

**STEWARDSHIP FORUM  
JUNE 7, 2011**

**SUMMARY REPORT**



**Stewardship  
Network of  
Ontario**

*Organizations working together to provide  
comprehensive stewardship programs to benefit  
landowners in Ontario*  
[www.stewardshipcentre.on.ca](http://www.stewardshipcentre.on.ca)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. Agenda</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Chair's Report</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. Session Notes</b>	
PLENARY SESSION: <i>Role of Stewardship in 2011 Renewal of Ontario Biodiversity Strategy</i>	<b>4</b>
CONCURRENT SESSION: <i>Species-at-Risk</i>	<b>8</b>
CONCURRENT SESSION: <i>Indicators of Stewardship Progress</i>	<b>9</b>
AFTERNOON SESSION: <i>Green Energy - Implications for Stewardship</i>	<b>15</b>
<b>4. Participant Reflections &amp; Suggestions</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>5. Appendices</b>	<b>see separate documents</b>
A. Participant Contact List	
B. Speaker Bios	
C. PowerPoint Presentations	
D. Stewardship Indicators Workbook	
E. Participant Survey and Results	

## AGENDA

- 8:45 am **Networking and Refreshments** (Poster Display Session)
- 9:15 am **Welcome, Introductions, Overview and SNO Update** (*Suzanne Barrett, Chair, SNO*)
- 9:30 am ***Role of Stewardship in the 2011 Renewal of Ontario Biodiversity Strategy***  
 The Ontario Biodiversity Council is renewing the 2005 Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy for 2010-15. Private land stewardship figured prominently in the 2005 Biodiversity Strategy. How will stewardship be reflected in the 2010-15 Strategy? What are the views of major stakeholder groups regarding the role of stewardship over the next five years? Join the discussion with our keynote speaker and panel.  
**Panel moderator:** *Carla Grant, Ontario Forestry Association*  
**Keynote speaker:** *Mark Stabb, Nature Conservancy of Canada*  
**Commentary:** *Moreen Miller, Ontario Stone Sand and Gravel Association*  
*Don McCabe, Ontario Federation of Agriculture*
- 10:45 am **Networking and Refreshments** (Poster Display Session)
- 11:00 am ***Concurrent Sessions***
- Species-at-Risk*** – Landowner concerns regarding the implications of SAR legislation have emerged as a “barrier to stewardship”. The federal Species at Risk Act and provincial Endangered Species Act aim to conserve species at risk. But is this legislation effective on private lands? Do landowners support species at risk conservation or are they concerned about possible restrictions on use of their land? How can we work better with landowners to overcome these challenges?  
**Panel moderator:** *Elizabeth Holmes, Eastern Ontario Model Forest*  
**Speakers:** *Kerry Coleman, EOMF SAR Working Group Member and Landowner*  
*Larry Cornelis, Landowner, Chatham-Kent*  
*Peter Jeffrey, Ontario Federation of Agriculture*  
*Michelle Kanter, Carolinian Canada*
  - Indicators of Stewardship Progress*** – Following the panel discussion on indicators at the 2010 Stewardship Forum, an expert panel convened on April 15, 2011 to discuss ways to develop an improved suite of indicators. This session will present the results of the expert panel discussion and seek your input. What indicators best communicate the results of stewardship efforts in conserving biodiversity? How can we go beyond reporting on accomplishments (e.g., hectares planted) and better report on the effectiveness of stewardship actions on the landscape?  
**Session facilitator:** *Suzanne Barrett, SNO*  
**Speaker:** *Rebecca Zeran, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources*
- 12:15 pm **Lunch and Networking** (Poster Display Session)
- 1:15 pm ***Green Energy - Implications for Stewardship***  
 Ontario's Green Energy Act has made Ontario a leader in renewable energy. But some local communities are concerned about wind turbines and other renewable energy facilities. How will green energy initiatives interact with the environment and biodiversity? What role can communities and landowners play?  
**Panel moderator:** *Lynette Mader, Ducks Unlimited Canada*  
**Speakers:** *Rick Smith, Environmental Defence*  
*Scott Petrie, Long Point Waterfowl Association*  
*Deb Doncaster, Green Energy Act Alliance*  
*Vitold Kreutzer, Landowner, Proton Station, Grey County*  
*James Holland, Rural Planning and Development, University of Guelph*
- 2:30 pm **Reflections and Suggestions**  
 A facilitated plenary discussion to seek feedback on the forum and suggestions for SNO's future work plan.

## BACKGROUND

The Stewardship Network of Ontario annual forum was held on June 7th, 2011 at Black Creek Pioneer Village, Toronto from 9:00am to 3:00pm. There were 57 people in attendance including speakers and members of the SNO Leadership Committee. A participant list is provided in Appendix A, and speakers' bios are in Appendix B. Copies of the powerpoint presentations are in Appendix C.

## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Kim Gavine (Executive Director of the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation and SNO Leadership Committee Member) thanked Don Gordon – Former Chair of SNO for his contributions over the past two years and introduced Suzanne Barrett as new SNO Chair.

## CHAIR'S REPORT BY SUZANNE BARRETT

Welcome to the 2011 Stewardship Forum. And thank you all for coming. Before I introduce today's agenda, I'd like to take a few minutes to introduce SNO's leadership committee and tell you about our activities over the past year.

How many of you were here for last year's Stewardship Forum? For those who weren't, let me begin by explaining a bit about SNO – the Stewardship Network of Ontario. Probably the most important aspect of SNO is that you are all part of it. SNO is an informal coalition of about 140 groups, agencies and associations with a shared interest in private land stewardship. There is no formal membership and we welcome the participation of all interested parties.

The affairs of SNO are conducted by a Leadership Committee including Conservation Ontario, Ducks Unlimited Canada, the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations, Eastern Ontario Model Forest, Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation, OMAFRA and OMNR, Ontario Forestry Association, Ontario Stewardship, and Trees Ontario.

