



Possibility grows here.



The Greenbelt Foundation

Annual Report 2022-2023

[Annual Highlights](#)

[Partners](#)

[Financials](#)

Land Acknowledgement

The Greenbelt Foundation acknowledges that the land we meet on and strive to protect is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat, and is now home to many other diverse First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. The area we now call the Greenbelt consists of treaty lands. It is important that we learn about the history and continued presence of these treaties because we are all treaty people.

The lakes, rivers, and wetlands, as well as forests, ravines, and healthy farmlands in the Greenbelt have been stewarded and protected by the First Peoples since time immemorial and we are grateful to the First Peoples for their care of the land on Turtle Island. We respect and are inspired by the deep connection of kinship that Indigenous Peoples have with the land.

We acknowledge the truth of the events of the past and their continuing effects, and the enduring rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We recognize that the Greenbelt is based on a land management plan developed by settlers, and we as a Foundation have a responsibility to ensure the work we do reflects the continued efforts and rights of the First Peoples of this land.

We will continue to look for ways to align our mandate with the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and further educate ourselves on Indigenous Knowledge Systems that can inform and support our mandate to sustain the air, lands and waterways in the Greenbelt.

A Message From Our Chair



Our vision is a vibrant and healthy Greenbelt.

This past year we have once again seen the benefits of the Greenbelt continue to come into sharp focus.

The Greenbelt serves Ontarians by providing opportunities for outdoor recreation, beneficial natural assets and features that help our region face the threats of climate change and as a source of fresh local food.

The Greenbelt Foundation plays a role of stewardship and investment in the Greenbelt, ensuring its strength and sustainability. A key asset for Ontario, the Greenbelt provides an estimated \$9.6 billion annual contribution to Ontario's GDP, 177,700 full-time or full-time equivalent jobs, and \$3.2 billion worth of ecosystem services provided to Ontario communities each year.

A Message From Our CEO



This year, the Greenbelt Foundation was proud to lead initiatives and programs to steward Ontario's Greenbelt.

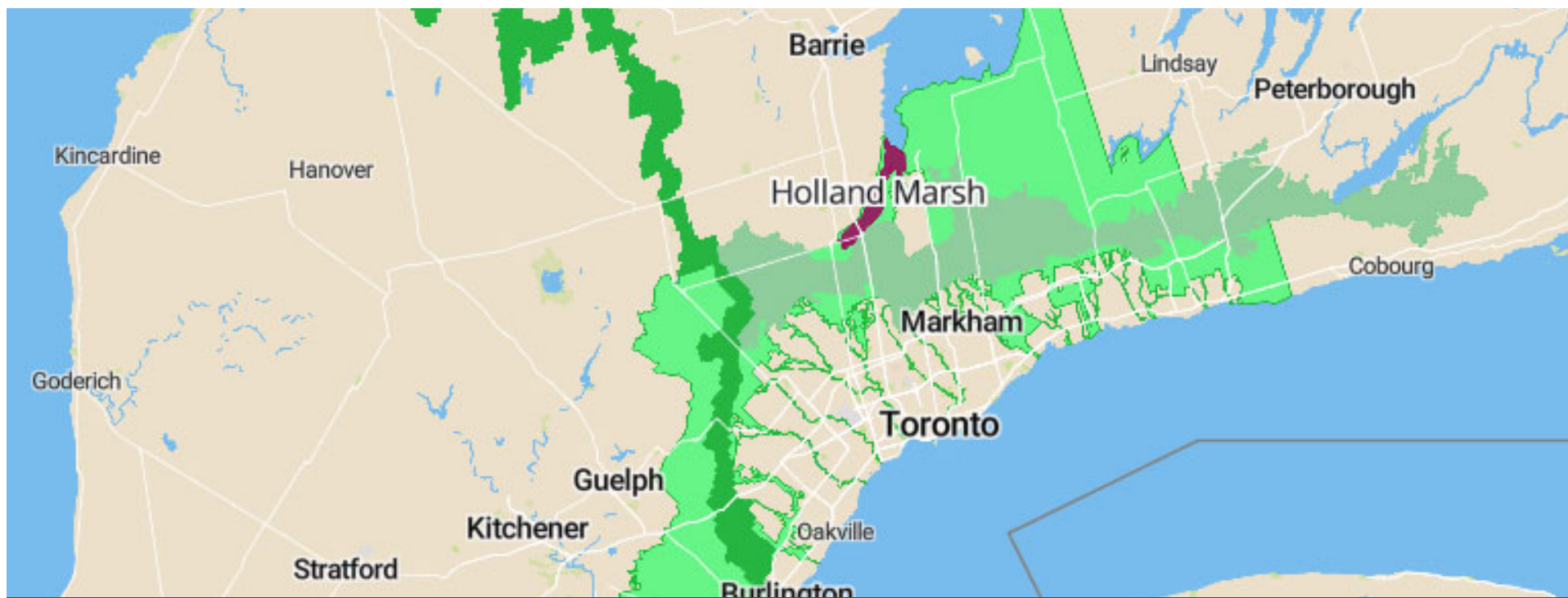
We continued our work to realize the full potential of this incredible Ontario resource by harnessing the power of our programs and partnerships to invest in a sustainable Greenbelt for generations to come. Ontario's Greenbelt and its boundaries have not been such a widely discussed topic amongst Ontarians since its creation in 2005.

