

NCC hopes to use new funds to acquire lands in King Township

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) welcomed the recent announcement in the federal 2018 budget that significant new funds will be earmarked to protect Canada's nature, parks, wild spaces and species at risk. NCC is hoping to use some of those funds to help conserve additional lands in King Township.

Kristyn Ferguson, NCC's central Ontario program director, is looking for opportunities to invest existing and future conservation funds in King Township, through acquisitions of high priority land in and around Happy Valley Forest and Pottageville Swamp. "NCC and its partners have helped protect more than 775 acres in this area, creating conservation lands that residents and visitors alike will benefit from for generations to come. Some of these have been generous land donations via the Ecological Gifts Program," she said.

An increasing number of conservation-minded Canadians are taking advantage of the Government of Canada's Ecological Gifts Program each year. Since its inception in 1995, NCC has worked with private land owners on many gifts of land across Canada. Many of these land donations involved a personal history, with families dedicating these sites in memory of parents and siblings. For lands certified through the Ecological Gifts Program, NCC will issue a charitable tax receipt for the appraised value of the property. This tax benefit can be applied in the year in which the gift is made and carried forward for up to 10 years following the donation. It also eliminates capital gains taxes on the land, which can represent tremendous tax savings for landowners.

"We are seeking more willing landowners who share our interest in long-term protection of these significant habitats," said Ferguson. "We are hoping to expand and connect conservation lands, through donations or purchases, to help protect species at risk and other wildlife.

"We are also looking forward to teaming up with partners to make more conservation happen on the ground," she added. "The Nature Conservancy of Canada has worked with the Regional Municipality of York, Toronto and Region Conservation, Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust and other groups in land conservation in the Township, delivering results under the Natural Areas Conservation Program. We are now ready to do more to leverage this federal investment to accelerate priority conservation work."

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is the nation's leading not-for-profit, private land conservation organization, working to protect our most important natural areas and the species they sustain. Since 1962, NCC and its partners have helped to protect more than 1.1 million hectares (2.8 million acres), coast to coast, with more than 74,400 hectares (184,000 acres) in Ontario.

The Government of Canada's Natural Areas Conservation Program (NACP) is a unique public-private partnership to accelerate the pace of land conservation across southern Canada. The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) manages the program. Federal funds are matched by contributions raised by NCC and its partners. Habitat conserved under the NACP enhances natural corridors and other protected areas.

Since 2001, York Region has supported NCC's work in the Happy Valley Forest, and elsewhere in York Region, through the Natural Greenlands Conservancy Joint Venture partnership agreement. To date, York Region has contributed more than \$1.6 million to NCC's operations, making it one of NCC's longest-standing and most generous municipal partners.