A note about a couple of recent changes: Mark Emery has joined the SNO Leadership Committee while Tara Borwick is on maternity leave. Rebecca Zeran is replacing Lul Hassan as our secretariat person at MNR. SNO's activities are supported, both financially and with staff support, by the Biodiversity Section of MNR. We are very grateful for that support, and it allows us to provide a range of services for our members. So I'd like to thank Lul for all her hard work and infectious enthusiasm for SNO. And welcome Rebecca – we look forward to working with you.

If you have any questions about the Leadership Committee, please ask one of the members. You will meet most of them today because they are moderating the sessions and taking notes for us. If you feel that your organization would like to participate in the Leadership Committee, just let one of us know.

I've only been chairing the Leadership Committee for a few months, but already I've been impressed with what this dedicated and enthusiastic group is doing. Since last year's Forum, they have been engaged in a number of activities. I'd like to tell you a bit about them:

### **Fostering Collaboration Among Stakeholders In Sustainable Landscape Planning In Southern Ontario**

Last year, with support from the Climate Change section of MNR and Ducks Unlimited Canada, SNO commissioned consultants North South Environmental Inc. and Planscape Inc. to prepare a paper on *Fostering Collaboration Among Stakeholders in Sustainable Landscape Planning in Southern Ontario*. The paper was the focus of a session at last year's forum and is available on SNO's website. It was also presented at the 2010 Latornell conference.

The idea for this paper grew out of concerns that we lack appropriate targets and thresholds for sustainable landscape

planning. The paper includes 17 suggested discussion topics that identify opportunities for us as a stewardship community to collaborate towards more sustainable approaches to southern Ontario landscapes. The SNO Leadership Committee has selected three themes from the paper for your consideration to help us shape our ongoing workplan – more about that in the last session today on “Reflections and Suggestions”.

## Communications

### 1. Website

We continue to maintain SNO’s website at [stewardshipcentre.on.ca](http://stewardshipcentre.on.ca), as part of the National Stewardship Portal. But there are changes in the works. The National Portal will be discontinued over the next six months, and we are engaged in discussions with our Ontario web partners – Ontario Stewardship, Ontario Biodiversity Council, BEAN (Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network) and the Ontario Biodiversity Science Forum – to establish a new internet service provider. At this time of transition, any suggestions you have for website functionality and content will be very welcome.

### 2. SNO Squall

SNO implemented another component of our communications strategy over the past year – the SNO Squall e-bulletin. The inaugural edition was published in November 2010, and the second in January 2011. We will start working on the next one after today’s Forum. The purpose of SNO Squall is to keep you up to date with the latest developments in land stewardship across Ontario and beyond. And we hope that you will use it as a medium to share your success stories, and your challenges, with other stewardship practitioners.

## Barriers To Stewardship

As you know, one of SNO’s objectives is to address barriers to stewardship, and we have been working on a couple of them over the past year.

### 1. Permits To Take Water

The January issue of SNO Squall has a summary of the work SNO has been doing on this issue. In a nutshell, SNO has been addressing an implementation issue related to the risk assessment approach established in MOE’s 2005 PTTW Manual. This approach resulted in most wetland restoration projects being deemed high risk, with the result that the consequent application process was slowing or even cancelling many conservation projects and costing landowners and conservation organizations valuable time and money.

Through a collaborative effort with the stewardship community, MOE has developed a consultation draft of a risk assessment framework that is intended to provide additional clarification and guidance to wetland project proponents and MOE permit staff. We are expecting that this will lead to a simpler, quicker and cheaper process that will yield more wetland projects, with the added bonus of reducing the burden on MOE staff. This is truly a win-win result that illustrates the value of collaboration and an important role for SNO.

### 2. Species at Risk

Another barrier to stewardship that has been identified by the stewardship community recently is the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This year SNO is providing some support to the Eastern Ontario Model Forest to work with landowners to share their thoughts and observations about the ESA and its current implementation. Their goal is to identify opportunities for achieving the objectives of the ESA while reducing the impact on land management activities. They held a session last month and will be sharing the results today at the concurrent session on Species at Risk, along with speakers from other parts of the Province.

## Indicators of Stewardship Progress

Some of you will have attended the session on **Indicators of Success** at last year’s Forum. It addressed the growing concern that the indicators typically used to report on stewardship progress are not adequate to properly assess the collective contribution of stewardship programs to biodiversity conservation. In order to follow up on this concern and try to find better indicators of stewardship progress, SNO collaborated with MNR’s Biodiversity Policy Section to host an

expert panel workshop in April of this year. Today's session on Indicators builds on the results of the expert panel's conclusions and we look forward to your input on this challenging issue.

### Today's Agenda

I've already mentioned two of the topics on today's agenda: the concurrent sessions after the break on Species at Risk and on Indicators. We will start the day with a keynote presentation on an important Provincial initiative that many members of SNO have been participating in – the renewal of the **Ontario Biodiversity Strategy**. I'd like to introduce Carla Grant, Executive Director of the Ontario Forestry Association, member of SNO Leadership Committee and Ontario Biodiversity Council and Renewal Team, who is going to moderate the session.

## PLENARY: ROLE OF STEWARDSHIP IN THE 2011 RENEWAL OF ONTARIO BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

**Carla Grant** introduced the session by providing some background on the Ontario Biodiversity Strategy (OBS) to date. Ontario has a large ecological footprint in relation to Canada and the rest of world. In the process of renewing the strategy, the focus is to "mainstream biodiversity" by helping the public to better understand what biodiversity means and how to protect it.

Carla summarized the strategy from 2005, which focused on reducing threats through various means of engaging all Ontarians. The Ontario Biodiversity Council (OBC) was established to guide and facilitate the process with the assistance of the Stewardship Network of Ontario (SNO) and the Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network (BEAN). An area that needs to be strengthened now is engaging with the business community.

The 2010 State of Ontario's Biodiversity Report highlighted progress on 29 indicators. Generally the report highlighted the fact that there is still concern for ongoing biodiversity loss.

