

Towards an Integrated Carden Conservation Strategy



Part 1: Healthy Ecosystems & Species at Risk

“How can we better protect the natural heritage and species at risk on the Carden Plain, while bringing greater benefits to private landowners and the local community?”



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Part 1: Healthy Ecosystems & Species at Risk

A Multi-Stakeholder Approach

Developed by:

**Wildlife Preservation Canada
The Couchiching Conservancy
The Nature Conservancy of Canada**

With financial assistance from
**Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
Species at Risk Stewardship Program
and Ontario Stone Sand and Gravel Association**

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Note: The *Towards an Integrated Carden Conservation Strategy* report is also available as a 6-page summary. Access at —
www.couchconservancy.ca

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Executive Summary

The Carden Plain, located north-east of Lake Simcoe, includes extensive alvar communities and grasslands, as well as wetlands and forested habitats. Because of the unique characteristics of alvars, extremely low human population density, and large unfragmented areas, Carden supports an extraordinary suite of species at risk and natural areas. Wildlife Preservation Canada (WPC), The Couchiching Conservancy (CC), and the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) proposed the development of an *Integrated Carden Conservation Strategy* (ICCS) in August 2007 to:

- Build on existing partnerships;
- Reduce conflicts and enhance community support for species at risk;
- Increase the effectiveness of all conservation efforts on the Carden Plain;
- Benefit multiple species at risk;
- Integrate species at risk recovery actions with habitat securement and stewardship programs; and
- Guide broader ecosystem based land stewardship.



The ICCS proposal was supported by a grant from the Species at Risk Stewardship Program of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR). As the study process took place, it became clear that this strategy should be one of several future components, focused on the aggregate industry, cattle ranching, and landowner concerns.

The ICCS process was managed by a steering committee of the sponsors: Elaine Williams, Wildlife Preservation Canada Executive Director, Ron Reid, The Couchiching Conservancy Executive Director and Kristina Kostuk, Georgian Bay-Huron Program Manager for Nature Conservancy of Canada. The steering committee retained consultants Ric Symmes and Gordon Ball supported by Kristen Field to conduct the process and to draft the report and strategy documents.

The strategy development process included a feasibility study (Phase I) consisting of a review of existing conservation activities and a situation

appraisal based on interviews with a diverse list of opinion leaders. Informed by this report, the sponsors hosted a day long public forum on November 3, 2007 with an extensive invitation list including members of species recovery teams, community, industry, and conservation representatives. Using an Open Space agenda process, issues and opportunities of particular interest to those in attendance emerged from the discussions. These were discussed in more detail at five subsequent workshop sessions on the following topics:

- **A Strategic Conservation Plan for Carden;**
- **Partners in Species at Risk Recovery and Stewardship;**
- **Agricultural Landowners and Species at Risk on Carden;**
- **Landowners and Conservation; and**
- **Aggregate Companies and Conservation.**

The results of these workshops were revisited at a second public meeting to confirm, refine, and integrate the ideas developed separately. The writing team then prepared this final ICCS document and a separate project report for approval by the project sponsors.

The key findings of this process are:

- **Implementing an ICCS will benefit species at risk and the community;**
- **Establishing an on-going leadership team and source of funds are essential;**
- **Targets and milestones are needed to ensure measurable progress;**
- **The active involvement of the aggregate industry, landowners and land managers (e.g. ranchers), and Ontario Parks is a key factor; and**
- **Respect for private property and community concerns will benefit species at risk.**

Five key strategic directions were developed, each supported by “desired outcomes” and “recommended actions:”

- 1. Promote greater mutual understanding and respect among Carden landowners, naturalists, and other visitors to Carden;**
- 2. Create and build consensus around a detailed, landscape-based, conservation plan for Carden;**
- 3. Develop a Carden Conservation Fund;**
- 4. Create an on-going Carden Futures Forum representing the various users of land in Carden (ranchers, aggregate producers, landowners, naturalists); and**



5. Continue to learn, and to share new learning, about the experience of conserving the Carden landscape and addressing community concerns.



After reporting back to participants, agencies, and funders of the ICCS process, next steps should include:

- Developing a Carden Futures Forum (CFF) with terms of reference and appropriate leadership;
- Under direction of the CFF, developing a charter and terms of reference for the Carden Conservation Fund and recruit appropriate leadership and a charitable sponsor to administer the fund;
- With the leadership of the CFF, developing specific goals, objectives (milestones), and proposed responsibilities for the Carden Conservation Plan;
- Meeting with aggregate companies and the Industry Association to further explore opportunities for the aggregate industry to benefit conservation on Carden, and opportunities for conservation groups and landowners to work better with aggregate producers regarding ongoing operations and new applications;
- Applying for grants and financial support to support implementation of the strategy; and
- Soliciting volunteers and organizations to pursue the remaining elements of the Strategic Directions and report back to the CFF.

Introduction and Background

In August 2007, Wildlife Preservation Canada (WPC), The Couchiching Conservancy (CC), and the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) identified the need for an integrated strategy for conservation on the Carden Plain. This strategy would build upon existing conservation plans including the Carden Natural Area Conservation Plan (part of NCC's Conservation Framework) and the Carden Important Bird Area (IBA) Conservation Action Plan.

This *Integrated Carden Conservation Strategy (ICCS)* was proposed to enhance community and stakeholder outreach and involvement, develop communications with local landowners, attract new partners and community members to participate in conservation efforts, and encourage multi-species recovery efforts within this globally significant habitat. A successful strategy would:

- Increase the effectiveness of all conservation efforts on the Carden Plain;
- Benefit multiple species at risk;
- Integrate species at risk recovery actions with habitat securement and stewardship programs; and
- Guide broader ecosystem based land stewardship.

During the development of this Strategy, it became clear that the current focus on conservation should be only the first among several components to be examined and discussed. The development of a similar parallel strategy for the future development of the aggregate industry on the Carden Plain is a high priority. Strategies for the future of ranching and other agricultural uses of the landscape, and for addressing topics of particular concern to Carden landowners, will require considerably more work and community participation.

For this reason, this report is being presented as Part 1: Healthy Ecosystems and Species at Risk, with the expectation that development of these additional components will lead in future to a comprehensive and well-balanced approach to this unique landscape.



Background

The Carden Plain is located in former Carden Township in the City of Kawartha Lakes and in southern Ramara Township, just north-east of Lake Simcoe. The Plain includes extensive alvar communities, shrublands, and grasslands, as well as wetlands and forested habitats.



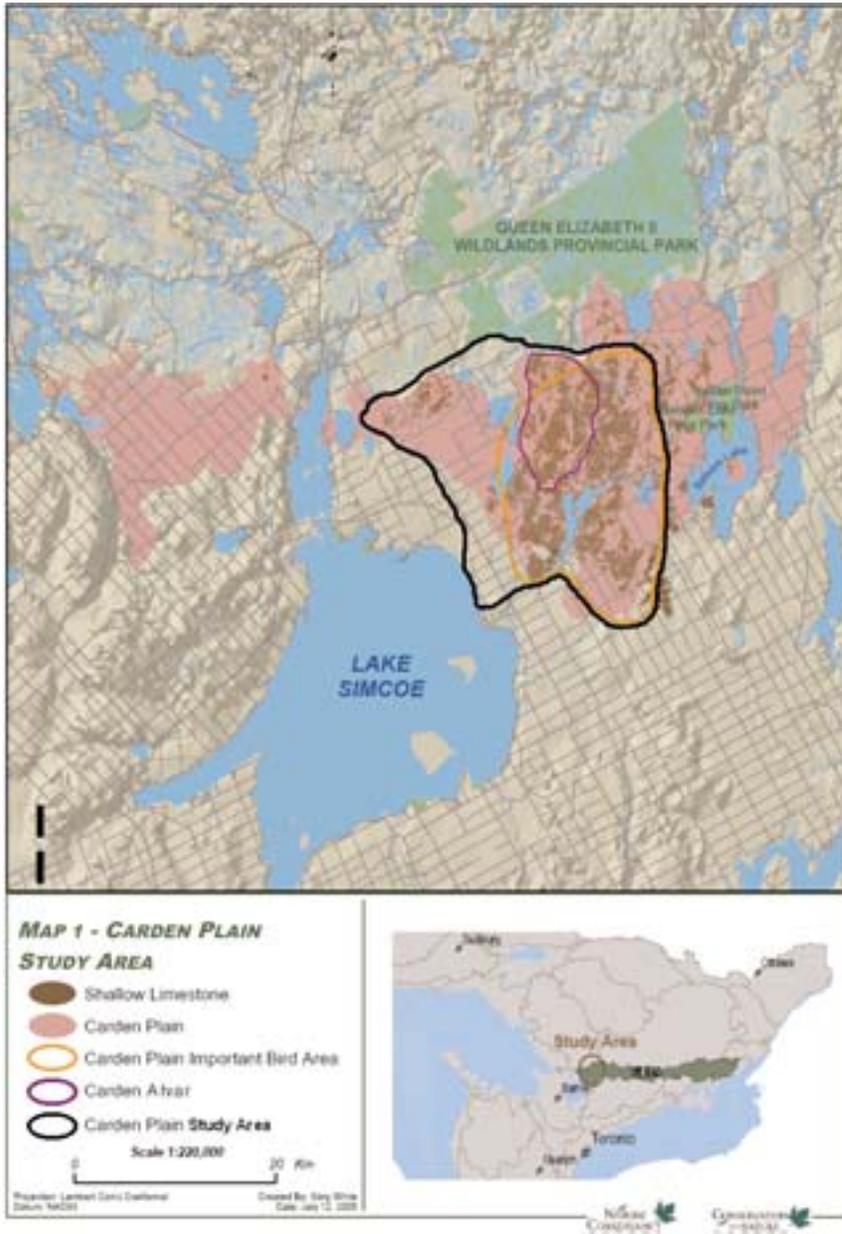
Natural values:

