

Grand River near Brantford © L. Halyk

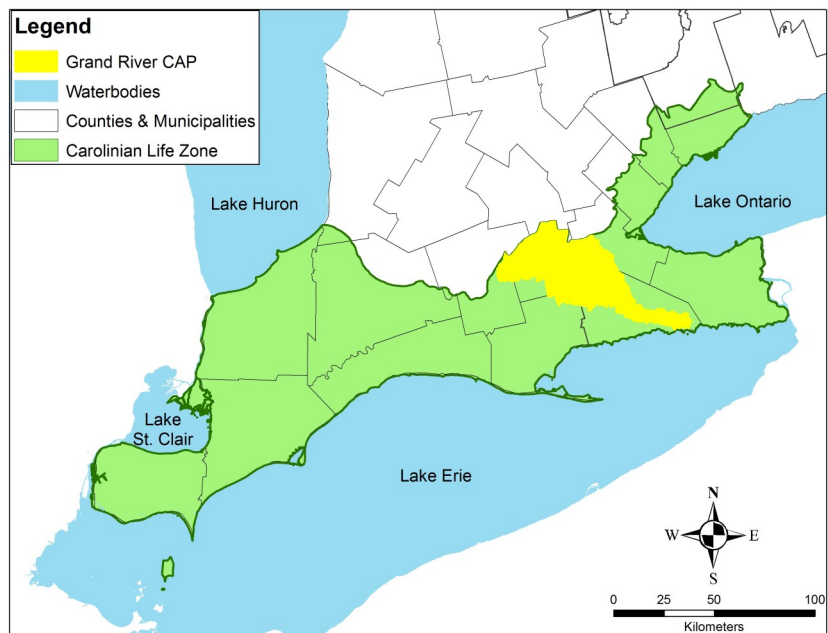
# Grand River Conservation Action Plan

The Grand River Conservation Action Plan (CAP) area lies within southern Ontario’s unique and highly 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. The Grand River itself is a major feature of this landscape, and the river and its major tributaries are designated as a Canadian Heritage River. Wetlands form a substantial part of the CAP, and there are also several small pockets of tallgrass prairie and savannah, one of the rarest ecosystem types in North America. The extraordinary diversity of this area has evolved over millennia, but its health and existence depends on conservation actions taken by people who care about the unique nature of the Grand River 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 Grand River Conservation Action Plan please visit our website at: [caroliniancanada.ca/caps-carolinian-canada](http://caroliniancanada.ca/caps-carolinian-canada)

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

- Hamilton-Burlington CAP
- Short Hills CAP
- Niagara River Corridor CAP



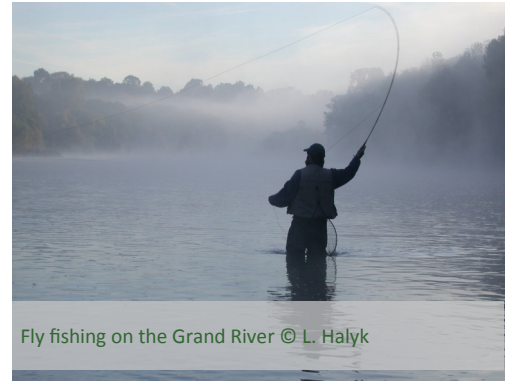
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Endangered American Badger © R. Gould



Provincially endangered Jefferson Salamander  
© G. Buck



Fly fishing on the Grand River © L. Halyk

### ***Vision Statement***

The Grand River Conservation Action Plan (CAP) aims to protect critical ecosystems, enrich biodiversity through restoration of habitat and improvement of connectivity of natural areas, enhance ecosystem services such as water quality for local communities, and engage citizens to work together toward a common, mutually-beneficial cause: a healthier environment for all.

### ***What makes the Grand River CAP area special?***

- Nineteen significant vegetation communities have been identified, seven of which are globally rare.
- The area provides habitat for over 53 species listed as nationally Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern.
- Globally and provincially significant rare remnant prairie habitats representing some of the rarest ecosystems in southern Ontario.
- A number of Provincially Significant Wetlands.
- A remarkable diversity of southern flora and fauna, many of them at the northern limits of their ranges.
- Over 151 species of breeding birds have been documented in the CAP area.
- The Grand River watershed is the largest watershed in southern Ontario.
- The Grand River, and its major tributaries, is recognized as a Canadian Heritage River for its significant cultural and recreational opportunities.