The 2011 process to renew the OBS is based on new knowledge since 2005, including the Convention on Biological Diversity and new global targets and outcomes identified for 2011-2020. The renewal strategy has established the need for a call to action beyond traditional sectors to include finance, insurance, and health. This aligns well with efforts underway elsewhere on the globe. Specifically the OBS renewal process has included the development and implementation of:

- A website e-consultation workbook;
- Workshops and focused sessions with interest groups, and;
- An outcome-based framework with clear, measurable, time-bound targets.

Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into everyday decision-making is one of three goals. Strategic directions include engaging people, reducing threats, enhancing resilience and improving knowledge.

In the implementation of the renewed Strategy it is hoped that there will be more links between day-to-day activities of Ontarians and biodiversity conservation. The SNO Forum today will focus on how stewardship initiatives can help with this.

**Mark Stabb**, Central Ontario Program Manager for the Nature Conservancy of Canada and member of the OBC and Renewal Team, focused on how stewardship and the OBS have come together. He reminded people that the Nature Conservancy of Canada has been a land trust since 1962. He also mentioned that credit for the success of land conservation can be given to private landowners who have managed and protected their lands over many years, including the many who have worked with conservation organizations to partner in the establishment of conservation easements

and acquisition projects.

Many stewardship initiatives and organizations have developed over the years to assist private landowners in managing their lands towards a range of conservation goals. There were financial challenges in the 1990s that led to the need for collaboration among the organizations. Dick Hunter (Conservation Ontario), Mark Stabb (Wetland Habitat Fund) and Steve Wilkins (Ontario Stewardship) met to establish the Stewardship Network of Ontario. SNO has become a task team for delivery of the OBS by the stewardship sector.

Ontario Stewardship is developing a new business model and the evolution of stewardship organizations continues, including the important role of conservation authorities. Mark spoke about different initiatives that support stewardship strategies – including the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture and the former Wetland Habitat Fund of Wildlife Habitat Canada, with many of those staff moving on to Ontario Stewardship and conservation authorities.

Mark also mentioned other initiatives like the Community Wildlife Involvement Program and the Community Fisheries Involvement Program that were based on the best science at the time. For example, Scotch pine was used to control erosion on the moraine but now we are focusing on using natural species in restoration projects.

Mark highlighted that the 2005 OBS put stewardship on the map and focused the involvement of the Stewardship Network of Ontario in biodiversity initiatives. Many other important and successful stewardship initiatives like Caring for the Moraine, the Environmental Farm Plan and activities of conservation authorities and stewardship councils have contributed to the mainstreaming of stewardship. One initiative – Natural Spaces, developed by a Leadership Alliance – produced a promising report that unfortunately hasn't seen the light of day.

The OBC wants the OBS to stay alive and recognizes that we can't depend on Government to deliver the document. It is up to Ontarians – the public. While it is not entirely the responsibility of government to deliver, the government response document will highlight what the government *will* do to address the OBS objectives. MNR has been the lead and is the current lead government organization in the development of the Renewal Strategy with 39 actions identified so far.

Mark also mentioned that the State of Ontario's Biodiversity report 2010 had indicators for stewardship and mentioned the gaps and challenges in reporting those indicators. While Ontario Stewardship information was incorporated, it is acknowledged that there is a need to ensure that other data are included and there is a role for SNO members to assist in this. Mark ended his presentation with a number of recommendations:

- The need to engage people and the significant role for stewardship groups
- The importance of a Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights – getting children outdoors in nature – which is being promoted by BEAN
- The importance of reducing threats like invasive species
- The importance of enhancing resilience, establishing and meeting targets for natural cover, promoting land securement and improving science knowledge by identifying and addressing data gaps
- We need to learn about and employ techniques like community-based social marketing to engage citizens
- We need a commitment to monitoring and strategies supported by the community that will help to direct government action
- There is an Endangered Species Act, but we need community support and engagement. It is important to remind the government that others need to be engaged
- WE ALL NEED TO BE ENGAGED!

**Moreen Miller**, President of the Ontario Stone Sand and Gravel Association (OSSGA), spoke about the role of the aggregate industry in stewardship and biodiversity conservation. She noted that the Ontario population will grow to exceed 4 million people in the coming years. And, with every Ontarian using roughly 14 tonnes of aggregate per year, the challenge is clear.

The OSSGA is involved in many research initiatives including recycling and ensuring the highest and best use of aggregates, for example using high quality resources in high quality applications. Urban rescue – short-term extraction before final development – is another technique being increasingly used.

Understanding the cumulative impacts of the industry is a challenge. It takes a long time to research and the science is not extensive. There is a need for long-term research. Examples of some initiatives underway:

1. Carden Plain cumulative impact assessment study

This study, involving 11 quarries and 10 producers in partnership with the Couchiching Conservancy, is examining the cumulative effects of dewatering. There is a need for proper adaptive management plans for inclusion of biodiversity. In the Carden Plain they have been asking what the landowners and citizens want and how can they be engaged. Moreen noted that in creating habitat there have been challenges including communicating expectations. Not all partners speak the same language. Also, what is the appropriate research, what do we need to know? Further, she emphasized that the aggregate industry is in fact the largest creator of new habitats in Ontario, including, for example, bobolink habitat.

2. Rehabilitation study 2010 (1971 - 2009)

Over 280 sites are being studied including the Greenbelt, the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Ottawa area, the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan Area and the City of Toronto. Questions being asked through this study include:

- Did they meet their targets for restoration?
- What are the partnership challenges and can mutually beneficial opportunities be created?

Moreen concluded that the industry is working towards more inclusive and consensus-driven processes. This includes the development of an Ontario Aggregate Forum involving NCC, Ontario Nature, Save the Oak Ridges Moraine group, Couchiching Conservancy and others. Moreen encouraged participants to speak with members for more information on this Forum.

**Don McCabe**, Vice President, Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA), emphasized that we are all connected to each other and to agriculture through the single landscape that we share and that supports us. By 2050 there will be 9 billion people on the planet – we need to understand that biodiversity health is essential for climate change resilience.