Map 1 shows the location of the area which is referred to as the “Carden Plain.” The area of relatively shallow limestone bedrock shown in pink is based on a broader geological definition. A sub-set of this area, encompassing globally rare alvar communities is identified as the “Carden Alvar.” A somewhat larger sub-set is the boundary defined for the Carden IBA.

Over the past decade the Carden area has hosted several significant conservation initiatives:

- **Acquisition** of over 5000 acres of natural habitats by Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), the Couchiching Conservancy (CC), and Ontario Parks, with an announced intention of acquiring a total of 12,000 acres by 2015;
- Establishment of a **captive breeding and release and habitat stewardship program** for Eastern Loggerhead Shrikes by Wildlife Preservation Canada (WPC);
- Installation of new perimeter fencing and cattle watering facilities to maintain and enhance **pasture management** for grassland birds;
- Increased **visibility and visitation** through signage, organized tours, and the Carden Nature Festival.

Map 1 – Carden Plain



Aggregate values:

Significant aggregate resource values are associated with the extensive areas of shallow limestone bedrock of the Carden Plain, which supports a growing role in serving the GTA market. Currently, most licensed aggregate operations and applications for new licenses are clustered in four loose nodes, as shown on Map 2.

Map 2: Existing quarry nodes on the Carden Plain



Community values:

For much of the past century, the Carden Plain area has been populated by a tight-knit rural community, with few economic opportunities and a steadily declining population base. For some of these families, the arrival of the aggregate industry has meant opportunities to sell their lands at premium prices, or to find local jobs for young people. For others, quarry operations raise concerns about adequate water supplies, dust, noise and vibration, and greatly increased truck traffic.

At the same time, the recent focus on species at risk, bird watching, and related tourism has created issues for the local community through increased traffic on some back roads, concerns over privacy and trespass, and uncertainties related to the new federal and Ontario species at risk legislation. Many landowners are concerned that an endangered species found on their land will affect their current activities and seriously curtail the market value of their land. Signs telling the government to “back off” and a demonstration against species at risk emerged in 2007. One of the ICCS challenges will be finding meaningful ways of engaging landowners and addressing their concerns about species at risk.

Landowners and other community members have generally been supportive of land purchases by conservation organizations, perceiving this to be an appropriate strategy to address conservation objectives. Another recent trend with community implications is the purchase of some former ranchlands by urbanites, either for recreational retreat purposes or as an investment. In many ways, as the older generation of traditional ranchers retires, the pattern of land ownership in Carden is rapidly changing.

In August 2007, WPC, CC, and NCC proposed the development of an ICCS to harness the power of partnerships and address the concerns and conflicts in the community. With the support of the Species at Risk Stewardship Program of the OMNR, the following project was undertaken to develop an Integrated Strategy.



Strategy Development

Organization and the process for ICCS development were designed to engage community, conservation organizations, and concerned individuals including those who were suspicious or believed themselves to be “outsiders” from conservation efforts on the Carden Alvar. Particular effort was made to contact both private landowners on the Plain and members of the Recovery Teams for species at risk present on the Plain.

Organization

The ICCS Project was managed by a Steering Committee with senior representatives from the three sponsoring organizations:

Elaine Williams, Executive Director of Wildlife Preservation Canada,

Ron Reid, Executive Director, The Couchiching Conservancy, and

Erica Thompson (and subsequently) Kristina Kostuk, Program Manager – Georgian Bay-Huron for the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

In addition to the Steering Committee and other staff of the sponsoring organizations, the Steering Committee retained consulting assistance to deliver the program:

L. R. L. (Ric) Symmes, Consultant,

Gordon Ball, Consultant, and

Kristen Field, new graduate assistant.

The Steering Committee provided oversight and direction for the project. WPC provided administration; CC provided office space and facilities; NCC provided mapping and technical support. The Sponsors acted as public spokespersons for the process. The consultants provided advice on the process, conducted the public meetings and workshops, and drafted notes and reports.



Process

Phase I – Initial Assessment

The initial assessment tested the level of interest, identified key opportunities, and included:

- Review of relevant background documents;
- Discussion with key stakeholders and a summary report including:
 - A list of 14 key stakeholders contacted,
 - Assessment of the opportunities and challenges,
 - Some options to proceed; and
- Meeting with the Sponsors to discuss the report.

The work was carried out by consultant, Ric Symmes, and a report was prepared that guided Phase II.

Phase II – Consultation and Strategy Creation

A public meeting with an “Open Space” approach was taken from the outset; this is an efficient approach that enables individuals to propose issues to the group, which are then discussed. While the question – How can we better protect the natural heritage and species at risk on the Carden Plain, while bringing greater benefits to private land-owners and the local community? – was posed to guide the theme of the issues, there was no agenda and the topics and issues advanced at the meeting were only those considered important by the participants.

Phase II consisted of:

1. A public meeting held on November 3, 2007 at the Carden Recreation Centre in the village of Lake Dalrymple, to identify the issues and opportunities. Over two hundred specific invitations were issued to local residents, landowners, ranchers, farmers, Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, naturalists, hunters, aggregate companies, federal and provincial agencies interested in species at risk, and conservation organizations active on the Carden Plain. This meeting applied the “Open Space” approach to ensure that the topics and content of the discussion were those chosen and directed by the participants, not the organizers of the meeting.



“What has really impressed me in the process of developing this Strategy is the successful effort we made to include the participation of the full spectrum of landowners and land interests from the Carden community.”

*— Doug Van Hemessen,
Stewardship Coordinator,
Victoria Land and Water
Stewardship Council*

2. Participants at the November 3rd meeting expressed an interest in discussion on a series of issues and they met at least once in a series of workshops aimed at developing the ideas from the November 3rd meeting. Workshops were held on the following topics:

- a. A Strategic Conservation Plan for Carden;**
- b. Partners in Species at Risk Recovery and Stewardship;**
- c. Agricultural Landowners and Species at Risk on Carden;**
- d. Landowners and Conservation; and**
- e. Aggregate Companies and Conservation.**

Edited summaries were prepared from each and reviewed and corrected by the session chairs. The results appear later in this report (Appendix C); participants in the process are listed in Appendix A.

3. A general meeting with all participants from previous meetings invited took place on January 14, 2008. The issues and ideas from the earlier sessions were reviewed and examined for opportunities for synergy between the different initiatives proposed. The results of this session were directed to the “writing team” charged with drafting the ICCS Project Report and this ICCS Document.
4. The Steering Committee reviewed drafts of the two documents and approved plans; they also arranged broader distribution and review of the reports.



Summary of Findings

The broad multi-stakeholder approach and open process proved to be of great value as open dialogue revealed many opportunities to achieve conservation and reduce conflicts on the Carden Plain. A wealth of ideas emerged from the discussion, and several new working partnerships got under way, perhaps the most notable being ongoing discussions among aggregate and conservation interests.