Because of this, our mission to maintain a thriving and sustainable Greenbelt has only become more integral to mitigating the effects of climate change, providing clean air and water, local food and enhancing natural infrastructure. With ever increasing awareness of its importance at home, the Ontario Greenbelt remains a benchmark for other greenbelt areas across the world. Our commitment to the important work of protecting and preserving our natural environment and farmland continues as does our relationship with our natural resources.

About the Foundation

For 18 years, the Greenbelt Foundation has been the champion of Ontario's Greenbelt, promoting its benefits and helping it to provide measurable contributions to quality of life in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Greenbelt Foundation has leveraged and invested over \$100 million in strategic grants and programs, research and policy initiatives, as well as engagement and outreach activities. This work has contributed to a thriving local food and agriculture sector, strong rural economies, climate-resilient communities, and accessible greenspace for the one in three Canadians who call the Greater Golden Horseshoe home.

The Greenbelt Foundation is the only organization solely dedicated to ensuring Ontario's Greenbelt remains permanent, protected, and prosperous. We make the right investments in its interconnected natural, agricultural, and economic systems, to ensure a working, thriving Greenbelt for all. Ontario's Greenbelt is over two million acres of farmland, forests, wetlands, and rivers, working together to provide clean air, fresh water, and a reliable local food source.



The Greenbelt



\$9.6 billion
contributed annually



\$3.2 billion
contributed annually



177,700 jobs
supported (full-time



9 out of 10 Ontarians
in favour of the

in economic activity

in ecosystem services

or equivalent)

Greenbelt



Spotlight: One Million Trees Program

The Greenbelt Foundation is focused on native tree, shrub, and other vegetation plantings that increase natural cover in the Greenbelt, contribute to biodiversity, and create greater climate resilience for Ontario residents.

This year, with the support of the Province of Ontario, we achieved a major milestone in our 1 Million Trees program by planting 500,000 trees in the Greenbelt. Throughout this two year long program we worked with leading organizations such as Forests Ontario, Conservation Ontario, individual conservation authorities, local stewardship groups, and others to expand and accelerate tree planting across the Greenbelt. This is a critical activity to advance climate and biodiversity goals.

The trees are planted strategically to restore ecological habitats and increase connectivity; build resilient communities and reduce flood risks, extreme heat, drought and water pollution; as well as store carbon and increase greenspace.

