



Possibility grows here.

Annual Report 2019/20



THE GREENBELT FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

We are living in unprecedented times – however, the Greenbelt continues to provide unique benefits and opportunities for Ontario and Canada’s most densely populated region.

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Foundation has focused on doing our part to support social and economic recovery. We are aware that many of our key partners and sectors have been particularly hard hit by the pandemic but we have also seen impressive determination and innovation in their response. Working closely with our diverse partners and communities, we will seek to protect and get the best from the Greenbelt’s 2.1 million acres of near-urban nature and prime farmland, including enhanced climate resilience, a reliable local food source, and economic opportunities for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

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KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2019/20

Through our strategic investments, leadership and research, we help partners, including all levels of government, leverage the Greenbelt’s natural features and working landscape to:

Protect Ontario communities from the impacts of climate

change.

Ensure residents have access to high-quality greenspace, boosting mental health.

Improve municipal infrastructure by investing in Greenbelt nature.

Increase benefits and opportunities for Ontario's Tourism and Recreation sectors.

Support innovation in Greenbelt-area agriculture.

Ensure that Ontarians have access to healthy, local food.

SINCE 2005, THE GREENBELT FOUNDATION HAS:

**Leveraged
and invested
approximately
\$100 million
in strategic
projects and
partnerships.**

**Awarded
grants to
more than 300
organizations.**

**Engaged
research
partners to
support
advancements
in climate
change**

**Consulted
with
government
on policies
concerning
the Greenbelt
and its natural**

**resiliency, a
sustainable
local food
system, and
stronger rural
economies.**

**heritage and
agricultural
systems.**

THE GREENBELT:

**Generates 9.6
billion
annually in
economic
activity
through
farming,
recreation,
tourism and
more,
resulting
directly from
its protected
status.**

**Creates
177,700 local
full-time
equivalent
jobs, and
supports rural
economic
activity and
community
vitality.**

ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS

**OAK RIDGES MORaine FOUNDATION JOINS
GREENBELT FOUNDATION**



On February 25th, 2020, the Greenbelt Foundation and Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation announced a historic joining of forces. Stemming from the belief that more can be accomplished together than separately, our two organizations will work on a set of shared priorities that ensure the ongoing stewardship and protection of the Oak Ridges Moraine for generations to come.

The Oak Ridges Moraine is amongst the most important natural features in the Greenbelt, widely recognized for its unique hydrological functions. The Moraine spans approximately 190,000 hectares of mostly forested land and provides clean drinking water to over 250,000 people in the region.

NEAR-URBAN NATURE AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE



The Greenbelt's near-urban nature is comprised of forests, river valleys, wetlands, savannahs, and other ecological features that surround and intersect our communities. These natural areas provide crucial infrastructural services that aid us in the fight against climate change. Their important greenspaces support the mental and physical well-being of our community members. The Greenbelt is also home to some of the highest concentrations of biodiversity in Canada, as well as 78 species-at-risk.

The Greenbelt's natural systems provides \$3.2 billion in ecosystem services to Ontario communities, through flood protection, water purification, and stormwater management.

Through research and investments, the Greenbelt Foundation helps government partners use near-urban nature as a cost-effective solution to climate change, infrastructure renewal, job-creation, and a green recovery from COVID-19.

NATURAL ASSET MANAGEMENT

Identifying and understanding the value of ecosystem services has never been more important. Communities across Canada face the dual challenges of climate change and economic strain posed by COVID-19—issues like flooding and droughts are becoming more common and yet municipal infrastructure budgets are more strained than ever. Fortunately, both issues can be addressed with natural solutions.

The Greenbelt Foundation is working with Municipal Natural Assets Initiatives (MNAI) on a 3 year-project that enables Ontario municipalities to understand and invest in nature in order to create better climate resilience and strengthen infrastructure, all while saving money and creating jobs.

