



Greening Strategy Achievements

Green. It's in our nature.

York Region's Greening Strategy helps ensure that our natural environment is healthy for current and future generations. The Strategy provides a context for Regional decision making that affects the natural environment. It focuses on co-ordinating Regional initiatives and agency and private sector partnership efforts to improve our environment.

This brochure summarizes the highlights of 2004 activities and achievements for a number of projects and initiatives. These achievements demonstrate the Region's commitment to strategic partnerships, rehabilitation, education and promotion, and a continued emphasis on keeping our environmental information current and available.



1 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The importance of maintaining a current Geographic Information System (GIS) or digital environmental databases is important in conserving natural features. Ensuring that information is available to stakeholders and the public serves to promote and educate about natural heritage systems and what the Region is doing to protect and enhance it.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- **York Region Significant Woodlands Study (ongoing)** - defines and identifies important woodlands across York Region.
- **Enhanced Natural Feature Inventory** of wetlands and streams.
- **Updating the Region's website** to improve communication and provide more user friendly access to the Region's environmental initiatives.

Look for the Greening Strategy logo to identify programs which demonstrate the Region's commitment to coordination, communication and delivery of our environmental initiatives



Stewardship and Ontario Streams, are the Environmental Earth Angels. Four to eight Regional road crossings are targeted for rehabilitation annually.

- **York Natural Planting Partnership for Private Property** is a very successful York Region program, delivered by the Conservation Authorities. This program provides financial assistance to eligible landowners for the naturalization of their properties (subsidized tree planting). A new program brochure was prepared and distributed to increase public awareness and the benefits for landowners. Approximately 45,000 trees and shrubs were planted in 2004.
- **Hall Tract Reforestation** - A forest management plan has been completed for the recently acquired 24 ha (60 acre) parcel of new Regional Forest. The plan includes management of 8 ha (20 acres) of existing forest and reforestation of 16 ha (40 acres) (mechanical and community planting to begin in the spring of 2005).
- **Reforestation Guidebook** - In 2004 York Region had an Guidebook prepared to help direct re-forestation efforts on newly secured lands and to document the cost/benefit by assessing real costs associated with securing land to be rehabilitated.



2 NATURALIZATION AND REHABILITATION

The Region is committed to creating and rehabilitating natural areas through the Greening Strategy. In partnership with a variety of organizations, the Region continues to positively impact the quality of our environment.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- **Adopt a Stream Crossing Program** is retrofitting and rehabilitating Regional road crossings of streams with community plantings. The purpose is to improve habitat for fish and wildlife, and improve water quality and aesthetics. Joining the existing partnership between York Region, York Environmental





6 LEGISLATION

Legislation is a very useful tool to protect and enhance our natural environment. Over 2004, a number of pieces of legislation were reviewed or proposed in the interest of environmental protection.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- York Region is seeking enhanced environmental protection through our review of the **Provincial Planning Act** (Bill 26), the Provincial Planning Policy Statement, the **Greenbelt legislation** and draft Plan and the **Provincial Growth Management initiative** for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Places to Grow).
- Updating the Tree By-law into a comprehensive **Forest Conservation By-law** will provide more tools than the existing Tree By-law to protect forest cover and educate land owners.
- York Region participation on a Provincial Task Force proposing changes to improve the effectiveness of the **Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program** (MFTIP).
- **Oak Ridges Moraine Conformity Amendment** (ROPA 41) approved in Oct. 2004 to further protect this sensitive area by bringing the Region's Official Plan into conformity with the Provincial Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.
- **Nodes and Corridors amendment** (ROPA 43) was approved in January 2005 to encourage development of higher density mixed use districts served by higher order transit facilities in centres and corridors to minimize the environmental footprint of new development.



7 URBAN FOREST

The urban forest plays a significant role in enhancing our natural environment. Trees provide many environmental benefits such as oxygen productions, aesthetics, and temperature moderation - in addition to enhancing the quality of life in our Region.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- **Annual Street Tree Planting and Streetscaping Program** - York Region has increased seedling, riparian and calliper stock tree planting in many areas. Over 2,000 trees are planted each year on Regional Road rights of way (excluding those planted as a condition of new development).
- Improved street tree survival rates through the development and implementation of **Street Tree Planting Guidelines**.
- Advanced **Management Plans and Agreements** for two co-owned public properties (Jefferson Forest, Baker's Sugar Bush). The plans will ensure that these features are adequately managed within their urban settings to protect their significant natural features and functions allowing for public use and enjoyment.

8 GREEN PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships continue to be critical to the delivery of every aspect of the **Greening Strategy**. Our achievements involve all levels of government including area municipalities, stakeholders, NGOs and community groups. Through the **Greening Strategy**, York Region has continued to demonstrate leadership with strategic projects, programs and partnerships.