Through this program, municipalities and private landowners across Ontario's Greenbelt are able to plant trees at a reduced cost. The program aims to improve social equity by prioritizing areas with high racial diversity and low natural cover, support Indigenous culture, and protect prime agricultural lands and rare habitats by planting on lands that add to or link to an existing forest.

Annual Highlights



The Greenbelt offers many ways for Ontarians to connect with nature. From urban river valleys that offer respite from modern life to hundreds of kilometres of cycling and hiking trails, there's something for everyone in the Greenbelt.

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.



Did you know?

Over 76 million people visit the Greenbelt each year, contributing \$8.3 billion in GDP and supporting 161,500 local jobs in the tourism and recreation sector.



Greenbelt to Great Lakes Cycling Experiences with Waterfront Regeneration Trust / Greenbelt Route

From August 7-12, the Waterfront Regeneration Trust (WRT), in partnership with the Greenbelt Foundation, CAA and Simcoe County, hosted a six-day, 450-kilometre event. The 2022 Great Waterfront Trail Adventure (GWTA) featured a circular route, starting and ending at the Blue Mountains, and it took riders from South Georgian Bay's coastline to Lake Simcoe's shores and back.



Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network (NEBN) / Signage and Indigenous Leadership

This project aims to raise awareness of the ecological significance of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere (NEB) and Greenbelt by supporting access to nature and enhancing Greenbelt tourism experiences.

The first step of the project is to identify locations where biodiversity and cultural information will be collected to then develop signages with QR code. These signs aim to educate people about the NEB, its biodiversity, and its importance in terms of ecosystem services and cultural traditions.



Plenty Canada / Wisdom from Knowledge: Biocultural Mapping / Greenbelt Indigenous Field Guide and Survey

The Nbwaakaawining binjibaamgad Gkendmaawziwin *Wisdom from Knowledge: Documenting and Sharing the Indigenous Biocultural Richness of the Greenbelt* grant with Plenty Canada is an Indigenous-led project that helps to build stronger Indigenous relationships across the region, showcases the Greenbelt as an important Indigenous cultural landscape and aligns with the Foundation's objective to support Indigenous-led initiatives that conserve nature. The project documents and shares Indigenous bio-cultural knowledge through the identification of culturally significant species and histories of Indigenous locations in the Greenbelt.



Near Urban Nature - Enhancing Climate Resilience

To increase Protected and Conserved Areas in the Greenbelt and Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) and contribute to Canada's biodiversity target of protecting 25 per cent of lands and waters by 2025, we have supported Ontario Nature's partnership with municipalities, Conservation Authorities and provincial staff to assess public lands and confirm their status to be counted towards the target. Using a new conservation tool, more adaptable in urban areas, the project highlights examples of appropriate lands and model policies for land management practices and supports an effort to increase participation of regional partners to protect biodiversity.

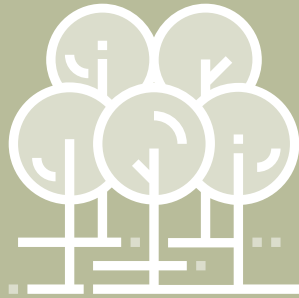


The “Greenbelts Around the World Responding to Local and Global Challenges” Report

A new report published by the Greenbelt Foundation, *Greenbelts Around the World Responding to Local and Global Challenges*, seeks to better understand Ontario’s Greenbelt within a global context. The report analyzes eight international Greenbelt case studies to identify trends, opportunities and challenges, with a focus on nature-based solutions to climate change, outdoor recreation and tourism, growth management and the agricultural system.

The Greenbelt Foundation is committed to implementing native tree, shrub, and other vegetation plantings that increase natural cover in the Greenbelt and adjacent areas.

These efforts will have positive long-term impacts on public health, while improving access to greenspace, and increasing climate resilience for communities. The Foundation has initiated a major program with leading organizations such as Forests Ontario, Conservation Ontario, individual conservation authorities, local stewardship groups, and others to expand and accelerate tree planting across the Greenbelt. This is a critical activity to advance climate and biodiversity goals.



