

North Oakville Natural Heritage System

Conservation Halton, working with the Town of Oakville and Halton Region, is an integral partner in preserving almost 900 hectares of green space for current and future residents to enjoy in North Oakville. This effort, which took several years, will create a linked natural heritage system, with trails and eventually a new conservation area known as Glenorchy.



The Sixteen Mile Creek ravine cuts through the future Glenorchy Conservation Area

What is a Natural Heritage System?

A natural heritage system looks to create a network of various habitat features and functions including woodlots, creeks, meadows, and thickets rather than isolated greenspaces separated by homes,

businesses, and roads. The systems approach is considered the best opportunity to preserve and enhance living natural systems. A natural heritage system allows plant and animal species to maintain vital populations and to thrive.

Summary

Conservation Halton believes the North Oakville area provides an important greenspace for Halton's expanding communities, and maintains and enhances critical natural habitat for protecting and maintaining biodiversity in our watershed.

Why is it important to preserve this Natural Heritage System?

This important natural area is characterized by gently rolling hills, forest, creeks, agricultural fields, and wetlands. The Sixteen Mile Creek valley cuts through the landscape as it winds through the lower portion of its watershed in Milton and Oakville.

To protect and ensure the viability of the natural features in North Oakville within an expanding urban environment, a priority was placed on the development of a linked natural heritage and open space system. According to the Town of Oakville, development in North Oakville will balance the preservation of natural resources with sustainable, community conscious development initiatives. This also includes walkable neighbourhoods, public transportation, and a network of trails for people to enjoy.

North Oakville is one of the largest undeveloped parcels of land within Halton at 3,100 hectares, bounded by Highway 407 to the north, Ninth Line to the east, Dundas Street to the south, and Tremaine Road to the west. The area is expected to accommodate approximately 50,000 people and around 25,000 jobs. The decision to preserve the 900 hectare natural heritage system within the larger area was ultimately upheld by the Ontario Municipal Board which turned down appeals by various landowners.

The Sixteen Mile Creek valley is an Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) noted for its large valley and tableland oak forests. The ANSI supports a large number of provincially and regionally rare plant and animal species, and vegetation communities. ANSI's are designated by the Province through the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Conservation Halton's Role in North Oakville

Conservation Halton's involvement in the various planning stages that led to the urban expansion of North Oakville lands (Dundas Street to Highway 407) dates back to the mid 1990's.

As the planning process continued to move forward in North Oakville to develop these lands, Conservation Halton provided technical expertise on the natural heritage aspects including, but not limited to, ecology, planning and water resources. Conservation Halton was part of a Planning Authorities Interagency Review with provincial and municipal representation involved in developing this linked natural heritage and open space system within an urban environment.

Throughout the process all parties involved made efforts to reach negotiated settlements to provide a balance between nature and development. The approach has been recognized as an innovative approach to protect natural heritage in the Province. The end result is a network of parks, trails, woodlots, wetlands and meadows for those who live and work in North Oakville to enjoy, as well as other watershed residents and visitors to the area.

Glenorchy, Our Newest Conservation Area

Conservation Halton has partnered with the Government of Ontario to create the Glenorchy Conservation Area, protecting 400 hectares (650 acres) of environmentally sensitive land in North Oakville, containing the Trafalgar Moraine and the Sixteen Mile Creek valley. This partnership contributes to the government's plan for permanent greenbelt around the Greater Golden Horseshoe creating a legacy for years to come and promotes cleaner air and water.

Conservation Halton Natural Champion for a Healthy Watershed



Conservation Halton is the community based environmental agency that protects, restores and manages the natural resources in its watershed. Conservation Halton has staff that includes ecologists, land use planners, engineers, foresters and educators, along with a network of volunteers, who are guided by a Board of Directors that includes municipally elected and appointed citizens. Conservation Halton is recognized for its stewardship of creeks, forests and Niagara Escarpment lands through science based programs and services.

For more information about the North Oakville Natural Heritage System contact Conservation Halton:

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