The detail of ideas from the workshops is organized in the following ICCS and the Summary of Workshops in (Appendix C). The summary of findings is as follows:

- 1. Implementing an ICCS will benefit species at risk and the community** — There are substantial potential benefits from an ICCS including:
 - a. Reduced friction between the general public and conservation organizations, agricultural producers, aggregate companies, and other private landowners;
 - b. Economic and other benefits for the community;
 - c. Attention diverted to a wider range of species at risk and more efficient use of resources directed to species protection and recovery;
 - d. New resources and partners to volunteer and provide more resources; and
 - e. An opportunity to pilot innovative approaches to species at risk and stewardship with results beneficial to wider species at risk recovery programs.
- 2. Establishing an ongoing Forum and Fund are essential** — A critical element for an effective ICCS is a Carden Futures Forum and Fund to provide resources to address conflicts, to facilitate meetings, to promote cooperation, and to maintain and develop the multi-stakeholder communications.
- 3. Targets and milestones are needed to ensure measurable progress** — Further work should be undertaken to crystallize the growing consensus as to the goals and objectives for the ICCS and Carden stewardship including specific and measurable milestones and supporting sub-strategies.
- 4. The active involvement of the aggregate industry, landowners and land managers (e.g. ranchers), and Ontario Parks is a key factor** — The aggregate industry is an important long term



“The ICCS approach was successful in bringing together a wide array of stakeholders from different sides of the spectrum. The focus included identifying individual’s targets/ objectives and how we can incorporate these for a smoother transition into the protection of the Carden Plain into the future.”

— Kristina Kostuk,
Georgian Bay-Huron
Program Manager,
Nature Conservancy
of Canada

landowner on the Carden Plain, and substantial potential benefits for the community and conservation could result by integrating their plans both current and long term. The industry members have shown a willingness and positive interest in contributing to the community and conservation. Ranchers are also major landowners and land managers, whose involvement can benefit many species at risk. Ontario Parks is a very large landowner on the Carden Alvar; planning for the Carden Alvar Provincial Park will aid conservation efforts and tourism issues.

5. Respect for private property and community concerns will benefit species at risk — Approaches and attitudes that demonstrate respect for private property, agriculture, and the community can reduce conflict and increase support for species at risk recovery and conservation.



Integrated Carden Conservation Strategy: Part 1

The following five strategic directions are proposed to increase the effectiveness of conservation efforts on the Carden Plain, benefit multiple species at risk, integrate species at risk recovery actions with habitat securement and stewardship programs, and guide broader ecosystem based land stewardship. Each strategic direction is accompanied by desired outcomes and recommended actions gleaned from the public meetings and workshops.

Strategic Direction #1:

Promote greater mutual understanding and respect among Carden landowners, naturalists, and other visitors to Carden.

Desired outcomes:

- a) Visitors to Carden will know and respect the interests and privacy concerns of landowners and behave accordingly. They will be directed to designated conservation areas away from private land.
- b) Carden landowners know and appreciate the special natural heritage value of the Carden Plain.
- c) Local landowners and naturalists will reap greater benefits and fewer inconveniences from each other's presence.
- d) Opportunities will be created for the public to see grassland birds and alvar habitats through an interpretive map of the Carden Plain, an interpretive trail, an eventual interpretive centre (potentially linked to the Shrike Recovery Program), interpretive opportunities using Web sites, and the Carden Nature Festival.

Recommended actions:

- a) **Develop and publish a code of conduct** for naturalist groups, to be widely circulated to members of nature organizations and promoted via interpretive signs and brochures. Such a code should address matters such as trespass, fence-hopping, violation of property owners privacy (e.g. use of scopes near private homes), danger from cattle, property owner liability, sharing the road, risk of wildfire, farmers' needs and schedules. A similar code for Carden hunters and ATV and snowmobile riders should be encouraged.

“As land owners, we want to be respected by the Conservation Groups, we want them to know that we respect their lands, and we expect them to respect our lands, as we pay the taxes and our privacy on our land is important to us. The concept of tourism is a concern and fire hazard, we realize no one would harm us intentionally, but it is our homes, our livelihood, something our families have worked hard for, and our children's inheritance. Our concern is our property rights.”

— Sharon Stewart,
Landowner



“The ICCS was a unique approach to reduce resource management conflicts at the local (landowner) level. The process was openly inclusive for all stakeholders and provided an opportunity to better understand each others needs and concerns. The interest and initiative is now in place to continue working together for mutually acceptable solutions.”

*— Anne Guiot,
Senior Planner,
Skelton, Brumwell &
Associates Inc.*

b) Design and implement a communication program on species at risk, in collaboration with OMNR staff and Environment Canada staff, to clarify to landowners the real requirements of Federal Species at Risk Act and the new Ontario Endangered Species Act. The program should include:

- a well-publicized forum with OMNR representatives to deliver factual information and dispel myths arising from the new Ontario Endangered Species Act and its regulations. At the same forum, Environment Canada representatives should explain the Federal Act requirements; and
- printed information distributed to landowners explaining the importance of species at risk and other species in Carden, as well as elaboration of the new Act and its regulations.

c) Introduce new conservation policies, programs and procedures to enhance visitor access to the 5,600 acres (2,266 hectares) of conservation lands (thereby relieving pressure on other private landowners) wherever this can be done without compromising the values under protection or creating hazards. Such policies, programs and procedures may include:

- directing visitors to designated parking/pull-off opportunities and facilities on conservation land, as well as viewing platforms at key locations (e.g. Wylie Road);
- an information kiosk on Carden to direct visitors to appropriate locations and facilities; and
- a periodic calendar of community events.

d) Bring economic and social benefits to the community (other than direct compensation) such as fencing, nature tours, business opportunities, enhanced local land value and tourism events like the Carden Nature Festival.

e) Engage volunteers. Opportunities to do this should be especially created – such as learning events and presentations, brochures for local circulation, workshops, pot luck suppers, and other social occasions.

Strategic Direction #2:

Create and build consensus around a detailed, landscape-based, conservation plan for Carden.

Desired outcomes:

An integrated conservation plan for Carden, created in close cooperation with aggregate companies, the local business community, farmers, and private landowners – a plan which will result in:

- a) Healthy, sustainable populations for a suite of species for which Carden habitat is particularly important, as well as an appropriate and sustainable diversity of wildlife including species not at risk and globally-threatened alvars. The plan will embrace not only the high quality alvars of Carden but also significant grasslands, wetlands and forests, integrating species at risk recovery actions with habitat securement and stewardship programs.
- b) Solutions to issues driving local objections such as trespass on private land and loss of land value due to the presence of species at risk.
- c) Regular and open consultation with stakeholders in the development of the Carden Conservation Plan. Ensure drafts are openly available and seek to create broad community support and participation. Engage the main organizations trusted by agricultural landowners such as Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and Cattlemen's Association.
- d) Extensive public support for conservation, built through providing incentives to and recognition of good stewardship by local landowners, aggregate companies, and farmers, and attractions for visitors that encourage them to learn and engage in conservation activities.
- e) Expanded use of suitable and restored habitats by wildlife including species at risk, while not preventing future use of private properties (farming, quarrying etc.).
- f) Protection, enhancement, or restoration of ecological linkages between natural areas and across the Carden Plain to ensure natural areas can sustain species populations over the long term.
- g) Creation of a new collaborative model for future ecosystem-based land management in other locations.

While the Plan would have no specific authority, it should be a living document that will influence and lead the plans, policies, and activities



of organizations such as the City of Kawartha Lakes, OMNR (Species at Risk, Ontario Parks, Aggregates, District Office), Ministry of Agriculture and Food, NCC, Aggregate Companies operating in Carden, Canadian Wildlife Service, WPC, and CC. The plan should lead to effective but largely independent action. The Carden pilot program resulting from the plan would not commit governments, but instead will inform those responsible for developing and implementing programs elsewhere in Ontario or Canada.

Recommended actions:

a) Craft and communicate a Carden Conservation Plan along the following lines, under the leadership of a new, multi-stakeholder team (the Carden Futures Forum). Include measurable objectives in the plan and provide for an annual evaluation of progress.

b) Promote multi-species approaches — e.g. shared monitoring efficiencies, joint responses to common threats, multi-species studies, stewardship and habitat management research.

c) Identify and map the priority areas for conservation, building on and where practical revising or augmenting, the NCC/CC Carden Natural Area Conservation Plan and extending it to include wetlands to the south and grasslands in the vicinity, and to ANSI areas north of Alvar Road. This process should take a landscape-based approach to conservation, maintaining large blocks of habitat and ensuring effective ecological connections while also giving special attention to significant habitats for species at risk. This mapping is important to private landowners who have concerns regarding species at risk and who will be concerned where the special stewardship programs and benefits will apply.

d) Invite the aggregate industry to prepare the same kind of area mapping for their priority extraction areas for future expansion, and to share this information with local landowners, conservation organizations and municipalities.

e) Build a consensus around natural heritage priorities and high value habitat. While this will result in some clarity around different areas of enhancement for species at risk recovery interest, some overlaps may appear around which negotiations could take place. An integrated set of priorities should inform land acquisition and stewardship programs, as well as areas for habitat restoration or enhancement.



