

ECO-NET

ECO-LOGICAL-NET

Ecological Network or Wildlife Corridors

Concept:

~To connect parks, public and private “protected lands” to each other with a series of contiguous and continuous green belts or wildlife corridors to form an Eco-Net. Which will allowing wildlife to migrate, forage and move more freely.

~Parks, preserves, protected areas or green spaces are usually isolated ecological islands that will be more viable, thus more valuable as habitat for wildlife when interconnected with each other.

~These corridors can utilize existing trail systems (ie: Grand Valley and Bruce trail systems) out of use private farm lanes or narrow reforested portions of fields, thickened tree lines, wood lots, banks of rivers, ponds and lakes, marshes, designated portions of First Nations lands, conservation lands, etc. As well as city, regional, provincial or federal parks and crown lands.

It's Been Done Already:

~ Southern Ontario's Green Belt is a fairly good example of this concept. Founded in 2005.

~The Freedom to Roam Campaign: Which is a truly ambitious project sponsored by fellow Canadian, outdoor enthusiast, eco philanthropist and founder of the company, Patagonia, Yvon Chouinard. F.T.R. is working with the World Wildlife Fund to interconnect many parks and important or endangered habitat areas in the western states and elsewhere. Plus the Washington Wildlife Habitat CONNECTIVITY Working Group in WA.

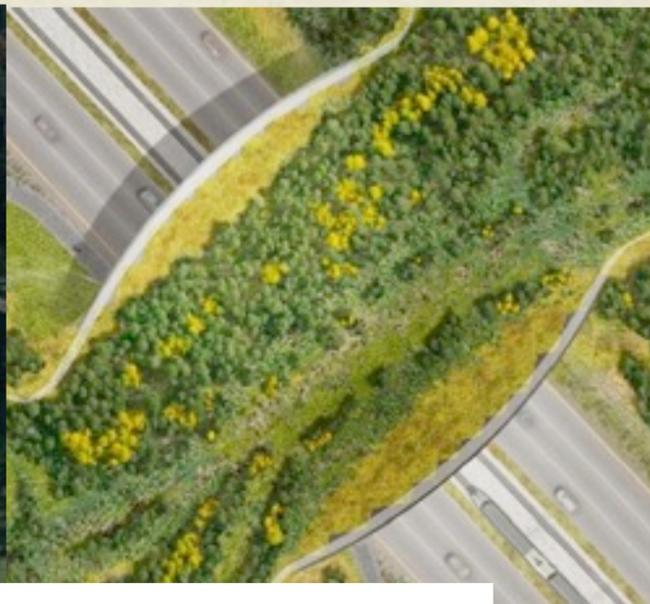
~Both Banff and Jasper Parks Alberta: The physical continuum of the parks from north to south offer more suitable habitat and range for wildlife throughout the year. The wildlife overpasses, use of fences and trails to herd the public away from crucial habitat & micro-migration corridors. The large parks realized long ago that it wasn't nature that needed managing but rather we humans need management in our use of nature. This concept is key to the Eco-Net idea.

~The Grand Valley and The Bruce trail systems are both a type of corridor but would need a wildlife only portion and some reclamation or re-wilding (replanting and reintroduction of indigenous flora and fauna).

~IENE: Infra Eco Network in Europe. In the Carpathian mountains of Romania, where there are still large numbers of Brown Bears, Wolves, Lynx as well as European Bison etc. because of this understanding that preserves areas must be linked together.

~Trans Canada Trail System. Not exactly, but with lots of work it could be a nation wide corridor.

~Plus, the government gives vast swaths of land away for infrastructure... pipelines, rail lines, power lines, roads.. etc. So why not this?



