4,539 (11,216)
Other Municipal Lands	437 (1,080)
Federal (Pickering Lands)	2,111 (5,216)
Provincial Lands	722 (1,784)
Ontario Heritage Foundation	566 (1,399)
University and College Lands	633 (1,564)
Nature Conservancy of Canada	65 (161)
Federation of Ontario Naturalists (now Ontario Nature)	50 (124)
Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust	7 (17)*
TOTAL	18,623 (46,019)

Information courtesy of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (2001)

*Note: The Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust has indicated that this information is incorrect. In 2001 they report to have had two land transactions for a total of 728 acres. The above chart has not been changed to reflect this as it reports on data obtained by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

4.0 LAND SECUREMENT ACTIVITIES SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ FOUNDATION

4.1 Overview

The establishment of the ORMF brought focused landscape-based financial resources to land securement activities on the ORM. With strong granting criteria in place, the ORMF ensured that ecologically significant lands were made a priority for protection. The availability of grant funds from the ORMF enabled grantees to leverage additional funds from the private and public sectors. Some regional municipalities set aside land/greenlands securement funds and, as a result, ORMF partners were able to leverage the Foundation's dollars.

4.2 Lands Containing Significant Natural and Hydrological Features and Values

Land securement is an important tool in protecting key natural heritage features and hydrologically sensitive features of the ORM.

Due to its abundant sand and gravel deposits, the ORM plays a critical role in groundwater recharge. The land securement projects supported by the Foundation have contributed directly to the protection of groundwater and drinking water sources, thereby helping to support the Province of Ontario's Source Water Protection Program. Land securement supported by the ORMF in areas like the Enniskillen Valley has protected locations identified with high aquifer vulnerability on the Province of Ontario's Aquifer Vulnerability Index (AVI).

Rare, threatened and endangered species are also protected by securing important habitat. Groups like the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) have been very active in the securement and restoration of lands in the Rice Lake Plains area. The tallgrass prairie found in this area is a globally imperilled ecosystem and provides habitat for many plant and animal species. In southern Ontario, tallgrass once covered approximately 1,000 kilometers squared. Today less than 3% remains, some of which can be found on the ORM.

4.3 Lands within Natural Core and Natural Linkage Areas

Natural Cores Areas on the ORM were identified through the ORMCP because they contained high concentrations of key natural heritage features, hydrologically sensitive features and landform features. Natural Linkage Areas are corridors connecting Natural Core Areas and river valleys. A key principle outlined in the ORMCP is the maintenance and, where possible,

enhancement or restoration of these connecting corridors to enhance connectivity. Connections enable plant and animal movement, hydrological and nutrient cycling, genetic transfer and energy flows through food webs. Both of these land use designations were considered high priority in the ORMF's land securement grant program.

In collaboration with more than 30 partners, the ORMF undertook a private landowner contact program called the Caring for the Moraine Project (CMP) whose objective was to engage rural ORM residents living in core and linkage areas that were identified as Conservation Priority Areas in the ORM conservation and restoration strategy [2003]. Through the CMP, the Foundation provided ORM landowners with information on permanent securement/protection options like conservation easements/agreements and land donations. Over 627 properties were visited through this project, an effort, which resulted in over 621 hectares (1,534 acres) of land and 17,890 metres of stream restored in Natural Core and Natural Linkage areas of the ORM. Additional benefits of engaging landowners in stewardship activities is the exposure to land securement options; the CMP was critical to identifying landowners who had an interest in land donation, sale or conservation easements/agreements. Groups like the Northumberland Land Trust, Kawartha Heritage Conservancy and the ORMLT worked with the Caring for the Moraine partners to ensure their land securement message and options were shared with landowners wanting to do something more permanent with their properties.

