



Conservation Notes

Water source protection is essential for clean drinking water



Conservation notes from CAO, Theresa Maguire-Garber

Water source areas such as creek headwaters, wetlands and groundwater need to be protected to ensure safe drinking water in Ontario. Water source protection is the first level in a multi-barrier approach to protecting drinking water and ensuring watershed

health and ecological integrity. It includes safeguarding surface and groundwater with such actions as plugging abandoned wells, proper nutrient management, pollution abatement initiatives, upgrading existing wells and septic systems, managing water taking, and initiating rural water

quality programs. If the first barrier fails, other barriers such as water treatment are there to reduce risk to human health.

In February, the Ontario Government released a *White Paper on Watershed Based Source Protection Planning*, which outlined a detailed approach to preparing water source protection plans for all watersheds in Ontario. The paper also described the legislative framework and timing for the process along with addressing water-taking issues. Conservation Halton is committed to working together with all stakeholders in the development of a water source protection plan for its watershed.

Conservation Halton is one of 36 conservation authorities mandated by the Province to ensure the conservation, restoration and responsible management of Ontario's water, land and natural habitats on a watershed basis. We work to ensure the protection of creeks, lakes, streams, wetlands, woodlands and other natural areas.

As the community based environmental agency in this area, Conservation Halton

provides information on a variety of environmental issues relevant to the watershed. Watershed communities are expanding at a rapid pace and the protection and conservation of natural areas is a major concern.

During the past year, Conservation Halton has been developing viewpoints on important watershed issues and communicating them to government, local residents and other stakeholders. This edition of *Focus* has a summary of these positions including water source protection.

A feature in this issue, called "Who's Looking Out for Our Water? Getting to the Source of Protecting Our Drinking Water," shows how water resources are impacted in a watershed and visually explains the multi-barrier approach to protecting drinking water. A Web site link to the Ontario government's *White Paper on Watershed-Based Source Protection Planning* is provided.

Water source protection is an efficient and practical way to protect the quality and quantity of our drinking water.

OPG funds will plant 190,000 trees

Ontario Power Generation has announced a grant of \$316,642 for Conservation Halton to plant 190,000 trees on lands owned by the community based environmental agency.

The trees will be planted this year and next at the Kelso, Rattlesnake Point and Mount Nemo Conservation Areas and the Lemonville Road Resource Management Area. "This is one of the largest contributions

that we have ever received for tree planting," says Conservation Halton's CAO, Theresa Maguire-Garber. "Ontario Power Generation must be commended for their extensive tree planting and carbon reduction strategy."

In 2000, Ontario Power Generation launched a program to assist landowners in planting trees for the purpose of carbon reduction. The program is focused on restoring forest habitat in Southern

Ontario, with a goal of planting two million native trees and shrubs by the fall of 2007, resulting in 900 hectares of new forest. Planting trees helps trap and offset tonnes of carbon dioxide, which over the lifetime of the trees reduces global warming.

To date, Ontario Power Generation has planted one million native trees and shrubs on more than 450 hectares of land that addresses key ecological restoration priorities. Between 2001 and 2003, Ontario Power Generation contributed \$203,000 to Conservation Halton for

planting over 127,000 native trees and shrubs on conservation lands.

"This program is unique in linking greenhouse gas emissions to a biodiversity solution by working with nature to sequester CO2 emissions," says John Bush, Conservation Halton Manager of Watershed Lands and Resources. "Planting trees also provides other important ecosystem enhancements such as restoring riparian areas; reducing erosion; enhancing stream quality; providing natural corridors for wildlife; and increasing interior forest habitat."

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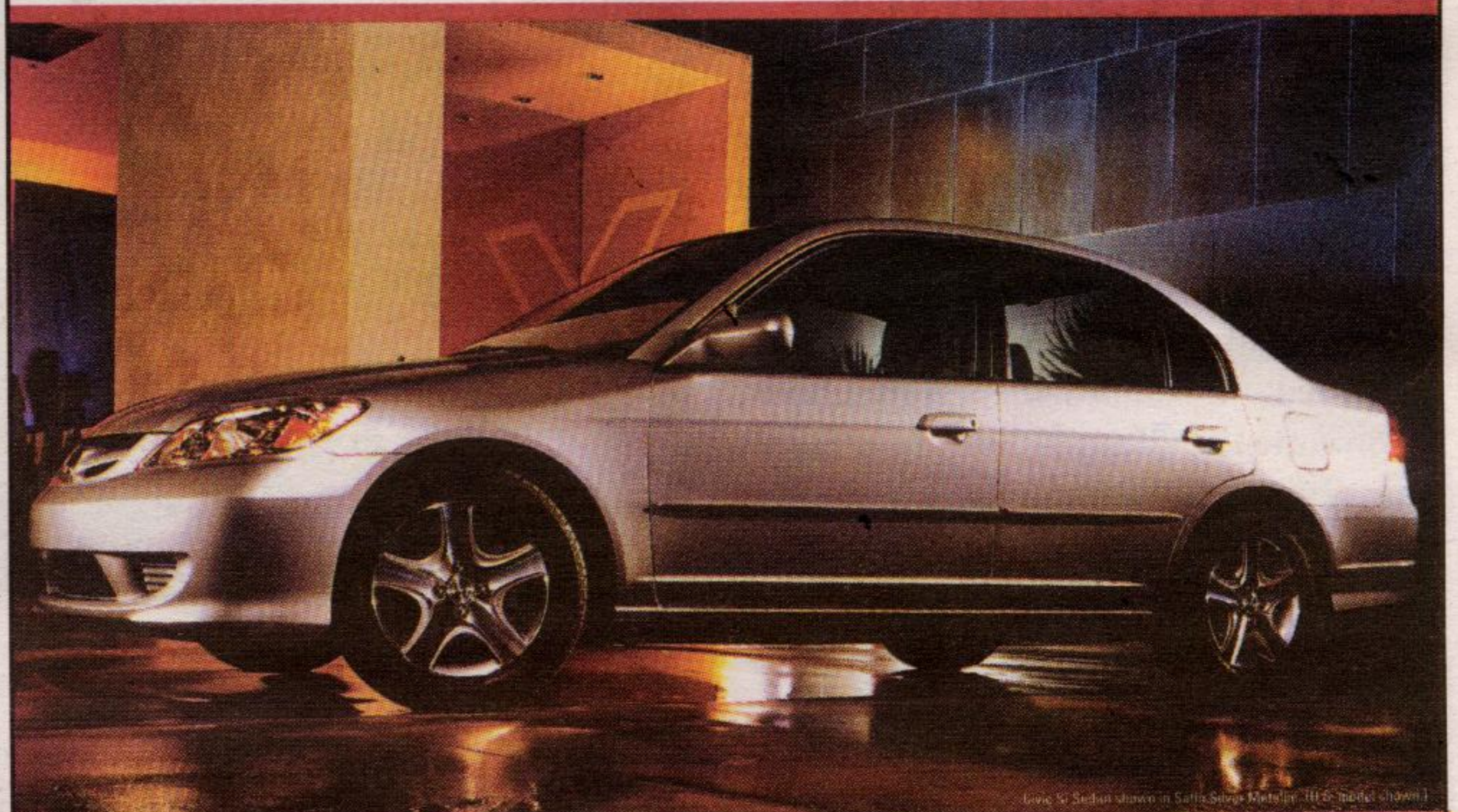
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