Did you know?

Forest cover in the Greater Golden Horseshoe currently stands below Environment and Climate Change Canada's 30 per cent target for healthy forests. Planting 54 million native trees will help us reach this target.

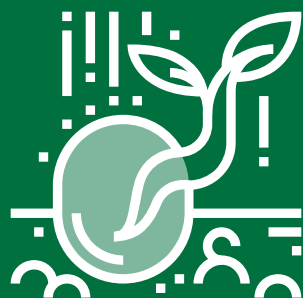


Alderville First Nation and Mitigomin Native Plant Nursery

With the Mitigomin Native Plant Nursery Project (MNPN), the Foundation built an Indigenous-run sustainable native plant nursery in the eastern Greenbelt within Alderville First Nation and Northumberland County. The project funds coordination, professional services and other activities required to see the nursery through to operation in 2023.

Wetlands, river valleys, forests, and other green features are examples of natural assets that provide quantifiable infrastructural services to surrounding communities. They prevent flooding, reduce temperatures during heat waves, purify fresh water, and provide greenspace for healthy, outdoor recreation, among other services. By formally managing, accounting for, and investing in these assets, municipalities can save on infrastructure costs, improve their region's resilience to climate change, and create stable, full-time jobs for local workers.

Additionally, the Greenbelt as an ecological corridor is critical to biodiversity in southern Ontario, which happens to be one of the most biodiverse areas of the country. The connectivity of natural systems in the Greenbelt allows for species migration and endangered species to find suitable habitat.



Did you know?

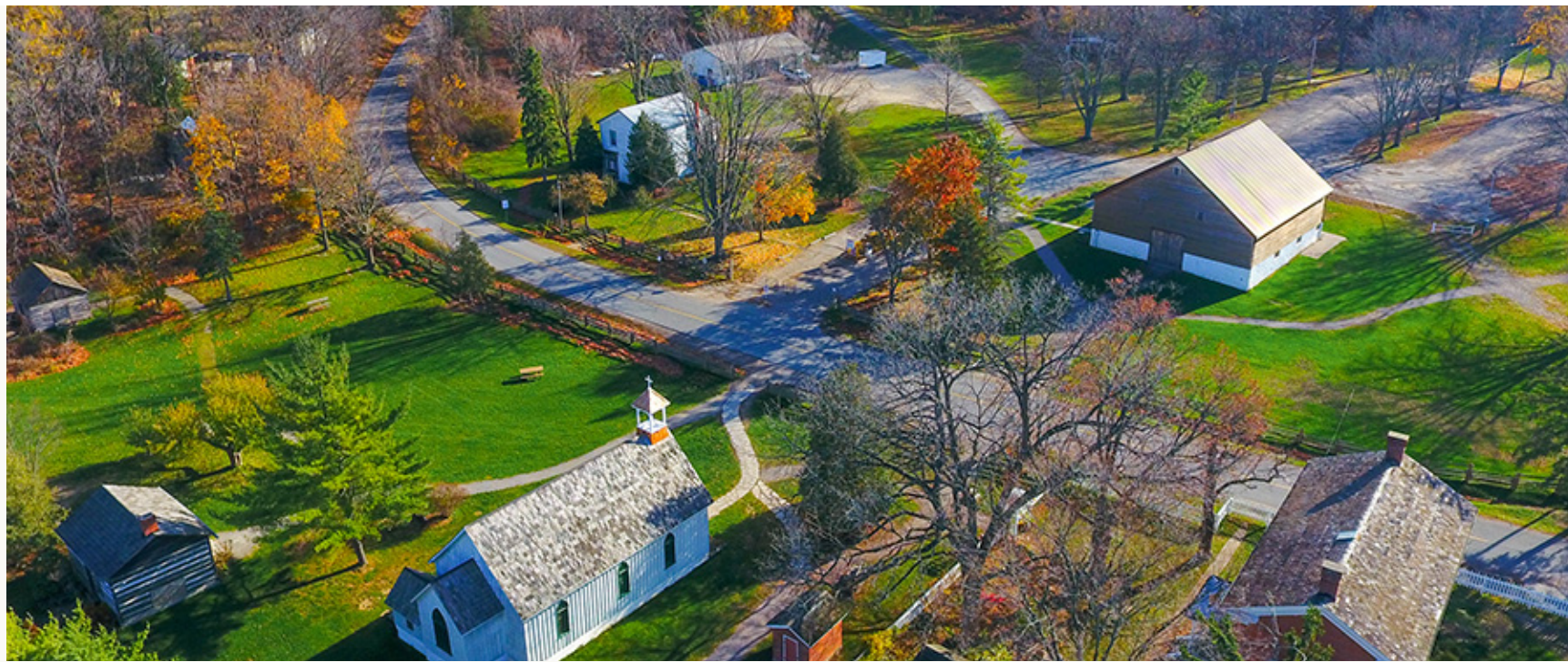
With the support of the Province of Ontario, the Greenbelt Foundation is Canada's largest third-party investor in municipal natural asset management programs. Our vision is to mainstream

