



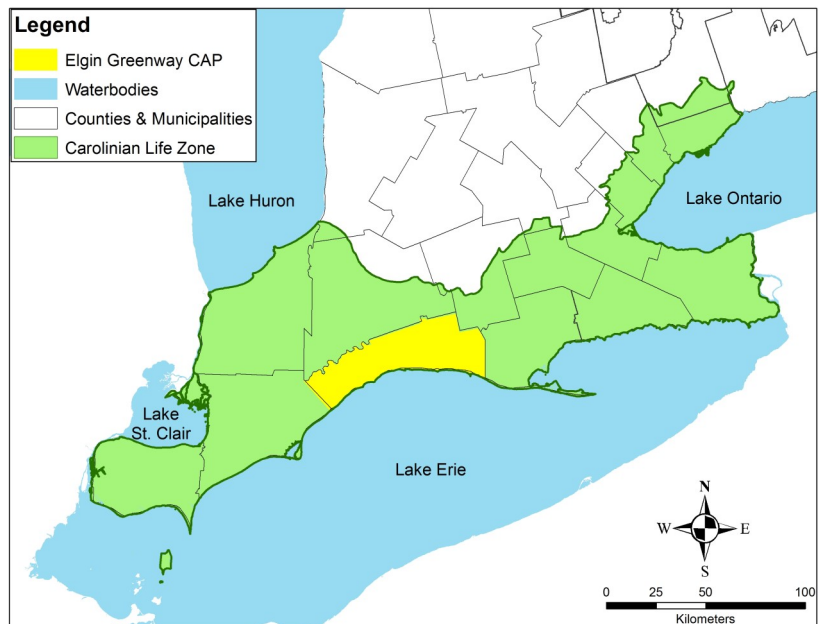
Elgin Greenway Conservation Action Plan

The Elgin Greenway Conservation Action Plan (CAP) area lies within southern Ontario’s unique and very diverse Carolinian Life Zone. This ecoregion supports more native species than any other place in the country and provides habitat for many globally, nationally and provincially rare species. Elgin County extends along the north shore of Lake Erie’s central basin. Although 85% of the county is farmland, there are still significant tracts of protected land, most associated with swamps or stream valleys that are unsuitable for agricultural purposes. The extraordinary diversity of this area has evolved over millennia, but the health and existence of this diversity depends on conservation actions taken by people who care about the unique nature of the Elgin Greenway CAP area and the many essential services its ecosystems provide.

What is Conservation Action Planning? Used throughout the world, Conservation Action Planning is an effective and efficient way to conserve many species and habitats at the same time. The approach brings together local partners to set conservation objectives and strategies through sharing of knowledge, collaboration and consensus.

Conservation Action Plans (CAPs) in Carolinian Canada focus on biodiversity hotspots—areas with a high concentration of biological and ecological diversity that are home to many rare species and habitats.

CAPs provide a common vision and strategy to protect biodiversity that communities can implement together.



To view the full Elgin Greenway Conservation Action Plan please visit our website at: caroliniancanada.ca/caps-carolinian-canada

You can also view Conservation Action Plans for neighbouring areas such as:

- Rondeau—Erie Coast CAP
- Lake St. Clair Coastal CAP
- Sydenham River CAP



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Federally threatened Hooded Warbler
© P.A. Woodliffe



Threatened Eastern Hog-nosed snake
© S. Gillingwater



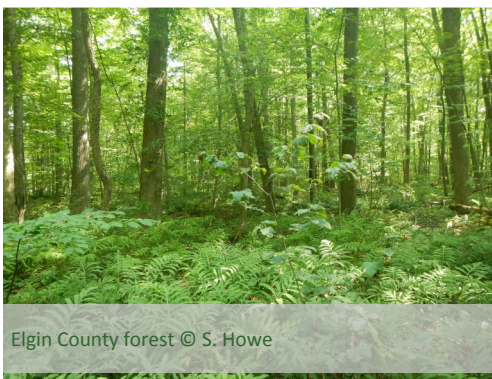
Threatened Blanding's Turtle
© P.A. Woodliffe

Vision Statement

The Elgin Greenway Conservation Action Plan will result in more vibrant, resilient ecosystems, healthier habitats and enhanced viability of flora and fauna across Elgin County. Recovery of the ecosystems will not only serve the needs of Species at Risk and other imperiled species, but will contribute to climate change adaptation and enhanced ecosystem services. Ultimately, this initiative aims to build more prosperous communities, healthier citizens, and improved quality of life in Elgin County and across the deep south of Ontario.

What makes the Elgin Greenway CAP area special?

- It is home to a remarkable diversity of southern flora and fauna, many of them at the northern limits of their ranges.
- 129 species of breeding birds, 16 reptiles, 33 mammals, 79 butterflies and over 1500 plant species have been recorded in Elgin County.
- Provides habitat for at least 50 Species at Risk.
- It is home to several rare ecological communities such as Moist-fresh Tallgrass Prairie and Dry Tallgrass Prairie.
- One of the largest intact prairies in Ontario is found in Elgin County.
- The CAP area is bordered by the Thames River, the second largest river in southern Ontario, home to one of the most diverse faunal assemblages within the Great Lake drainage system.
- While only 10% forest cover remains in the CAP area these forests support more than 30 Species at Risk, including the Acadian Flycatcher, American Badger and Spoon-leaved Moss.



