

RECOMMENDATIONS

79. The Royal Commission recommends that Durham Region, its local municipalities, MTRCA, CLOCA and GRCA continue to review relevant documents including official plans, secondary plans and other waterfront-specific plans to ensure that they incorporate the ecosystem approach and the nine principles described in Part I.

The review should include, but not be limited to:

- a regional waterfront plan encompassing all of Durham's Lake Ontario shoreline;
- a review of the Pickering District Plan; and
- a review of the Ajax District Plan and preparation of an Ajax waterfront plan.

Prior to establishing a comprehensive Durham waterfront plan, waterfront projects should be approved only if proponents show that the development is consistent with the ecosystem approach, the nine principles in Part I and recommendations in Part II.

80. The Commission further recommends that Durham Region, the towns of Pickering, Ajax, Whitby, and Newcastle, the City of Oshawa, MTRCA, CLOCA and GRCA participate in preparing the proposed shoreline regeneration plan, including a waterfront greenway and trail, and ensure that any other plans for waterfront areas are reviewed and/or developed in this context.

81. The Province of Ontario should negotiate one or more Waterfront Partnership Agreements with the Regional Municipality of Durham, local municipalities, other levels of government and their agencies, and appropriate private-sector bodies, to manage future waterfront activity. While different municipalities are at different stages of waterfront planning, the Waterfront Partnership Agreements should be closely linked to preparation and implementation of the regional waterfront plan, and should include:

- clear identification of the roles and responsibilities of various agencies in implementing waterfront plans in Durham, with the Region taking the co-ordinating role;
- a review of the design of proposed regional water supply and sewage facility plans along the waterfront, to ensure that they do not detract from other waterfront objectives;
- strategies to protect and maintain significant natural habitats including:
 - Frenchman's Bay marshes;
 - Carruther's Creek mouth;
 - Lynde Creek mouth;
 - Pumphouse Marsh;
 - Oshawa Second Marsh;
 - McLaughlin Bay;
 - Wilmot Creek mouth; and
 - Bond Head Bluffs;
- endorsement and implementation of the recommendations made for Frenchman's Bay, in

its *Conservation and Sustainable Development* report, after consultation with the public and with such appropriate agencies as the Town of Pickering, the Region of Durham, MTRCA and the Province of Ontario;

- a regional greenway and trail strategy consistent with recommendations in Chapter 5. This regional greenway and trail system should extend from the Oak Ridges Moraine south to Lake Ontario and north to Lake Simcoe and Lake Scugog.

The natural areas between the three regional urban nodes — Pickering/Ajax, Whitby/Oshawa/Courtice, and Bowmanville/Newcastle — should be re-established and kept in a natural state (see Map 12.1);

- transfer of the Class III wetland at the mouth of Carruther's Creek and a suitable buffer, to a public agency to be managed as a protected wetland; and acquisition of waterfront lands east of the creek by the Town of Ajax or MTRCA, prior to future development; and
- options and implementation strategies for the future of the Oshawa Harbour area; this process should include information on soil and groundwater contamination, appropriate clean-up standards for proposed future land uses, alternative remediation techniques, and cost/benefit analyses of the options.



EAST OF DURHAM

As noted in chapter 1, the *Watershed* report focussed on the waterfront of the Greater Toronto Area. However, with a broader understanding of the ecological features of the bioregion we now venture east of Durham to the Trent River. The Towns of Port Hope, Cobourg, Colborne, Brighton and Trenton are located along Lake Ontario in the County of Northumberland. To date, the Commission has been in contact with the towns of Cobourg and Port Hope, and includes comments specific to these areas here.

TOWN OF PORT HOPE

Port Hope is located at the point where the Ganaraska River meets Lake Ontario. In 1793, the first 27 settlers arrived in what was originally named Smith's Creek, and was later renamed Port Hope, in honour of Colonel Henry Hope, a lieutenant governor of the colony. By 1834, the town's population had grown to 1,517 and, by the mid-1900s, it had reached 6,327. Currently, Port Hope has a population of about 11,830 people, which is expected to increase by about 36 per cent over the next decade.

The Ganaraska River contributed significantly to the economic development of Port Hope: historically, it provided the power for saw and grist mills and clean water used by distilleries, making Port Hope a thriving centre of industry and trading until the beginning of the 20th century, when competition from larger centres became increasingly fierce.

Today, the Ganaraska River, which flows to Port Hope southeast from the

EARLY ECOSYSTEM PLANNING: THE GANARASKA WATERSHED

Although concepts like the ecosystem approach, watershed planning, and quality of life may seem to be new additions to our mental maps, they have existed and been applied for many decades. The 1944 Ganaraska Watershed report is an early and exciting example of their use; while terminology has changed in the years since then, many ideas and goals remain unchanged.

In 1941, citizens concerned about the environmental health of Canada, and of Ontario in particular, met at what later became known as the Guelph Conference to formulate a conservation program and lobby government. The Dominion and Ontario governments responded by agreeing to collaborate in a survey of the Ganaraska watershed and to publish a follow-up report. But another 48 years passed before the two governments actually established a joint inquiry including land-use matters: this Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront. One of the most significant innovations of the original Ganaraska study – the use of natural boundaries, rather than political boundaries, to determine land-use planning borders – has been used by the Royal Commission.