f) Make a joint submission to the City of Kawartha Lakes' Official Planning process (conservation groups, aggregate companies and other partners) with the option to make a secondary plan for Carden if deadlines for the new Official Plan cannot be met. The Official Plan time frame currently allows for another round of comments. Science-based, detailed land use designations (i.e. protected land, aggregate land, farmland, etc.) should inform the Official Plan.

g) Provide open information to landowners on land use planning proposals. Landowners should be alerted to potential changes in zoning. Ensure voluntary choice for landowners regarding their participation in conservation land acquisition or stewardship programs.

h) Develop a practical and effective “safe harbour” agreement or Ministerial permit process for use with the quarry companies and other landowners. Safe Harbour agreements are agreed upon by the government and landowner and protect against any future inhibition of land use that stems from improved species at risk habitat through private land stewardship. A meeting should be convened with OMNR personnel familiar with the provincial endangered species legislation to provide much needed clarity for all players regarding the legislation. Through a process that includes landowners, farm organizations, agencies, conservation leaders and government officials, a model safe harbour agreement and/or a permit process should be developed, informed by experience from other jurisdictions. Use Carden as a pilot area for testing safe harbour provisions and new regulations, in collaboration with MNR officials. Aggregate companies and conservation groups alike seek a clear understanding of safe harbour agreements which will both protect the aggregate industry and conserve nature. New Ontario legislation could support a type of conservation agreement that would allow new use by wildlife including species at risk, while not preventing ongoing or future use of the property for farming or quarrying. Present the Carden experience as a unique, multi-stakeholder, regionally-based ecosystem approach to Ontario species at risk stewardship.



i) Seek agreements with aggregate companies that will enable them to be great land stewards without being penalized for it and



“Dialogue involving endangered species, aggregates extraction, ranching and land values can be fraught with anxiety as to how the interest groups and the public will react, given their deep rooted concerns.

The earnestness of those preparing the open forums, the attention to equalizing opportunities for participation and their in-situ leadership has been above reproach. The call for actions distilled from this input has been strengthened by this participatory process.

*— Peter White,
Manager, Environment
and Resources, Ontario
Stone, Sand & Gravel
Association*

without facing unreasonable, uninformed opposition. With new agreements and safeguards, expensive and divisive Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearings and litigation that often lead to costly obstacles and delays should become unnecessary, or at least less frequent. As aggregate companies have a long-term commitment to the Carden Plain and its resources, they are prime front-line participants; seek their community support for the conservation plan – e.g. updated rehabilitation plans for quarried land, interim land use/setback areas, clustering of quarries, linking of licenses and collaborative rehabilitation projects, land exchange or compensating land purchase, construction of parking lots in interpretation areas, stewardship funding partnerships, salvage of natural heritage material such as alvar plants, and baseline applied scientific research.

- j) Develop a stewardship agreement program for ranchers** that would shelter them from unknowingly violating species at risk legislation so long as they meet a common set of standards included in an agreement template. Development of this program would require participation and approval by relevant government staff, but could be implemented locally by one or more conservation groups.
- k) Develop a mechanism to determine fair compensation for landowners** for measurable financial loss arising from the requirements of the Species at Risk Act and its regulations, including determination of values of properties and how they are affected by species at risk. Carden should be a pilot area to test and demonstrate innovative approaches and flexibility tools for species at risk stewardship, rewards, and compensation.
- l) Provide financial assistance and recognition for voluntary recovery efforts and stewardship work** to benefit or protect species at risk and their habitat – e.g. fencing, water wells, shrub/tree thinning, rotational grazing on private land, prescribed burns, natural grazers, changes in harvest timing (e.g. late harvest of hay to allow grassland birds to fledge) and quarantine for cattle before introduction to sensitive areas (to clear them of invasive seeds and species). Promote grassland habitat in mutually beneficial ways – i.e. approaches that benefit both natural species and landowners. Seek out particular opportunities that will bring funding to the Carden community – e.g. species at risk projects, fencing, nature tours, Environmental Farm Plan (EFP), developing a market for Carden bees/honey, finding a wholesaler to market Carden produce, the Carden Nature Festival. Explore opportunities to have tourism and agricultural funding sources help contribute to a stewardship fund.

Strategic Direction #3:

Develop a Carden Conservation Fund

Desired outcomes:

- a) Sufficient financial support will be available for the implementation of the Carden Conservation Plan.
- b) Funds will be available to support acquisition and voluntary stewardship activities.
- c) A transparent and accountable mechanism will be in place for how the funds are to be allocated and how they are spent.

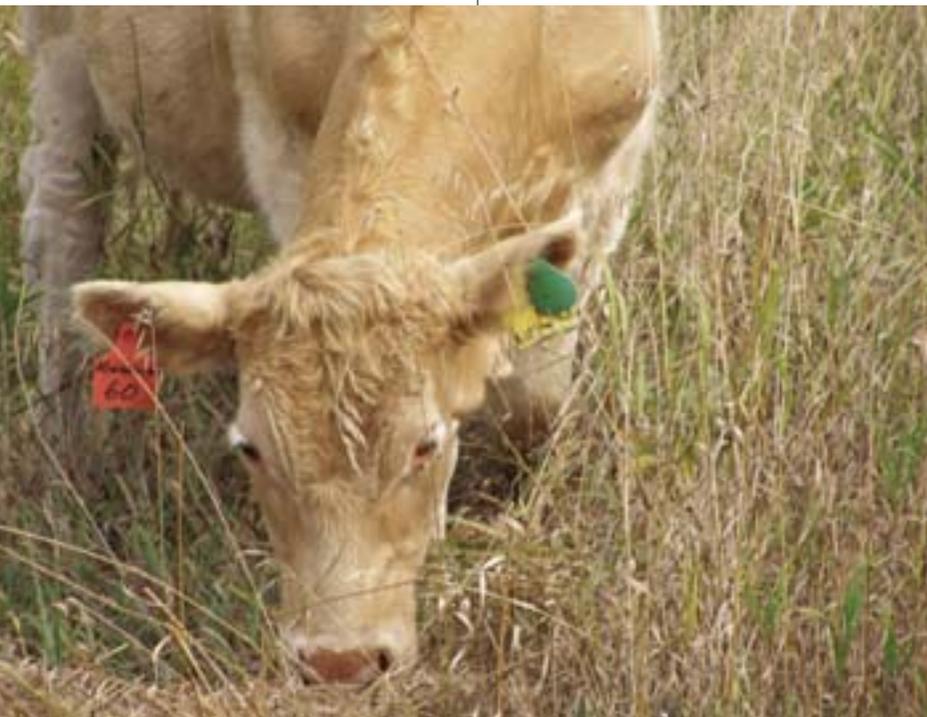


Recommended actions:

- a) **Establish an organizational “home” and accountability structure** for the Carden Conservation Fund, and determine the priorities and expenditures from the Fund.
- b) **Provide for sustained and coordinated funding over the next 5 to 7 years** in order to build trust and deliver meaningful benefits. Seek government contributions but maintain the onus on the local community. Funding should come from a range of existing and new sources to address land securement, stewardship (including rewards and compensation for recognized loss) and recovery programs specific to the Carden area. All sectors with an interest in the future of Carden should contribute in some way including: governments, the aggregate industry, naturalists, recreational users of the landscape, agriculture, private individuals and foundations. Use Carden as a pilot area to test innovative funding approaches.

c) Establish criteria and a transparent, accountable mechanism to allocate funds, including:

- Habitat stewardship activities such as fencing, water sources, prescribed burns;
- Habitat protection activities including acquisition, conservation easements and voluntary agreements;
- Species at risk recovery activities including monitoring, signage, breeding and release, and other activities identified in species at risk recovery plans;
- Compensation for landowners for defined measurable losses arising from species at risk regulations.
- Financial incentives to reward good stewardship practices, such as application of the Alternate Land Use Services (ALUS) concept (e.g. ALUS -Norfolk County) and models of community-based funds;
- Communications and public information/consultation sessions.



Strategic Direction #4:
Create an on-going leadership team among the various users of land in Carden

Desired outcomes:

- a) A named group of respected individuals, who will bring profile, credibility, and leadership to conservation efforts in Carden. Some representatives will have technical expertise in land management, ecological systems, habitat restoration, etc., while others will provide connections to the local community.
- b) Increased trust and cooperation resulting from open and inclusive communication around issues, opportunities, information, common and competing interests.

- c) Effective management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Carden Conservation Plan and the Carden Conservation Fund.

Recommended actions:

- a) **Form a leadership team** (the “Carden Futures Forum”), consisting of respected individuals representing farmers, landowners, conservationists, and the aggregate industry, with each group selecting their own representatives. Establish clear terms of reference and an administrative Chair for this team, focused on the outcomes stated above.
- b) **Task the Forum** with a primary role in developing and overseeing the Carden Conservation Fund and the Carden Conservation Plan.
- c) **Create a “Carden Charter” based on and abbreviated from the ICCS Guiding Principles** (Appendix B) as a one-page summary of common intentions that can be endorsed by participating organizations, agencies, companies, and individuals.
- d) **Prepare and circulate widely an annual status report** outlining goals, progress to date on the Plan and the Fund, and potential revisions as needed.