### **Conservation Targets**

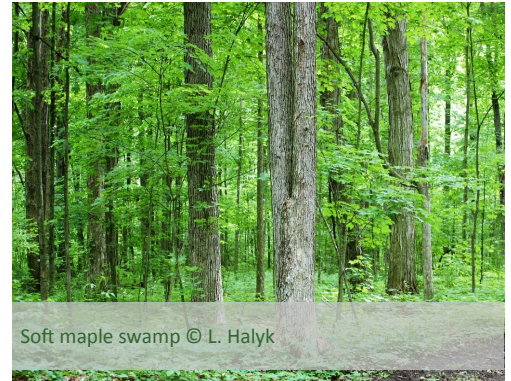
- Upland Forests
- Prairies, Savannahs and Woodlands
- Thickets, Hedgerows, Fencerows, Shelterbelts, Abandoned Fields, Agricultural Lands
- Coastal Wetlands
- Inland Wetlands
- Watercourses, Riparian Habitat and Riverine Wetlands
- Amphibians and Reptiles
- Sustainable Agricultural Practices



Riparian buffer in CAP area © L. Halyk



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



Soft maple swamp © L. Halyk



Threatened Blanding's Turtle © P.A. Woodliffe



Provincially threatened Wavy-rayed Lampmussel  
© S. Staton



Special Concern Northern Map Turtle © S. Gillingwater

## Conservation Objectives

1. Establish an outreach program to communicate the reasons for the Conservation Action Plan, its goals and objectives to the community.
2. Research and promote to municipalities policies for development that minimize negative impacts on biodiversity.
3. Maintain, restore and enhance conservation targets in CAP area.
4. Research, promote and monitor positive incentive approaches for farmers to conserve biodiversity on their land.  
  
**You can become a Landowner Leader and protect and enhance habitat for rare species on your property.**
5. Support and endorse the *Grand River Water Management Plan*.
6. Research and promote best management practices regarding problematic native, non-native and domestic animals to public audiences to protect amphibian and reptile populations in developed areas.
7. Promote the Grand River CAP as a mechanism to focus stewardship and rehabilitation of aggregate operations on enhancing biodiversity.
8. Prevent and control the spread of new populations of high priority terrestrial and aquatic invasive species at critical sites in the Grand River CAP area.

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



Seeds of the endangered American Chestnut  
© P.A. Woodliffe



Threatened Mapleleaf Mussel © C. Mesher



Endangered Bird's-foot Violet © G. Buck

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.



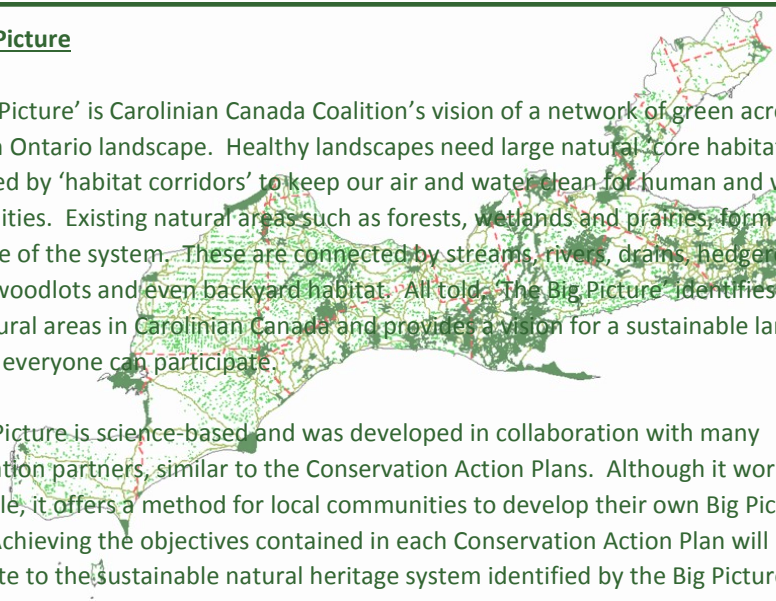
Black Oak Savannah © G. Buck



Threatened Spiny Softshell Turtle © R. McArthur

### 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.



Ontario



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[www.caroliniancanada.ca](http://www.caroliniancanada.ca)  
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### Many thanks to our partners who were involved in the development of the Grand River Conservation Action Plan:

- Bob Scott
- Carolinian Canada Coalition
- County of Brant
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Grand River Conservation Authority
- Haldimand & Area Woodlot Owners' Association
- Haldimand Stewardship Council
- Hamilton Field Naturalists
- John Ambrose
- Larry Davis
- Long Point Basin Land Trust
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
- Ontario Stone, Sand and Gravel Association
- Parks Services, Brantford
- Six Nations of the Grand River