The Ganaraska was chosen as an example of conservation study for all of Canada. Among the most significant environmental matters of the time were related issues of erosion and flooding; toxic pollution, urban sprawl, and atmospheric change still lay in the future. Instead, terrible years of drought had alerted people to the vulnerability of Canada's soils. Photographs show the desert-like northern reaches of the Ganaraska watershed, with its sand dunes and washed-out gullies.

While those who carried out the Ganaraska study in the 1940s did not use the term "ecosystem approach" (it had yet to be coined), that they understood its value is evident in even a single paragraph of their report:

Natural resources form a delicately balanced system in which all the parts are interdependent, and they cannot be handled piece-meal. The present situation requires the co-ordination of existing relevant knowledge and its amplification where necessary, and then the development of a comprehensive plan for treating the natural resources on a wide public basis.

The study's first step was to connect existing environmental problems with historical land-use patterns in order to gain a better understanding of the nature and extent of problems. In the early 19th century, lumber was Ganaraska's main industry: between 1793 and 1861, 38 saw mills operated in the region. Agriculture spread in the wake of the felling of forests. Together, these two land uses helped create erosion and flooding problems in the Ganaraska watershed. Without tree roots to bind the soil, and trees to soften the impact of falling rain, soils were easily washed away. And without tree roots to trap moisture, rain or sudden snow melts led to torrential floods, resulting in heavy property damage and occasional loss of life.

Following a survey of the climate, soils, farms, natural areas, vegetation, wildlife, areas suffering from erosion, and land uses (similar to today's "state of the environment"

reports), recommendations were made to rehabilitate the watershed. They included reforestation of approximately 8,100 hectares (20,000 acres) — particularly of the delicate soils of the Oak Ridges Moraine — water retention ponds, improved agricultural practices (which included a recommendation that fragile soils be taken out of production), and the creation of several recreational centres. With the end of World War II in sight, the report's authors saw these remedial measures as providing important job creation opportunities for returning soldiers.

The report also called for provincial legislation that would combine the best features of two existing conservation programs “so that conservation projects on needy areas may be initiated immediately after the necessary local requirements of the Act are compiled with the municipalities concerned.” Two years later, in 1946, the Ontario government responded and passed the Conservation Authorities Act.

Source: Richardson, A. H. 1944. *A report on the Ganaraska watershed: a study in land use with plans for the rehabilitation of the area in the post-war period.* Toronto: Ontario. Dept. of Planning and Development.



The desert-like northern reaches of the Ganaraska Watershed, circa 1940s

Oak Ridges Moraine in Newcastle, is an important recreational resource, home to thousands of rainbow trout and other species. Fishers come to the Ganaraska to participate in an annual salmon hunt or other fishing events.

Portions of the lower Ganaraska River are subject to erosion and severe annual flooding. Therefore, Port Hope has constructed concrete and stone channels to hold flood waters and has recently completed

the Caven Street Erosion Control Project. This involved lining the river banks with armourstone to prevent erosion.

The waterfront area west of the Ganaraska is occupied by a beach parkette and by the Eldorado/Cameco uranium refinery. The latter industrial site is characterized by noise, odours, and contaminated soils, discouraging public use of the lakefront and commercial, residential, and other land uses in the vicinity.

East of the Ganaraska River are a sewage treatment plant and the Esco industrial area, which includes an abandoned paint factory. Most of the remaining land along the eastern shoreline is publicly owned, providing recreational opportunities for fishing, hiking, boating, and swimming. Clear access routes leading to and connecting waterfront areas are limited and are currently being considered by the Town.

The Port Hope Harbour at the mouth of the Ganaraska River is a spawning ground in spring and fall for a number of fish species, including brown trout, rainbow trout, lake trout, and Pacific salmon. Unfortunately, harbour waters and sediments are contaminated by radionuclides from former radium and uranium refining operations, as well as by high levels of phosphorus, nitrates, and metals. The levels of many of the contaminants exceed the Guidelines for Open Disposal of Dredged Materials set by the Canada-U.S. Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. At present, the harbour is the focus of a Remedial Action Plan (RAP).

East of Port Hope Harbour is Gage Creek, which also flows from the Oak Ridges Moraine. There is a wetland area at its mouth that contains marsh vegetation including wetland tree species. Tests of the creek and nearby areas indicate poor water quality with high levels of nutrients and bacteria, as well as maximum summer temperatures that are too high for rainbow trout.

Conceptual plans have been prepared for remediating Gage Creek and other contaminated sites in the Port Hope area. The federal government will select and prepare a storage site for contaminated materials, a process that could be completed within five years, and clean-up will begin after this time.

