


COMPLETE AND ENHANCE THE WATERFRONT TRAIL AND GREENWAY

The Waterfront Trail has proven to be an important symbol of a new attitude to the waterfront and a catalyst for waterfront improvements – it is the signature project that ties all the others together while providing much-needed public access to the Lake.

While the Waterfront Trail is substantially complete from Hamilton to Trenton, there are several significant gaps (for example in Scarborough and Hope Township). The Trail is close to 50% complete in the Niagara Peninsula and is in the early stages of development in Quinte Country, Prince Edward County and the Greater Kingston area (Glenora to Gananoque).

There are also sections of existing Trail that need re-alignment and/or upgrading to improve safety and the quality of experience. Currently 38% of the Trail is off-road and 62% is on-road. The majority of on-road portions are on quiet, attractive residential streets and rural routes. However, others are on busy streets, and should be re-routed to provide a safer, more pleasant experience, closer to the Lake. Some of the sections of Trail that need particular attention are in parts of Etobicoke, downtown Toronto, Whitby, Clarington and Hamilton Township.

Completing the Trail and continuing to implement new greenway projects will build on the investments of the last decade and maximise their value. Benefits will include tourism opportunities, healthy recreation, local economic development, cultural heritage protection, and environmental regeneration.

 Communities along the Lake will undertake a rich variety of projects over the next decade – continuing to realize our shared vision of a revitalized waterfront. Here is an illustrative sample of planned initiatives:

- Fort Erie Riverwalk
- Upper River View Trail and Niagara Gorge Hiking Trail, Niagara Falls, New York
- Lakeshore Road improvements to accommodate cyclists, Niagara-on-the-Lake and St. Catharines
- Charles Ansell Park in St. Catharines, at meeting point of Waterfront Trail and Welland Canals Parkway
- Victoria Shores Trail, Lincoln
- Forty Mile Creek Park improvements, Grimsby
- Powerline Trail linking Bruce Trail to Waterfront Trail in Stoney Creek
- Retail complex featuring waterfront amenities at Bayfront Park, Hamilton
- McNichol Waterfront Park, Burlington
- New linear waterfront parkland to be secured during residential redevelopment in Oakville
- Port Credit Harbour/Memorial Park East shoreline regeneration, Mississauga
- Mimico Apartment Strip waterfront revitalization (parks, Trail, boat mooring)
- Restoration of Don River Mouth, gateway to Toronto Portlands
- Port Union Village Common and Waterfront Trail from Highland Creek to Rouge River, Scarborough
- Restoration of Frenchman's Bay wetlands and Hydro Marsh, Pickering
- Restoration of Duffins and Carruthers Creeks coastal marshes
- Performance area in Rotary Park, Ajax
- Land acquisitions to expand Lynde Shores conservation area in Whitby
- Recreational development of Oshawa's western lakefront lands
- Securement of public lands in Bowmanville Marsh area, Clarington
- Centre Pier Development, Port Hope
- West Harbour Park, Cobourg
- Butler Creek Trail to connect with Waterfront Trail in Brighton
- Waterfront Trail link from Quinte West to Belleville
- Millennium Trail, Prince Edward County
- Lennox Generating Station conservation area and Trail
- Joel Stone Beach project, Gananoque



Waterfront regeneration is a project that will never be completed – that's part of the beauty of it. It's a matter of having a long term plan and seizing the moment whenever it presents itself to do the bits and pieces that will add together to be something truly wonderful. To be part of something in your time that will make a difference in times to come.

