



News Release

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Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation Preparing to Close after 50 million dollars of Conservation

Created in 2002 to support partnerships and voluntary efforts to protect the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Foundation is preparing to close its doors in September 2010. During the eight year period, the Foundation will have generated over 50 million dollars of conservation effort by investing 15 million dollars of capital in partnerships matched by private organizations, municipalities, conservation authorities and individuals.

More than 5,500 acres of high value conservation lands have been secured for long term protection. More than 800 acres of Moraine lands were protected through tree planting, protection of streams, prairie restoration, cooperative projects with farmers and other land stewardship initiatives on the Moraine. Road signs now identify the Moraine.

More than 85,000 landowners have received stewardship advice and more than 5,700 school children have learned about the importance of water and wildlife protection through educational programs supported by the Foundation. An additional 52 kilometers of public hiking trails have been improved or created to enhance appreciation and understanding of the Moraine as a recreational resource. Perhaps most important, strong partnerships are in place to continue the work of protecting water resources and the natural character of the Moraine.

The Foundation was created with an independent Board of Directors and a grant from the Provincial Government of 15 million dollars in 2002 to support voluntary and cooperative efforts to complement the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

The Directors established a policy of not competing with its partners for funds from foundations, organizations and individuals. Instead, the Foundation sought a two for one match for any dollar invested in a project by the Foundation. This matched funding approach helped partners secure the remaining funding to undertake important conservation projects throughout the Moraine. While there is much more to be done, the capital of the Foundation will be expended by the closure date and since no further investment has been received, the Foundation's partners must look to other sources and programs to complete the work.

The Foundation would like to thank all those partners who have worked tirelessly to protect and restore the moraine. By working together, they have demonstrated their shared commitment to the moraine and will make its best possible future reality.

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For more information, contact:

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The Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation was created in 2002 to help preserve, protect and restore the environmental integrity of the Oak Ridges Moraine. The Foundation is a granting agency and works primarily by funding the work of others. It provides funds for five program areas; securement, stewardship, research, education and the Oak Ridges Trail. It also offers leadership and coordination for moraine-wide activities.

*Stretching 160 kilometers from the Trent River to the Niagara Escarpment, the **Oak Ridges Moraine** has long been recognized for its importance as wildlife habitat and a source of groundwater. It is the starting point for 65 rivers flowing into Lake Ontario, Lake Simcoe and the Kawartha Lakes, and is the source of drinking water for over 250,000. <http://www.moraineforallife.org>*