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Nature Conservancy of Canada increases protection for Minesing Wetlands

April 11, 2018
Barrie, ON

Only known Canadian site for the endangered Hine’s emerald dragonfly

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) today announced the protection of an additional 43 hectares (107 acres) in the Minesing Wetlands. Located 12 kilometres west of Barrie, the Minesing Wetlands are vitally important as they are one of the largest and least disturbed wetland areas remaining in southern Ontario.

The federally endangered Hine’s emerald dragonfly’s very specific habitat needs make the Minesing Wetlands the only known place in Canada that supports this rare and beautiful insect. By increasing the amount of protected and restored land in the wetlands, NCC hopes to expand the Hine’s emerald dragonfly’s current habitat range.

Since 1974, NCC and its partners have protected over 5,500 hectares (13,500 acres) of a variety of habitats in the Minesing Wetlands. At more than 10,900 hectares (26,900 acres), the Minesing Wetlands natural area is home to many species at risk, including several turtle species and birds, such as least bittern and cerulean warbler. The area supports a wide variety of wetland birds, which flock to the area in the tens of thousands during spring migration when most of the wetlands resemble a large lake.

These wetlands are also important to surrounding communities in providing flood control, water filtration, fish habitat and recreational opportunities. Over 70 per cent of southern Ontario’s wetlands have been converted for alternative uses since European settlement. The remaining wetlands are threatened by non-native, invasive plant species, pollution and habitat fragmentation. It is very likely that without the actions of NCC, the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority and other key partners, this portion of the Minesing Wetlands may have been further developed and degraded.

This Nature Conservancy of Canada project was generously supported by funding from the Government of Canada through the Natural Areas Conservation Program, the Patrick Hodgson Family Foundation, Robert and Ellen Eisenberg, Ontario Power Generation and the support of other donors.

Quotes

“The Minesing Wetlands are incredibly important to the local community and all of Ontario. Rich in native plants and wildlife,

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they are also key in filtering water, absorbing heavy rain floodwaters, preventing property damage and protecting local infrastructure — helping to mitigate severe weather events from our ever-changing climate.” Wendy Cridland, Nature Conservancy of Canada acting vice-president, Ontario Region

“On behalf of my colleague, Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, I congratulate the Nature Conservancy of Canada for their work in conserving an additional 43 hectares of important habitat in the Minesing Wetlands. Through the Natural Areas Conservation Program, our government is working with Canadians to preserve habitat for species at risk and protect biodiversity.” Deb Schulte, Member of Parliament for King-Vaughan and Chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development

Facts

- Going forward, NCC will manage the natural portions of this property for their conservation value, and restore the meadows, which were once used for cattle grazing, back to a functional, forested swamp, ensuring the entire property remains an important piece of the Minesing complex for the long term.
- The property is being named after the late Patrick W. E. Hodgson, who was a long-time supporter of the Nature Conservancy of Canada’s work in the Minesing Wetlands.
- The Patrick W. E. Hodgson Property is adjacent to existing conservation lands and contains moist meadows and a swamp forest that buffer the core of the Minesing Wetlands.
- Buffering and expanding the sensitive core of the Minesing Wetlands, where conservation has been active for the past 45 years, was identified as a top, urgent priority by NCC and partners in 2017.
- Residential development around the Minesing Wetlands, associated changes in water quality and quantity, and the spread of non-native phragmites all threaten the Hine’s emerald dragonfly’s survival.
- The Minesing Wetlands are home to unique wetland community types, such as southern Ontario’s largest fen, a coniferous swamp more typical of northern Ontario, and hackberry and bur oak woodlands, which are more typical of the southern U.S.
- The Minesing Wetlands are designated as a Provincially Significant Wetland (PSW), Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) and Ramsar wetland of international significance.

About

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is the nation's leading not-for-profit, private land conservation organization, working to protect our most important natural areas and the species they sustain. Since 1962, NCC and its partners have helped to protect more than 1.1 million hectares (2.8 million acres), coast to coast, with more than 74,400 hectares (184,000 acres) in Ontario. To learn more, visit natureconservancy.ca.

The Government of Canada's Natural Areas Conservation Program (NACP) is a unique public-private partnership to accelerate the pace of land conservation across southern Canada. The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) manages the program. Federal funds are matched by contributions raised by NCC and its partners. Habitat conserved under the NACP enhances natural corridors and other protected areas.

Video and images

[B-roll and images are available here.](#)

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