In February 1991, the Town of Port Hope released *Town of Port Hope: Waterfront Master Planning Study*, which emphasizes the need to enhance tourism and recreation, and recommends that planning policies be altered to ensure that the Town's waterfront areas become a focus for public use. According to the master plan, policies of the Port Hope Official Plan should ensure that environmentally sensitive areas are protected, diverse land uses co-exist along the river and lakefronts, and that public access and recreational opportunities on the waterfront are improved. These goals are supported by the Commission as they are in accordance with the nine principles for waterfront regeneration.

In response to the waterfront study, the Town of Port Hope council approved formation of the Port Hope Waterfront Implementation Committee which is now involved in its first project, construction of a new harbour on the east side of the mouth of the Ganaraska. The purpose is to improve the Town's economy and enable Port Hope's citizens to reclaim the waterfront as a people place; the new facilities might also attract more tourists to Port Hope, increasing the Town's revenue and generating new jobs.

A lakefront park and a public marina with facilities that include a restaurant are planned for the new harbour. The town proposes to use lakefill in some places to provide areas for onshore marina facilities; planning for the Port Hope waterfront should be guided by the shoreline regeneration plan described earlier in this report.

A Greenways Subcommittee was formed by the Town to co-ordinate the planning and development of walkways and paths along the lakefront, Gage Creek, and the Ganaraska River. It has fully endorsed

the waterfront trail concept described in *Watershed* and in the provincial report, *The Waterfront Trail: First Steps from Concept to Reality* (Reid et al. 1991). Members of the subcommittee are currently engaged in rehabilitating the Gage Creek Wetland area in order to restore its natural elements (marsh, waterfowl nesting areas) and to develop trails linked to the proposed waterfront network.

TOWN OF COBOURG

Originally named Amherst, the Town of Cobourg was founded in 1798 and renamed to honour the marriage of Princess Charlotte to Prince Leopold of Saxe-Cobourg. By the 1830s, the community had established itself as a regional centre with a population of about 1,000; by the middle of this century, population had increased to 7,818. Today it is home to more than 15,000 people, which is expected to increase by about 20 per cent in the next decade.

Cobourg has a number of public buildings of architectural and/or historical significance: Victoria Hall, also known as the Town Hall, was completed in 1860 and remains an impressive example of mid-Victorian architecture, embellished with detailed carvings. The Hall is the home of the Northumberland Art Gallery and the Victoria Hall Concert Hall. Cobourg's Old Victoria College, established in 1836, also has historical resonance: its first president was Reverend Egerton Ryerson, an educator who attracted many visitors, including actors and musicians, to the college, and who went on to establish Ontario's school system.

Construction of a harbour in the 1840s on Cobourg's beach stimulated the town's growth and the harbour soon became a busy port from which iron ore and other

products were exported. A century later, after World War II, industry expanded and Cobourg became the home of several leading international companies in Canada, including General Foods and Curtis Products. However, commerce in the harbour had declined by the 1950s and development plans for alternative uses of the land have since been proposed.

Among concerns about the present condition of the Cobourg Harbour area is the presence of contaminated soil on industrial sites in the harbour lands, most of which is attributed to oil and gas spillage from storage tanks. The Town of Cobourg recognizes the need to develop and enhance the harbour area so that it becomes more accessible, usable, and attractive for residents and tourists.

In late 1990, the mayor of Cobourg asked Town staff to review *Watershed* with a view to adapting and applying its recommendations to the Cobourg waterfront area. The staff report, which endorsed the relevant *Watershed* recommendations, found that some recommendations could have implications for the town's future, while others could be adopted by policy documents or implemented through departmental programs. For example, an ecosystem-based policy to deal with waterfront issues could be included in the Official Plan, as could a policy for a waterfront trail. The staff report has been approved by council and steps are being taken to incorporate specific *Watershed* recommendations into the Town's planning.

A Harbour Area Secondary Plan (1989) has been approved by the Town of Cobourg and by the Province of Ontario. It will guide development of the harbour area, based on principles of accessibility and

attractiveness to residents and tourists. The plan also notes that development should support the downtown, physically and commercially, and should maintain the town's existing scale and character. Proposed improvements include creation of parkland, promenades, pathways, and a plaza; expansion of marina facilities; and development of mixed land uses.

The Town of Cobourg will have opportunities to improve its harbour area and waterfront in the short and long term. The Commission believes that future development should be guided by comprehensive policies that deal with issues including, but not limited to, environmental protection, shoreline regeneration, appropriate land-use designations, and incorporation of public access.

There is an opportunity for Northumberland County and its member municipalities, especially the towns along Lake Ontario, to participate in future studies on the Greater Toronto bioregion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 82.** The Royal Commission recommends that the towns of Port Hope and Cobourg, the County of Northumberland and the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority continue to review relevant documents including official plans, secondary plans, and other waterfront-specific plans to ensure that they incorporate the ecosystem approach and the nine waterfront principles described in Part I.
- 83.** The Commission further recommends that the towns of Port Hope, Cobourg,

Colborne, Brighton and Trenton, the County of Northumberland, the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority and the Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority participate in preparing the proposed shoreline regeneration plan (Chapter 4), including a waterfront greenway and trail, and ensure that any other plans for waterfront areas are reviewed and/or developed in this context.