Don commented on the short mandates of governments that make it difficult to deal with the kinds of challenges that are affecting biodiversity, such as climate change. We need long-term thinking. People need to appreciate and understand the importance of farming (e.g. 25 per cent of items we use contain corn, including tires, batteries, cell phones). We need to consider the importance of Best Management Practices such as those associated with the Environmental Farm Plan. Farmers don't want to be the enemy – they can and *do* play a significant role in the health of biodiversity.

Don spoke about the challenges of meeting options for addressing climate change and targets of the OBS. Large corporations like Walmart are looking at the carbon footprint of products as a means of meeting consumer expectations and enhancing public relations. This will have an impact on everyone down the supply chain, and especially farmers.



Farmers can help but they need the flexibility to meet consumer expectations and markets to make a living.

Don mentioned that farmers can be part of the solution in meeting a number of the targets of the Renewal Strategy. He argued that farmers may be 10 per cent of the problem but 20 per cent of the solution in managing carbon sequestration; we need a long-term carbon plan with bridges built across the silos.

Monitoring and reporting on progress are critical and we need to consider urban development, invasive species (including, in many respects, humans), water management issues and a range of other challenges in the mix. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture is ready to work with others towards getting it done.

### Questions and Comments

John FitzGibbon, Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition – There is an urban/rural divide with respect to what is wanted and who is affected by stewardship. Many stewardship initiatives are geared towards urban interests and activities but much of the stewardship needs to be implemented by rural people. How do we address this?

Don McCabe responded: The world revolves on money and the need to make living. Stop assuming that rural residents can help without assistance. Tell me what you value in reality – not in words but in dollars and actions.

Mark Stabb responded: A number of “urban” NGOs left the OBC. The groups left at the OBC are more broadly-based. We now have more support for stewardship networks, Stewardship Councils and Conservation Authority work. We also need to identify the value of Ecological Goods and Services and find support for them. NCC is looking into this and you have the investment in ALUS (Alternative Land Use Services) by the Weston Foundation on farmland ecological goods and services (EG&S) as one example.

Steve Wilkins, Ontario Stewardship – We have the groups and networks. We just aren’t being heard – e.g. OFA, CAs, Ontario Stewardship. We need to communicate more effectively to politicians and get their ear. People in this room need to join in communicating the messages and issues we want politicians to pay attention to.

We need to focus on the 50 per cent of Ontarians who will be urban. This is a challenge – we need to pay attention to that. What is the actual percent of ecosystem that is rural? We also have the present challenge of deficits in government. Because of this we could be losing the carrots rather than the sticks. Rural voices need to be heard.

Moreen Miller, OSSGA – The stick doesn’t work in the aggregate industry. How do we identify and move forward with carrots? I agree with Don McCabe that we need a “Ministry of Embracement.”

Don McCabe – We need to take care of our natural environments and other issues to address our health care issues. We currently have a repair system in the Ministry of Health and we need to look at a longer-term picture of health that is more preventative.

Carla Grant, Ontario Forestry Association – We have a forest tenure divide. I would suggest we have a north-south divide as well as an urban-rural divide and need to develop more effective partnerships to address them.

Suzanne Barrett, SNO Chair – We clearly need more carrots, but we have less money. Other than financial, what other incentives do you recommend?

Mark Stabb responded: Recognition is important (e.g. referring to stewardship awards). With EG&S, what is the actual value to society? Carbon sequestration may be one link to making funding for EG&S possible. We need to be smart about what we do – we need good measures of success – that is, indicators beyond the traditional ones we’ve tended to use in the stewardship community (e.g., acres restored). How do we show, convincingly, that we are having an impact on the landscape?

Don McCabe showed a slide from Alberta highlighting that innovation will help to address challenges. He argued that a little bit of money for agriculture goes a long way.

Maureen Miller OSSGA – For the aggregate industry, we need carrots, but they might not be what you expect. At a recent OMB hearing there were 12 agencies that supported the industry. One agency argued against, and the aggregate company lost. This aggregate company had been in the community for many years and employed many people. In excess of \$8 million dollars were spent on the hearing! Instead, imagine how much could have been achieved in stewardship for \$8 million dollars.

## SPECIES AT RISK SESSION

### **Kerry Coleman, MNR Kemptville District/EOMF**

Eastern Ontario Model Forest (EOMF) recently held a species at risk (SAR) workshop for land managers and landowners engaged in a variety of land uses including farming, forestry, recreation, harvesting etc. Consensus was that we need the Endangered Species Act but landowners are tired of dealing with new legislation: “If the only tool you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.” An important question is: how are SAR best served? Examples were noted relating to Butternut trees and grassland species that benefit from active management.

Workshop participants noted that the SAR fund application is much too onerous for landowners and also emphasized that there is a lack of “boots on the ground.” More field staff representatives are needed to assist landowners in understanding policies and accessing programs.

### **Larry Cornelis, Landowner**

Southwestern Ontario landowner Larry Cornelis described a wetland restoration project on his property and the many species it is attracting, including numerous species at risk. A highlight was a Eurasian Ruff which attracted birders and garnered international attention on the internet. He also described the enjoyment he gets from his wetland project and how it serves as a location for educational outings for students and naturalist clubs.

### **Peter Jeffrey, OFA**

Peter Jeffrey described some of the challenges that farmers experience with SAR legislation: for example badger dens and groundhog holes that require a specific management regime for a huge radius. He indicated that a similar challenge exists for species that use wetlands, such as salamanders, and expressed concern at the lack of clear direction on the types of adjacent activities that can take place next to a woodlot or wetland within a farmed acreage. Peter pointed out that information from the Province regarding SAR sets a threatening tone: no one is going to call MNR for advice or help. Better communication is needed: the Ministry should get out ahead with workable solutions.

### **Michelle Kanter, Carolinian Canada**

Michelle Kanter expressed that she doesn’t see SAR as a barrier to land stewardship and talked about myths that help to drive a wedge between sectors. She noted that a collaborative landscape approach could address these challenges cost-effectively. A few of the examples she gave are as follows:

**Myth:** “There are not enough dollars to do stewardship activities.” Kanter argued that the dollars are there, it’s a case of prioritizing what those dollars are spent on. Ecosystem stewardship benefits SAR, health, economy, agriculture and other

land use sectors. Currently, it is highly undervalued. A habitat or ecosystem approach can be very cost-effective in addressing multiple SAR and community values.