KEY GREEN PARTNERS INCLUDE:

- York Environmental Stewardship, the Conservation Authorities, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the University of Toronto, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust, the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation, local naturalist groups and more.
- New Partners in 2004 included Natural Resources Canada and the Environmental Earth Angels (a local non-profit group).
- GTA Clean Air Committee helping improve air quality.

9 MONITORING RESULTS

The progress of the **Greening Strategy** including Securement activities has been reported on regularly through annual staff reports to Committee and Council.

ACHIEVEMENTS

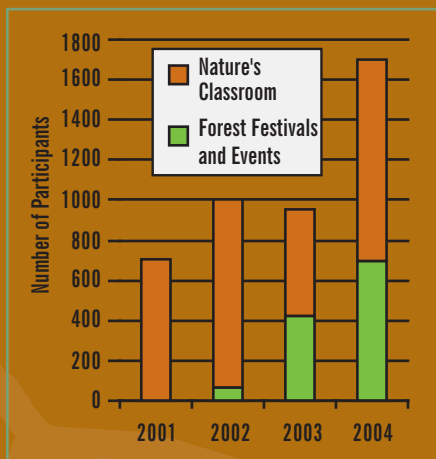
- The public also continues to be informed of **Greening Strategy** advancement through annual reports to Council and products like this brochure as well as through other corporate reportings systems like the Vision 2026: Toward the Vision annual report and the State of the Environment Report.

4 EDUCATION AND PROMOTION

Awareness of the value and benefits of our natural resources is an essential factor towards securing a healthy natural heritage system for future generations. The Region has a number of promotion and education initiatives underway to raise awareness of the natural environment.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- **Forest Festivals and Events** - York Region hosts monthly Forest events in the York Regional Forest. The events increase community knowledge of the relationships that exist in the forest ecosystem, and raises awareness of the natural and social heritage of the Regional Forest. In 2004, over 700 people participated in three Forest Festivals and nine Forest Events.
- **Nature's Classroom** - presents a unique opportunity for a variety of groups to experience and learn about the Forest in a natural setting. In 2004, over 1,000 people participated in the Nature's Classroom program.



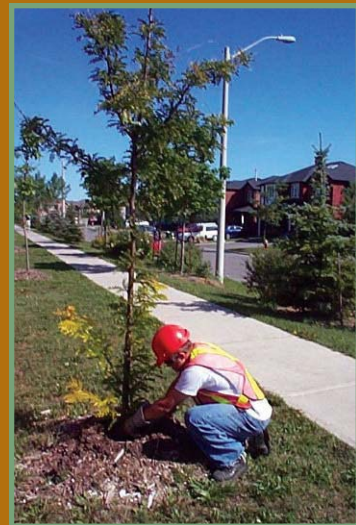
- York Region continues to play an active role in other educational and promotional activities through the Children's Water Festival, the Windfall Ecology Centre EcoFestival, Envirothon and more.
- Update the popular "Take a Hike" trail guide web site.

5 REGIONAL OPERATIONS

Through the Greening Strategy, the Region seeks to continually expand and improve our protection and enhancement of the natural environment while providing the necessary infrastructure and services to our residents.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- **Street Tree Assessment and Inventory** - Street trees were inventoried as part of the Region's Asset Management Strategy. A GIS data base was developed to increase our knowledge and ability to deal with potential stressors on Regional Street trees.
- **Street Tree Planting Guidelines** have been developed to help protect trees and improve tree survival.
- Establishment of the **Corporate Clean Air Task Force** to oversee the Region's actions towards improved air quality and reduce and monitor Regional Operations on air quality. The recommendations of this task force will help the Region implement actions that will help to meet Kyoto Accord objectives.
- **Salt Management Strategy** for salt use on Regional roads developed to minimize impacts on the environment while continuing to provide safe conditions on our winter roads.



To obtain a schedule of this year's forest festival events visit www.york.ca and click on the greening logo



3 LAND SECUREMENT

York Region's commitment to land securement continues to grow. Historically land securement was considered the direct purchase of land. Today, the public's commitment to, and support of, the environment is being demonstrated through charitable actions including donating conservation easements and land. The Region's Greening and Securement Strategies proactively pursue these opportunities to protect a healthy and natural heritage system for current and future generations.