the protection and use of natural assets, and to make near-urban nature an integral part of key government environmental conservation programs.



Natural Asset Management Program

The Greenbelt Foundation hosted a virtual workshop titled “Recommendations to Advance Municipal Natural Asset Management in Ontario” last June. The purpose of this workshop was to review the results of research conducted by University of Waterloo students this past winter on recommendations to overcome barriers in advancing municipal natural asset management in Ontario. Partners who attended this event were leading experts in this field, some of whom participated in this research as interviewees, and discussed the relevance and opportunities of a select set of recommendations from the research.



Town of Pelham & Town of Lincoln

The Foundation is working with the town of Pelham on a project that advances the use of natural infrastructure as a cost-effective and sustainable solution to address climate change impacts and maintain community services. This project is contributing to a growing network of municipalities engaged in natural asset planning and serves as an example for Niagara Region municipalities and Greenbelt Settlement Area communities. The main project activities include developing an overview of the current and future potential ecosystem services (i.e. stormwater management) contribution of natural assets, identifying strategies for securing these services long-term, and identifying knowledge gaps and areas where detailed modelling is required to support decision-making.

The Greenbelt's agricultural system is the cornerstone of Ontario's rural economy and provides

residents of the Greater Golden Horseshoe with a reliable and diverse source of local food and drink.

With the support of the Greenbelt Foundation and through its protected status, Ontario's Greenbelt preserves 750,000 acres of some of Canada's most fertile farmland within one of its most favourable growing climates. Greenbelt farmland is in close proximity to Canada's most densely populated region, making it a critical resource for advancing local food initiatives.



Did you know?

The Greenbelt includes Ontario's only two specialty crop areas—the Holland Marsh and the Niagara Tender Fruit and Grape Area—whose fertile soils and unique climate conditions allow Greenbelt farmers to grow over 50 per cent and 10 per cent of the province's fruits and vegetables, respectively.



Women in Agriculture

The Foundation increased education and awareness of female-identifying farmers and leaders in agriculture across the Greenbelt by launching its second Women in Agriculture campaign during Women's History Month.

Using videos profiles, the Foundation shared their incredible work.



Power of Soil Project with Équiterre and Soil Health Fact Sheets

We are delighted to announce the successful completion of our three-year Power of Soil project in partnership with Équiterre, and Ontario Agri-food partners. Throughout this period, we achieved significant milestones, producing three comprehensive research reports that have greatly contributed to our understanding of soil health and its impact on farmers and resilience.