Strategic Direction #5:

Continue to learn, and to share new learning, about the experience of conserving Carden landscape and addressing community concerns.

Desired outcomes:

- a) New opportunities will be continually emerging for members of the Carden community to learn from each other.
- b) The Carden experience will have established a widely consulted and respected collaborative, community conservation model, featuring innovative approaches to species at risk stewardship, rewards and compensation.

Recommended actions

- a) **Continue to build the Carden Nature Festival** as a mechanism to promote learning and to generate benefits to local businesses and community groups.





“The use of Open Space Technology provided a platform that fostered respect, open dialogue and information exchange, and sharing of values among what may have been perceived as disparate groups or interests.”

— Elaine Williams,
Executive Director,
Wildlife Preservation
Canada

- b) Convene an annual or semi-annual Carden Town Hall Meeting** featuring public sessions, presentations and workshops. Topics for presentation or discussion could include: species at risk, safe harbour, pros and cons of tourism, ALUS, farming/grazing practices, rehabilitation practices, opportunities for quarries, compensation for conservation, NCC’s land securement process, conservation easements, selection criteria/process for aggregate companies, etc.
- c) Publish and circulate widely a semi-annual newsletter.** Include information on new funding sources from the federal government, provincial government, business and industry partners, as well as updates on various conservation activities and other items of interest.
- d) Organize a professional development event for teachers** featuring the Carden Plain. Seek out opportunities to engage the school system and elementary and secondary school students in the Carden area. Initiate a teacher/student outreach project for species at risk in Carden.
- e) Publish an information brochure** about the Carden Plain, designed to catch broad public attention. Create public interest stories for local and regional newspapers and magazines.
- f) Initiate and publicize an interpretive trail system** through Carden conservation lands, where natural and agricultural interests are not threatened.
- g) Institute a Carden Conservation Volunteer program** to assist with monitoring, shared among species at risk groups on Carden.
- h) Monitor, document and publish Carden conservation experiences,** especially the collaborative community conservation model, to share with others responsible for developing similar initiatives elsewhere in Ontario and/or Canada.
- i) Continue regular and consistent monitoring** to track changes through thorough point counts every 5-7 years and highlight priority areas (e.g. turtle mortality from road kill and mass predation of eggs/nests, disease threat to butternut trees, shrikes).
- j) Initiate long-term studies of the effects of cattle** and their effect on flora, rotational grazing, cutting and burning on natural heritage values of Carden land, including demonstration of any economic benefits or consequences.
- k) Encourage relationships with colleges or universities** – e.g. field courses, summer credit courses on the abundance of invasive species in plots; species of interest; inventories, etc.

Next Steps

After reporting back to participants, agencies and funders of the ICCS process and reviewing their comments, next steps should include:

- a) Development of a Carden Futures Forum (as described in Strategic Direction # 4, above) with terms of reference and appropriate leadership;
- b) Under direction of the Carden Futures Forum, development of a Charter and terms of reference for the Carden Conservation Fund (as described in Strategic Direction # 3, above), and recruitment of appropriate leadership and a charitable sponsor to administer the fund;
- c) With the leadership of the Carden Futures Forum, development of specific goals, objectives (milestones) and proposed responsibilities for the Carden Conservation Plan (as outlined in Strategic Direction # 2, above);
- d) Meeting with aggregate companies and the Industry Association to further explore opportunities to benefit conservation on Carden;
- e) Applying for grants and financial assistance to support implementation of the Strategy; and
- f) Soliciting volunteers and organizations to pursue the remaining elements of the Strategic Directions and reporting back to the Carden Futures Forum.



“It was an excellent process which provided the opportunity for input from the greater majority of the partners involved. The area we have fallen short in is the participation of the local people. We need to collectively figure out a way to bring some people that should have been there up to speed and encourage their involvement. This is not an easy task but an achievable one. We did, collectively explore some new and innovative ways of addressing possible solutions. The test will come as we try to put these ideas into action.”

— John Kinghorn,
Carden Rancher/ Board
Member, Carden Advisory
Committee

Appendix A – List of Meeting Participants

**CARDEN CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES MEETING
First Open Public Forum, November 3, 2007**

Last Name	First Name	Organization
Austen	Madeline	Environment Canada
Ball	Gord	ICCS
Bowles	Bob	Kids for Turtles
Boysen	Barb	Forest Gene Conservation Association
Brunton	Daniel	Miller Aggregates
Campbell	Glenn	City of Kawartha Lakes
Field	Kristen	CC /ICCS
Gervais	Louise	WPC
Guiot	Anne	Skelton Brumwell
Hall	Harry	Carden Field Naturalists
Harrington	Michael	Landowner/Rancher
Holt	Margo	Ecostudy Consulting
Homer	David	Carden Field Naturalists
Howes	Kyra	CC /NCC
Idone	Domenic	R. W. Tomlinson Limited
Jewell	David E.	Farmer
Jones	Tom	Miller Aggregates
Kennedy	Judy	Kawartha Field Naturalists
Kinghorn	John	Rancher
Laughlen	Ray	Haliburton Highlands Field Naturalists
Laver	Frances	Resident
Nichols	Rina	WPC
Preston	Robbie	Kawartha Field Naturalists
Probst	Lou	IBA
Reid	Ron	CC
Rockhill	Nathalie	CC /IBA
Simmons	Dennis	Beamish Construction
Steiner	Jessica	WPC
Stewart	Frank	Landowner
Stewart	Sharon	Landowner
Stewart	Elwood	Landowner
Symmes	Ric	Integrated Carden Conservation Strategy
Turner	Mike	MNR - Bancroft District
Van Hemessen	Doug	Victoria Land and Water Stewardship Council.
Williams	Elaine	WPC
Wilson	Robert	OSCIA

"A STRATEGIC CONSERVATION PLAN" WORKSHOP • Nov. 21, 2007		
Last Name	First Name	Organization
Reid	Ron	CC (Convener)
Ball	Gord	ICCS
Field	Kristen	CC/ICCS
Guiot	Anne	Skelton Brumwell Consulting
Howes	Kyra	CC/NCC
Idone	Dominic	R. W. Tomlinson Limited
Kinghorn	John	Rancher
Kostuk	Kristina	NCC
Probst	Lou	IBA
Steiner	Jessica	WPC
Van Hemessen	Doug	Victoria Land and Water Stewardship Council.
Williams	Elaine	WPC
Austen	Madeline	Environment Canada

"LANDOWNERS AND CONSERVATION" WORKSHOP • Nov. 29, 2007		
Last Name	First Name	Organization
Rockhill	Nathalie	CC /IBA (Convener)
Field	Kristen	CC/ICCS
Homer	David	Carden Field Naturalists
Howes	Kyra	CC/NCC
Nichols	Rina	WPC
Pengelly	Betty	Landowner

"AGRICULTURAL LANDOWNERS AND SPECIES AT RISK" WORKSHOP December 3, 2007		
Last Name	First Name	Organization
Van Hemessen	Doug	Victoria Land and Water Stewardship Council (Convener)
Field	Kristen	CC/ICCS
Harrington	Michael	Landowner/Rancher
Howes	Kyra	CC/NCC
Kennedy	Judy	Kawartha Field Naturalists
Kinghorn	John	Rancher
Nichols	Rina	WPC
Preston	Robbie	Kawartha Field Naturalists
Probst	Lou	IBA
Reid	Ron	CC
Rockhill	Nathalie	CC/IBA
Stewart	Sharon	Landowner
Wylie	Leo	Landowner/Rancher

Appendix A – List of Meeting Participants

"PARTNERSHIPS IN SPECIES AT RISK RECOVERY AND STEWARDSHIP"

WORKSHOP January 4, 2008

Last Name	First Name	Organization
Williams	Elaine	WPC (Convener)
Ball	Gord	ICCS
Barnett	Don	Ontario Field Ornithologists
Carlyle	Gayle	CC
Field	Kristen	CC/ICCS
Holt	Margo	Ecostudy Consulting
Howes	Kyra	CC/NCC
Kelch	Margaret	Toronto Ornithological Club
Kennedy	Judy	Kawartha Field Naturalists
Kostuk	Kristina	NCC
Preston	Robbie	Kawartha Field Naturalists
Reid	Ron	CC