As part of this effort, in early March 2020, the Greenbelt Foundation and MNAI announced a flagship project in the Greenbelt's Grindstone Creek. Through a site-specific evaluation, planning, and implementation process, the Greenbelt Foundation and MNAI will work with the cities of Hamilton and Burlington, Halton Region, Conservation Halton, and Royal Botanical Gardens to develop an asset management plan for the Grindstone Creek watershed. This plan will help cost-effectively address local flood-risk and water contamination in Hamilton Harbour.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

Through a unique research project, the Greenbelt Foundation examined the economic case for investing in nature. Three case studies explored how municipal natural asset management can help communities to reduce reliance on expensive built infrastructure, mitigate the effects of extreme weather, and create much-needed jobs for workers.

The Greenbelt Foundation partnered with three conservation authorities to determine the return-on-investment of ecological restoration efforts in their jurisdictions: the Brock Lands, Saltfleet Conservation Area, and Lake Scugog.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The Greenbelt Foundation funded this first-ever assessment of the full scope of Ontario's green infrastructure sector, undertaken by the Green Infrastructure Ontario Coalition and its partners. The project revealed that green infrastructure in Ontario generates \$8.6 billion in gross revenue and \$4.64 billion in gross domestic product, while employing roughly 84,400 people in 2018.

Factoring in the indirect and induced impacts, Ontario's green infrastructure sector was responsible for more than 120,000 jobs and nearly \$8.33 billion in GDP in 2018

CONNECTING RESIDENTS TO RIVER VALLEYS

The Greenbelt River Valley Connector Program, run in association with Park People, connects residents with their local Greenbelt-protected urban river valley through community-based outreach, stewardship and education initiatives. Over three years (2018-2021), fifteen grants are being dispersed to support local leaders and community partners in providing nature-based programming and restoration activities that improve the ecological health of the Greenbelt's 21 Urban River Valleys.

READ MORE

PERSONALIZING CLIMATE CHANGE

The Greenbelt Foundation's In a Changing Climate series of visual reports ask how everyday things are impacted by climate change. The purpose of the series is to help make climate change—an often complicated, confusing subject—more relatable. In 2019 and 2020, the Foundation released a number of installments of the series, which covered topics from hockey, to biodiversity, to fresh water.

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CLIMATE MODELLING

In order to prepare for climate change, Ontario communities need to understand what their future climate will look like. The Greenbelt Foundation partnered with the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority to provide updated climate projections for the Greenbelt's municipalities and watersheds.

Using an ensemble of climate models, this project provides accurate climate projections for weather averages and extremes, helping the region to get climate ready. Data taken from this project will inform everything from the region's climate adaptation planning efforts, to its watershed planning documents and municipal planning review, to its official plans, policies and programs. It will also help identify potential sites where natural solutions to climate change can be developed.

LOCAL FOOD AND AGRICULTURE



With excellent soil, a long growing season and close proximity to major urban markets, the Greenbelt is one of the country's most important growing regions.

Over the past fifteen years, the Greenbelt Foundation and its sister organization, the Greenbelt Fund, have supported over 240 local food projects, increasing local food sales by over \$260 million and providing a 19:1 return-on-investment. We have strengthened the local food system from farmer to retailer. We will continue to support rural economic recovery from COVID-19 by continuing to support innovation in the local food sector and a robust and sustainable local food economy.

The Greenbelt is home to 4,783 farms, earning 68% more revenue per acre than the average Ontario farm.

GREENBELT FARMERS MARKETS GO ONLINE

Our local Greenbelt farmers are foundational to our region's food supply. Over 50% of Ontario fruit and over 10% of all Ontario vegetables are grown in the Greenbelt. The Greenbelt is also home to over 70% of the province's greenhouse capacity.

To ensure the ongoing sustainability of this important sector throughout COVID-19, the Foundation supported the Greenbelt Farmers Market Network in pivoting their operations to bring key markets online, recovering income for farmers and providing a reliable source of local food for consumers.

LAUNCHING DISTRICT VENTURES KITCHENS

In November 2019, the Greenbelt Fund and City of Toronto supported Foodstarter, an important agri-food incubator, in relaunching as District Ventures Kitchen.

Since its inception in 2017, Foodstarter has supported over 300 Ontario food entrepreneurs by providing access to shared production and packaging facilities, business advisory services, and a structured training program. As District Ventures Kitchen, the facility will support roughly 500 jobs and pave a promising road forward for local food entrepreneurs and the local food system, as a whole.

CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE

Canada's farmers are on the frontlines of worsening climate impacts. Adaptation strategies are needed to maintain yield and farm profitability. The Greenbelt Foundation is supporting research into best approaches to improving soil health as well as the barriers farmers face in adopting these best management practices, working with an Ontario advisory committee of farm organizations, as well as Quebec-based Equiterre and its national advisory committee. The research underway will help to identify innovative federal policies that would support improved soil health and associated climate benefits.

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RECREATION, CULTURE AND TOURISM



Ontario's Greenbelt is over 2 million acres of lush hiking trails, prolific cycling routes, dramatic shorelines and accessible river valleys that can be enjoyed on foot, or by bicycle, canoe or kayak. Beyond its natural attractions, the Greenbelt is a thriving, working landscape, with a diversity of small towns and rural businesses.

Over 76 million people visit the Greenbelt each year, contributing \$3 billion and supporting 75,000 local jobs in the tourism and recreation sector.

Through research and investments, the Greenbelt Foundation helps drive tourism and recreation in the Greenbelt. This supports rural economies and helps Ontarians understand the multitude of opportunities the Greenbelt offers for enjoying a low-carbon, healthy active lifestyle, particularly during COVID-19.

STATE OF LARGE PARKS

Large parks are a legacy of visionaries who understood the important role greenspace plays in having healthy communities. This first-ever report, undertaken as a partnership between Greenbelt Foundation and Green Infrastructure Ontario, sought to understand how the Greater Golden Horseshoe's large parks are holding up against

population growth and environmental stressors.

The report finds that large parks in our region face pressures from increased visitation and that population growth will only exacerbate this. Unless coordinated action is taken to create more large parkland, we can expect a significant decline in the supply of these parks per resident.

CONNECTING NEW CANADIANS TO NATURE IN THE GREENBELT

New Canadians are a fast-growing population in the Greater Toronto Area. However, research suggests that they visit parks and outdoor areas less often than those born in Canada. With the importance of greenspace to mental and physical wellbeing in mind, the Greenbelt Foundation held six focus groups with Chinese New Canadians and South Asian New Canadians to understand what we could do to increase their engagement and awareness of outdoor recreation opportunities in the Greenbelt.

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INTO THE GREENBELT

Developed by the Greenbelt Foundation and Park People, in collaboration with regional Conservation Authorities and the Boys and Girls Club of Canada, this program removes economic barriers and brings new Canadians and underserved youth and seniors into Ontario's Greenbelt for free, enriching day trips. Eight itineraries to conservation areas, pick-your-own-farms and other natural spaces were developed. In 2019, there were 44 trips with over 1,700 participants.

In November, a group of youth from Boys and Girls Club of Hamilton joined staff from the Greenbelt Foundation and Park People at Mountsberg Conservation Area to celebrate another great season of the Into the Greenbelt program.

WATERFRONT REGENERATION TRUST

Since 2012, the Greenbelt Foundation has supported the ongoing development of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail, which connects the Greenbelt with 3000 km of trails traversing the shores of Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, Lake Huron and Lake Nipissing. The trail also connects 140 cities, towns and First Nations; 33 provincial parks; 3 UNESCO world biosphere reserves; 169 beaches; and 21 national historic sites. The route is a dream for cycling enthusiasts, and a fantastic opportunity for families and amateur cyclists interested in exploring the varied landscapes and communities of Ontario.

In August of 2019, the Greenbelt Foundation supported the launch of the “Huron North Corridor,” with a culminating event at Science North in Sudbury.

THE MOCCASIN IDENTIFIER PROJECT

After years of dedication by Carolyn King (former Chief of Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation), and with support from the Greenbelt Foundation, The Moccasin Identifier Project has come to fruition with 10 “moccasin identifier” installations and an innovative school toolkit.

READ MORE

OUR PARTNERS

The Greenbelt Foundation’s achievements would be impossible without the ongoing support of its partners, donors and the dedicated governance of its Board of Directors. Our partners include a range of organizations with whom we collaborate to fund key projects and support important research initiatives. Our work is also made possible by our dedicated individual donors and supporters.

We thank all of you for your support and commitment.

