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Species protected with Greenbelt help

What do the King Rail, Cucumber Magnolia and Jefferson Salamander have in common? They are among the 65 or so endangered species protected by the Ontario Greenbelt.

Through the preservation of the Greenbelt's 1.8 million acres, these species have been able to persist and with time, will hopefully be taken off of the endangered species list.

"Given ongoing threats to many of our birds, plants, mammals, amphibians and reptiles, Ontarians are lucky to have this land protected in order to preserve wildlife habitat," says Dr. Anne Bell, Director of Conservation and Education at Ontario Nature and one of the lead partners in the Save Our Species coalition. "Without these species, the natural heritage of the area would be severely depleted and we would suffer a great loss, not being able to experience all that nature has to offer."

Reduced pesticide use, appropriate management of rural areas, clean streams and woodland areas - these are important to all species, whether endangered or not, in order to help them survive.

Preserving land from development in the Greenbelt, which wraps around the Golden Horseshoe, not only helps Ontarians today but provides a natural heritage for future generations to enjoy. We can take pride in knowing that preserving the land is doing more than just providing green space; it allows a number of endangered species a second chance to rebuild and hopefully flourish.

"For some species, the protection of the Greenbelt may very well be their last hope for survival," says Bell. "The possibility of stopping and reversing the current decline in these species is possible and we will have the Greenbelt to thank."



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HONoured FOR HIS EFFORTS: Retired Halton Regional Police Supt. Dan Okuloski shows the Crime Stoppers of Halton Rod Cliffe Award — for his significant contribution to the organization — during the annual Crime Stoppers Recognition Dinner last week. The other three recipients, retired chief James Harding, retired sergeant Dave Atkinson and Randy Pickard, were unable to attend.

Fraud case back in court Mar. 11

The case of a Milton businessman facing a handful of fraud charges made its first court appearance February 12.

Nick Cortese, 43, has been charged with seven counts of fraud over \$5,000 in connection with a series of alleged fraudulent loans and mortgages totaling more than \$8 million.

Cortese wasn't at the Milton courthouse appearance. Instead a representative from his lawyer's firm attended. The case will make its next court appearance Tuesday, Mar. 11 in Milton.

Halton Regional Police recently completed a four-month investigation into four mortgages and three small business loans taken out in the Milton area over a two-year period allegedly using false documents.

It's alleged the documents over-valued the properties, allowing larger mortgages to be obtained. It's also alleged false documents were used to over-value the businesses when getting three small business loans totaling \$750,000.

Cortese was released in December.

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