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Supplementary Media Information

2026 Natural Asset Management Study: Integration of Natural Assets into Municipal Asset Management Plans

The document provides additional information about the Greenbelt Foundation's *2026 Natural Asset Management Study: Integration of Natural Assets into Municipal Asset Management Plans*, including methodology, stakeholder quotes, supporting resources, and media contacts.

Background Information

This natural asset management assessment, conducted by the Greenbelt Foundation in collaboration with Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., highlights the progress Greenbelt municipalities have made in integrating natural assets, such as forests, wetlands, and rivers, into their asset management plans.

Ontario is the only province that requires municipalities to include natural assets in their asset management planning. Under Ontario Regulation 588/17, municipalities were required to include natural assets in their asset management plans by July 7, 2024, and establish proposed levels of service by July 1, 2025.

The 2026 assessment provides insights into the advancements municipalities have made in natural asset management following these regulatory deadlines.

Assessment Methodology

Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. conducted both the 2024 and 2026 assessment for the Greenbelt Foundation, using the same methodology to evaluate the progress. Each of the 73 municipalities was evaluated against 28 criteria, with a maximum score of 36 points, and then each assigned to one of five maturity levels. The assessment was conducted using a questionnaire, interviews, and available documentation.

Of the 73 assessed municipalities, 40 completed the questionnaire, 10 participated in interviews, and the remaining 33 were assessed based on their asset management plans and related documents.

Only documented evidence was considered in the scoring. Where the 2026 evidence did not demonstrate further advancement beyond the 2024 assessment, municipalities retained their

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2024 scores. As a result, scores could increase or remain unchanged, not decrease. The scores reflect documented steps taken toward natural asset management rather than the quality or effectiveness of their implementation.

Stakeholder Quotes

Angela Coleman, General Manager, Conservation Ontario: “Conservation Authorities provide critical support to municipalities completing natural asset work. Natural assets support key shared priorities including stormwater management; flood mitigation; erosion control; and source water protection. We are pleased to see the progress greenbelt municipalities are making in NAM.”

Jennifer Court, Executive Director, Asset Management Ontario (AMONTario): "AMONTario provides support to municipalities across Ontario working to incorporate natural assets into asset management planning. This new report demonstrates the measurable progress being made by Greenbelt municipalities and highlights the value of these collective efforts. Its call for additional resources and the development of municipal working groups is an important step toward building on this momentum and continuing to advance natural asset management across Ontario."

Roy Brooke, Executive Director, Natural Assets Initiative: “These results show that treating nature as foundational infrastructure is no longer a niche idea, though closing the funding gap so that communities can fully implement related management solutions is critical. When local governments see a wetland or forest as a vital asset that manages stormwater, or protects against floods and erosion, they can manage it with the same rigour as pipes and culverts, and steward it for the long term. Greenbelt municipalities are showing the rest of Canada what that shift looks like in practice.”

Related Resources

- NAMual: this resource features practical guidance, tools, and case studies to facilitate knowledge sharing and strengthen municipal capacity in natural asset management.
- 2026 Natural Asset Management Study: Integration of Natural Assets into Municipal Asset Management Plans.
- Summary Report: How 50 Greenbelt municipalities found infrastructure they already owned.

Media Contacts

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