The Greenbelt Foundation would like to pay special thanks to the Government of Ontario for their ongoing, committed support of our work.





**METCALF
FOUNDATION**

IVEY FOUNDATION



Hodgson Family Foundation

J.P. Bickel Foundation Foundation

The Charles Norcliffe Baker
And
Thelma Scott Baker Foundation



THE GEORGE KOSTIUK FAMILY
PRIVATE FOUNDATION

The Willowool Foundation

THE KLEIN-PANNETON
FOUNDATION







FINANCIALS

In 2019/20, the Greenbelt Foundation invested in a range of key partnerships, educational initiatives, research and policy work and community programs.

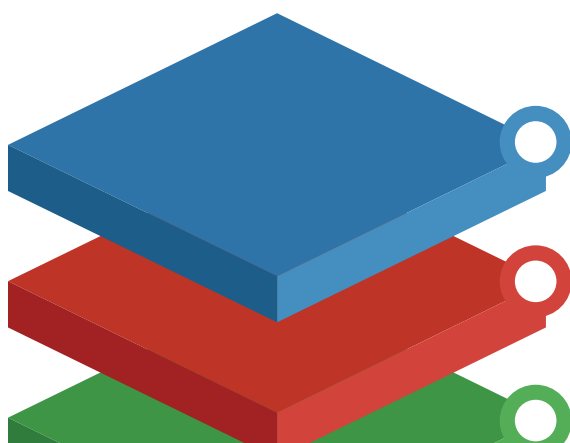
Year ended March 31, 2020 / Our charitable ratio: 85%



EXPENDITURES



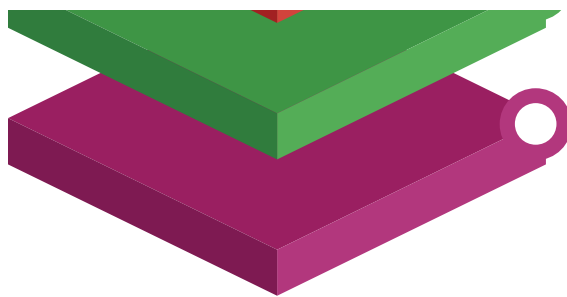
PROGRAM ACTIVITIES



GRANTS
\$1,259,823

AWARENESS & EDUCATION
\$921,492

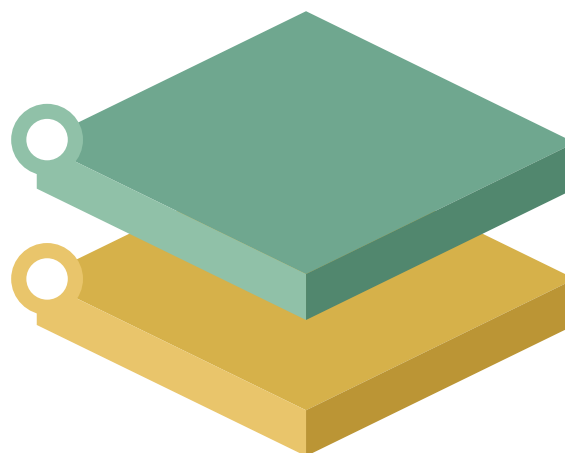
RESEARCH & POLICY
\$852,000



\$852,992

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS
\$780,561

SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES

MANAGEMENT & GENERAL
\$512,392**FUNDRAISING,
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**
\$137,043

*Each year, KPMG audits our financial records. Our full financial audit can be found online at [greenbelt.ca/accountability](https://www.greenbelt.ca/accountability)





THANK YOU!

From the entire team at the Greenbelt Foundation, thank you for taking the time to learn about us!

The Greenbelt Foundation is made up of a vibrant team of program leaders, research and policy experts, development and communications specialists and much more. We come together with varied expertise to support a unified vision of keeping the Greenbelt a healthy, resilient and productive working landscape for Ontario—and one of Canada's best resources in the fight against climate change! We would not be able to achieve any of our work without the dedicated support of our funders, partners and community members like you.

Additional photo credits: Doug Worall (Hero image), Dan Copeland (Message From Our CEO), Elton Law (Economic Impact of Green Infrastructure), Stephanie Braconnier (Climate Modelling)

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