

# Nature reserve in jeopardy, says group

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geographic scope of the ELAP program without increasing the pot of money available reports CONE, resulting in the same amount of money being spent for reserve lands, all parks acquisitions and other land acquisitions in Ontario.

According to the group the upshot will be a cut in funds for Escarpment acquisitions by more than half to \$1 million per year, down from \$2.5 million.

CONE is also concerned that the smaller pot of money will force the Ministry of Natural Resources to strictly limit which candidate nature reserves qualify for funding.

Ruth Kuchinad of Georgetown, a member of the board of directors for the Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy (EBC), said she is unhappy with the proposed changes. She said they show a lack of support for the efforts of land trust organizations that both acquire property and steward it afterward.

"I think it's a very short-sighted view of land preservation on the

Niagara Escarpment," said Kuchinad, who urges everyone to voice their objections to the changes to their MPP.

"Every year development pressures on the Escarpment are getting stronger, which means the cost of acquiring these lands and protecting them in conservation reserves is getting higher and higher," said Jason Thorne, executive director of CONE. "If we don't act now by committing the funds necessary to do the job, it will be too late."

"Adding lands to existing parks is very important," said Thorne. "But there are a lot of environmentally-sensitive lands on the Escarpment that are in need of protection that are not adjacent to an existing park. Those lands need to be protected too."

Bob Barnett, Chair of the EBC, said as the Silver Creek property is



RUTH KUCHINAD

not designated as a government park acquisition it would likely not qualify for government funds under the ELAP.

"If the Ministry carries through with its plans to cut funding under the ELAP and focus its efforts only on parks we don't think we can acquire and protect these important Georgetown-area properties," said Barnett who urges people to tell the MNR by the deadline of Monday (September 16) not to make the changes to ELAP.

He said the Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy is willing to match government money from ELAP.

Government agencies generally have to pay a full dollar for every dollar of land acquired, said Barnett, plus more taxpayers' money to manage it later. However, non-government charities can leverage other forms of support, including donations from the landowners themselves, he added.

Halton MPP Ted Chudleigh did not return requests for comment before press time.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer



## Child's play

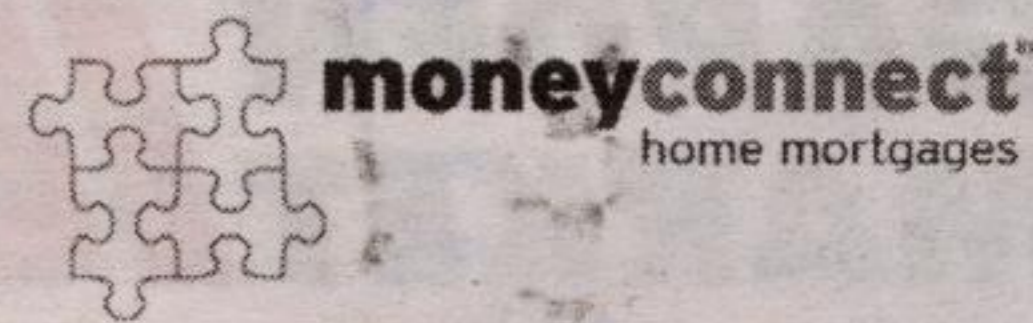
Youngsters from Maple Avenue Regional Child Care Centre enjoy the newly-opened playground at Durham Street Parkette Monday. (From left) Town of Halton Hills Parks design and construction coordinator Rakesh Mistry, Ron Howald of Saturn Isuzu of Brampton, and Halton Hills Mayor Kathy Gastle, along with Halton Hills Director of Recreation Terry Alyman (right) officially opened the facility. Saturn Isuzu of Brampton presented Mayor Gastle with a cheque for \$5,000 as part of the Saturn Canada program.

Photo by Ted Brown

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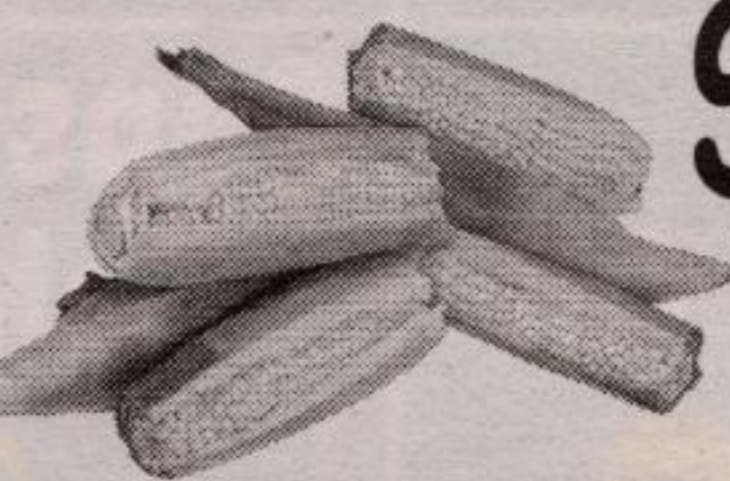
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