Elgin County forest © S. Howe



Threatened Spiny Softshell Turtle © R. McArthur

Conservation Targets

- Valley and Ravine Forests
- Upland Forests
- Moist Forests and Swamps
- Native Prairies and Savannahs
- Thickets, hedgerows, fencerows, shelterbelts, abandoned fields
- Sustainable Agricultural Practices
- Rivers, streams, and associated open floodplain habitats
- Marshes, ponds, impoundments and constructed wetlands
- Lake Erie Shoreline
- Species at Risk Snakes



Endangered Eastern Foxsnake © C. McCreary



Endangered American Chestnut seeds
© P.A. Woodliffe



Endangered Prothonotary Warbler © B. Mann



Endangered Drooping Trillium
© P.A. Woodliffe



Endangered Spotted Turtle
© S. Gillingwater



Federally threatened Red-headed Woodpecker
© P.A. Woodliffe

Conservation Objectives

1. Implement projects to address peak flows, nutrient inputs and gully erosion at priority drain outlets.
2. Increase natural cover of all conservation target types through restoration.
3. Protect and enhance functional ecological linkages between and within existing core natural areas through securement.
4. Establish and manage functional ecological linkages between and within existing core natural areas through stewardship.

You can become a Landowner Leader and protect and enhance habitat for rare species on your property.

5. Develop an outreach strategy to communicate CAP themes and objectives to Elgin residents.
6. Complete a natural heritage inventory in order to update and fill gaps in relation to Species at Risk, significant habitats, invasive species and other important natural heritage features.
7. Prevent and control the spread of new populations of high priority terrestrial invasive plant species at critical sites in Elgin County.
8. Reduce road mortality of small animals at key sites.
9. Improve roadside habitat for pollinating insects.
10. Improve forest habitat quality and reduce threats to priority species and community types.
11. Manage problematic native species (e.g. White-tailed deer, wild turkey, Canada Goose) populations.
12. Develop a complementary strategy to promote sustainable agricultural practices in Elgin County.
13. Develop a complementary strategy to promote eco-tourism in Elgin County.

You can learn more about rare species and habitat and help protect the unique nature of Carolinian Canada.



Provincially endangered Jefferson Salamander
© G. Buck



Special Concern Yellow-breasted Chat
© P.A. Woodliffe



Endangered American Badger © R. Gould

Since 1984, Carolinian Canada Coalition (CC), now a registered charity, has been a leading ecoregional group in Canada. Stretching from Toronto to Windsor, the Carolinian Life Zone of southern Ontario is among North America’s most vibrant and fragile ecoregions. CC brings together diverse sectors, people and governments to collaboratively steward southern Ontario’s unique habitat network, the green infrastructure needed to support thriving wild and human communities in harmony for generations.



Special Concern Swamp Rose Mallow
© P.A. Woodliffe



Threatened Dense Blazing Star © H. Giethoorn

The Big Picture

The ‘Big Picture’ is Carolinian Canada Coalition’s vision of a network of green across the southern Ontario landscape. Healthy landscapes need large natural ‘core habitats’ connected by ‘habitat corridors’ to keep our air and water clean for human and wild communities. Existing natural areas such as forests, wetlands and prairies, form the backbone of the system. These are connected by streams, rivers, drains, hedgerows, smaller woodlots and even backyard habitat. All told, ‘The Big Picture’ identifies 140 core natural areas in Carolinian Canada and provides a vision for a sustainable landscape in which everyone can participate.

The Big Picture is science-based and was developed in collaboration with many conservation partners, similar to the Conservation Action Plans. Although it works at a large scale, it offers a method for local communities to develop their own Big Picture vision. Achieving the objectives contained in each Conservation Action Plan will contribute to the sustainable natural heritage system identified by the Big Picture.

To find out how you can assist with meeting the CAP Conservation Objectives visit the Landowner Leaders section of our webpage at: <https://caroliniancanada.ca/landowner-leaders>

Assistance for this project was provided by the Government of Ontario & Environment Canada’s Habitat Stewardship Program.



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Many thanks to our partners who were involved in the development of the Elgin Greenway Conservation Action Plan:

- Carolinian Canada Coalition
- Catfish Creek Conservation Authority
- Elgin County
- Elgin Federation of Agriculture
- Elgin Stewardship Council
- John St. Pierre
- Kettle Creek Conservation Authority
- Long Point Region Conservation Authority
- Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority
- National Farmers Union
- Nature Conservancy of Canada
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
- Ontario Nature
- Otter Valley Field Naturalists
- St. Thomas Field Naturalists
- Thames Talbot Land Trust