

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY FOREST, ONTARIO

OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA BASED CONSERVATION MEASURE (OECM)

Nestled within the rolling landscape of the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Northumberland County Forest stands as a testament to history and resilience. What began more than a century ago to protect and enhance the area through land securement and conifer planting has evolved into a rich mosaic of plantations, mixed hardwoods, wetlands, and one of the region's historical and most distinctive natural features—tallgrass prairie and oak savanna ecosystems. Across North America, these rare habitats and the species that depend on them have declined dramatically, making their protection here especially significant.

The 5-Year Operating Plan (2016-2020) identified **special management zones**, with the intent to ensure habitat and species are managed. Within these zones, management goals include invasive species treatment, regenerating forest, restoring open oak woodland, revitalizing tallgrass prairie and oak savanna, enhancing sand barren communities,

and protecting ponds and wetlands. In total, 442.5 hectares of these areas were recognized in 2021 as Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECM).

Today, this 2,225-hectare landscape is carefully stewarded through County bylaws and the Forest Management Plan—a long-term vision that balances conservation, sustainable forestry, and recreation. County staff advance this vision by restoring habitats, managing invasive species, and using selective harvesting to transition low-diversity plantations into healthy, biodiverse forests. Guided by science and strengthened through partnerships, these efforts help ensure the forest remains resilient and thriving.

Woven through all of this is the role of the community and visitors—whose use, support, and appreciation help keep this vast landscape thriving. Together, they ensure the Northumberland County Forest remains a treasured place, now and into the future.

HOW DO WE KNOW THAT THE NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY FOREST IS AN OECM?



Does the property have a defined geographical space?

Yes! The boundaries of Northumberland County Forest are well identified and can be accurately placed on a map.



Is there an effective way of ensuring that biodiversity will continue to be conserved into the future?

Yes! The area is managed and monitored for use, restoration of habitats and non-native species treatment is occurring, and detailed operational plans and bylaws are in place. The area is Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified.



Is there an expectation that the biodiversity on the site will be conserved for the long term?

Yes! The area is conserved long term through certification, bylaws, operation plans and a team of skilled staff.



Is biodiversity conservation the primary objective of the area?

No – and that's okay! Recreation, Forestry, and Conservation are three primary objective pillars that balance together within the forest, while ensuring that biodiversity is a key component in each.

Quick tip

If the answer to this question was “yes!” the area would likely be assessed as a protected area instead of an OECM. Both types of areas are important, and both achieve biodiversity conservation.



Is biodiversity on the site conserved?

Yes! Biodiversity is conserved through restoration, monitoring, invasive species removal and a dedicated team.