"A STRATEGIC CONSERVATION PLAN FOR CARDEN" WORKSHOP #2

January 8, 2008

Last Name	First Name	Organization
Reid	Ron	CC (Convener)
Ball	Gord	ICCS
Field	Kristen	CC/ICCS
Guiot	Anne	Skelton Brumwell Consulting
Howes	Kyra	CC/NCC
Kinghorn	John	Rancher
Kostuk	Kristina	NCC
Nichols	Rina	WPC
Probst	Lou	IBA
Rockhill	Nathalie	CC/IBA
Van Hemessen	Doug	Victoria Land and Water Stewardship Council
Williams	Elaine	WPC

CARDEN CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES MEETING**Second Open Public Forum, January 14, 2008**

Last Name	First Name	Organization
Azevedo	Frank	Landowner
Ball	Gord	ICCS
Bhatt	Deepak	City of Kawartha Lakes
Bloomfield	Diane	Dufferin Aggregates
Field	Kristen	CC/ICCS
Fontana	Romy	Landowner
Galway	Chris	Lafarge
Guiot	Anne	Skelton Brumwell Consulting
Homer	David	Carden Field Naturalists
Howes	Kyra	CC/NCC
Idone	Domenic	R. W. Tomlinson Limited
Jones	Tom	Miller Aggregates
Kennedy	Judy	Kawartha Field Naturalists
Kostuk	Kristina	NCC
Laver	Paul	Carden Field Naturalists
Probst	Lou	IBA
Reid	Ron	CC
Rockhill	Nathalie	CC/IBA
Steiner	Jessica	WPC
Stewart	Frank	Landowner
Stewart	Sharon	Landowner
Stewart	Charles	Landowner
Van Hemessen	Doug	Victoria Land and Water Stewardship Council.
Van Luit	Hank	Ontario Parks
White	Peter	Ontario Stone, Sand, and Gravel Assoc.
Williams	Elaine	WPC
Woodford	Pat	Orillia Naturalists Club
Woodford	Jim	Orillia Naturalists Club

Appendix B – Guiding Principles

Principles Guiding an Integrated Carden Conservation Strategy (ICCS)

1. Landowners are the primary keepers of Carden and their good stewardship of their land should be respected. Demonstrations of respect for private property should include: prevention of trespass, open information on planning proposals, compensation for demonstrable and proven economic losses resulting from the presence of a Species at Risk, and voluntary choice on whether to participate in acquisition or stewardship programs.
2. Carden is a rare and precious landscape. Interest in conservation of its significant wildlife species and ecological communities will continue indefinitely. Conservation activities should be primarily focused on landscapes or ecosystems, to maintain large blocks of habitat and effective ecological connections.
3. Significant habitats for species at risk should be given special attention, and recovery programs for species at risk should seek to restore viable wild populations on suitable habitats.
4. All activities and land use proposals should consider related social and economic effects on the local community, including positive effects such as increased business revenues or community cohesion, and negative effects such as traffic concerns.
5. Ongoing communication among various interests is essential to foster cooperation and minimize conflicts. A summary of the conservation strategy resulting from this process should be openly available and should seek to create broad community support and participation. An annual status report, outlining goals, progress to date and potential revisions as needed, should be widely circulated.
6. Sustained and integrated funding for securement, stewardship, compensation and recovery programs specific to Carden is required on an ongoing basis, with major investments needed over at least the next 10 years, from new sources as well as existing funds. Funding and other support should come from a diversity of sources and through using Carden as a pilot area to test innovative approaches. All sectors with an interest in the future of Carden should be expected to participate in some way, including governments, industry, naturalists and other recreational users of the landscape, landowners, and private individuals and foundations. Transparent and accountable mechanisms to develop, manage and allocate funds will be needed.
7. Aggregate companies will be major players in the Carden landscape over the long term and are integral to its future. As landowners, stewards and members of the local community, they have much to contribute.

Appendix C – Workshop Summary Reports

The results of the workshops outlined in the following reports were arrived at separately. Results of one workshop had minimal persuasion on the results of another, except for limited information from overlapping participants.

A STRATEGIC CONSERVATION PLAN FOR CARDEN

Convener: Ron Reid
Location: Carden Recreation Centre
Date: November 21, 2007
Start: 2:34 pm
End: 4:37 pm

Attendance: Ron Reid (Convener), Jessica Steiner, Doug Van Hemessen, John Kinghorn, Kyra Howes, Elaine Williams, Anne Guiot, Dominic Idone, Kristina Kostuk, Lou Probst, Gordon Ball, Kristen Field (minutes)

The Task for the meeting was outlined by Gord Ball:

- to propose a foundation of guiding principles for ICCS
- to develop key strategies
- to identify additional partners

Principles & Strategies

1. Study Area and Approach – The study area for the Strategic Conservation Plan for Carden (Conservation Plan) should embrace not only the high quality alvars of Carden but also significant grasslands, wetlands and forests. Within the broad study area there may be areas of particular conservation interest. It is important to map the study area and areas of particular conservation interest so that private landowners will know where they stand, and all will know where the special stewardship programs and benefits will apply. The Carden Important Bird Area (IBA) boundaries plus the ANSI to the north may provide a logical study area.

Conservation should be landscape-based, that is it should reflect ecosystems and interconnections, maintain large blocks of habitat and ensure effective ecological connections. Significant habitats for species at risk should be given special attention. Recovery programs for species at risk should seek to restore viable wild populations on suitable habitats.

2. Private Landowners – The interests of private landowners should be respected. Their role as keepers or stewards of the land which provides public goods and services should be recognized. The Conservation Plan should include:

- Measures to discourage/reduce trespass on private property by hunters or naturalists;
- Open information and consultation regarding any land use planning proposals;
- Rewards for good stewardship/providing public goods and services (i.e. clean water, wildlife habitat, etc.) and some mechanism for compensation for recognized losses arising from the presence of species at risk; and
- Assurance that land acquisition and stewardship programs will remain voluntary.

3. Considering the Impact – Activities and land use proposals should consider their social and economic effects on the local community. Social effects could include conflict between visiting birders and local

ranchers who find Wylie Road blocked, or between neighbours who support species (like Shrike) recovery and those who do not. Economic effects include positive contributions to local business by events like the Carden Nature Festival, or negative effects such as the loss of income if agricultural land were to be withdrawn from production.

4. Communications – In developing a Conservation Plan, open and inclusive communication among various interests is essential to foster trust and cooperation. To improve communications with agricultural landowners it is important to engage the main organizations that they trust such as Ontario Soil and Crop, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and Cattlemen’s Association. To be credible, it is essential that the Conservation Plan address issues that are driving local objections such as trespass on private land and perceived loss of land value due to the presence of species at risk.

5. Sustained Funding is Critical – Any Conservation Plan must provide for sustained and coordinated funding over 5 to 7 years to build trust and deliver meaningful benefits. Both existing and new funding should address land securement, stewardship (including rewards and compensation for recognized loss) and recovery programs specific to the Carden area. Carden should be a pilot area to test innovative approaches to species at risk stewardship, rewards and compensation. All sectors with an interest in the future of Carden should contribute in some way including: governments, the aggregate industry, non-governmental conservation organizations, naturalists, recreational users of the landscape, agriculture, local businesses, private individuals, foundations and corporations.

6. Characteristics of the Plan – Resolving the interests of Agriculture on Carden with the rising interests of the Aggregate Industry and Conservation organizations will be a critical task for the Conservation Plan. While the Plan will have no specific authority, it is intended to be a living document that will influence and lead the plans, policies and activities of organizations such as the City of Kawartha Lakes, Ministry of Natural Resources (species at risk, Ontario Parks, Aggregates, District Office), Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Aggregate Companies operating in Carden, Ontario Stewardship, Canadian Wildlife Service, Wildlife Preservation Canada and The Couchiching Conservancy.

Other desirable characteristics of the Conservation Plan include:

- Measurable objectives and an annual evaluation
- How to recognize landowners as good stewards on Carden
- Ways of engaging more people and groups (such as hunters)
- Ways of attracting new funding partners to implement the Plan, and
- An explanation of the Carden Stewardship fund, how it will be administered, and by whom.

Additional Partners

It was suggested that the following persons be engaged in the process:

- City of Kawartha Lakes (Councillors Lloyd Robertson, Glenn Campbell, Emmett Yeo)
- Ramara Township (Councillor John O’Donnell)
- More Carden landowners
- Agriculture organizations (beyond the OFA)
- OMNR – Species at Risk staff, District, Aggregates (Brian Hollingsworth)
- Ducks Unlimited, hunters
- Ontario Nature, Bird Studies Canada
- Individual Aggregate companies active on Carden (Lafarge, Dufferin, Beamish, Tomlinson, Miller, Ferma, and OSSGA)

Summarized by Ric Symmes based on detailed meeting notes prepared by Kristen Field.