One of the key outputs of this project is the publication of the technical and public-facing report titled "The Power of Soil: An Agenda for Change to Benefit Farmers and Resilience." This report delves deep into the dynamics of farmer adoption of soil health practices, shedding light on the intricate mechanisms and motivations behind their decisions. It offers valuable insights into the challenges faced by farmers and provides actionable recommendations to drive positive change.



Soil Health Program

This year the Foundation was pleased to kick-off a four-year long Soil Health Program. The Foundation is providing Ontario farmers the opportunity to measure and evaluate the impact of different beneficial management practices (BMPs) on soil health. Through a regionally unique Soil Health Testing Program, the Foundation and the US-based Soil Health Institute will advance soil health assessment and management across Ontario, improving profits for farmers, boosting the strength of local food systems, and furthering Ontario's ecological sustainability goals.



Ontario Tender Fruit

In 2016 and 2018 the Foundation provided Ontario Tender Fruit with grants resulting in more than 212,000 new trees, including peach, nectarine, plum, apricot, pear and sour cherry, and 200 new table grape vines being planted on approximately 765 acres of land across the Niagara Tender Fruit and Grape Area – one of the province's only two specialty crop areas protected by Ontario's Greenbelt.

The combined impact of this partnership has resulted in overall economic activity in Ontario of \$25 million, including 335 full-time jobs sustained with associated wages and salaries of \$13 million.

Through public outreach and engagement, the Greenbelt Foundation deepens public understanding of the Greenbelt, as well as how it contributes to a prosperous and sustainable future. We continued to

focus on building awareness and improving understanding of the Greenbelt.



Earth Rangers

The Foundation continues its support of Earth Rangers' "Creating the Next Generation of Conservationists in Ontario" program, which builds on the success of Earth Ranger's previous grant to engage kids and their families across the Greenbelt and Greater Golden Horseshoe. In 2022, with renewed Foundation support of \$125,000 the Education and Action in the Greenbelt program built on the success of Earth Rangers' previous programs and continued the work to inspire kids and their families to interact with and protect nature.

This program increases awareness about the benefits provided by the Greenbelt among children aged 6-12 and their families. It includes a series of six community events that have been held throughout 2022 and 2023. Ontario families are invited out in the Greenbelt for a day of fun, tangible learning and collectively take action to help the environment.



EcoSchools

With support from the Foundation and through a new program called “Taking Action in the Greenbelt,” EcoSchools Canada’s national program has provided student-led EcoTeams (environmental clubs) with tools to raise awareness about the Ontario Greenbelt, encouraged students to conduct a biodiversity survey on their school grounds, and plant native species.

With \$70,000 in funding from the Greenbelt Foundation, EcoSchools Canada developed tools and resources to teach students from kindergarten to grade 12 about native plants and biodiversity. To date, the Greenbelt Biodiversity action card has been selected by 199 schools from 57 school boards/districts across Canada, with a student reach of 103,533 students. Of this, 109 schools from 19 school boards with a student reach of 65,602 are in the Greenbelt or within 5km radius.



Student Placements

In the Fall 2022 and Winter 2023 terms, we hosted and supported projects for a total of 24 students from institutions such as the University of Toronto, Toronto Metropolitan University, Toronto District School Board, Western University, and the University of Waterloo. These students actively participated in our initiatives focused on data collection and analysis, contributing to our project on Greenbelt indicators and research on natural asset management.

Our Partners and Donors



We are grateful to RBC Foundation's support through their Tech for Nature Program for leadership funding to help establish and scale our **Natural Asset Management Program**.

Funding supported the development and socialization of critical datasets and technology tools, capacity building programs and resources, that advanced the valuation and inclusion of natural assets in municipal asset management practices, policies and projects.



We are thrilled to acknowledge the leadership support of the Weston Family Foundation for our project ***"Farmers and Soil Health: Motivating Change with Locally Relevant Soil Assessment"***.