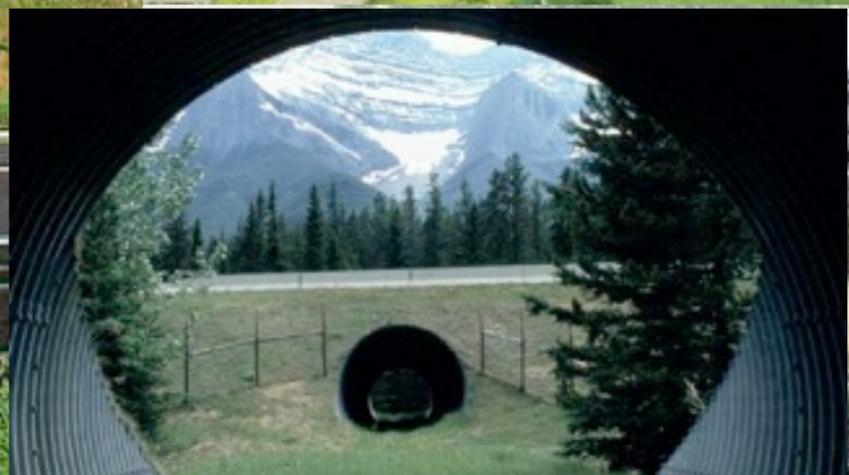
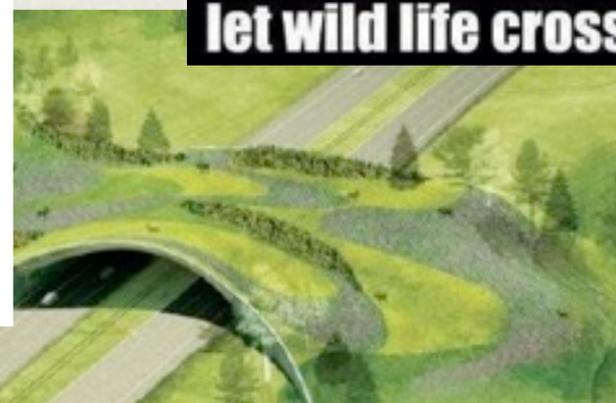
"Ecoduct" Bridge in the Netherlands to



let wild life cross the highway safely!