LANDOWNERS AND CONSERVATION

Convener: Nathalie Rockhill
Location: Carden Recreation Centre
Date: November 29, 2007
Start: 1:21 pm
End: 3:08 pm

Attendance: Nathalie Rockhill (Convener), David Homer, Kyra Howes, Rina Nichols, Betty Pengelly, Kristen Field (Minutes)

The following is a summary of the “Desired Outcomes” and “Strategies” to achieve those outcomes based on extensive notes of the meeting prepared by Kristen Field. The group also commented on the “Guiding Principles” and those comments are included in the meeting notes. There is considerable overlap between this discussion and the “Agricultural Landowners and Species at Risk” discussion held on December 3, 2007.

Desired Outcomes

- 1. Greater Understanding** – Understanding of each other's concerns and needs between Carden landowners, and visitors (naturalists, hunters and other recreational users such as All Terrain Vehicle [ATV] users) should be greatly improved
- 2. Mutual Respect and Courtesy** – There should be greater courtesy and much less conflict between Carden landowners and naturalists, hunters and other recreational users, including:
 - a. Eliminating trespassing, obstruction of roads and agricultural processes, and improved respect for local residents' privacy; and
 - b. Eliminating discourteous and threatening signs and roadside conflicts.
- 3. Species at Risk Information** – Landowner understanding of the Species at Risk Act should be enhanced to eliminate unjustified fear and misinformation.
- 4. Landowner Support for Species at Risk** – As a result of these and other measures, landowner support for Species at Risk research and recovery should be enhanced.

Strategies

- 1. Greater Understanding and Species at Risk Act Information** – Similar strategies were proposed to improve understanding between landowners and the different categories of visitors.
 - a. Naturalists**
 - i. Develop a Naturalist/Birder “Code of Conduct.” Post it at prominent places (see “kiosk” below) and disseminate it to organizations and individuals through web sites.
 - ii. Develop a brochure with the “Code of Conduct” and other advice to encourage respect and consideration of local residents.
 - iii. Consider a seasonal “kiosk” or information centre on Carden.
 - iv. Provide information about farmers' needs and schedules.
 - b. Hunters**
 - i. Engage OFAH and local hunters clubs in this strategy discussion.
 - ii. Encourage the development of a Hunters Code of Conduct.
 - iii. Develop an effective communication strategy (signs, brochures, etc.).

c. ATV and other recreational land users

- i. Engage the local club, if one exists.
- ii. Encourage the development of an ATV Code of Conduct.
- iii. Develop a communication strategy (signs, brochures, etc).

Landowners

- i. Distribute material that explains the importance of Species at Risk and other species to enhance landowner understanding. Distribute Ontario Nature’s “Birds on the Farm” and/or new material to support landowner efforts to farm effectively and at the same time to steward their land for nature.
- ii. Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) staff should undertake a communication program to clarify what are the real requirements under the new Act, including:
 - a. well-publicized meeting on Carden; and
 - b. brochures and Internet-based information.

2. Reducing the Impact on the Local Community – will help reduce some of the causes of irritation and conflict. Measures could include:

- a. Installing viewing platforms at key locations for birding (but also avoid overlooking homes etc);
- b. Providing parking and pull-off opportunities;
- c. Keeping community informed of events and avoiding key times for agricultural use, where practical
- d. Improvement arising from the “Code of Conduct” – use of scopes, parking, no trespass, etc.; and
- e. Improved access to Conservation lands for those interest in birding, botany, and naturalist pursuits – access to “the 6000 acres” could help reduce the numbers on roadsides and elsewhere on Carden.

3. Ongoing Communications – Minimize future irritants by setting up more effective communication links including:

- a. Social occasions where information is shared;
- b. Brochures for local circulation; and
- c. Opportunities that arise from implementation of other aspects of the ICCS.

This summary was prepared by Ric Symmes from notes and minutes Kristen Field.

AGRICULTURAL LANDOWNERS AND SPECIES AT RISK ON CARDEN

Convener: Doug Van Hemessen
Location: Carden Recreation Centre
Date: December 3, 2007
Start: 1:15 pm
End: 3:15 pm

Attendance: Doug Van Hemessen (Convener), Michael Harrington, Judy Kennedy, Nath Rockhill, Robbie Preston, Lou Probst, Rina Nichols, John Kinghorn, Kyra Howes, Leo Wylie, Sharon Stewart, Ron Reid, and Kristen Field (Minutes).

The following is a summary prepared based on extensive notes prepared at the meeting by Kristen Field. These conclusions are organized around “Desired Outcomes” from the Integrated Carden Conservation Strategy, and “Strategies” to achieve those outcomes.

Desired Outcomes

- 1. Carden Pilot Stewardship Program** – There should be a program to address Species at Risk Stewardship on Carden including:
 - a. Mutually beneficial ways to promote grassland habitat, that is, approaches that benefit both species and the landowner;
 - b. Financial assistance and recognition for voluntary stewardship to benefit or protect species at risk;
 - c. A mechanism to determine fair compensation for landowners for recognized loss arising from the requirements of the Species at Risk Act and its regulations; and
 - d. Recognition of the Carden program as a local pilot or demonstration to determine what is practical, effective and affordable in the long term. The Carden pilot program would not commit governments, but instead would inform those responsible for programs with application elsewhere in Ontario or Canada.
- 2. Clarity Regarding Regulation** – Landowners should have clarity and easy access to information as to the real requirements and myths arising from the Species of Risk Act and its regulations.
- 3. Respect for Private Property** – Private property should be respected, and to this end a range of strategies should be employed to address current abuses such as trespass, and loss of privacy.
- 4. Tourism** – There should be strategies to reduce and control the impact of tourism on the local community, including a “Code of Conduct.”
- 5. Continued Dialogue** – Since issues and concerns will emerge and evolve, there should be a mechanism to continue this dialogue between landowners and other organizations and individuals who are concerned with conservation and species at risk.

Strategies

The following are some strategies to achieve the desired outcomes.

- 1. Carden Pilot Stewardship Program**
 - a. Safe Harbour** – Through a process that includes both landowners, farm organizations, agencies and conservation leaders, develop a practical and effective “Safe Harbour” agreement that considers experience from other jurisdictions.
 - b. Compensation** – Through a process that includes landowners, farm organizations, and conservation leaders (while keeping agencies informed but not engaged).
 - i. Develop criteria and a mechanism to establish “recognized” losses due to the Species at Risk Act and regulations, or voluntary stewardship.
 - ii. Develop an approach and criteria for compensation, considering ALUS (Alternate Land Use Services – Norfolk County) and other models.
 - iii. Develop a funding strategy.
 - c. Organization** – A proposal should be developed for the objectives, organization, funding and administration of a Carden Pilot Stewardship Program.

- 2. Clarity Regarding Regulation** – At the earliest practical time, ICCS sponsors should facilitate a forum with MNR representatives, and encourage brochures and other mechanisms to deliver factual information to landowners concerning regulations and requirements under the new Species at Risk Act. Communication should address common concerns and myths arising from speculation about the Act.
- 3. Respect for Private Property** – Strategies to address trespass and privacy abuse should be developed including:
 - a. A “Code of Conduct”** for birders should be communicated through various means including signage, brochures, an information kiosk on Carden, with naturalist groups. Such a Code should address matters such as trespass, use of viewing stations, avoiding violation of property owners privacy, sharing the road, etc.; and
 - b. Hunters** – Local and Provincial hunters organizations should be engaged to enhance communication, develop hunters code of conduct and to discourage trespass and other issues with local landowners.
- 4. Tourism** – While it is recognized that tourism is a growing reality, strategies should be developed to reduce the impact on the local community, including:
 - a. A Code of Conduct** as described above;
 - b. Facilities** such as parking space and viewing platforms and interpretive signs to allow tourists to enjoy the values without blocking roads and causing problems;
 - c. Information** – flowing to/from landowners and tourists and conservation organizations to enhance mutual understanding and encourage considerate use;
 - d. Access to “Conservation Lands”** – Conservation organizations should develop policies and programs to enhance access to lands held for conservation where this can be done without compromising the values to be protected as well as safety and budgetary constraints. By accepting more of the tourism interest, the “conservation lands” can relieve some of the pressure on other private landowners; and
 - e. Funding** – Explore opportunities to have tourism help fund stewardship.
- 5. Continued Dialogue** – It is important to sustain and enhance the communication started through the ICCS and previous outreach initiatives. An imaginative and practical strategy for on-going communication should be developed.