4.4 Lands that Serve Important Ecological Functions

The Moraine's unique soil composition makes it a critical recharge and discharge area and is the headwaters to over 65 river and streams that flow south to Lake Ontario, north to Lakes Simcoe, Scugog and Rice and east to the Trent River. Long-term protection of these major streams is critical given



Photo: Craig McWilliam

the impact of activities in the headwaters to downstream systems. This need to protect headwaters for the benefit of downstream water resources has been recognized by the City of Toronto. Since 2005 the Toronto has contributed to a Source Water Protection Fund that supports the securement of ecologically important land such as headwater areas, discharge areas and wetlands. The fund pays up to one-third of the cost of acquiring a property subject to the approval by Toronto City Council. In 2010/2011 \$200,000 was also been provided to the ORMLT to pay for legal fees and transaction costs incurred when private land owners donate land or conservation easements to the organization. (City of Toronto, e-mail communication with Gwen Mackay for Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker). Five ORMF grants received significant leveraged funds from the City of Toronto. All of these properties have helped to ensure that clean and abundant water resources are available in the headwaters that flow off of the ORM and into the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). It is unknown if the City of Toronto will allow its Source Water Protection Fund to be used to secure lands outside the City limits beyond 2011.

Other regional municipalities have set up land securement/greenland funds that have supported the protection of ORM lands. Since 2005, the Region of Peel has had a \$3 million reserve (Region of Peel, personal communication) which has been used to secure lands both on and off the Moraine. The Regions of York and Durham also have reserves that offer opportunities for the securement of sensitive ORM lands.

One way of permanently protecting ecological function on private lands is through conservation easements/agreements. As mentioned in the previous section, the ORMLT was operating prior to the establishment of the ORMF. However, with the ORMCP established and dedicated land securement funding made available through the ORMF, the ORMLT's work has significantly gained momentum. To date the ORMLT has secured over 1,340 hectares (3,327 acres) of land through 26 registered conservation easements, three restrictive covenants, and six properties in direct ownership. The ORMF was a key partner in securing eight of the registered conservation easements (over 585 hectares/1,446 acres) by providing \$277,438 of funding to the ORMLT.

4.5 Lands Identified in the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail Strategy

Natural spaces are an integral part of healthy communities – not only do many of the secured properties on the ORM provide a great ecological benefit to the landscape, they also can provide social and recreational opportunities. With 13 conservation areas, two county forests, a provincial park (Peter's Woods) and over 300 kilometres of hiking trail available, there is a wealth of outdoor activities and interactions with nature on

Happy Valley

The Happy Valley Forest is one of the largest remaining intact upland deciduous forests found on the ORM. Located in King Township in the northwest of the GTA, this 631-hectare (1,560 acre) area supports more than 110 breeding bird species and is an outstanding example of the mature sugar maple and beech upland and oak-pine forests that are characteristic of the ORM. Ecologically and aesthetically significant, the area's wetlands and upland forest are critical to the survival of nationally significant species such as the Acadian flycatcher and provide an ideal home for many other plant and animal species, including a wide range of wildflowers and several salamander species. The area also holds special cultural significance given its association with the Toronto Carrying-place. It is becoming an increasingly popular hiking destination, as visitors can visit the forest along the publicly-accessible ORMT.

The Happy Valley Forest is a special area that features all the elements necessary to achieve old-growth structure in the next 50 years at a scale large enough to allow for natural disturbances such as wildfires, insect outbreaks, disease and severe storms. Nowhere else on the western Moraine or within the GTA is old-growth forest of this extent achievable.

Over the past 30 years, the NCC has helped to protect more than 1,011 hectares (2,500 acres) of the Moraine, of which almost 113 hectares (280 acres) are in Happy Valley. The ORMF assisted the NCC with the securement of almost 188 hectares of land within Happy Valley through a total of \$537,400 in grant funds.

Information courtesy of The Nature Conservancy of Canada



Photo: Laura Mousseau

the ORM. The establishment of the ORMT was a priority action in the ORMCP and the securement of land in order to make trail connections was a priority in the ORMF's Strategic Plan. The Oak Ridges Trail Association (ORTA or the Association) in partnership with the ORMF has had an additional 103.6 km of trail approved and/or marked, representing a 42% increase in total length of the Trail since 2002. This increase includes an additional 75.8 km of trail along a defined main route, which represents the completion of the continuous east-west trail across the entire ORM. Lands identified in the ORMT Strategic Plan as part of the Trail's optimum corridor were given high priority for securement by the ORMF.

4.6 Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation Grant Listing

Land securement was undertaken by ORMF partners either by the purchase or donation of property titles or through conservation easement/agreements. To date more than 2,259 hectares (5,582 acres) of conservation lands have been protected through the ORMF's land securement grant program.