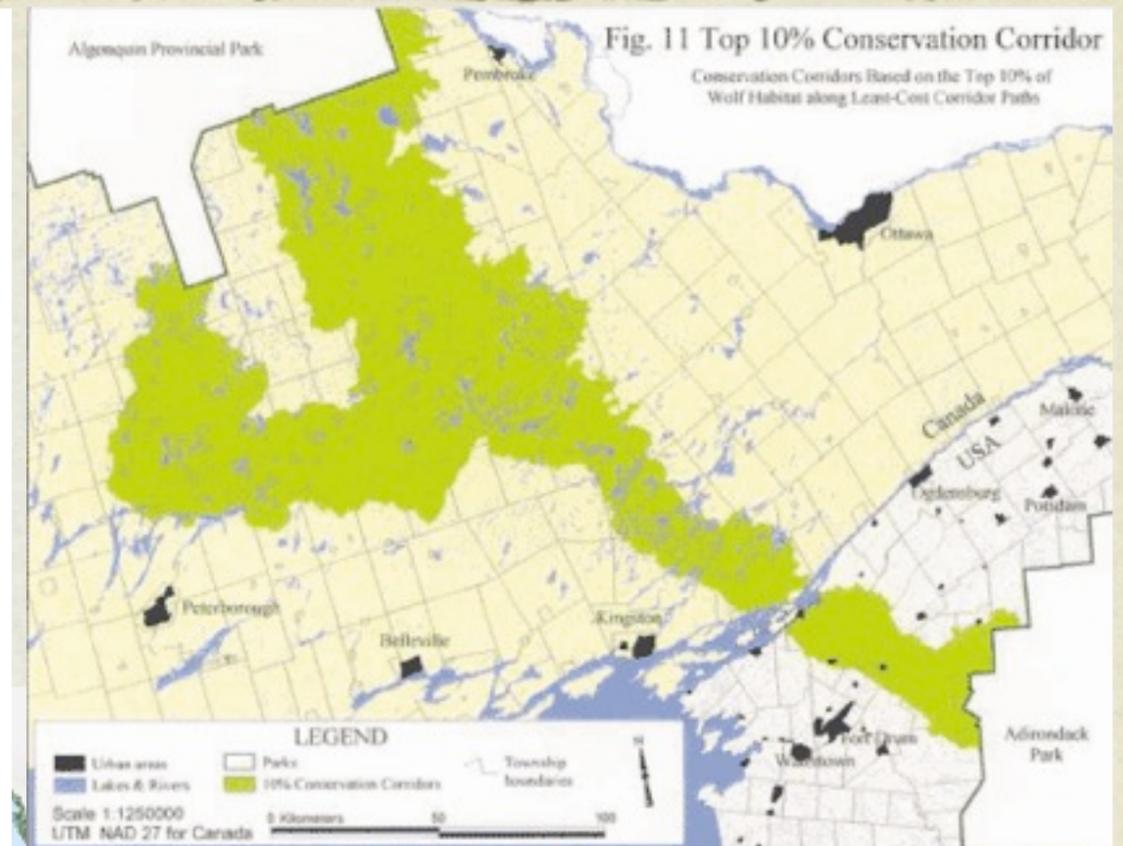
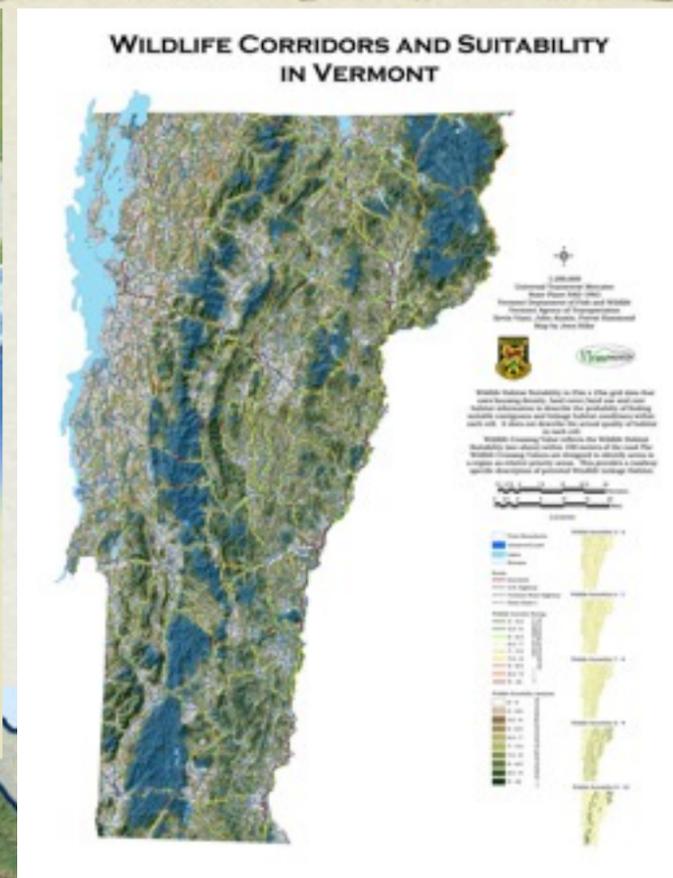


IENE
Infra Eco Network Europe





Corridor through five countries!



linkage-mapper
A GIS tool designed to support regional wildlife habitat connectivity analyses



Why Here? Why us?

~ Because Southern Ontario is one of the most heavily populated and industrialized regions of Canada.

~The Carolinian vegetation zone/forest region makes up only 1% of Canada's overall land mass but it boasts a greater number of both flora and fauna species than any other ecosystem in Canada... but less than 10% of this 1%, our beautiful and very fragmented Carolinian forest, is still intact!

