

# ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS IN LONDON, ONTARIO

CONSERVING BIODIVERSITY CLOSE TO HOME

## PROTECTED AREAS

In 2019, the City of London became the first Ontario municipality to have municipal lands count towards Canada's protected areas target. As a certified, high level Bird Friendly City London is an identified leader in natural heritage protection, invasive species management and stewardship. London completed an assessment of 11 Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) totaling over 735 hectares, all of which met the pan-Canadian standard as protected areas.

As part of London's Natural Heritage System, these ESAs include wetlands, woodlands, and valleylands that provide habitat for wildlife. Some properties also include Provincially Significant Wetlands, as well as Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest – unique natural landscapes or features that are important for

activities like scientific study or education. Together these areas support several species at risk and other regionally and locally rare species. These include Bald Eagles, Bank Swallows, Snapping Turtles, and other Carolinian forest plants that are only found in Southern Ontario. The areas are considered permanently protected year-round and are managed in ways that help support ecosystem health. Assessments have also shown that the species diversity on these lands has been increasing over time.

Check out the [technical screening assessment](#) of these areas for more information.

*Photo: City of London*

## HOW DO WE KNOW LONDON'S ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS ARE PROTECTED AREAS?



**Does the property have a defined geographical space?**

Yes! The boundaries of London's Environmentally Significant Areas 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! There are a number of Federal and Provincial Acts that apply to these sites that help ensure that biodiversity will continue to be conserved. City of London Bylaws, policies, strategies, guidelines, and Provincial designations all add additional layers of protection.



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

Yes! The London Plan (the Official Plan) for the City of London says that these areas are to be protected, conserved, enhanced, and managed for present and future generations. It's very unlikely that this protection status will ever change.



**Is biodiversity conservation the primary objective of the area?**

Yes! Working with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, the City of London's objectives include maintaining, restoring, monitoring, and enhancing the biodiversity, ecological function and connectivity within the watershed.

### Quick tip

If the answer to this question is "no!" the area would likely be assessed as an Other Effective area-based Conservation Measure. Both types of areas are important, and both achieve biodiversity conservation.



**Is biodiversity on the site conserved?**

Yes! As well, ecological inventories are conducted on these sites every 10 to 20 years which help detect changes to the diversity of plants and animal species located there.