See Map 1 – ORMF Funded Land Securement 2002-2009

Examples of costs supported by the ORMF for land securement grants included items such as staff time for land negotiations, purchase cost, legal fees, appraisal fees, survey fees, management planning, building capacity and land

stewardship/restoration once the property was secured. All of the projects funded met one or more of the four priority areas for ORMF funds.

Conservation Foundation of Greater Toronto

Acquisition of 160 acres	\$215,000
Acquisition of 30 acres	\$87,375
Acquisition of 232 acres	\$270,000
Acquisition of 25 acres	\$247,000
Acquisition of 5 acres	\$33,167
Acquisition of 92 acres	\$322,500
Acquisition of 50.45 acres	\$895,000
Acquisition of 82.71 acres	\$82,667

Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority

Acquisition of 325 acres	\$219,834
Acquisition of 216 acres	\$225,000
Acquisition of 135 acres	\$140,000
Acquisition of 300 acres	\$275,000
Acquisition of 630 acres	\$575,000



© Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation

Acquisition of 120 acres	\$40,000
Acquisition of 124 acres	\$35,000

Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust

Easement Acquisitions 2003	\$14,160
Easement Acquisitions 2004	\$24,421
Secure Conservation Land and the Oak Ridges Trail ...	\$219,943
Acquisition of 25.55 acres	\$6,833
Acquisition of 49.8 acres	\$5,248
Donation of Conservation Easement	\$6,833

Nature Conservancy of Canada

Acquisition of 50 acres	\$220,000
Acquisition of 96 acres	\$87,000
Acquisition of 388 acres	\$156,000
Acquisition of 100 acres	\$11,000
Acquisition of 226 acres	\$59,310
Acquisition of 71 acres	\$230,400

Regional Municipality of York

Acquisition of 60 acres	\$108,000
Acquisition of 71 acres	\$80,000

Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority

Acquisition of 107 acres	\$41,000
--------------------------------	----------

Kawartha Heritage Conservancy

Building Securement Capacity on the Eastern Oak Ridges Moraine	\$92,000
--	----------

Kawartha Region Conservation Authority

East Cross Forest Land Acquisition and Protection ...	\$235,200
Acquisition of 29.5 acres	\$16,151
Acquisition of 599 acres	\$427,500

Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority

Acquisition of 115 acres	\$8,075
Acquisition of 100 acres	\$23,736

Northumberland Land Trust

Acquisition of 52.85 acres	\$26,110
----------------------------------	----------

Total Funding to Land Securement Projects	\$5,761,463
Funding leveraged	\$15,827,353
Total funding supporting Land Securement	\$21,588,816

4.7 Leveraged Funds

A number of other funding programs were available after 2002 to help support land securement activities on the ORM. Many of these programs were accessed by ORMF partners to leverage grant funds. They included:

Ontario Land Trust Assistance Program: Financial assistance for capacity building within land trusts and education and training provided by OLTA.

East Cross Forest

Prior to 2005, East Cross Forest was better known as a place for illegal activity than it was for its ecological significance. Major issues included trespassing, off-roading, dumping and other activities that resulted in environmental damage and a safety hazard to those who entered the area. Even with the ORMCP in place, additional action was needed to protect this forest.

In November 2003, the Township of Scugog established the East Cross Forest Task Force. In a report entitled Proposal for the Protection of East Cross Forest, the task force recommended that a comprehensive land securement strategy be developed in order to protect the area. Kawartha Conservation agreed to take the lead in implementing the strategy, as well as to hold title to future properties and manage them as a conservation area.

In 2005, the ORMF approved a grant for \$235,200 to Kawartha Conservation to help implement the recommendations in the report, including other activities that would lead to re-establishing the ecological health of East Cross Forest. This grant was central to the development of partnerships that led to the creation of a new 459-hectare (1,134 acres) conservation area entirely on the ORM, called Durham East Cross Forest Conservation Area. The grant also supported restoration work and protection for this largely forested area, which contains a variety of species of plants, including prairie grass remnants. Subsequent grants totaling \$443,651 were approved by the ORMF for Kawartha Conservation to secure lands identified in its securement strategy.