~Most of the work is already done. We have these extensive trail systems in place already. Plus a multitude in number, but small in size, protected areas and parks. ie: Grand Valley trail system which connects to the Bruce Trail system, Trans Canada trail system, numerous parks, conservation areas, the Green Belt area... etc.

~Due to climate change wildlife will need to migrate to less stressed habitat and this Eco-Net will facilitate this movement.

~The Eco-Net will help prevent urban sprawl into sensitive or essential wildlife habitat.

~ Why us? Because we are the lucky ones who understand the interdependent perspective and that its our interconnectedness that will keep us whole. Plus you guys, here at RARE, have done amazing things in this region already! RARE could be just another appendage to this Eco-Net or maybe you could be the unifying force behind this entire endeavor. I'm hoping for the latter:)

Why will people want to get involved?

~Land Owners: Tax breaks and reclamation and rehabilitation of a once “unproductive” or exhausted and unprofitable portion of their land.

~The Regional Government: Lots of pit cash on hand and few good ideas around. Needs to be looking out for the public's interests and always looking for a green thumbs up.

~Provincial Government: Needs balance to resource development and is always looking for a green thumbs up, too.

~Federal Government: This bunch needs to look like they are doing something positive for the environment. Tar sands development, amendments to the fisheries act etc.. etc... has brought a lot of heat and rightly so. So there again, they are looking for a green thumbs up.

~First Nations have constitutionally protected land rights for traditional usage (ie: gathering, hunting, trapping, fishing etc.) These corridors will allow their lands to maintain healthy populations of wildlife, as well as help them to realize in part their 6 miles either side of the Grand river land title which is still unresolved. Remember, what colonialism did to the First Nations in the past, corporatism is now doing to us.

~General Public: You might say we will be bringing back the commons. As you all well know, protected these lands brings the public incalculable yet very tangible benefits. Clean water, air, carbon balancing, natural habitat for wildlife and human outdoor activities. Quality of life and private property values always are good where there is lots of intact and protected public property.

~Corporations: Wanting a green thumbs up (to look like they are being socially responsible). Especially the gravel pit corporations in this area.

Logistics:

- ~First, agree on a mandate, basic philosophy and a clear mandate or constitution with crystal clear rules and boundaries. This will act to bind and free all parties that get involved and protect the affiliated and operating nonprofits. In other words, keeps friends friends.
- ~Map out in extreme detail potential eco-net routes and alternative routes.
- ~Setup administration and a sub committee to connect and align all parties. ie: private land owners, government bodies etc.
- ~Procure funds, lands and or Right Of Way agreements from the region, provincial and federal governments and private land owners (ie: farmers and corporations).
- ~Start building wildlife overpasses over the 401 and 400 to raise awareness.
- ~Engage Grand River Six Nations First Nation community. Combining Aboriginal/First Nations rights with environmental protections is an unbeatable, almost magical, combination. First Nations Rights are constitutionally protected and can really help fortify and benefit, if properly combined, both Native and non-Native interests in regards to environmental protection.
- ~Work out governmental tax breaks and subsidies for interested parties.
- ~Start reclamation projects on eco-net routes:(planting indigenous tree and plant species, signage at road crossing etc.)

On The Horizon:

- ~A continuous Eco-Net wildlife corridor route from the mouth of the Grand River to the tip of Tobermory with North Eastern arms reaching Muskoka, Algonquin Park, the Kawartha's and hooking up with the Trans Canada Trail system and on.
- ~A contiguous and interconnected park and habitat reserve system.
- ~Ontario's first wildlife overpasses over the 401 and the 400 (3 of them). With smaller road crossings well marked.
- ~The last remaining 10% of Ontario's Carolinian forests finally and fully protected. (The Carolinian forest only represents 1% of Canada's forests and there is only 10% of that 1% left intact and it's very fragmented)
- ~The return of a rare habitat to a pristine and wild state with the reintroduction of indigenous flora and fauna.

