

# Farmers feel CH stepping out of bounds with Green Lands Strategy

by Donna Danielli

It's almost ready. Conservation Halton is currently putting the finishing touches on its new three year Strategic Plan.

The Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee and the Halton Federation of Agriculture have both been active participants in the process, providing input and outlining concerns as well.

Recently, Jamie Fisher represented both organizations when he spoke to Conservation Halton about concerns regarding their Green Lands Strategy.

Conservation Halton CAO Theresa Maguire-Garber outlined the Green Lands Strategy in a recent newsletter as, "A critical component of the plan to determine the optimum amount of natural areas required for a healthy watershed. The program will identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas through acquisition, stewardship agreements, and conservation easements. The strategy will also include measures to establish natural corridors linking watershed ecosystems, and where possible have the lands accessible to the public."

Mr. Fisher spoke to the Board of Directors for Conservation Halton about the water equation, rainfall, infiltration, ground and surface water.

"From our point of view it appears that the infiltration part of the equation is covered by the Region," explained Mr. Fisher. "The run-off part of the equation is not as well monitored and we're not sure there is a clear leadership in the surface water part of our watershed."

Mr. Fisher reminded the Board the Bronte Creek Watershed has only two monitoring points - at Carlisle and at Crawford Lake.

"One of our biggest concerns is anything we might be causing, especially in water quality," he explained. "We think you have the best knowledge to gauge where to put that monitoring base. From our point of view, you are the surface water people. The next disaster, like Walkerton, is going to happen and I would like to know that Halton's watershed is protected and can handle any problem with engineers and

scientists."

When contacted for comment, Conservation of Halton Director of Marketing Gary Hutton said, "Mr. Fisher certainly has a point, but there are also other agencies involved in surface water planning. The Ministry of the Environment is in charge of permits regarding taking over 50,000 litres of water daily but that's not done in communication with the conservation authorities working with the watershed. There needs to be more clarification for who is responsible for surface water."

The basis of Mr. Fisher's presentation to Conservation Halton was the most effective use of their budget at a time when funding isn't as plentiful as in the past.

The position of the Halton Federation of Agriculture is that Conservation Halton's Green Lands Strategy not only duplicates the Region's Green Lands Strategy but also their own Watershed Plan.

"We don't see it as a huge amount of resources as we hope to add that strategy to the stewardship studies and the watershed studies," explained Ms. Maguire - Garber. "It's really more a matter of pulling all the information from all the other studies into one study."

Director of Watershed Management Services Bob Edmondson summed it up.

"We're continuing on with the whole process of watershed management and planning. These plans include identifying natural areas. The Green Lands Strategy is a continuation of that process and we will certainly be working with the Region to make sure there is no duplication."

Mr. Fisher argued that Conservation Halton should think twice before taking on new projects like Smart Growth and Green Lands.

"We think you should forget about taking on a Green Lands Strategy but take a leadership role in surface water monitoring and research, and set an example on lands that you own for the best use of environmentally sensitive areas," said Mr. Fisher.

"We need you to take that leadership role in groundwater management and monitoring. We think that there are enough experts here to see what you've done in the past, and look at how you can do it better or if it even needs to be done better. The Green Lands study is not something you should put a lot of resources into."

At press time, Conservation Halton was still in the process of reviewing the draft of its Strategic Plan before presenting it to its Board of Directors for final approval.

## Hire a student!

by Deborah Quail

Calling all students looking for work.

The Georgetown and Milton Human Resources Centres of Canada for Students (HRCCS) are opening their doors for another season of summer employment connections on May 1, 2002. This is the fourth decade that over 350 HRCCS offices across Canada will be offering a variety of free services to assist students and employers with their summer employment needs.

The HRCCS offices are part of the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy (YES). The strategy helps youth make the transition from school to work by providing work experience opportunities.

Anne-Marie Chiles, the North Halton/Dufferin HRCCS Supervisor, says, "The Human Resource Centre of Canada for Students 34th Annual Grand Opening will focus on the Hire a Student...Higher Success message. There will be access to a wide range of employment-related information throughout the event. Included at the Grand Opening will be a selection of print materials and other information about the services offered by the Human Resource

Centre of Canada for Students and many other government programs."

"For more than 30 years, the Government of Canada has invested in Canadian youth as part of its ongoing efforts to facilitate their access to learning and work opportunities," Ms. Chiles remarks. "In 1997, the Government of Canada established Canada's Youth Employment Strategy, demonstrating a continued commitment to the provision of youth employment programs. The HRCCS is part of the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy that helps young Canadians make the transition from school to work and get their first job."

"According to the most recent Labour Force Survey, employment among youth ages 15-24 has increased this year. The purpose of the grand opening is to promote public awareness of the free services we provide to students and employers in the North Halton area. I'm very proud to be a part of this initiative. In 2001, in PHD the total number of jobs filled was 3,458."

For more information on the programs/services call toll free 1-800-622-6232, or visit their web site at [www.youth.gc.ca](http://www.youth.gc.ca).

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