Prepared by Ric Symmes based on extensive meeting notes by Kristen Field

PARTNERS IN SPECIES AT RISK RECOVERY AND STEWARDSHIP

Convener: Elaine Williams

Location: Grant's Woods

Date: January 4, 2008

Start: 2:10 pm

End: 4:06 pm

Attendance: Elaine Williams (Convener), Margo Holt, Robbie Preston, Judy Kennedy, Ron Reid, Kyra Howes, Margaret Kelch, Kristina Kostuk, Don Barnett, Gayle Carlyle, Gordon Ball, Kristen Field (Minutes)

The following is a summary based on extensive notes of the meeting prepared by Kristen Field. These notes are organized around “Background,” “Desired Outcomes,” “Some Suggested Strategies” to achieve those outcomes, and “Potential partners.”

Background

- **The Carden alvar is a unique landscape** because of its particular and unusual concentration of species. Many people want to experience Carden – nowhere else in Ontario is there such an opportunity to learn about alvars. The “specialness” of this landscape is due to its entire dynamic ecosystem. All parts are important. Simple actions directed at one or a few species could have a detrimental effect on the biodiversity of the whole. There are still many unanswered questions; a focus that is too narrow could do harm.
- **A big challenge in Carden** will be to balance tourism and good management in order to maintain the optimal diversity and populations of all its species.

Desired Outcomes

- **Healthy, sustainable populations** for a suite of species important to the Carden habitat.
- **An appropriate and sustainable diversity** of species in Carden, including non-rare species. Optimal diversity has limits and, at some point, it could reach the point that overall quality is compromised.
- **Extensive public support for conservation**, built through attractions for visitors that encourage them to learn and engage in conservation activities.
- **Clearly defined roles for each of park land, NCC land and private land**, noting the accepted definition for a “natural environment area.”
- **Create a new collaborative model** for future, eco-system-based land management.

Some Suggested Strategies

- **Create opportunities in Carden for the public** to see species at risk.
 - Post an interpretive map of the Carden plain.
 - Prepare a park plan, including an interpretive trail on Prairie Smoke. An opportunity for resource management improvements also exists on a small piece of land owned by Miller Paving Limited.

- Consider the establishment of an eventual interpretive centre, potentially linked to the shrike recovery program. Create incentives for visitors to go to park land and not to private property (e.g. a birders code of conduct). Explore interpretive opportunities also using Internet websites.
- Continue the Carden Nature Festival.
- **Continue regular and consistent monitoring** to track changes. Include monitoring of cattle and their effect on flora. Re-do point counts that were completed in 2000 to determine any changes; repeat survey every 5-7 years to highlight priority areas. Complete bird counts/monitoring annually.
- **Use Carden as a pilot area for testing “safe harbour”** provisions and new regulations, in collaboration with Ministry of Natural Resources officials.

Potential Partners and Opportunities for Collaboration

- Naturalists and conservation volunteers can help with monitoring and stewardship activities
- Summer projects with students from University of Guelph (where Doug Larson is working on alvar plants) and Trent University
- Sir Sanford Fleming College
- Some research might be funded by aggregate companies
- The Ontario Aggregate Resources Corporation (TOARC) might contribute to a research fund
- Stewardship rangers
- Ontario Landowners Association
- The three agricultural associations
- Some green funders are interested in biodiversity conservation. Some funds are available only to farmers, who may need assistance with applying for stewardship activities
- LCBO for volunteers and funds
- Pharmaceutical companies have an interest in medicinal values of plants and may be looking for funding opportunities to off-set damage to the environment
- Bird-life International – e.g. organize a tour from Holland to raise funds
- Scouts Canada can help at the Carden Nature Festival. They also have a learning program
- Partner with oil companies – e.g. Imperial Oil is shifting its donations toward environmental work
- USA sources
- Missing partners are governments – provincial, federal and municipal

AGGREGATE COMPANIES AND CONSERVATION

Convener: Peter White
Location: Kortright Centre for Conservation
Date: January 3, 2008
Start: 1:42 pm
End: 3:55 pm

Attendance: Peter White, Environmental and Resource Manager Ontario Stone, Sand, and Gravel Association in Mississauga; Diane Bloomfield, manager of planning and environment for Dufferin Aggregates; Anne Guiot, planner for Skelton Brumwell Consulting; Ron Reid, Executive Director of The Couchiching Conservancy; Deepak Bhatt, Senior Planner City of Kawartha Lakes; Greg Sweetnam, resource manager James Dick Construction Ltd.; Tom Jones, Miller Aggregates; Elaine Williams, Executive Director of Wildlife Preservation Canada; Anthony DiCerbo, Land Technician at Lafarge; Gord Ball, Consultant for the Integrated Carden Conservation Strategy; Kristen Field, Conservation Intern at The Couchiching Conservancy

The following is a summary based on extensive notes of the meeting prepared by Kristen Field. These notes are organized around “Background,” “Desired Outcomes” and some “Suggested Strategies” to achieve those outcomes.

Background

- Determinants of where aggregates go for land acquisition are: access to good haul routes, depth and quantity of overburden, availability of permits, and competing land interests.
- The aggregate industry has three stages of land management: holding of land, extraction, and rehabilitation. The industry seeks to enhance natural habitat through management of properties in all three land management stages.

Desired Outcomes

- Acknowledgement that there will continue to be a strong demand for aggregate in Ontario, and that those who are meeting this demand are eager to do so as good corporate members of the community and great stewards of land.
- Agreements that will enable aggregate companies to be great land stewards without being penalized for it, and without facing unreasonable, uninformed opposition.
- A clear understanding of “safe harbour” agreements.

Suggested Strategies

- **Clustering:** A broad area could be identified that will have good roads and will serve as a zone of extraction. Cluster pits within this area where eventually one large wetland will be created instead of several small ones, once the quarries have been spent. In the case that quarries are extracting below the water table, instead of a wetland, a lake will be created. Such a cluster could also maximize haul routes.
- **Collaborative business strategy:** A business strategy could be developed enabling companies to work together and still be individual business ventures. Aggregate companies could focus on an identified area and produce a single aggregate management strategy as opposed to separate plans. For example, several Australian companies collaborated to form a separate corporation, divided the resource, developed collectively and created a recreational facility when they reached their extraction limit.

- **Licensing:** One of the factors determining where aggregates go is where it is easiest to get permits. Is there a way to tip the balance to attract companies to a predetermined area? e.g. through the Official Plan.
- **Mapping of high priority areas:** Aggregate companies want to know where prime habitat is so they can avoid it. The conservation community could be invited to identify the most viable conservation areas. The aggregate companies could be invited to do the same for their priority extraction areas. While this will result in some clarity around different areas of interest, some overlaps may also appear around which negotiations could take place and decisions made. This mapping will help to inform the City of Kawartha's Official Plan. This process should be open to other parties who may have a land use interest.
- **Rehabilitation:** Most, if not all existing licenses have site plans dating back to the 90's and would benefit from updating, implementing new information and methods. Changes to the rehabilitation plans or site plans are desirable, but would require going through a site plan amendment application process. Support from the conservation community would facilitate those changes. These changes must also be financially viable for aggregate companies.
- **Research and education:** Aggregate companies have found research on rehabilitation of alvars, however comments from the conservation community on rehabilitation plans and activities would be welcome. External funding has been available to do research on aggregate property.
- **Community engagement:** Many of the local population work in local quarries – there are limited opportunities for people to make a living in Carden. There is a direct link to the community here. Educational opportunities exist: community events, site visits, school groups, fossil hunts, etc.
- **Contributions-in-kind:** Aggregate companies are willing and able to make contributions-in-kind to conservation initiatives – parking lots, fences, snow removal and other benefits to the staff and community.
- **Direct funding of initiatives:** Direct funding is a possibility, but the industry is always looking for practicality – policies and agreements that will help them avoid costly obstacles and delays. Funded initiatives would have to be specific with clear benefits to the industry – e.g. safe-guards.
- **Safe harbour agreements:** Aggregate companies would like to see these – they can protect the aggregate industry, protect nature and please naturalists.
- **The City of Kawartha Lakes Official Plan:** Aggregate companies and other partners could make a joint submission to the City of Kawartha Lakes on the Official Plan, with the option to make a secondary plan if deadlines cannot be met. The Official Plan time frame currently allows for another round of comments.
- **Pilot project in Carden:** A suggestion could be made to the Ministry of Natural Resources to make Carden a pilot area for testing the “safe harbour” agreement mechanism – presented as a unique regionally-based ecosystem approach to Ontario species at risk, involving all stakeholders.
- **Education around “safe harbour”:** A meeting with MNR personnel familiar with the provincial endangered species legislation could provide much needed clarity for all players involved regarding the legislation and the terms of the “safe harbour” agreement. Other MNR employees that do not understand “safe harbour” agreements could benefit from this session as well.

Towards an Integrated Carden Conservation Strategy

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