Today the success of this initiative is evident in multiple ways: trespassing in Durham East Cross Forest Conservation Area has been reduced by over 95%; more than 75 km of unsustainable trails have been closed; 5 km of sustainable trails were opened to the public in 2009 for low-impact recreational uses, with another 2.3 km to be opened in the spring of 2011; in 2007 and 2008, over 150 volunteers cleared many tonnes of garbage, construction waste, burnt vehicles, tires and other materials during two community cleanups; and volunteers have planted a total of 2,000 trees and shrubs.

There are an additional 900 hectares (2,224 acres) within East Cross Forest that have been prioritized for acquisition and protection through Kawartha Conservation's land acquisition strategy. These include parcels that contain either Natural Core Area or Natural Linkage Area within the ORM, or natural systems within the Greenbelt.

Information courtesy of Kawartha Conservation

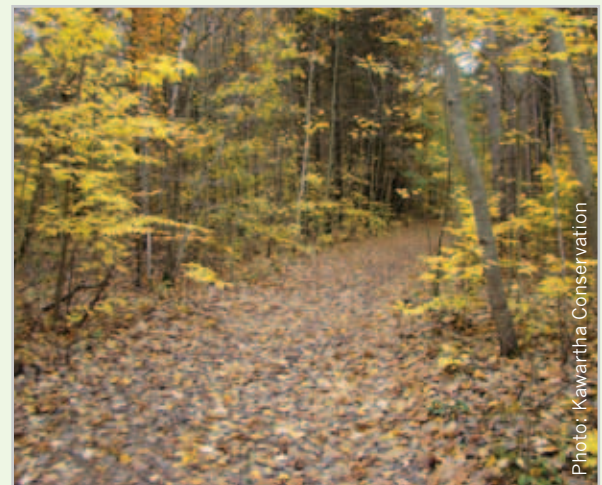
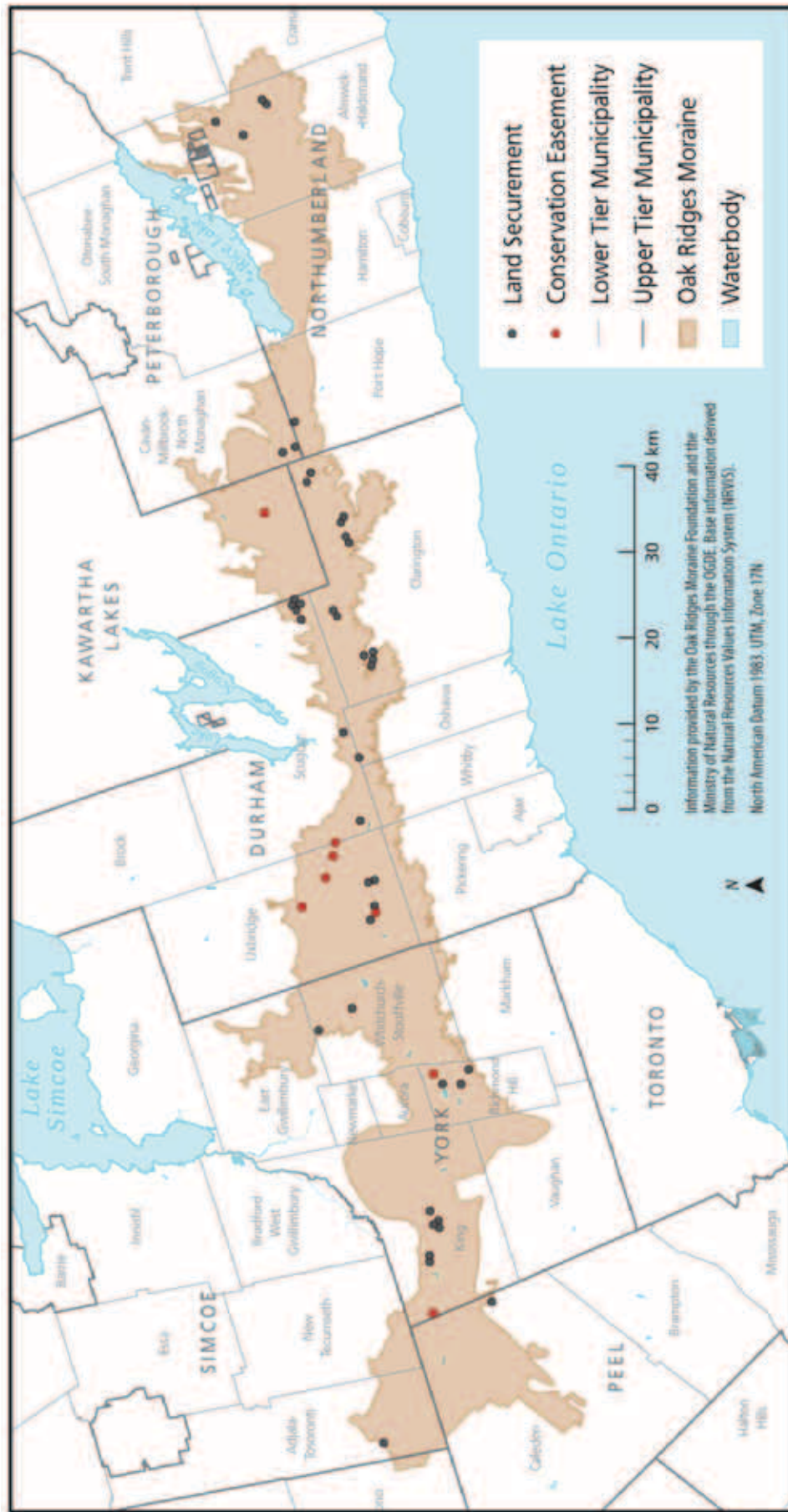


