Ontario’s Biodiversity Strategy 2011

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Ontario Biodiversity Council
June 6, 2012
What is Biodiversity?

“Biodiversity is life”
The variety of life through genes, species, and ecosystems that is shaped by ecological and evolutionary processes.

“Biodiversity is our life”
The variety of life on Earth is essential to sustaining the living systems we depend on for health, wealth, food, and other vital goods and services.
The Conservation Imperative

• The moral imperative – “surely the rest of life matters”.

• Enlightened self-interest – clean air, water, food, and renewable resources.
Habitat loss
Invasive species
Population growth
Pollution
Overharvest

+ Climate change
Ontario’s Ecological Footprint

Our Ecological Footprints
Are we living within Nature’s Capacity?

In Ontario we use 8.5 hectares per person!

Globally there is only 2.1 ha per person.
Ontario’s Ecological Footprint

- Ecological Footprint compares human demands on nature with the available Biocapacity to provide products and assimilate wastes - indicator of overarching human pressures causing biodiversity loss.
- Ontario’s Ecological Footprint is equivalent to its available Biocapacity, but exceeds the world average by more than four times.

If everyone in the world lived comparable lifestyles to Ontarians, it would require the resources of four planets to support humanity.
Pressures on Biodiversity

- Pressures most acute in southern Ontario and the Lower Great Lakes which supports Canada’s densest population and supports more species at risk than anywhere else in Canada.

- Habitat loss and fragmentation the biggest threat.

- Climate change risk greatest in the far north (Hudson Bay lowlands).
State of Ontario’s Biodiversity

• No indicators of biodiversity response showing consistent improvement.

• Forests have remained stable, although still a concern in southwestern Ontario.

• Some indicators showing clear deterioration:
  - wetlands (72% loss);
  - native grasslands and savannas (3% of historic supply);
  - Great Lakes shoreline hardening and habitat loss.
Biodiversity Conservation: Actions at Global and National Scale

International Activities
- COP 10 Strategic Plan 2011-2020 (Aichi Target), Nagoya Japan
- Signatories to convention reporting on progress using global indicator framework
- Major Reports: *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment; Global Biodiversity Outlook 3; The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity*
- 2011-2020 – United Nations Decade on Biodiversity

National Activities
- National Strategy (1995) and Biodiversity Outcomes Framework
- Reporting to Canadians – *Ecosystem Status and Trends Report* (ESTR)
- Policy on Access and Benefit Sharing of Genetic Resources
- Survey on Value of Nature to Canadians (2011?)
- Revision of national framework to address new global Strategic Plan
Ontario Biodiversity Council

Formed in 2005 to guide the implementation of Ontario’s Biodiversity Strategy – an action from Ontario’s Biodiversity Strategy, 2005

Volunteers from environmental and conservation groups, government, academia, Aboriginal organizations and industry

Minister of Natural Resources represents Ontario government on Council

MNR provides secretariat support


Three Working Groups contribute to OBS actions

Structure and governance of Council will be reviewed in 2012
Ontario’s Biodiversity Conservation Timeline

2005
- Ontario Government Released Ontario’s Biodiversity Strategy: Protecting What Sustains Us

2005
- The Ontario Biodiversity Council was formed along with 3 working groups: The Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network; the Stewardship Network of Ontario and the Ontario Biodiversity Science Forum

2008
- Ontario Biodiversity Council released an Interim Report on Ontario’s Biodiversity

2010

2011
- Ontario Biodiversity Council renews its commitment to Protecting What Sustains us with Ontario’s Biodiversity Strategy, 2011
Ontario’s Biodiversity Strategy, 2011

- Builds on OBS, 2005
- Elevates tenet that “protecting the diversity of life requires broad societal consensus and participation” through a mainstreaming goal
- Establishes a guiding framework for conserving biodiversity over the next decade
- Outcome-based biodiversity conservation framework including key actions and responsibilities
- Four strategic directions:
  - Engage People
  - Reduce Threats
  - Enhance Resilience
  - Improve Knowledge
Ontario’s Biodiversity Strategy, 2011

VISION

Our vision is a future where biodiversity loss is halted and recovery is advanced. People value, protect and enhance biodiversity and the ecosystem services essential for human health and well-being.

GOALS

Mainstream Biodiversity. Protect and restore Ontario's biodiversity. Use Ontario's biological assets sustainably.
Ontario’s Biodiversity Strategy, 2011

- 4 strategic directions
- 9 objectives
- 21 desired outcomes
- 39 actions
Ontario’s Biodiversity Strategy, 2011

ONTARIO’S BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY TARGETS

1. By 2015, biodiversity is integrated into the elementary, secondary and postsecondary school curricula, including schools of business.

2. By 2015, 50 per cent of Ontarians understand biodiversity and its role in maintaining their health and well-being.

3. By 2015, the number of Ontarians who participate in biodiversity conservation activities is increased by 25 per cent.

4. By 2015, all sectors have initiated the development of implementation plans in support of Ontario’s Biodiversity Strategy, and by 2020, those plans are implemented.

5. By 2020, all relevant policies and programs integrate biodiversity values.

6. By 2015, plans for climate-change mitigation are developed and implemented and contribute to Ontario’s target to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions by 6 per cent below 1990 levels.

7. By 2015, strategic plans are in place to reduce the threats posed to biodiversity by invasive species.

8. By 2015, the release of pollutants harmful to biodiversity is reduced.

9. By 2020, the growth of Ontario’s per-capita resource consumption and waste generation is halted and reversed.

10. By 2015, the status of species and ecosystems of conservation concern in Ontario is improved.

11. By 2015, the proportion of private lands in Ontario that are managed for biodiversity is increased.

12. By 2015, natural heritage-systems plans and biodiversity-conservation strategies are developed and implemented at the municipal and landscape levels.

