



Marsh habitat along Lake St. Clair © H. Giethoorn

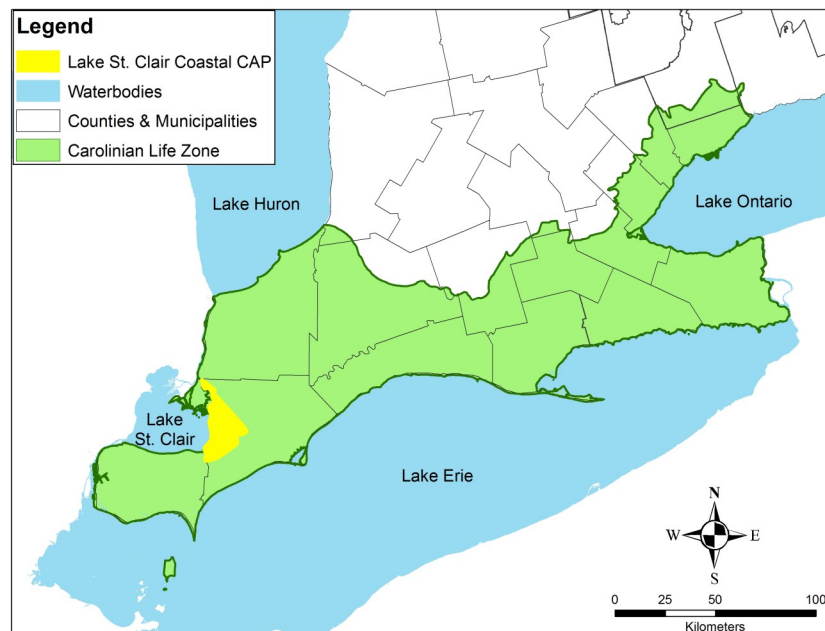
Lake St. Clair Coastal Conservation Action Plan

The Lake St. Clair Coastal Conservation Action Plan (CAP) area is located in the Carolinian Life Zone, which is rich in many species and habitats found nowhere else in Canada. From forests, to prairies and savannahs, to marshes and streams, to vast coastal wetlands, the Lake St. Clair Coastal area is an important part of our natural heritage. These habitats support an amazing diversity of species, many of them provincially, nationally and globally rare. The unique diversity of this area has evolved over millennia, but its future health and survival depends on conservation actions taken by people who care about the unique nature of the Lake St. Clair Coastal 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 Lake St. Clair Coastal 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—Lake Erie Coast CAP
- Elgin Greenway CAP
- Sydenham River CAP



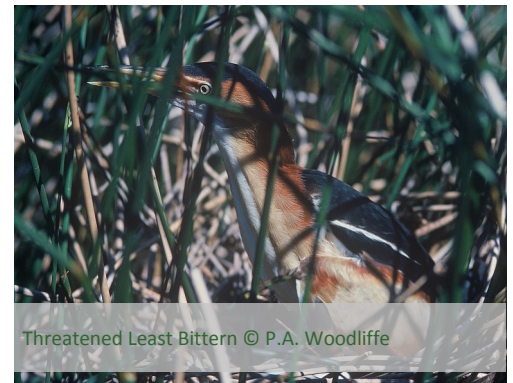
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Special Concern Northern Map Turtle © S. Gillingwater



Drain habitat © J. Jalava



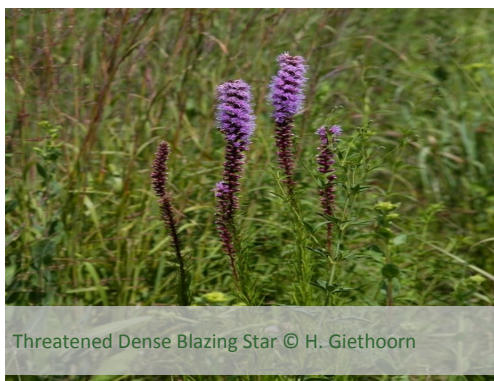
Threatened Least Bittern © P.A. Woodliffe

Vision Statement

The Lake St. Clair Coastal Conservation Action Plan (CAP) aims to enhance biodiversity, resilience, adaptation to climate change, ecosystem services, productive soils and agriculture, and tourism and recreation opportunities. This will result in more prosperous communities, healthier citizens and improved quality of life in Chatham-Kent. The vision will be achieved through maintaining, enhancing and protecting the natural systems of the CAP area through engaged citizens working together toward a common, mutually-beneficial cause: a healthier environment for all.

What makes the Lake St. Clair Coastal 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.
- Prairie habitats of high conservation value are present which support Species at Risk such as Riddell's Goldenrod and Eastern Prairie Fringed-Orchid.
- Provides habitat for at least 14 terrestrial and aquatic Species at Risk.
- Several globally and provincially rare ecological communities occur here.
- A number of Provincially Significant Wetlands.
- Lake St. Clair shoreline and its associated river, wetland and forest habitats support many migratory birds and insects.
- Portions of the Sydenham River and Thames River are within the CAP area and support aquatic Species at Risk such as Pugnose Shiner and Spotted Sucker.



