



Wetland Creation and Enhancement Program



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Wetlands . . . where the water meets the land . . . the best of both worlds. Wetlands are home to a great number of species including species at risk in Ontario. In fact, wetlands have the highest biodiversity of any landscape unit. Waterfowl, songbirds, shorebirds and raptors use wetlands for nesting habitat, protective cover or sources of food. Wetlands provide essential breeding habitat for many amphibians, reptiles and insects. They are prime locations for a large number of freshwater fish seeking shallow waters for cover, spawning and nurseries, and serve as a primary habitat for mammals like muskrat. They also provide habitat for other upland species that occasionally use these areas to escape predators, reproduce or forage.

Wetlands moderate water flow, reduce flooding, maintain stream base flows, recharge groundwater, enhance air and water quality. These swamps, fens, bogs and marshes are all valuable wetland types found across Ontario.

Despite their value to our quality of life and the existence of several provincial and municipal policies and regulations to protect them, like the *Endangered Species Act*, wetlands are still being lost or degraded. While preservation of habitat is key, there is a growing awareness that habitat restoration is essential to recover ecosystems that have been degraded or destroyed. And because many of Ontario's wetlands are located on privately owned land, individual landowners play a crucial role in protecting and restoring wetlands for species at risk.

In the St. Clair Region, wetlands are being restored and created. Ironically, the concentration of large industry in the Sarnia area has provided a tremendous opportunity. Many of the industries in Sarnia's Chemical Valley own large tracts of buffer lands or lands abandoned from production.

Industry is giving back to the community by creating wetlands and forest on their under-utilized land. Working in partnership with the Conservation Authority and other organizations, wetlands and forests have been and are being created on lands owned by Dow Chemical and ICI. In these cases, the wetlands are open for the public to enjoy.

Wetlands are also being created on lands owned by rural residents by re-contouring to create the desired topography, construction or improvements to water control structures (i.e., weirs or culverts) and intensive planting and seeding of native species of wetland vegetation, shrubs and trees. These projects have been made possible through grants from a number of government programs.



Our partnership with the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority to establish The Dow Wetlands in the Sarnia area has allowed our company to create a natural location from which to learn more about local, native flora and fauna while protecting important species at risk and contributing to the quality of life within our community.

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