Funding:

~Region of Waterloo grants

~Foundations

~Public Fundraising

~The Freedom To Roam campaign

~Federal and provincial government grants

~Each of the affiliated habitat reserves will partially fund their connecting portions of the ecology network with oversight by the Eco-Net project but each would obviously remain autonomous.

~The Eco-Net Project will not accept corporate funds. We are raising the bar and will not participate in the corporatization of not for profit entities. But we would graciously accept corporate land grants, use of equipment or donations of materials.

Mapping:

Greenbelt and Bruce Trail

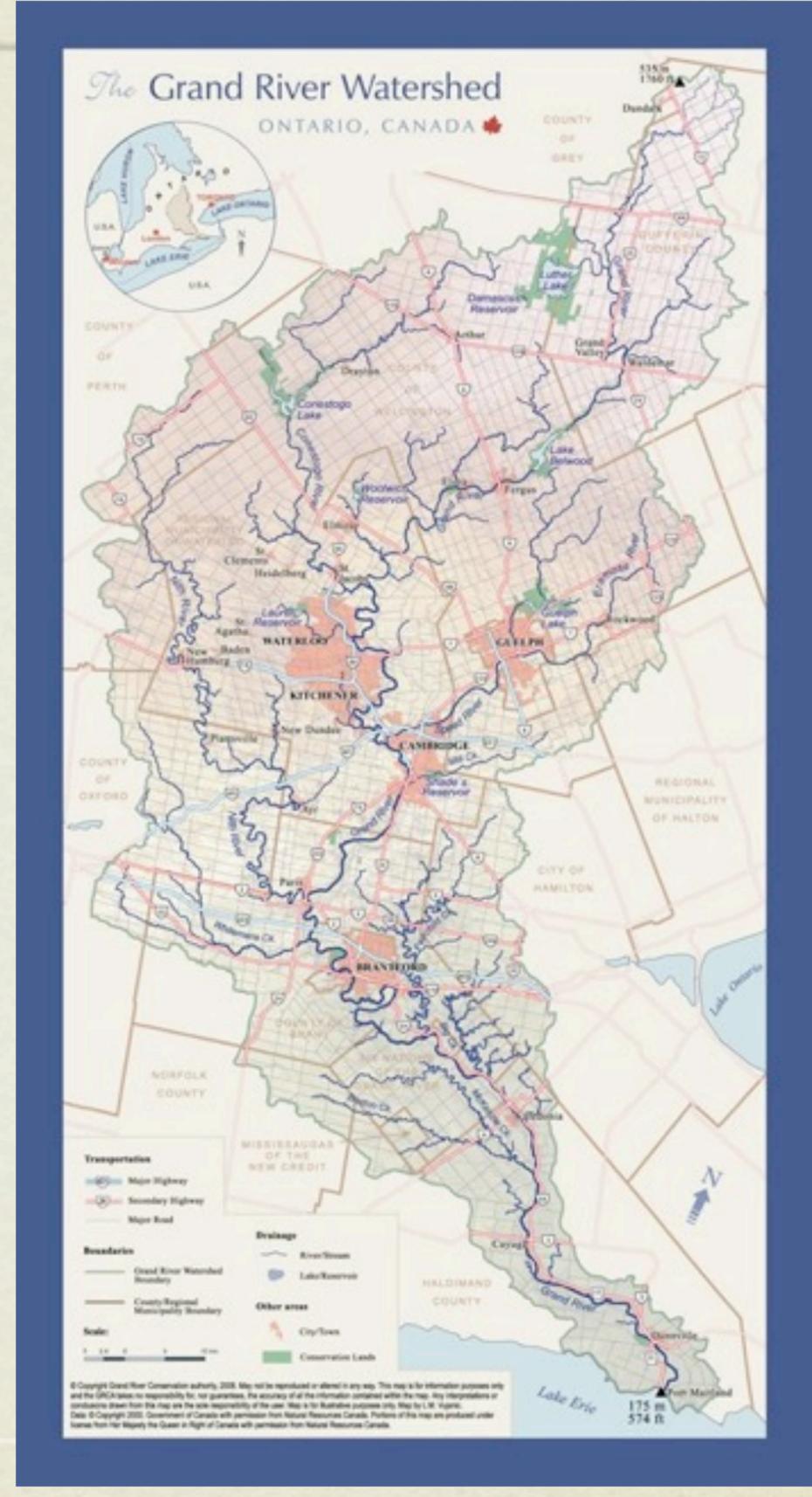
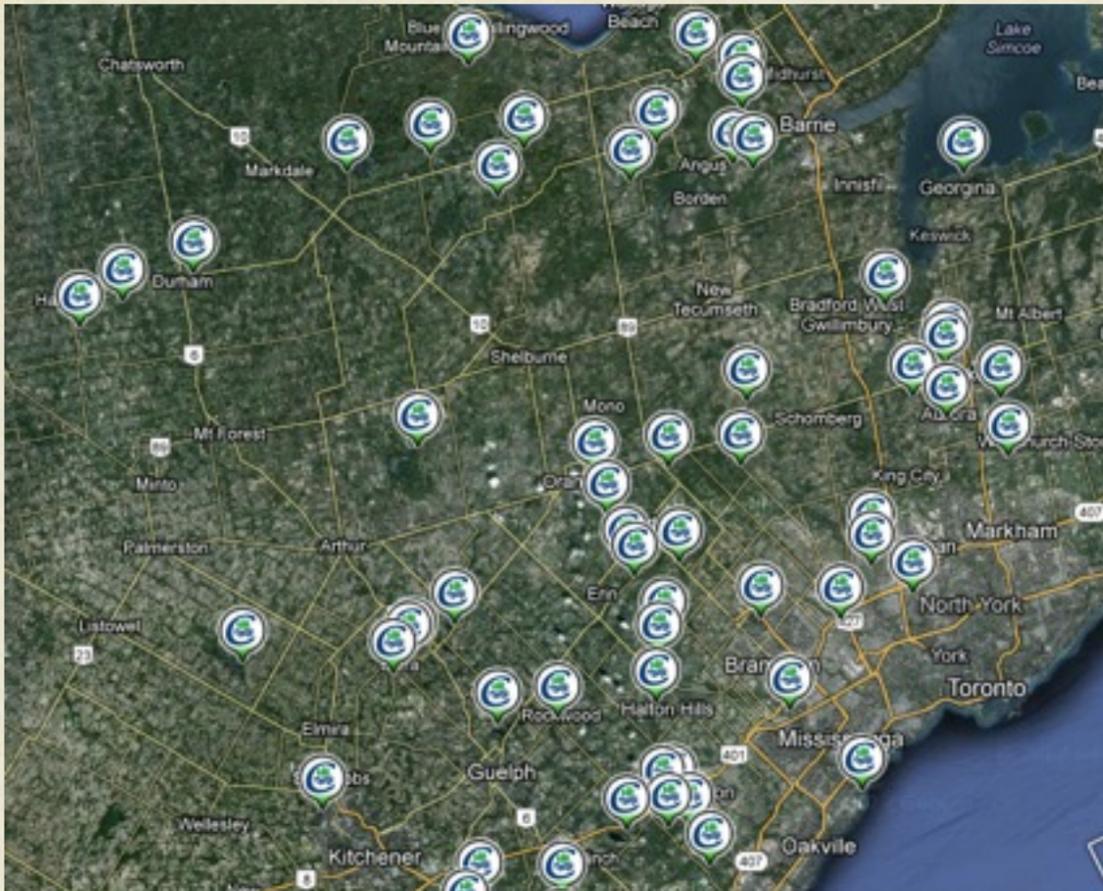