Threatened Dense Blazing Star © H. Giethoorn



Threatened Spiny Softshell Turtle © R. McArthur

Conservation Targets

- Upland Forests
- Moist Forests and Swamps
- Prairies and Savannahs
- Thickets, Hedgerows, Fencerows, Shelterbelts, Abandoned Fields
- Rivers, Streams, Drains and Riparian Vegetation
- Inland Marshes, Ponds, Impoundments and Constructed Wetlands
- Coastal Wetlands
- Species at Risk Reptiles
- Sustainable Agricultural Practices



Threatened Blanding's Turtle © P.A. Woodliffe



Special Concern Grass Pickerel © S. Staton



Endangered King Rail © P.A. Woodliffe



St. Clair National Wildlife Area © J. Jalava



Mating Black Swallowtails © S. Nethercott



Phragmites control at the Cadotte Rex Club © L. Buchanan

Conservation Objectives

1. Communicate the reasons for the Conservation Action Plan, its goals and objectives, and get input from stakeholders and landowners on how to best implement it.
2. Support natural heritage systems planning in Chatham-Kent.
3. Increase prairie habitat and establish demonstration sites of prairie habitat.

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

4. Promote ecologically appropriate management of drains.
5. Retain existing forest cover, increase extent of healthy forest and plant strategic forest buffers.
6. Include sediment basins and two-stage ditches in new engineers' reports and in drain maintenance projects.
7. Promote use of reptile-friendly vegetation mats in drain maintenance and road and bridge upgrades.
8. Apply turtle-friendlier drain maintenance practices.

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

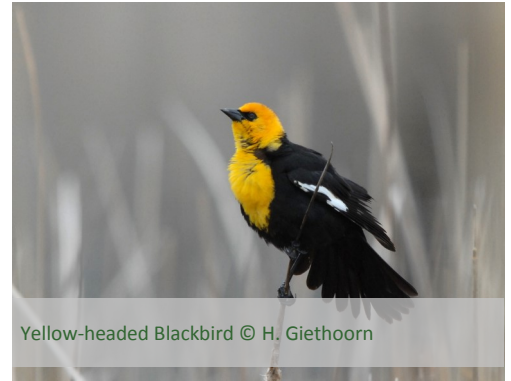
9. Establish buffers of native vegetation along open watercourses and include in all new engineers' reports.
10. Initiate Phragmites control at coastal wetland sites, natural watercourses and drains.
11. Establish new native-, multi-species, shrub dominated hedgerows.
12. Engage landowners in strategic forest buffer enhancement.



Provincial species of Special Concern—Bald Eagle
© H. Giethoorn



Migrating Tundra Swans © H. Giethoorn



Yellow-headed Blackbird © H. Giethoorn

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.



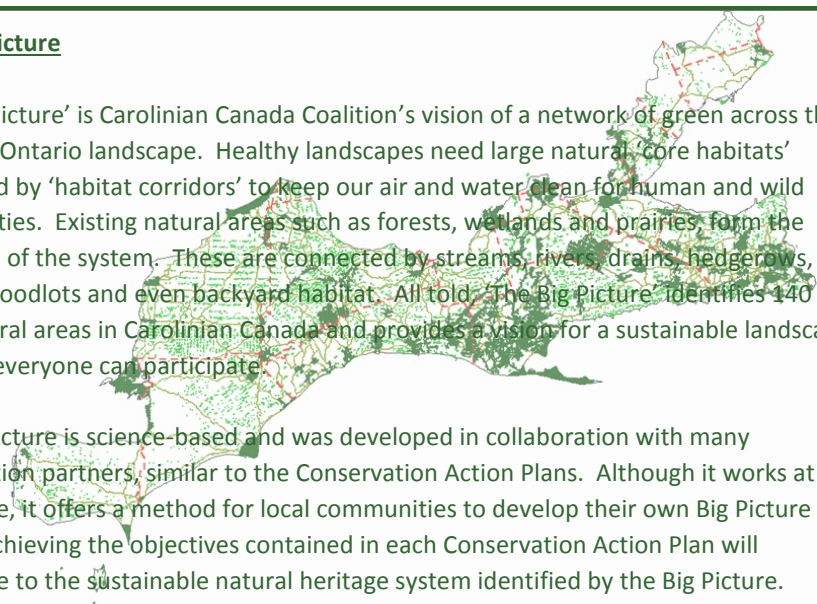
Endangered Eastern Foxsnake © C. McCreary



Tallgrass prairie habitat © J. Bowles

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 Lake St. Clair Coastal Conservation Action Plan:

- Allen Woodliffe
- Canada South Land Trust
- Canadian Wildlife Service
- Carolinian Canada Coalition
- Christian Farmers Federation - Chatham-Kent
- Chatham-Kent Wind Action Group
- Ducks Unlimited
- Essex Region Conservation Authority
- Kent Federation of Agriculture
- Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority
- Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
- Mitchell’s Bay Association
- Municipality of Chatham-Kent
- National Farmers Union
- Rural Lambton Stewardship Network
- St. Clair Region Conservation Authority
- Sydenham Field Naturalists
- Transition Town Chatham-Kent
- Walpole Island Heritage Centre