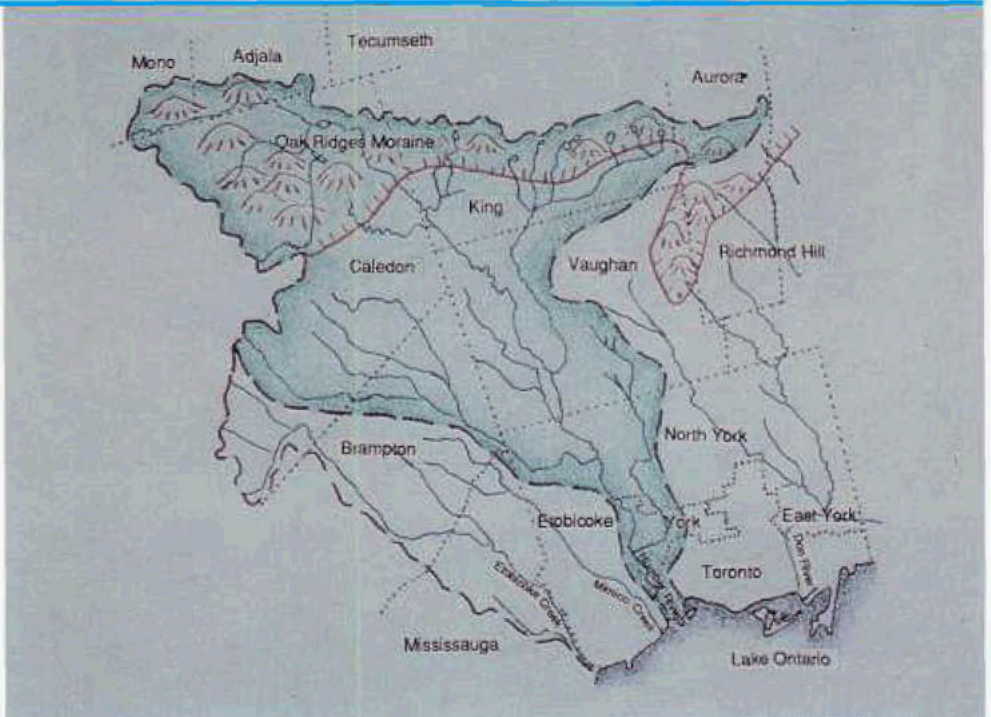
Ian Wilson, Past Chair, Eastern Lake Ontario – St. Lawrence River Waterfront Working Group

EXPAND WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP

In the Great Lakes Areas of Concern along the Niagara River and Lake Ontario, the pressures of land use and environmental degradation prompted special designation by the governments of Canada and the US in 1987. In some of these areas, such as Hamilton Harbour, Toronto and Region, and the Bay of Quinte, the remedial action plans (RAPs) have been particularly successful in stimulating watershed-based strategies and actions as well as the development of diverse community partnerships. For example, groups such as the Don Watershed Council and Humber Alliance, coordinated by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, have made significant advances by developing community-based action strategies (eg *40 Steps to a New Don*) and report cards to assess progress.

While progress has been made, environmental monitoring of the RAP areas shows that much more needs to be done to fully restore these areas to health. Beaches are still posted to warn of unsafe pollution levels, habitats are fragmented and degraded, sediments are contaminated, fish consumption advisories are needed because of contaminant burdens in fish flesh, and there are still concerns about taste and odour of drinking water. Renewed mechanisms for inter-governmental cooperation through the Canada-Ontario Agreement, renewed funding commitments for conservation authority and municipal initiatives, and increased community and business involvement in stewardship are all essential to address these issues.

Humber Watershed





Many of the watersheds between the RAP areas are vulnerable to similar land use pressures and environmental degradation, but have not had the benefit of the focussed attention, planning and funding that accompanies designation as a Great Lakes Area of Concern. Sharing the philosophy and methods developed within the RAP areas in other watersheds along Lake Ontario would buttress the existing efforts of conservation authorities and community groups, and result in significant environmental restoration benefits along the entire waterfront area.

The effects of climate change are becoming increasingly apparent, and will continue to do so over the coming decades, with potentially profound implications for the health of our watersheds. We expect to experience more extremes in local weather conditions – greater fluctuations in air and water temperatures, changes to precipitation patterns. Ecological concerns include changes to groundwater infiltration and discharge rates, the distribution of cold and warm water fisheries, freezing and thaw patterns, spring freshets, acidification of watercourses, flash flooding in small watersheds, the dynamics of stormwater management systems, and the breeding patterns and distribution of aquatic and terrestrial plants and animals.

A 1999 symposium on *Climate Change and Watershed Management* held in Toronto recommended a number of measures to accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and to implement adaptive management to deal with the unavoidable impacts of climate change. They include local climate change scenarios to identify possible impacts, improved coordination among government agencies, watershed management responses, and extensive social marketing to help citizens modify their behaviours and adapt to expected changes.

