



Media Release

Measuring Success on the Oak Ridges Moraine Report released by Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation

ORMF requests Environmental Commissioner to review Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan

(Toronto, September 15, 2011) Today, in keeping with its commitment to voicing Moraine issues, the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation (ORMF) released its timely and important *Measuring Success on the Oak Ridges Moraine* reports.

Measuring Success was released today at a Sustainability Network Breakfast featuring David Miller, former Mayor of Toronto. Mr. Miller's attendance is fitting given the important role the City of Toronto played advocating for the province to protect the Moraine – the City's headwaters – 10 years ago when the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP) was passed.

Started in 2010, ORMF's *Measuring Success* project assesses how effective the provincial government, the ORMF and all other Moraine partners have been in reaching the ORMCP's original expectations and targets.

"*Measuring Success* reveals the Province has not met all of its obligations and much work remains to ensure that the objectives of the ORMCP are met," said Kim Gavine, Executive Director of the ORMF. "The ORMF's stakeholder relationships, proven ability to effectively manage provincial funds and deep understanding of Moraine environmental issues make the ORMF best positioned to assist the Province in addressing many of the key concerns and meeting the ORMCP's goals."

Measuring Success tells a story of a Moraine that is holding its own in terms of its environmental health. However, "red flags" have been identified (see background).

The identification of significant concerns through the *Measuring Success* project pushed the ORMF to submit an official request to the Environmental Commissioner's Office to have the ORMCP reviewed under section 61 of the *Environmental Bill of Rights*.

The request to the Commissioner contends that several instruments tied to protection of the Oak Ridges Moraine warrant review. The ORMF requests revisions to existing policies, amendments to existing legislation, regulations and technical guidelines to ensure more effective ORMCP implementation. The *Measuring Success on the Oak Ridges Moraine* reports are available on the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation's website: www.ormf.com.

Backgrounder

Red Flags

Red Flag #1 Monitoring and Policy Development

There are policy gaps that are allowing continued degradation to the Moraine. There is also a lack of sufficient monitoring stations, standardized methodologies and committed funding for monitoring.

Red Flag #2 Streams

Stream health on the Oak Ridges Moraine is poor. Only one-third of all stream corridors meet national ecological targets of 75% natural vegetation coverage and many still have high levels of E. Coli and phosphorous loadings.

Red Flag #3 Forest Interior

Forest interior habitat is insufficient on the Oak Ridges Moraine to support many significant breeding bird species.

Red Flag #4 Prairie and Savannah Habitat

Rare prairie grassland and Savannah habitats, present in small quantities on the Moraine, are under constant threat as is habitat for species-at-risk.

Red Flag #5 Land Securement

Only 8.5%, or 16,450 hectares, of the Moraine is secured to protect natural habitats and important features. Yet public polling and stakeholder surveys found strong support for more extensive and active securement.

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Issues include:

- Lack of control of fill importation, site alteration and tree cutting
- Lack of strong direction in the control and management of transportation, utilities and other infrastructure
- Uncoordinated and ineffective management of water resources
- The need to accommodate sustainable lifestyles and livelihoods on the Moraine
- Lack of effective monitoring
- Lack of an effective audit process to assess compliance
- The need to institute a sunset deadline for the grandfather provisions of the ORMCP
- The need for ongoing stewardship, land securement, education and research programs

*The **Oak Ridges Moraine** is an 186,000 hectare ridge, stretching 160 km across South Central Ontario (including the GTA). This extremely important concentration of forested land has over 60 headwater areas and is one of the most essential groundwater recharge zones in the Province.*

*The **Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation (ORMF)** is a non-profit organization mandated to preserve, protect and restore the ecological and hydrological health of the Oak Ridges Moraine (Moraine). Since 2002, the ORMF has allocated more than \$14.1 million and leveraged more than \$35.8 million to 177 projects in support of stewardship, education, research, trail and land securement projects. With further investment by the Province, the ORMF can build on its success by addressing the challenges with renewed vigour, in order that the Moraine's value to Ontarians remains secure. www.ormf.com*