Photo: Kawartha Conservation

Map 1 – ORMF Funded Land Securement 2002–2009



Natural Spaces Land Acquisition and Stewardship Program: In August 2005 the provincial government announced the Natural Spaces Program. This new program included a \$6-million allocation to the Ontario Heritage Trust for the acquisition and stewardship of provincially significant natural heritage lands.



Photo: Brian Benabissa

Greenlands Program: The Greenlands Program was a partnership between MNR and the NCC to help conserve Ontario's biodiversity. It was established in 2006 to help organizations secure privately held lands primarily in southern Ontario with significant natural heritage features. Ontario-based organizations such as land trusts, conservation authorities and municipalities had access to the funds and a matching contribution was required. Only direct purchase price costs to secure lands could be funded through this program.

Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) — Government of Canada Natural Areas Conservation Program: Up to \$15 million of the monies received from the Government of Canada under this program are granted to provincial and regional land trusts to support the program goals in NCC's priority areas. On the ORM these areas are Happy Valley and the Rice Lake Plains.

4.8 Leveraged Programs

The ORMF's grants were able to achieve more than just the hard statistic of 2,259 hectares (5,582 acres) of conservation lands protected. ORMF funds were also able to help partners build securement capacity and in many cases fostered landowner commitments to projects that will proceed in the future. In some cases partners developed relationships with landowners that may not, even in the long term, result in a traditional land securement option. However, this work still produces positive results by fostering: natural heritage education; enlightened stewardship; and community conservation leadership.

The Oak Ridges Corridor Park

In May 2001, the Oak Ridges Moraine Protection Act froze all development applications involving the ORM, including an area referred to as Yonge East and West in the Town of Richmond Hill. In September 2004, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced that the Province of Ontario and certain landowners on the ORM in the Town of Richmond Hill had reached an agreement to exchange lands. The purpose of the land exchange was to protect the last remaining natural corridor link between the eastern and western parts of the ORM in Richmond Hill. Under the agreement, 428 hectares (1,057 acres) of land in Richmond Hill came into public ownership. The Province completed the land exchange in August 2007 and became the owners of this area, which is referred to as the 'Corridor Park'. In 2010 the Province of Ontario and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) signed an agreement for TRCA to manage these lands.

In addition to the Corridor Park lands, an opportunity arose for the Province to secure and protect additional adjacent lands in the area east of Bayview Avenue (referred to as 'Corridor Park East'). Through this process the TRCA acquired 109 hectares (269 acres) from the Province. Additional properties were then secured by TRCA in the Corridor Park East, with the support of partners such as the ORMF, bringing the total lands protected in the entire Corridor Park to over 602 hectares (1,488 acres) for both provincial and TRCA lands.