The partnership launches a 4-year project to develop **a method for evaluating and monitoring soil health** and an engagement strategy to advance the participation of farmers in the adoption of Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) to improve **soil function**.

The project is part of the **Weston Family Soil Health Initiative** which seeks to expand the adoption of ecologically-based beneficial management practices that increase soil organic matter in order to improve biodiversity and resiliency on agricultural lands across Canada



IVEY FOUNDATION

**CHARLES FREDERICK FELL
CHARITABLE FUND**

— THE —
ECHO
FOUNDATION

**The
McLean
Foundation**

**HAMILTON
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**

Hodgson Family Foundation

**PETERBOROUGH
K M HUNTER**
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

The Willowool Foundation

THE FITZHENRY FAMILY FOUNDATION

**THE KLEIN-PANNETON
FOUNDATION**

**The Charles Norcliffe Baker
And
Thelma Scott Baker Foundation**

 | **consecon
foundation**

neptis

**McLean Smits Family
Foundation**

CTFF
Chisholm Thompson

**THE DALGLISH
FAMILY FOUNDATION**

**CHRISTOPHER THOMPSON
Family Foundation**

**Farm and Forest
Foundation**



**Global Asset
Management**

**THE PHILIP SMITH
FOUNDATION**



**Douglas and Margaret
Derry Foundation**

Message from our Director of Community Relations and Partnerships

Thank You to our Community of Donors!

On behalf of the Greenbelt Foundation, I would like to share my gratitude for the support provided by our community of partners and donors.

Thanks to the Government of Ontario, and the various Family and Corporate Foundations who have given so generously, the Foundation has been able to strengthen our programs focused on restoring the natural integrity and vitality of the Greenbelt.

Thank you also to all the individual and monthly donors who gave a gift in response to our annual appeal. The value of near urban nature, access to greenspace, a strong local sustainable agricultural system and the natural systems that provide us clean air and water continue to make Ontario's Greenbelt a source of pride for all those it serves.

We look forward to continuing to work on your behalf to strengthen the natural systems of the Greenbelt and its many communities.

Warmly,

Cheryl Weldon

Director of Community Relations & Partnerships





Project Funding for Nature-Based Solutions

The Greenbelt Foundation proudly acknowledges the following Lead Partners and Family Foundations who support our Natural Asset Management Program to advance policies, programs and projects that support nature-based solutions as municipal services.

Leadership Partners

RBC Foundation, Tech for Nature Program

Echo Foundation

Neptis

McLean Foundation

Hamilton Community Foundation

Family Foundations

Charles Frederick Fell Charitable Fund

Hodgson Family Foundation

Chisholm Thomson Family Foundation

The Willowool Foundation

The Fitzhenry Family Foundation

Charles Norcliffe Baker & Thelma Scott Baker Foundation

Daglish Family Foundation

Consecon Foundation

Douglas and Marcus Derry Foundation

Core Support for 1 Million Trees, Native Plants and Indigenous Conservation

We are grateful to the unprecedented numbers of new donors and local Family Foundations who have helped us plant 500,000 of the first 1 million Greenbelt Trees in the pipeline and supported foundational Native Plant Nurseries led by Indigenous communities.

Thank you to the Peterborough KM Hunter Foundation and the Klein-Panneton Family Foundation for your ongoing support.

Thank you to our individual and monthly donors who share our passion for forests, native species and Indigenous Conservation.

