



Media Release

Ontario's Environmental Commissioner applauds work of Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation and questions lack of government support

See below for page 122 of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario's 2011/2012 Annual Report, *Engaging Solutions*, released on November 29, 2011 at the Ontario Legislature:

7.2.1 The Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation

In 2001, the provincial government established the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation to fund activities related to the Oak Ridges Moraine (the "Moraine"), such as land securement, research, monitoring, public education and the Oak Ridges Trail. The government provided the foundation with an initial grant of \$15 million for activities to support the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. Since its inception, the foundation has leveraged an additional \$36 million in funding and supported over 170 projects to protect, preserve and enhance the Moraine.



Despite these impressive achievements, the provincial government has not provided any additional money to the foundation. As a result, the foundation suspended its granting role in 2009 due to a lack of provincial funding. However, the foundation has remained active in its co-ordinating and collaborative roles. For example, in 2011, the foundation released a series of reports that assessed the effectiveness of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. Through the assessment, the foundation discovered that Moraine stakeholders feel that its initiatives in land securement, land stewardship and public education are essential to ensuring the success of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

In 2011, the government provided \$20 million to the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, in addition to its initial \$25 million grant in 2005. While some of the Moraine is within the Greenbelt, the two foundations play two very distinct roles. Generally speaking, the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation focuses on agriculture and tourism projects across the Greenbelt, whereas the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation supports water quality and conservation land projects specific to the Moraine.

Given its accomplishments over the past decade, the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation should be actively involved in the scheduled review of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan in 2015. The ECO urges the provincial government to continue investing in projects that protect the Moraine and to support the foundation in its original roles.

For ministry comments, please see Appendix C.

To view the entire Environmental Commissioner's 2010/2011 Annual Report, *Engaging Solutions*, visit www.eco.on.ca.

The Measuring *Success on the Oak Ridges Moraine* reports are available on the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation's website: www.ormf.com.

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The Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation (ORMF) is a non-profit organization mandated to preserve and enhance the Oak Ridges Moraine (Moraine). Originally established as a granting agency in 2002 following the implementation of the Provincial Government's Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP), the ORMF has successfully provided funds to many different partners in support of stewardship, education, research, the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail and land securement projects.

While the ORMF's granting role is currently suspended, it still has a pivotal role to play if the Moraine is to remain protected in the future. While plenty of positive work has been done on the Moraine over the last eight years, there are still outstanding goals that need to be met.