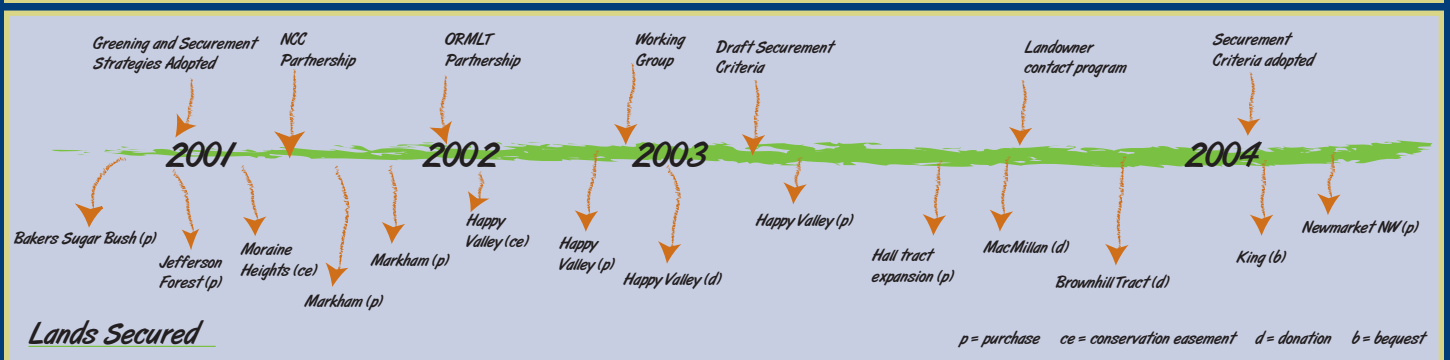
- **MacMillan Nature Reserve** - a 49 ha (120 acre) property, on the Oak Ridges Moraine, donated to the Nature Conservancy of Canada by Dr. and Mrs. Robert MacMillan. It will be protected jointly by the NCC and York Region through an innovative land securement/protection partnership.
- York Region has committed to contributing 25% of funds required for a major **King Township public acquisition** with the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust and TRCA. If this property is successfully secured in public ownership it presents a significant opportunity to establish a new Regional Forest Tract in the western portion of the Region.
- **Land owner stewardship and securement contact program** has brought a number of potential conservation easements to the attention of York Region and our securement partners. Work on these projects is ongoing.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- Since the adoption of the York Region Land Securement Strategy 235 ha (**580 acre**) have been protected through conservation easements, donations, purchases, etc.
- **Partnerships** continue with the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust (ORMLT), and other stakeholders. Opportunities are reviewed through the Securement Working Group (region-wide).
- York Region has adopted **Regional Securement Criteria** that are strategic and unique.
- **Expansion of York Regional Forest** (Hall Tract) - 24 ha (60 acre) purchase with the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation.
- Contribution to the **Town of Newmarket** 4.6 ha (11.3 acre) woodlot purchase.



The development of the program and key land acquisitions are depicted in the following timeline.



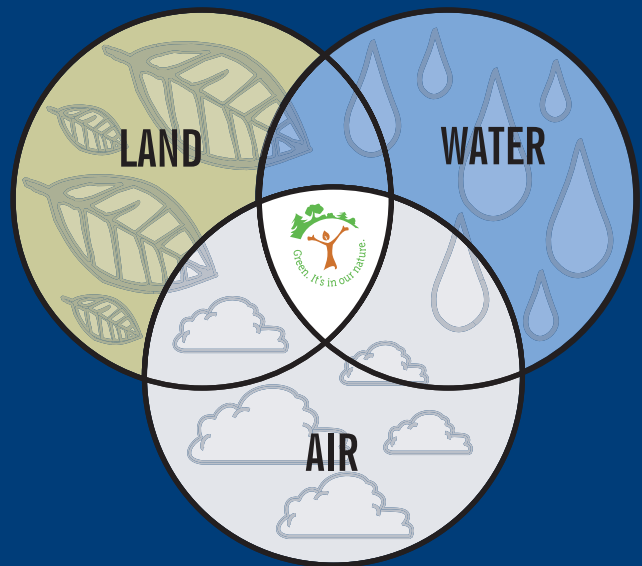
Green. It's in our nature.

The need for a Greening of York Region Strategy was first established in the mid to late 1990s during; the Regional Official Plan Report Card exercise, the State of the Environment Report, through partnership initiatives with the Conservation Authorities and through the review of the Regional Trees By-law. Through Vision 2026: Creating Strong Caring Safe Communities, the Region committed to addressing development and the provision of services in such a manner that "residents will continue to value and embrace the Region's unique natural heritage (land, air and water) and cultural heritage". Throughout the consultation process associated with the development of the Greening Strategy, the public made it clear that they were looking for the Region to put environmental policies into action. In 2001, the Region adopted the Greening and Securements Strategies and associated \$1.4 M annual budget.