One of the key properties secured in this system is referred to as Swan Lake. This property was a high priority in TRCA's land securement program because of its ecological significance and connection to the conservation authority's Lake St. George Field Centre as well as its proximity to other secured lands within the Corridor Park East. The property is within the ORM's Natural Core designation and partially located within the Lake Wilcox Wetlands and Uplands Area of Natural and Scientific Interest and the Wilcox Lake Bog Environmentally Sensitive Area. The lake on the property is a kettle lake, which is a significant feature often associated with the ORM. Kettle lakes are considered fragile systems since they are generally closed water systems. This circumstance makes them very susceptible to pollutants as the lake does not have the ability to 'flush' itself out. The presence of a pristine kettle lake on this property made its protection critical. The Swan Lake property also includes several rare high quality natural communities supporting rare or uncommon flora and fauna species.

The ORMF issued a grant to the TRCA for \$895,000 to assist with the costs associated with securing Swan Lake. Other key partners in this initiative were the Regional Municipality of York, the City of Toronto, Town of Richmond Hill, EJLB Foundation and Ducks Unlimited. The total cost to secure this property was over \$3.5 million.



Photo: Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)

5.0 EFFECTIVENESS OF THE OAK RIDGES MORAINES FOUNDATION'S LAND SECUREMENT PROGRAM: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The ORMF and its partners can be justifiably proud of the achievements made to date in land securement. In just eight years, the land securement initiative has been able to protect more than 2,259 hectares (5,582 acres) of land valued at \$21,588,816. The ORMF has contributed \$5,761,463 or approximately 27% of this amount while leveraging the remaining 73% from its partners. ORMF grant funds not only delivered these impressive on-the-ground and financial results, they also helped build the securement capacity of organizations and in many cases have provided the seed funding to enable partners to continue with longer term landowner negotiations.

5.1 Strategic Coordination

The ORMF helped bring together a network of conservation organizations that built and enabled collaboration and improved the sharing of expertise and resources; strategic direction and focused priorities were also provided. All land securement projects were funded based on strong, strategic criteria developed by the ORMF that ensured that these investments contributed directly to the objectives of the ORMCP. Notwithstanding these achievements, land securement was somewhat reactionary and arbitrary in the sense that applications were dealt with as opportunities arose. This was not seen as an issue during the first eight years of the ORMF's granting; lack of significant funding for securement over the previous 20 years ensured that there were many high-priority acquisition opportunities available. However, as the ORMF moves forward, it recognizes a need to be even more focused and strategic in considering future acquisitions. The ORMF sees a need to work with its partners to develop a more comprehensive, long-term acquisition plan that identifies needs and priorities across the ORM. Such a plan would provide a template upon which the ORMF and its partners can more effectively prioritize its efforts and expenditures around acquisition.

5.2 Restoration Imperative

Some groups have suggested that future land securement is not necessary because the land use control policies of the ORMCP are sufficient to protect the ecological and hydrological values of the ORM. However, there are many practical reasons why an ongoing, robust land securement strategy is necessary on the Moraine. These reasons include:

- Stakeholder surveys, particularly those drawn from the municipal and conservation authority sectors, confirmed



land securement as one of the highest priorities in relation to the future role of the ORMF;

- Many protection and restoration priorities identified in the ORMCP can only be realistically achieved through the direct securement of key lands on the ORM. For example, many restoration needs or opportunities have been identified in other reports in the Measuring Success series that will not be achievable solely through land-use planning or stewardship on private land. The Measuring Success Project report entitled *Assessing the Health of the Oak Ridges Moraine in a Watershed Context* revealed that stream health on the ORM needs improvement (Enviroscape Consulting Services, 2011). A need for more meadow habitat to support breeding bird habitat was also identified. Lands that can help protect or restore these features should be considered a priority for the future.
- A park and open space system is required to ensure opportunities are available for the public to access and appreciate, in a controlled manner, the significant values and opportunities available on the ORM. Currently less than nine percent of the ORM is fully or partially available for public enjoyment. Other natural areas of similar character and function as the ORM have much higher levels of public lands. For example, the Niagara Escarpment Planning Area, which has very similar ecological objectives, has park and open areas well in excess of 20%.
- A complete, well-structured open space system is required to provide the ORM with long-term identity and increase its attractiveness as a near urban tourist destination.
- Although now fully connected from east to west, 40% of the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail remains on roadways. Continued work with landowners to secure safer, more scenic alternative routes is needed so that the Trail can continue to offer recreational opportunities and promote healthy living.