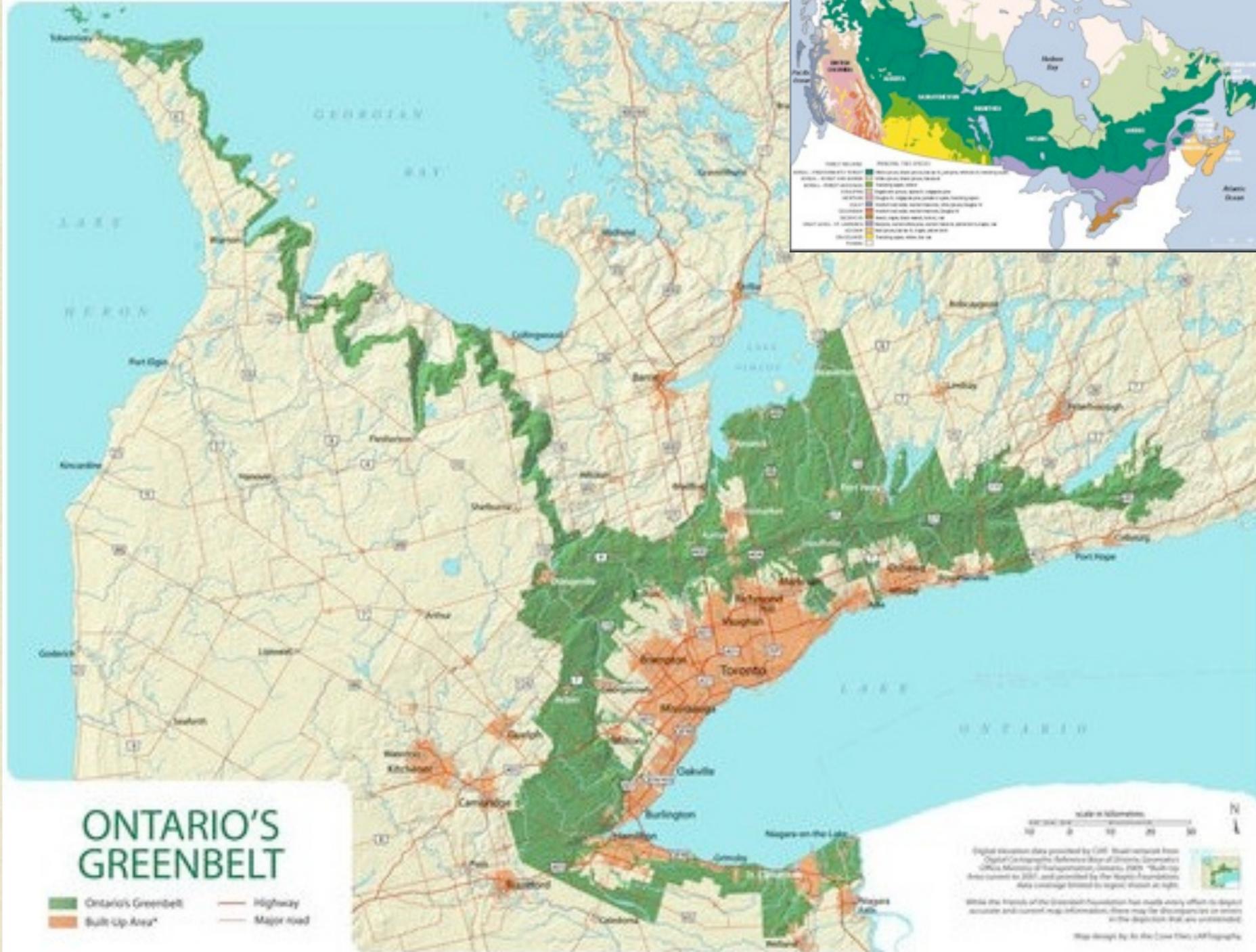
TransCanada Trail



Six Nations Title







Last 10% of the extremely fragmented Carolinian forest

Potential Partners



Region of Waterloo



linkage-mapper

A GIS tool designed to support regional wildlife habitat connectivity analyses



CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL



Parks Canada