The Greening Strategy's action areas:

1. Information Management
2. Naturalization and Rehabilitation
3. Securement of Priority Greenlands
4. Education and Promotion
5. Regional Operations
6. Legislation
7. Urban Forest
8. Green Partnerships
9. Monitoring Results

The Greening Strategy functions as the Region's strategic and co-ordinated one window platform to coordinate and promote our environmental initiatives. The Strategy's delivery has been described in nine broad themes or action areas. A series of projects or programs have been identified under each theme. The majority of these projects have been undertaken in partnership with other Regional departments, agencies and organizations. This co-ordinated approach achieves common objectives, leverages resources and avoids duplication. Over 34 tasks were initially identified; progress has been made on all of them and new initiatives and partnerships have broadened the Strategy to currently include over 50 initiatives.



The Region is committed to delivering York Region's Environmental Initiatives through a greening window. The Regional Municipality of York is working on a number of different fronts to affect positive changes in the areas in which it does business. It is about affecting positive changes, achieving more and coordinating efforts in order to maximize results. York Region has a number of programs, initiatives and partnerships that work to protect and restore a healthy natural environment for current and future generations. Protecting clean land, air and water requires a strategic and coordinated approach because, ecologically, actions that improve one area (land, air or water) have benefits for others.



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York Region has a number of other significant programs which benefit the Region's land, air and water. Some of these other initiatives include:

- York Region Transit and Viva Rapid Transit
- York Region's Energy and Environmental Management System
- Water Conservation Programs (Water for Tomorrow Program)
- Watershed Planning
- Strategic Plan for Groundwater
- Growth Management Strategy
- Smart Commute Initiative
- Corporate Clean Air Initiatives (anti-idling, etc.)
- Waste Diversion Programs



GREENING STRATEGY ... CONTINUES TO GROW

Turning innovative ideas into reality takes time. The next steps for the Greening Strategy involve its further development through corporate co-operation, communication, partnerships and continued implementation of innovative ideas.

York Region is recognized as a leader in proactively protecting and restoring our natural environment. However new measures are needed to deal with new challenges. During the past four years significant achievements have been realized through the Greening Strategy.

The Greening Strategy has developed strong roots through partnerships, education, stewardship, environmental protection and rehabilitation and policy development. It is a program that continues to grow.

Partnerships and public support are essential to the success of the Greening Strategy. Your feedback is important to us. Please take a few minutes.

Visit the Region's web site to learn more about our environmental initiatives

www.york.ca

click on the greening logo



email your comments or questions to

greening@york.ca

Photography courtesy of:

M. Prawecki L. Atkins-Paul
D. Pomeroy L. Parrott
D. Wells





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Town of Newmarket



Mayor
Tim Jones
Town of Aurora



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James Young
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Mayor
Robert Grossi
Town of Georgina



Regional Councillor
Danny Wheeler
Town of Georgina



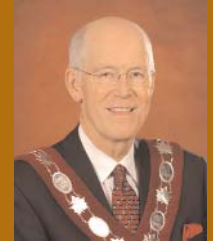
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Township of King



Regional Councillor
A.J. (Tony) Van Bynen
Town of Newmarket



Regional Chair and CEO
Bill Fisch



Mayor
Donald Cousens
Town of Markham

MESSAGE FROM YORK REGIONAL COUNCIL

The Regional Municipality of York continues to commit itself to protecting the rich legacy of its natural environment now and for future generations.

In 2001, York Region adopted the York Region Greening Strategy to provide a framework for all the Region's environmental initiatives. The strategy is a critical element in the realization of a number of the Region's long-term goals, contained in the Regional Official Plan and Vision 2026, the Region's 25-year blueprint for service delivery to residents and businesses.

The Greening Strategy involves:

- Several amendments to the Regional Official Plan to further protect the Oak Ridges Moraine and natural environment
- A natural partnership tree planting program with Conservation Authorities
- Outdoor Education to the public and other stakeholders
- Naturalization of the urban landscape through streetscaping initiatives
- The development of a Greening logo and slogan, "Green. It's in our Nature", for public recognition, marketing and communication

The York Region Greening Strategy is about making decisions today that sustain our natural environment for tomorrow. This strategy continues to build a natural heritage legacy for York Region.

Successes of the Greening Strategy to date, include:

- Partnerships to secure 580 acres of key greenlands through land donations, conservation easements and acquisitions
- Increasing total Greening Strategy initiatives from 34 to 50, to ensure clean air, and the protection of land and water resources.

York Region is committed to keeping its residents well-informed of its greening efforts, and updating its progress on Greening Strategy implementation. Through the Greening Strategy and the principles of Vision 2026, the Region will continue in its commitment towards the preservation and expansion of its natural legacy.



Mayor
William F. Bell
Town of Richmond Hill



Regional Councillor
David Barrow
Town of Richmond Hill



Regional Councillor
Brenda Hogg
Town of Richmond Hill



Regional Councillor
Frank Scarpitti
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