For the reasons stated above, the Land Securement program continues to be viewed by most stakeholders as an essential component of the ORMF. For more information, refer to *An Assessment of Stakeholder Awareness, Support and Concerns for the Implementation of the ORMCP* (Enviroscape Consulting Services, 2011).

5.3 Open Spaces and Park System

Based on feedback received from many stakeholders, it was suggested that the ORMF and the Province need to expend more time and resources in promoting and branding the ORM as a special and unique landscape that contributes to the identity of the GTA as a world-class community. It was felt that the promotion of its parks, open spaces and trails as a distinct inter-connected system would help reinforce this identity. In addition, some stakeholders feel that the agencies involved in park and trail development and operations on the ORM could benefit from the development of a partnership that coordinates and shares resources. As part of this self assessment, ORMF discovered that there is currently no comprehensive inventory of all parks, open space and trail systems located on the ORM in terms of area, ownership or type. With renewed funding, the ORMF should develop a comprehensive inventory of such lands that could be ultimately placed in the MNR's Land Information Ontario warehouse.

As the Moraine is over 90% privately owned, securement of significant lands is key to ensuring the connectivity of natural spaces across the landscape and long-term protection of the headwaters. The challenge is the time and effort required to secure lands that are in private ownership; success is not a guarantee as all too often, long-term negotiations can unexpectedly be dropped or ownership of the land changed.

5.4 Oak Ridges Moraine Securement Plan

Although many of the conservation groups that are undertaking land protection in the form of securement on the Moraine have detailed securement plans in place, a strategic and Moraine-wide plan identifying key areas and opportunities has not been completed. Spatial mapping of all public/secured lands on the Moraine needs to be undertaken as a first step in this process. Map 1 shows point data for ORMF-funded projects but this mapping needs to be taken further to include other information such as the size of property, other non-ORMF funded securements and all other protected natural spaces. An ORM Securement Plan should also be integrated with plans that exist for surrounding landscapes such as the Greenbelt and the Niagara Escarpment to ensure that linkages and corridors are achieved. Ultimately a plan for land securement needs to be completed for southern Ontario, of which the ORM would be a key element.

The only funds specifically allocated to the ORM that are currently available for land securement are through federal dollars allocated to the NCC. These funds can be applied to the NCC's conservation blue print areas only – on the ORM, these include Happy Valley and the Rice Lake Plains. Some ORM municipalities have funding available for land securement activities in their capital budgets but activities do not necessarily target the ORM.

5.5 Funding Needed for Future Securement Activities

Not only is there a lack of funding available for land securement opportunities, there is also a lack of funding available to help agencies manage secured properties or conservation easements. Many protected properties require long-term management and restoration plans while conservation easements require long-term monitoring to ensure the intent of the conservation easement is being upheld. If the Province remains committed to the long-term protection and enhancement of the ORM as stated in the ORMCP, the continuation of a land securement program is critical. An infusion of dedicated funding is needed in order to maintain an effective land securement program.

The Land Securement program continues to be viewed by most stakeholders as an essential component of the ORMF.

6.0 OBSERVATIONS

Observation #1:

In its efforts to meet the objectives of the ORMCP, the ORMF has demonstrated the effective use of resources for land securement to protect key lands, the establishment of effective partnerships with land securement organizations across the ORM and the leveraging of additional securement dollars through these partnerships.

Observation #2:

In spite of the fact that stakeholders indicate that land securement is the highest priority for funding on the ORM, there are insignificant funds available to allow the ORMF to pursue any



further strategic opportunities to help partners undertake this work. The only funding available is either for two specific areas on the ORM managed by the NCC management or that which is available through the regional municipalities and which is not necessarily targeted to the ORM.

Observation #3:

The existing criteria for funding land securement has served the ORMF and its partners well over the past eight years. However, an ORM-wide land securement strategy would be the next step needed to ensure key ecological features are protected and linkages across the landscape are optimized.