**Myth:** “SAR programs and policies are taking a stewardship-first approach.” The new legislation is making headway on SAR stewardship but programs need to be enhanced to take advantage of the growing opportunities available for landowner partnerships. Michelle pointed out that the Endangered Species Act focuses on species, not habitats. The focus on species does not facilitate a balanced landscape approach that is needed to encourage a variety of best management practices that will improve the landscape for multiple SAR.

**Myth:** “Landowners don’t support SAR.” Although some landowners may balk at SAR conservation, most understand and support a landscape approach that manages habitat in the context of a working landscape. Michelle stated that the Carolinian Canada zone has one third of Canada’s SAR: over 500 rare species. We expect a lot from landowners to manage this biodiversity given the current amount of support available. A true stewardship-first approach would support landowners more consistently using a whole landscape approach and thus reduce the concern over new listings. Kanter pointed out that the conservation sector has done lots of studies to establish/identify natural heritage systems and SAR biology. But we have not made a similar investment in understanding the social framework that we need to facilitate stewardship activities.

**Myth:** “Incentives are expensive.” Although financial incentives can be part of a package, there are many options to explore that are less expensive and more effective. A range of incentives integrated into stewardship programs can be highly cost-effective. Currently, support programs are fragmented, inconsistent and often disregard local SAR realities. A model could be developed based on successful past programs and examples from other areas. Kanter called for a working group to explore these options in a proactive and collaborative way.

#### **Other questions or comments that came up during the Species at Risk session were:**

How diverse can Ontario be? What is the expectation? What is the balance? Response: stop planning for bits and pieces – it always comes back to the need for an ecosystem approach with targets.

Science is both the product and the process...we need to understand that our current state of knowledge may be wrong. Stakeholders need to come together to agree on the uncertainties and then move forward with an adaptive management approach.

## **STEWARDSHIP INDICATORS SESSION**

### **Introduction**

Suzanne Barrett introduced the approach to the workshop, which built on discussions at last year’s Stewardship Forum, as well as the deliberations of an Expert Panel workshop co-hosted by SNO and MNR’s Biodiversity Policy Section in April.

The PowerPoint presentation for this June 7<sup>th</sup> workshop is included in Appendix C, and the workbook is attached as Appendix D. The workbook includes some background on the indicators used for the *State of Ontario’s Biodiversity 2010* report (SOBR), a summary of the Expert Panel workshop held on April 15<sup>th</sup> 2011, and worksheets for today’s discussion.

Suzanne provided an overview of the key conclusions of the Expert Panel workshop:

- 1. Outcomes and targets:** The outcomes provided by the draft 2011 Ontario Biodiversity Strategy provide a broad and valuable framework at the Provincial level. It will be useful to develop specific stewardship targets at a regional or watershed level.
- 2. Relationship between stewardship and direct environmental measures:** Stewardship is all about empowering

*people* to care for the land, air, water and biodiversity. It is difficult to measure the direct environmental results of stewardship actions separately from the results of other actions such as government policies and regulations. It may be most useful for the stewardship community to focus on measuring the social and economic benefits of stewardship actions where the information is available to do this.

In addition, the Expert Panel suggested taking a case study approach to research that would attempt to link stewardship actions to changes in environmental quality and biodiversity. This would help to provide a better understanding of the effectiveness of stewardship activities that could then be extrapolated to other situations.

3. **Building on existing indicators:** The indicators in the 2010 SOBR resulted from a process that used existing information available from groups and agencies across Ontario. It will be worthwhile to assess these indicators to determine:
  - What are their limitations?
  - How can data reliability be improved?
  - What additional information can be collected to make the indicators more meaningful?
4. **Standardized reporting:** It would be invaluable to develop a core set of reporting requirements among organizations that fund stewardship programs. This could be designed to reduce “double-counting” and provide meaningful information about the social, environmental and economic benefits of stewardship activities.
5. **Rationale for stewardship:** It is often difficult for NGOs and agencies to allocate sufficient time for comprehensive and effective reporting on their activities. But it is important to remember that meaningful indicators, especially those that focus on economic benefits of stewardship, are essential to justify investments and help stewardship organizations to survive and thrive in a highly competitive environment.

Today’s workshop was designed to address the third conclusion by exploring how we can build on existing indicators used in the 2010 SOBR. Rebecca Zeran introduced the six indicators used in the 2010 SOBR that relate most directly to stewardship. She explained how they were developed and some of their limitations.

### Table Discussions

Participants were divided into four groups of 4 or 5. Each table had a facilitator from the SNO Leadership Committee (Suzanne Barrett, Jo-Anne Rzakki, Mark Emery and Rebecca Zeran) and was assigned one or two indicators from the 2010 SOBR to discuss. Below are some general comments that were made by a number of the discussion groups, followed by specific comments about each indicator:

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

- Need to develop national or provincial data standards for property/project reporting
- Provide a template so that partners can collect consistent information
- There is a barrier associated with confidentiality of data and sharing of personal information
- Unless people participate in education and awareness programs or are recipients of a grant or incentive, there is no way to measure what people do on their own
- We need incentives for reporting on projects where incentives are not involved. Could this be included in the farm census to at least capture the agricultural sector?
- Time and staff resources for reporting on projects can be a barrier
- For CAs and other umbrella organizations, survey questions asking for data for the SOBR indicators could be added to the standard surveys circulated annually
- Need to use independent tools like the Southern Ontario Land Resource Information System (SOLRIS)
- Land trust information is not being included; at least we could collect data from the ‘top 5’ land trusts
- Smaller grassroots organizations such as Ontario Streams and Evergreen Foundation have not been included to date

