

Newly released videos take you on a journey to discover the Oak Ridges Moraine

STORM (Save the Oak Ridges Moraine) Coalition released two videos in a 12-part series on the Oak Ridges Moraine. Each video segment is a visual feast and features a conversation with experts including scientists, academics, planners and municipal leaders at scenic locations across the moraine. The Oak Ridges Moraine is an iconic and critically important natural heritage landscape of southern Ontario, home to a unique groundwater feature in the Greenbelt. "We are pleased to share these stunning informative videos that communicate the value of the Oak Ridges Moraine, which is part of the Greenbelt. If people understand how the moraine functions, and its role as the "rain barrel" of the Greater Golden Horseshoe, they will be more likely to protect it," notes Ian McLaurin, STORM chair. "Residents were vital to the creation of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan 20 years ago. Today, people need to play an active role in advocating for moraine protection more than ever." The purpose of this video series, funded by Greenbelt Foundation, is to encourage people to get to know the moraine, meet those engaged in protecting and stewarding the moraine, and get engaged themselves. The videos profile the science behind groundwater systems, how it is protected, and threats to the moraine's long-term health. "The Oak Ridges Moraine provides an essential corridor for wildlife movement and ecosystem services like clean drinking water, flood and erosion control, and carbon sequestration," says Rob Messervey, chair of the Oak Ridges Moraine Committee for Greenbelt Foundation. "A growing population, climate change, and an unprecedented loss of biodiversity make the moraine more important than ever." The Government of Ontario created the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan in 2001 to protect the moraine's surface and underground water systems and natural heritage systems, but some threats remain. Threats include new infrastructure such as roads and pipelines, the dumping of contaminated soil, and below-water table aggregate extraction. Experts in the video series note how urbanization and climate change put additional stress on water resources and natural systems. While the province created the plan, the responsibility of plan implementation falls to municipalities. Conservation authorities across the moraine monitor forest conditions, surface and groundwater quality, and stream health "all key indicators of a healthy environment. Residents can also help steward and enhance the moraine by working with conservation authorities and other moraine advocates." Urbanization remains a threat to the Oak Ridges Moraine headwater areas," said King's Susan Lloyd Swail of Lloyd Swail Consulting, project creator, scriptwriter, and host. "Through this video series our aim is to highlight the fragility of the moraine's water systems that feed major rivers like the Don, Rouge and Humber, underscore the significance of its natural heritage systems, explain the science behind the conservation plan, and celebrate the many people, First Nations, and organizations that care for the health of the Oak Ridges Moraine." The newly released video series is available on YouTube, Save the Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition's website, and many partner websites. "Thanks to funding from the Greenbelt Foundation, you can now learn about the science and beauty of the moraine from your home or on the go," added Lloyd Swail. The series is sponsored by Save the Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition and funded by Greenbelt Foundation. The 12 videos were filmed and produced by Sara Cornwaihthe Productions.