



Possibility grows here.

Greenbelt Foundation

661 Yonge Street, Suite 500  
Toronto, ON M4Y 1Z9

(416) 960-0001

[www.greenbelt.ca](http://www.greenbelt.ca)

## “Investing in the Future: The Economic Case for Natural Infrastructure in Ontario” Report Backgrounder

### Overview

A critical component of strengthening regional resilience to the impacts of climate change is the strategic investment in natural assets, like wetlands and forests. This natural or “green” infrastructure can help us mitigate some of the largest threats facing our region, including flooding, water quality issues and rising temperatures. By understanding what services our natural assets provide, we can better plan for and manage them – just as we would any other municipal asset.

### The Lake Scugog Enhancement Project

This project will help protect local tourism and recreation, and ultimately the economic value associated with people’s use and enjoyment of the lake. The Project will address water quality issues, while managing the amount of excess nutrients and invasive species, while creating new wildlife habitat and recreational amenities. The major risk factors to the long-term health of Lake Scugog are:

- Eutrophication
- Sedimentation
- Weed growth caused by phosphorous and nitrogen loading
- Climate change; and,
- Harmful algal blooms (linked to climate change).

The Project, estimated at a capital cost of \$3.0 million, will include the following components:

- Dredging for one time removal of sediment and invasive aquatic plant species
- Installation of storm water management features
- Construction of new wetlands, and shoreline extension (including a berm); and,
- Naturalization to enhance habitat and recreation.

Annual Ecosystem Services Values of the Lake Scugog watershed in millions \$:

- ✓ CLIMATE REGULATION: \$20.1
- ✓ RECREATION & AESTHETICS: \$38.5
- ✓ BIODIVERSITY: \$46.7
- ✓ OTHER SERVICES: \$115.60

“We were excited to work with the Greenbelt Foundation on this important study,” said Mark Majchrowski, CAO for Kawartha Conservation. “This work demonstrates the important return on investment for green infrastructure projects such as the Lake Scugog Enhancement Project. This report underlines the economic value to our communities in addition to providing important environmental and social benefits.”



## Saltfleet Conservation Area

The Hamilton Conservation Authority is creating a new conservation area located above the Niagara Escarpment in the Upper Stoney Creek and Upper Battlefield Creek watersheds in the east end of the City of Hamilton. The purpose of the new conservation area is to:

- Reduce downstream flood risk to residential and commercial properties by enhancing and enlarging existing wetland areas, creating new wetland areas and restoring the natural features and functions of watercourses in the area
- Support community well-being by creating new recreational opportunities and linking to the Dofasco Trail; and,
- Support biodiversity by creating new wildlife habitat and connective corridors to other local conservation areas.

50-year net present value range of services for Saltfleet Conservation Area in millions \$:

- ✓ CARBON SEQUESTRATION: \$0.95 - 1.8
- ✓ RECREATION \$2.4 - 3.5
- ✓ FLOOD MITIGATION \$5.5 - 14.8
- ✓ BIODIVERSITY \$9.9 - 15.6
- ✓ WATER QUALITY PROVISION \$0.149 - 0.230
- ✓ WASTE REGULATION \$5.2 - 8.2

“The Saltfleet Conservation Area wetland is an exciting project that has been developed to reduce the risk of flooding and erosion, create and enhance wetlands and associated natural areas and provide trails in the east end of our watershed,” says Scott Peck, Deputy CAO and Director of Watershed Planning & Engineering for Halton Conservation Authority in Hamilton. “This business case study completed provides an economic review, and specifically notes the economic benefits of the project. This is important as it shines a light on the overall benefit of this type of green infrastructure project.”

## Brock Lands Restoration

About 1.12 million people live within 20 km of Brock Lands. The population of this region is relatively young and growing, suggesting an increased need for recreational greenspaces. As a result, the TRCA developed a plan for ecological restoration of the former Brock Lands. The original cost estimate for this restoration work was \$4.3 million, with the expected result of this investment being improved terrestrial habitat, enhanced wetland habitat, restored groundwater catchments, improved stream-edge habitat, improved headwater streams, and self-sustaining natural cover.

50-year Net Present Value Range of Services for Brock Lands in millions \$:

- ✓ RECREATION: \$25.0 - 36.1
- ✓ OTHER SERVICES: \$35.6 - 56.1

“Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) congratulates the Greenbelt Foundation on this important work,” says John MacKenzie, CEO of TRCA. “This report helps quantify and recognize the value of green infrastructure investments to Ontario’s communities and our economy, including the ongoing restoration of sites, such as the Brock Lands in Pickering and Ajax, and many other sites within TRCA’s jurisdiction.”