- Double-reporting of projects that involve multiple partners is a major concern
- The Stewardship Tracking System (STS) has great potential to compile, centralize and manage data. It could also help to reduce double-counting, but it is not being used enough
- Collect data from funding agencies as well as implementing agencies
- All the indicators need to relate more closely to biodiversity and make direct link with management actions and results

**Do you have other suggestions for indicators?**

- Acres of trees planted and the % of those trees reaching maturity
- Use urban forests/neighbourhoods programs to report on urban biodiversity (Ontario Urban Forest Council could help with networking and potentially send out a survey to the Ontario Urban Forest Network)
- Incorporate analysis of natural heritage features: many CAs have a Natural Heritage layer. This could be connected to stewardship projects to analyze the value of the projects
- # of stewardship programs that specifically address biodiversity objectives

**A. PROTECTED AREAS AND CONSERVATION LANDS IN ONTARIO BY ECOZONE**

**How could comprehension and data reliability be improved?**

- Compile all information from all partners
- Identify the actual amount of the property that is being managed/secured to support biodiversity conservation

**Is the indicator effective and compelling? If not: Could the existing data be presented more effectively? What additional information could be collected to make the indicator more meaningful?**

- Could show spatial results (e.g. maps) as well as numbers
- Need a target (by watershed or county) and to show it spatially
- Could engage the public in setting regional targets; this would increase buy-in

**Are there any barriers to participation?**

- Purpose of land securement may be protection but sharing information may increase use and impact the integrity of the sites
- Legal issues regarding data sharing and agreements (e.g. Ontario Parcel Agreement)

**B. SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT AND CERTIFICATION**

**How could comprehension and data reliability be improved?**

- Work with Eastern Ontario Model Forest, Canadian Standards Association, Sustainable Forestry Initiative and Forest Stewardship Council to report on uptake on private lands

**Is the indicator effective and compelling? If not: Could the existing data be presented more effectively? What additional information could be collected to make the indicator more meaningful?**

- Add private land certification (eg. EOMF)
- The measure is not compelling because MNR mandates that all Sustainable Forest Licence holders must be certified. Given the mandate was for certification by 2007, we should be at 100%. This is really a measure of compliance with a government directive.

**Are there any barriers to participation?**

- The cost of 3rd party certification is very high (both start-up and maintenance) - this is a huge barrier for private lands

**Any other comments or advice?**

- Need to add urban forest (on public and private lands)
- MNR is not leading by example: crown lands do not have to be certified by a 3rd party
- Could MFTIP lands be included under this category?

**C. PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROGRAM**

**How could comprehension and data reliability be improved?**

- Already a high level of reliability in the data from EFP and OSCIA
- Transition to an e-form for the EFP process is underway and may lead to improved data collection
- Are both northern and southern Ontario represented? For OSCIA data – yes
- EFP is not the only program doing stewardship projects on agricultural land (eg CA's also have agriculture projects); but if you include other organizations, double-counting will be a problem
- Lack of follow-up after BMPs have been put in place so we don't know if they are being effectively implemented. Need to check back at intervals of less than 5 years
- Ecosystems don't necessarily correlate with property boundaries, therefore would group EFPs, for example on sub-watershed basis, be more effective?

**Is the indicator effective and compelling? If not: Could the existing data be presented more effectively? What additional information could be collected to make the indicator more meaningful?**

- Use fact sheets or other means to aggregate responses (would help to address confidentiality issue)

**How could you participate? E.g., Does your organization collect any of this information? Would you be willing to share it to contribute to the next SOBR? Are there any barriers to participation?**

- CAs could easily provide information about projects on agricultural land
- Include a check box on forms to indicate whether grant applicants to stewardship programs already have EFPs
- DUC has some matching funds available for stewardship but access to private landowner information is difficult
- OMAFRA and AG Canada are investigating barriers that keep people from attending EFP workshops

**Any other comments or advice?**

- Should other rural lands be covered under this category or continue to focus on agriculture?

**D. AREA WITH STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES**

**How could comprehension and data reliability be improved?**

- Use a common measure (e.g. Assessment Roll Number) so that we know what parcel is involved
- Apply broad landscape analysis (e.g., South Western Ontario Orthophotography Project, SWOOP) to assess cumulative progress (similar to watershed report cards)

**Is the indicator effective and compelling? If not: Could the existing data be presented more effectively? What additional information could be collected to make the indicator more meaningful?**

- # of projects would not be as meaningful as some projects are very small
- N.B. Alberta is introducing a searchable conservation easement registry
- Create larger landscape vision within which landowners can demonstrate their contribution

**How could you participate? E.g., Does your organization collect any of this information? Would you be willing to share it to contribute to the next SOBR? Are there any barriers to participation?**

- Yes, organizations collect this info and would be willing to share it

- If CAs knew a few years ahead of time what kind of data is required, they could collect it and provide it to Conservation Ontario

**Any other comments or advice?**

- Combine the EFP indicator with this one
- Pick a pilot indicator (e.g., forest cover in the Carolinian Life Zone) and work out from there to produce the more challenging indicators

**E. NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS VOLUNTEERING TO CONSERVE BIODIVERSITY**

**How could comprehension and data reliability be improved?**

- Reliability of this information is sketchy at best
- Impossible to gather this type of information from all the agencies that are working to conserve biodiversity: many smaller agencies don't manage/collect this type of information accurately (if at all)...and there are no standards for collecting information across agencies
- It would also be useful (and maybe easier) to collect information about employment – numbers and types of jobs, economic value etc.

**Is the indicator effective and compelling? If not: Could the existing data be presented more effectively? What additional information could be collected to make the indicator more meaningful?**

- Might be more compelling if we had a \$ value for volunteer time in relation to the value of the grants provided (to capture the leverage value of the grant in terms of volunteer time)
- Would be good to also survey the types of activities that people are engaged in
- Number of hours spent volunteering would be a better measure than numbers of individuals
- Recognition programs would help to track volunteer work
- Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence is a good current example (but not directed towards nature stewardship)
- Province should re-establish a stewardship recognition program – Peterson government had one; it included a data base of landowners, award ceremonies, and plaques for recipients

**How could you participate? E.g., Does your organization collect any of this information? Would you be willing to share it to contribute to the next SOBR? Are there any barriers to participation?**

- Yes, organizations collect this information and would be willing to share it. Would just need enough lead time to collect the information
- Agencies might be more willing to provide data if there was more incentive (e.g., access to lists of volunteers to contact for various events)
- CAs already provide this information through Conservation Ontario – requests coming through CO are easier to address
- Is there an agency that already tracks the number of volunteers in Canada?