Grantee List

April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023

Prosperous Greenbelt

Berry Growers of Ontario

Corporation of the Town of Georgina

Greenbelt Markets

Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation

Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation

Ontario Heritage Trust

Plenty Canada

The Shared Path Consultation Initiative

Township of Uxbridge

Bruce Peninsula Biosphere Association

Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority

Green Thumbs Growing Kids

Niagara Peninsula Aspiring Global Geopark

Ontario Farmland Trust

Ontario Tender Fruit Growers

Shake Up The Establishment

Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

Waterfront Regeneration Trust

Resilient Greenbelt

Alderville First Nation Black Oak Savanna

ALUS Canada

Carolinian Canada Coalition

EcoSchools Canada

EcoSpark Environmental Organization

Environment Hamilton

Earth Rangers

Farms At Work

Equal Ground Community Gardens

Forests Ontario

Grand River Environmental Network

Green Communities Canada

Hamilton Conservation Foundation

Ontario Nature

Ontario Parks Association / GIO

Plenty Canada

Save the Oak Ridges Moraine

Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition

Smart Prosperity Institute

The Town of Lincoln

Wildlands League

The Sustainability Project (Former name: Grey Bruce Sustainability Network)

Expansion Consultation Fund

EcoSpark

Greenbelt West Coalition

Ontario Farmland Trust

Rescue Lake Simcoe Charitable Foundation

Wildlands League

Reports List

April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023

[Improving Access to Large Parks in Ontario's Golden Horseshoe: Policy, Planning, and Funding Strategies](#)

[Municipal Finances and Growth Planning in the Greater Golden Horseshoe: Opportunities for Better Integration to Support Smart Growth](#)

[Greenbelts Around the World Responding to Local and Global Challenges](#)

Financials

In 2022–2023, the Greenbelt Foundation invested in a range of key partnerships, educational initiatives, research and policy work, and community programs.

Year ended March 31, 2023 / Our charitable ratio: 85 per cent



EXPENDITURES

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES



GRANTS

\$1,500,624

AWARENESS & EDUCATION

\$967,475

RESEARCH & POLICY

\$607,376

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

\$556,959

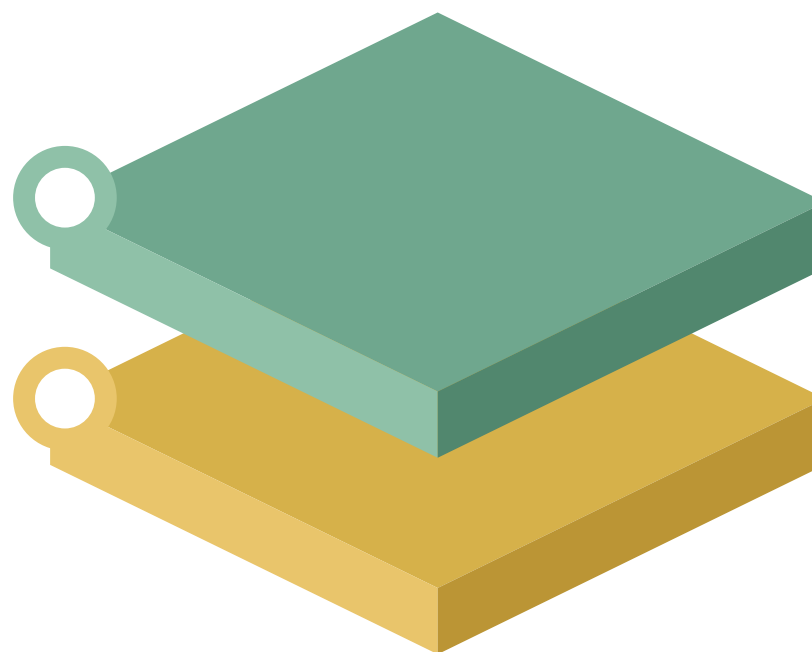
SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES

MANAGEMENT & GENERAL

\$503,531

FUNDRAISING, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

\$141,007



* Each year, KPMG audits our financial records. Our full financial audit can be found online at greenbelt.ca/accountability.

Thank You

The Greenbelt Foundation is made up of a vibrant team of program leaders, research and policy experts, development and communications advisors, 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 addressing 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.



2023 © [The Greenbelt Foundation](#) / Charitable Business Number: 822521878RR0001 / ISSN 1917-8328 / ISBN 978-1-927075-32-6