

Watershed Stewardship

What Is Stewardship?

Stewardship involves caring for our natural environment to maintain healthy land, air, and water. To ensure a healthy environment for both current and future generations, it is important that we care for our resources in the most responsible and sustainable manner possible. As an authority on environmental conservation, Conservation Halton is committed to promoting excellent environmental stewardship through our own policies and actions and through our education outreach services.



Today's youth are the environmental leaders of tomorrow

Stewardship Education Through On-Site Consultations

The Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program began in 1994 for the purpose of protecting and enhancing environmentally significant lands. Through this program, free on-site consultations are offered to Halton landowners. Professional stewardship technicians meet with landowners on their properties to discuss concerns and stewardship objectives and provide advice on environmentally friendly ways of managing properties with natural features, such as woodlots, wetlands, meadows, and creeks.

Watershed Planning

Conservation Halton, in partnership with the municipalities, leads in the development of action plans designed to improve the ecological functions of our watersheds and educate the public on environmental issues within their local subwatersheds. Action plans focus on stewardship activities such as education and awareness, habitat restoration, and mitigation efforts.

Mentoring Tomorrow's Environmental Stewards

Conservation Halton believes today's youth are the environmental leaders of tomorrow and is committed to developing programs for students in order to make them responsible environmental stewards. Every year over 50,000 students visit Crawford Lake and Mountsberg. Through community outreach programs such as Stream of Dreams™ and Yellow Fish Road™, Conservation Halton leads students in hands-on watershed education. Each September, Conservation Halton also hosts the Halton Children's Water Festival, educating upwards of 4,000 students in grades two through five about our most important natural resource – water. More information about Conservation Halton's outreach education programs can be found in our Community Outreach, Education and Volunteer Services FactSheet.

“Everyday” Stewardship Initiatives

Conservation Halton encourages the public to become passionate and

environment. There are a number of ways landowners in Halton Region can practice responsible stewardship.

Pool Drainage

When draining a swimming pool it is important to not drain the water into a storm drain, down a driveway or into the nearest creek. Storm drains or catch basins are located along the edges of roadways, and in most municipalities the water is not treated and flows directly into a creek, stream, or Lake Ontario. Pool water contains chemicals that are harmful to the natural environment. Direct drainage into our watercourses can result in detrimental consequences for fish and other wildlife and plants. To drain a pool properly, it should be allowed to sit (without shock treatment) at least 72 hours before draining. This allows some of the chemicals to evaporate. At this point, the water can be slowly discharged onto a grassy area. This permits the filtration of the water through the sediment and further safe evaporation of chemicals into the air.

Decommissioning Unused Water Wells

An unused well that is not properly filled, sealed and capped can act as a pathway for contaminants to enter the groundwater. It is therefore important to decommission correctly any abandoned wells. If there is an unused well on your property, you may be eligible for financial assistance through the Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program. More information can be found at their official website:

<http://conservationhamilton.ca/environment/stewardship/>.

Riparian Buffers

Riparian buffers are natural unmowed, unploughed areas of trees, shrubs, and grasses that border streams or creeks. By

creating riparian buffers along waterways on private properties, Halton's landowners can help improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat and reduce flooding. The plants within a buffer filter sediment and pollution from rain water as it flows overland into our creeks. Naturally vegetated riparian buffers also help prevent flooding by providing storage for rainwaters and provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife.

Gardening for the Environment

Residents can also practice environmental stewardship through their gardening practices. Planting native grasses and wildflowers instead of lawn grasses provides wildlife with areas for nesting and foraging. Because of their deep root systems, native grasses are able to reach water deep in the soil and require very little watering. When choosing plants, do some research and be aware of the term "wildflower" since many wildflowers are non-native and may be invasive. Conservation Halton's website has information on native plant species, invasive species, and species at risk.

What is a Watershed?

A watershed is an area of land that catches rain and snow and drains or seeps into a marsh, stream, river, lake, or groundwater. Some cross municipal, provincial and even international borders. They come in all shapes and sizes and can vary from millions of acres, like the land that drains into the Great Lakes, to a few acres that drain into a pond. Conservation Halton's watershed is one of the most beautiful and diverse places in Ontario. It includes the world-renowned Niagara Escarpment, Carolinian forests, Lake Ontario shoreline, creeks, valleys and rich wetlands. The Conservation Halton watershed has a population of 450,000 people in seven local municipalities and two regional municipalities.

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 on Watershed Stewardship contact Conservation Halton:

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