**F. PARTICIPATION IN PROVINCIAL TAX INCENTIVE PROGRAMS**

**How could comprehension and data reliability be improved?**

- Reporting on participation in tax incentive programs isn't entirely 'fair' because not everyone is eligible
- Need to provide context i.e. how many hectares are actually eligible and what % has incentives
- Need to identify what types of features/landscapes are protected
- There is no monitoring to confirm compliance with objectives of the incentive program
- Not possible to measure protected hectares because the feature being protected does not cover the entire property that gets the incentive

- Would it be possible to include agricultural incentives that are protecting habitat? Discuss with Ontario Federation of Agriculture, NFU and Christian Farmers

**Is the indicator effective and compelling? If not: Could the existing data be presented more effectively? What additional information could be collected to make the indicator more meaningful?**

- Apply weighting to make measure more meaningful
- Report on % eligible land (e.g., provincially significant wetlands) vs % other land (e.g., evaluated wetland but not provincially significant) vs % properties participating in program

**Any other comments or advice?**

- The MFTIP data would be better located under the Sustainable Forest Management indicator

## CONCLUSIONS

Workshop participants provided valuable input to help in refining and improving the indicators of stewardship success. They had specific suggestions about data that could be added to improve the effectiveness of many of the indicators. For example, this might help to identify the economic value of specific stewardship activities, and the leveraging effects of grant programs. In some cases, additional partners were recommended, for example land trusts could participate in providing information about the number of volunteers participating in stewardship. It was also suggested that granting agencies could play a larger role, both in the design of their reporting requirements for grantees, and in directly providing data. Several groups mentioned the value of collecting and presenting information at a regional level, for example by watershed or ecozone.

There was a high level of interest in participating in a collaborative effort to improve the collection and reporting of data about stewardship. Participants also recognized some of the barriers to improved reporting on stewardship. Most frequently cited barriers were concerns about the confidentiality of personal landowner information and the limited availability of resources to collect the information. The issue of double-counting was also raised frequently; it typically arises because stewardship activities are often funded and implemented through partnerships of several agencies. Another challenge is the difficulty of obtaining information about stewardship actions taken by private landowners who are not participating in a funding or education program.

One of the greatest opportunities, cited by all the discussion groups, is to develop a Province-wide template so that funding and implementing agencies can collect more consistent and comprehensive information. It appears that this may be the most fruitful next step in the process to develop an improved suite of indicators for the next *State of Ontario's Biodiversity* report.



## GREEN ENERGY SESSION

This session considered Green Energy and its implications for stewardship. Lynette Mader, Manager of Landowner Outreach Programs for Ontario with Ducks Unlimited Canada, introduced the speakers and moderated the discussion.

### **Dr. Rick Smith, Executive Director, Environmental Defence**

- We need to determine how we accommodate our growing population, provide energy and grow the economy
- Environmental Defence was involved in the creation of the Green Energy Act and continues to be involved in the on-going debate on how to implement the Act
- The science of global warming is clear – the globe has reached a crisis – emissions are still climbing in industrialized nations in North America (United States and Canada) as well as most other countries
- Stewardship practitioners need to reflect on the implications of climate change for the human population and the environment we care about
- There are long-term impacts on animals and plants and anyone who cares about them has to be thinking about how to reduce greenhouse gases
- New partnerships were formed for the Green Energy Act including involvement from First Nations
- There are over 25,000 participants plugged into the micro program
- We have a common objective standard across the Province for setbacks and noise
- Supportive projects need to be properly sited i.e. we don't support solar panels in endangered turtle habitats or windmills on the shores of Point Pelee, but we have to make sure we apply one common standard rather than every municipality re-inventing the wheel

### **Dr. Scott Petrie, Executive Director, Bird Studies Canada**

- Newest threat is improperly placed wind turbines – on-shore and off-shore
- Concerns include: aesthetics and impact on property values, fisheries issues, habitat loss and fragmentation, impact on monarch butterflies, bat mortality, sound impacts, passerine mortality and displacement (especially species at risk), displacement of grassland species, raptor mortality and waterfowl displacement
- Importance of the lower Great Lakes for bird migration on the Atlantic and Mississippi flyways
- Wind farms should not be placed: within 1000 m of waterfowl roosting sites, on flight corridors between roosting and feeding areas, in agricultural fields used by large flocks of waterfowl
- The 120 m setback is not defensible
- Cumulative impacts are not being considered, for example on the eastern shore of Lake Huron
- At the Long Point Research Centre – birds are being caught and implanted with transmitters to look at travel in the region as well their migratory routes
- Information on five species will hopefully influence placement of turbines in future

### **Deb Doncaster, Green Energy Act Alliance**

- Deb worked for the Animal Alliance of Canada and the experience of working with the birding community brought her into the renewable energy sector
- Wanted to better understand the compatibility between windmills and birds and researched the wind park in California where raptors were being killed

- Worked with Fatal Light Attraction Program (FLAP) to do a comprehensive literature review of the potential impact of windmills on birdlife. Concluded that in Toronto an average wind turbine may kill one bird per year (less than the impact of a domestic house cat or an office tower)
- Based on this review, felt confident that renewable energy was the correct thing to do
- Brought in 500 residents as investors to initiate the project
- Big barrier was access to purchase agreements
- Launched campaign for feed-in tariff – anyone who wants to become a generator can participate – community groups, churches, farmers, homeowners, etc.
- Campaign in 2004 culminated in the Green Energy Act which put Ontario in a leadership position for green jobs and green infrastructure and provides opportunities for rural economic development and aboriginal development
- 32,000 mega watts of energy are produced – 50% owned by communities
- Community Power Fund helps communities to get started – have funded over 84 projects – \$4 million in initial grant money
- On Georgian Island, First Nations own 51% of the project and receive revenue as opposed to royalties
- Cooperative model - 14 projects in Ontario
- There is room to resolve all kinds of issues and questions regarding the benefits and impacts of turbines. We need more dialogue on how to move forward in a way that meets the needs of local communities

