



# Media Release

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Conservation Ontario launches Marginal Lands Initiative with \$12 Million investment from the governments of Canada and Ontario to support farmers**

*Applications from agri-environmental organizations to support farm sustainability projects will be accepted until February 28, 2025.*

**NEWMARKET, ON (January 27, 2025)** Conservation Ontario is proud to announce its role in delivering the Marginal Lands Initiative, a program funded by a \$12 million investment over four years from the governments of Canada and Ontario through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP). This program is designed to make it easier for farmers to implement environmental projects on their properties, enhancing the productivity and resilience of their operations while strengthening the province's food supply chain.

The Marginal Lands Initiative will support farmers by providing technical expertise from organizations specializing in agri-environmental planning and implementation. These experts will work directly with farmers to design, install, and maintain projects that incorporate beneficial land management practices, such as the creation of wetlands and natural grasslands. By optimizing marginal lands, the program will help protect soil and water quality while ensuring long-term sustainability.

“This is an incredible opportunity for Ontario farmers to enhance their operations and contribute to a healthier, more resilient agricultural landscape,” said Angela Coleman, General Manager of Conservation Ontario. “We are thrilled to be delivering this initiative in collaboration with other organizations and drawing on our experience in agri-environmental projects to support farmers in protecting their land and increasing its capacity for the future.”

The funding reduces the burden for farmers undertaking larger environmental projects by offering the support and resources needed to implement meaningful changes. This initiative will improve marginal areas of farmland, fostering environmental benefits while bolstering productivity.

“Our farmers work so hard to care for their land, despite facing challenges that are outside their control,” said the Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. “With funding under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, the Marginal Lands Initiative will help farmers continue to grow and succeed sustainably for generations to come.”

“Our government continues to create the right conditions for Ontario's farmers and our \$51 billion agri-food sector to reach their full promise and potential,” said Rob Flack, Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness. “The Marginal Lands Initiative represents our latest commitment to supporting our farmers in maximizing the environmental health and long-term productivity of their farms, which will strengthen food supply chains and our agricultural competitiveness for generations to come.”

Conservation Ontario encourages farmers to take advantage of this program to improve their agricultural properties and contribute to a stronger, more sustainable food supply chain. Information and guidelines about the Marginal Lands Initiative are available on Conservation Ontario's [website](#).

The Sustainable CAP is a 5-year, \$3.5-billion investment by federal, provincial, and territorial governments to strengthen competitiveness, innovation, and resiliency of Canada's agriculture, agri-food, and agri-based products sector. This includes \$1 billion in federal programs and activities and a \$2.5-billion commitment that is cost-shared 60% federally and 40% provincially/territorially for programs that are designed and delivered by provinces and territories.

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### **About Conservation Ontario**

Conservation Ontario is a non-profit association that represents Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities. Conservation Authorities are community-based watershed management agencies whose mandate is to undertake watershed-based programs to protect people and property from flooding and other natural hazards and to conserve natural resources for economic, social, and environmental benefits. Conservation Authorities are legislated under the *Conservation Authorities Act*, 1946.

### **Quick Facts**

- The Marginal Lands Initiative falls under the Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program (RALP) that provides \$56.7 million through the five-year [Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership](#) to support Ontario farmers in sequestering carbon and make their agriculture lands more productive and resilient.
- Conservation Ontario is inviting [applications](#) from agri-environmental organizations that specialize in developing natural features that support farm environments. The application period runs from January 27, 2025, to February 28, 2025.
- Successful applicant organizations will promote their own initiatives to farmers who will apply directly to the organizations that would best help them design, build and maintain natural features on their marginal lands.
- Information and guidelines about the Marginal Lands Initiative are available on the Conservation Ontario [website](#).

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