Observation #4:

Existing parks, open spaces and trail infrastructures on the ORM are currently not branded or promoted as being part of a larger system and cross-agency co-ordination and resource sharing is limited.

Observation #5:

There is currently no funding or program in place to continue to work on securing off-road options for the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1:

The ORMF needs to share widely with the Province, the public and its partners the tremendous successes it has achieved in land securement over the past eight years.

Recommendation #2:

The Province needs to infuse additional funding into the ORMF so the Foundation may achieve further success in the area of land securement.

Recommendation #3:

The ORMF should revisit its current criteria for funding land securement projects to ensure they reflect effective priorities in moving forward to 2015. This review should include the development of a more comprehensive and strategic acquisition plan.

Recommendation #4

In particular, the ORMF should ensure that future land securement criteria reflect the findings of the Measuring Success Project that identifies stream health, meadow habitat and interior forest habitat as priorities for securement and restoration.

Recommendation #5:

The ORMF in conjunction with its partners should develop a branding initiative to promote the parks, open space and trails infrastructure within the ORM as part of a larger, comprehensive open space system that unifies and enhances the identity of the ORM as a distinct and unique landform.

Recommendation #6:

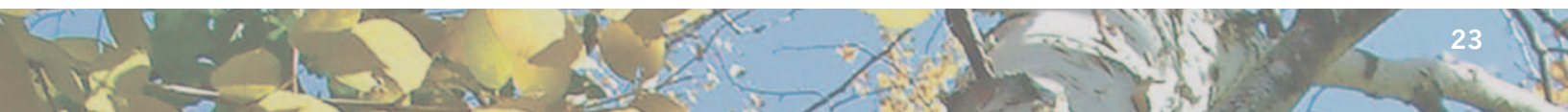
The ORMF should explore with its partners the feasibility of establishing a coalition of park, open space and trail groups to coordinate and share resources in the management, operation, maintenance and identification of key land securement opportunities as part of an ORM parks, open space and trail system.

Recommendation #7:

The ORMF should work with other organizations to develop and archive a comprehensive, open space inventory of the ORM, one that would identify and track the location, area, ownership and types of park, open space and trail facilities on the ORM.

REFERENCES

- Canadian Land Trust Alliance 2005
Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices.
- City of Toronto (February 1, 2011)
Gwen Mackay (for Councillor DeBaeremaeker)
E-mail communication
- Enviroscape Consulting Services 2011
An Assessment of Stakeholder Awareness, Support and Concerns for the Implementation of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.
- Enviroscape Consulting Services 2011
Assessing the Health of the Oak Ridges Moraine within a Watershed Context.
- Enviroscape Consulting Services 2011
Improvements to the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail since the Adoption of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.
- Kawartha Conservation
Kawartha Conservation [web page] Accessed 2011 January.
Available at: <http://www.kawarthaconservation.com>
- Kawartha Conservation
Proposal for the Protection of East Cross Forest, Kawartha Region Conservation Authority.
- Kawartha Heritage Conservancy
Kawartha Heritage Conservancy [web page] Accessed 2010 December. Available at: <http://www.kawarthaheritage.org>
- Nature Conservancy of Canada
Nature Conservancy of Canada [web page] Accessed 2011 January. Available at: <http://www.natureconservancy.ca>
- Northumberland Stewardship Council 2003
ORM Conservation and Restoration Strategy, Towards a Conservation Science Basis for Restoring Natural Areas on the ORM.
- Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation 2003
Strategic Plan 2003-2006.
- Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation 2003
Land Securement Strategy.
- Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust
Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust [web page] Accessed 2010 December. Available at: www.oakridgesmoraine.org
- Ontario Land Trust Alliance
Ontario Land Trust Alliance [web page] Accessed 2010 December. Available at: <http://www.olta.ca>
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources 2001
Oak Ridges Moraine Public Natural Heritage Lands, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Unpublished Report.
- Region of Peel (July 2011)
Janet Wong
Personal communication
- Toronto and Region Conservation Authority 2008
Proposal to the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation for the Purchase of Lands...(Swan Lake).





Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation

The Gate House
13990 Dufferin Street North
King City, Ontario L7B 1B3

Phone: 905.833.5733
E-Mail: support@ormf.com
www.ormf.com

**THE MORaine.
FOR LIFE.**