#### **Vitold Kreutzer, Landowner**

- When he moved from the city to the country, Vitold recognized that he needed to be more in touch with nature
- Sees himself not as a landowner but one who shares the land and he is therefore responsible to make sure no one else can damage it
- The basis of transmitting electricity seemed an unnatural source of energy
- Uses solar panels for running a bakery on his farm – he gets equal amount of production all year round – 1.8 kilowatts of power – and is able to store some of it. This has saved \$8,000 in energy costs over the last 10 years
- This individual responsibility is a contribution to Vitold's community

#### **James Holland, Ducks Unlimited**

- Looked at 8 case studies of solar farm applications – before the Green Energy Act came into effect
- For example: 50 hectare site farmed in soya bean and wheat, includes part of a provincially significant wetland. Ten rows of solar panels were to be placed in this rural context
- Wetland to be dedicated to conservation authority or municipality with a berm to hide wetland from solar panels
- Public was very involved in this process: environmental advisory committee was appointed by municipal council
- Neighbours were well engaged through a public open house, two residents meetings and over 30 written and verbal submissions
- Once studies had been conducted, most concerns became non-issues
- The proponent met with residents to address matters beyond the requirements of the Planning Act including setbacks and a management plan for the wetland were discussed
- Residents convinced the proponent to make a living fence, habitat patches, full size trees, native shrubs, wildflowers and native grasses

- Case study demonstrates the value of public involvement in green energy projects to incorporate local knowledge, encourage discussion in a public forum and influence the outcomes
- In contrast there are concerns that the Green Energy Act has resulted in loss of local accountability

## REFLECTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

**Suzanne Barrett** asked participants to complete the survey and questions regarding SNO priorities, forum feedback and SNO communications. The survey and detailed results are in Appendix E. A summary is provided below.

### SNO Priorities

Suzanne summarized the six potential themes. The first three were discussed at the Forum today, and the remainder were proposed by the Leadership Committee, based on recommendations in the Fostering Collaboration paper:

*Species at risk:* SNO could continue to provide regional workshops to facilitate the exchange of ideas and perspectives on how to overcome barriers to stewardship of species at risk.

*Green energy:* SNO could facilitate discussions about the role that communities and landowners can play to maximize the benefits of green energy and avoid harmful impacts to wildlife and natural areas.

*Indicators of progress:* SNO could continue the dialogue by disseminating the results of the Forum session; hosting sessions with other groups (e.g. data providers and funders) to discuss data reliability and consistent reporting requirements; and exploring opportunities for case study research to link stewardship action with measurable environmental quality and biodiversity outcomes.

*Targets and thresholds:* SNO could host regional workshops to kick-start community action to identify a sustainable countryside vision, targets and thresholds that would help convey the urgency for stewardship activities. This could take an integrated approach that includes biodiversity, agriculture, climate change, economic futures and other aspects of sustainable landscape planning.

*Community-based sustainable landscape planning:* SNO could pursue ways to showcase case studies and host local forums to work towards sustainable landscape plans. This could be linked to the visioning and target-setting initiatives under the previous theme.

*Stewardship and agriculture:* SNO could help to increase understanding of agricultural perspectives on issues facing the countryside and help to remove perceived or real barriers to stewardship faced by the farm community. For example, we could host a forum with provincial level agricultural organizations (such as Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition, Ontario Federation of Agriculture etc) on a specific issue, such as species at risk.

30 participants expressed their opinions about the six potential themes by filling out the survey. Based on rating the themes 1 (low priority), 2 (moderate priority) or 3 (high priority), the results were as follows:

- **Species at Risk** was a high or moderate priority for 33 people
- **Indicators of Progress** was a high or moderate priority for 27 people
- **Stewardship and Agriculture** was a high or moderate priority for 25 people
- **Community-based Sustainable Landscape Planning** was a high or moderate priority for 24 people
- **Green Energy** was a high or moderate priority for 21 people
- **Targets and Thresholds** was a high or moderate priority for 17

### **Forum Feedback**

38 participants provided feedback on the Forum. The results are as follows, and will be used by the Leadership Committee to help plan the 2012 Forum.

**FEEDBACK ON 2011 STEWARDSHIP FORUM**

Aspect of Forum	Number of ratings	
	Poor - fair	Good - excellent
Forum format		31
OBS session (speakers)		38
OBS session (discussion)		27
Species at Risk session (speakers)		20
Species at Risk session (discussion)	2	16
Indicators session (speakers)		14
Indicators session (discussion)		16
Green Energy session (speakers)		27
Green Energy session (discussion)	5	17
Poster Display	3	5

### **Forum Logistics**

In response to the question “would you be prepared to pay a small registration fee for the Forum in future to cover the cost of refreshments?”, 26 people replied “yes” and 6 people replied “no”.

In response to the question “is June the best month for the stewardship forum?”, 22 people replied “yes” and 6 people replied “no”.

### **SNO Communications**

In response to the question “What are the key features you would like to see in a re-vamped SNO website?”, participants responded that they would like to see: member profiles, mapping that informs local projects, information on BMPs, links to partner organizations or sections for partners to provide updates, links to project stories and innovative partnerships etc, more related events, and research news.

In response to the question “is the SNO Squall e-bulletin meeting your needs?”, ten people responded that it is. A number of people noted that they aren’t on the distribution list yet. Seven participants indicated that they would like to submit articles over the coming year and suggested some topics, including water quality, shorelines and community action, coastal zone stewardship, ecosystem recovery heritage, the Ontario Invasive Plant Council’s guide “Plant Me Instead”.

**Suzanne thanked participants for attending and the Forum adjourned at 3pm.**