13. By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and aquatic systems are conserved through well-connected networks of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures.

14. By 2020, programs and policies are in place to maintain and enhance ecosystem services.

15. By 2015, a long-term monitoring and reporting system for assessing the state of Ontario’s biodiversity is established and operating.

- Success of the Strategy to be tracked through 15 specific, measurable, time-bound targets

- These targets represent important areas of focus for biodiversity conservation in Ontario over the next 10 years
### Ontario’s Biodiversity Strategy, 2011

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Actions</th>
<th>LEAD RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>SUPPORT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Employ strategies to effectively communicate the relevance of biodiversity to the public.</td>
<td>All sectors</td>
<td>Ontario Biodiversity Council and working groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Continue to integrate biodiversity education into all levels and all types of curricula.</td>
<td>Provincial government and education sector</td>
<td>Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network and non-government organizations</td>
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<td>3. Develop and implement a Children’s Outdoor Bill of Rights.</td>
<td>Provincial government</td>
<td>All sectors</td>
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<td>4. Develop a strong network of partners engaged in acquiring a deeper understanding of the linkages between biodiversity and human health and well-being.</td>
<td>All governments and health sector</td>
<td>Non-government organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Develop and provide decision-making tools for effective biodiversity conservation.</td>
<td>All governments and Canadian Business and Biodiversity Council</td>
<td>Ontario Biodiversity Council and working groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Develop implementation plans to incorporate biodiversity values into the government and business sectors.</td>
<td>All governments and business sector</td>
<td>Ontario Biodiversity Council and Canadian Business and Biodiversity Council</td>
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<td>7. Review and enhance Ontario’s policy and legislative framework to maximize alignment with Ontario’s Biodiversity Strategy and support ecological sustainability.</td>
<td>Provincial government</td>
<td>All sectors</td>
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<td>8. Integrate the economic value of biodiversity and ecosystem services into decision making.</td>
<td>All sectors</td>
<td></td>
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<td>9. Investigate economic tools that encourage biodiversity conservation (e.g., incentives, removal of disincentives, markets).</td>
<td>All governments and business sector</td>
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<td>10. Support the involvement of Aboriginal communities in shared stewardship for biodiversity conservation.</td>
<td>All sectors</td>
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<td>11. Support and enhance biodiversity stewardship activities and partnerships with local communities and landowners.</td>
<td>All sectors</td>
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- 39 actions listed under 4 strategic directions
- High-level responsibility and support recognized
- Not an exhaustive list; all sectors are encouraged to develop their own action-based implementation plans in support of the Strategy
# What We Want to Achieve

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<tr>
<th>Current State</th>
<th>Future State</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
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<td>Biodiversity is only a government responsibility</td>
<td>Everyone has a responsibility for biodiversity conservation</td>
<td>Mainstreaming Biodiversity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus on individual species and critical habitats</td>
<td>Conservation planning and management at landscape scale</td>
<td>Diversity of species and ecosystems are protected</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manage biodiversity threats independently</td>
<td>Integrated, ecosystem based approach to managing biodiversity threats and pressures</td>
<td>Threats to biodiversity are reduced</td>
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<td>Measuring by activities and programs</td>
<td>Measuring against outcomes and indicators</td>
<td>Robust performance measurement and transparent state of biodiversity reporting</td>
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<td>Biodiversity conservation investments are random and not prioritized</td>
<td>Strategic investment and partnerships for biodiversity</td>
<td>Conservation action delivered through key partnerships</td>
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<td>National/provincial accounts exclude natural capital and biodiversity</td>
<td>Biodiversity Indicators included in national/provincial accounts</td>
<td>Biodiversity is valued for its contribution to human health and well-being</td>
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Towards Implementation

• The Ontario Biodiversity Council alone cannot deliver the scale of change required to conserve Ontario's biodiversity; all sectors and all Ontarians have a role.

• Objectives, outcomes, actions, and targets provide a broad framework for coordinating biodiversity conservation across the province, but much more is possible.

• All sectors are encouraged to think creatively about biodiversity conservation and the actions they can take to implement OBS 2011.
Ontario Biodiversity Council Views:

- There is an expectation that government will lead by example and work to develop their own implementation plan in support of the Strategy.

- The government (not just MNR) plays a key role in biodiversity conservation in the province, from a range of policy and legislation to public outreach and education.

- Council looks forward to see the government response to the OBS, which should also align with the Aichi targets of the CBD.
Suggested Priorities – “Game Changers”

• Making the link between human health and ecosystem health

• Development of incentives for the delivery of ecosystem services.

• Promoting habitat offsets and conservation banking.

• Linking biodiversity to climate change (mitigation and adaptation).

• Reducing habitat loss through effective land use planning

• Improving and disseminating knowledge.
Challenges

• Provincial economic woes could adversely affect funding and resourcing of critical programs at a time when we need GREATER SUPPORT.

• Financial woes need to be placed into a larger context – the deficit spending and draw-down of global and indeed provincial “NATURAL CAPITAL”. *We need to balance our natural capital accounts.*

• **Do we have the right priorities?**

• “First comes the values, then comes the science and technology and the public and hence political will to implement”.
What’s Needed
(personal views)

• A “step change” in conservation action and a societal push for ecological sustainability.

• Ontario’s Biodiversity Strategy is the vehicle to move us towards a sustainable future. This is not a nice to do, but an imperative.

• **Bottom Line:**

  “Healthy ecosystems sustain healthy people and a healthy economy”.

• We MUST protect what sustains us.
“Surely the rest of life matters. Surely our stewardship is its only hope. We will be wise to listen carefully to the heart, then act with rational intention and all the tools we can gather to bear”.