

Media Release

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Provincial Plan Review Report Recognizes Important Relationships Between Environment, Economy and People

Newmarket (December 16, 2015) Ontario's Conservation Authorities applaud a final report produced by the Advisory Panel on the Coordinated Review of four key provincial plans that suggests using an integrated watershed management approach to ensure resilient watersheds, healthy people and a strong economy. The report also acknowledges the role and responsibilities of Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities in helping to implement many of the plans' outcomes.

The four plans under review - the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, Niagara Escarpment Plan, Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe Plan - provide a framework to accommodate population and employment growth in a more sustainable manner, curbing urban sprawl and protecting productive farmland, water resources and natural heritage.

"The Conservation Authorities were pleased to read the Advisory Panel's final recommendations to incorporate an integrated watershed management approach to future growth. You just can't have a strong economy and healthy population without protection for the environment. We need clean air, sustainable water, healthy agricultural land, and strong natural heritage if you want a productive economy and livable communities." said Kim Gavine, General Manager of Conservation Ontario.

Conservation Authorities are also recognized for their role in helping to implement the four plans.

"The idea of establishing a Secretariat to guide implementation which would include Conservation Authorities is acknowledgement of all the hard work they do with many partners to ensure our watersheds can support a strong urban and rural economy and healthy people," Gavine said.

Along with the Province and municipalities, Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities were also specifically recognized for their work in monitoring and reporting, watershed planning and watershed programs.

Through their source protection and watershed management programs, Conservation

Authorities can help to inform decision-making by providing a picture of conditions in Ontario's watersheds, particularly around water quality and quantity, the state of natural heritage, areas of risk and watershed characterizations.

The Advisory Committee provides a total of 87 recommendations to address traffic congestion, improve natural and built infrastructure, protect natural heritage, mainstream climate change, protect public health, sustain productive agriculture and incorporate watershed and sub watershed plans in conjunction with other municipal and provincial plans.

They also suggest streamlining the policy framework, terminology and timelines of the four plans as well as creating a 'Secretariat' within the Provincial government which would coordinate implementation actions of the Province, Municipalities, Niagara Escarpment Commission and Conservation Authorities.

An oversight forum is recommended to monitor and report on implementation. Conservation Authorities encourage the Province and municipalities to work together to follow up on the report's recommendations.

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