

Beauty of Moraine captured on the page

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You don't know what you've got until you lose it. Fortunately for residents in this area, however, a group of individuals has recognized the need to protect a unique natural feature of the landscape before 'progress' overwhelms it.

To increase public awareness of its work, the Save The Oak Ridges Moraine (STORM) Coalition, which includes naturalists, historians and writers, recently published a book entitled *Oak Ridges Moraine*.

The book is both a pictorial celebration of the moraine — an immense ridge of land which stretches for more than 200 kilometres from the Niagara Escarpment to almost the Trent River — and an eloquent plea for its preservation. David McQueen, who chaired the book committee, joined STORM in the early 1980s.

"When I moved out into this area and bought a house near the shores of Chalk Lake in 1980, I couldn't have told you what the Oak Ridges Moraine was," he said. But after joining the local landowners association, "I began to find out what it was and why it was so important."

As he learned more about the size and characteristics of the moraine, he realized that it was well worth saving, "but I also knew that it couldn't be done just on a local basis and that's when I became acquainted with STORM. The coalition exists to provide communications between local groups and I got quite heavily involved with it."

Once again, however, the problem of public awareness surfaced: "Most people don't know where it is, what it is and why it's important to do something about it."

A few years ago, STORM decided to put together a book and in order to do that we needed to draw on many areas of expertise."

The book committee recruited 29 writers, along with photographers, designers and a retired cartographer, all of whom volunteered their services. While each contributor brought his or her expertise to the project, the committee wanted to ensure the book was not too technical or obscure for the general public.

"We didn't envisage it as a great war cry, what we wanted it to be was a description, an introduction, a message to people — here's this place, it's very interesting and important, why don't you go out and have a look around and decide for yourself what the issues are and how you would like to see them resolved."

Oak Ridges Moraine is a beautiful book to look at, as well as being a fount of information about the moraine. It explains how it was formed, gives vivid descriptions of the wildlife that inhabit it and provides a fine guide to scenic treasures contained within its boundaries.

"Drive north from Lake Ontario, almost anywhere along its length, and the pattern is the same: a fringe of urban life near the lake that gradually gives way to suburbs, and a flat, square grid of roads and farms laid out with careful precision," noted the Hon. David Crombie in his introduction to the book.

"But a little further north yet, the land begins to rise in an irregular ridge of sandy hills. Woodlands crowd farm fields, and the roads dip and weave through hummocky terrain. You have reached the Oak Ridges Moraine."

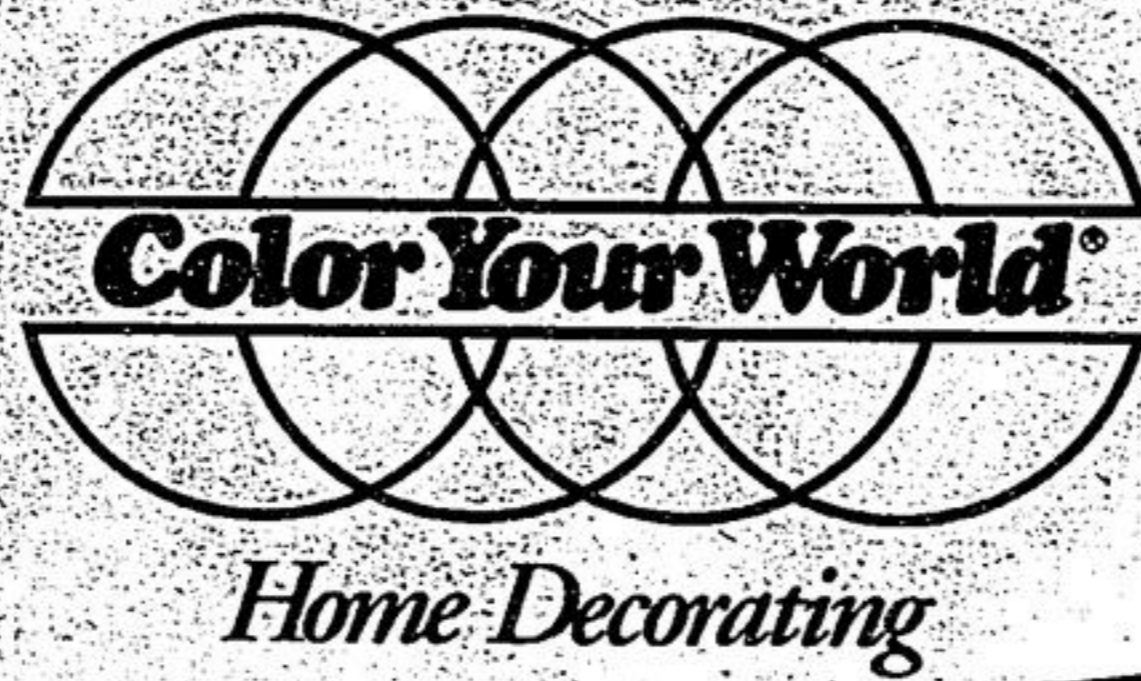
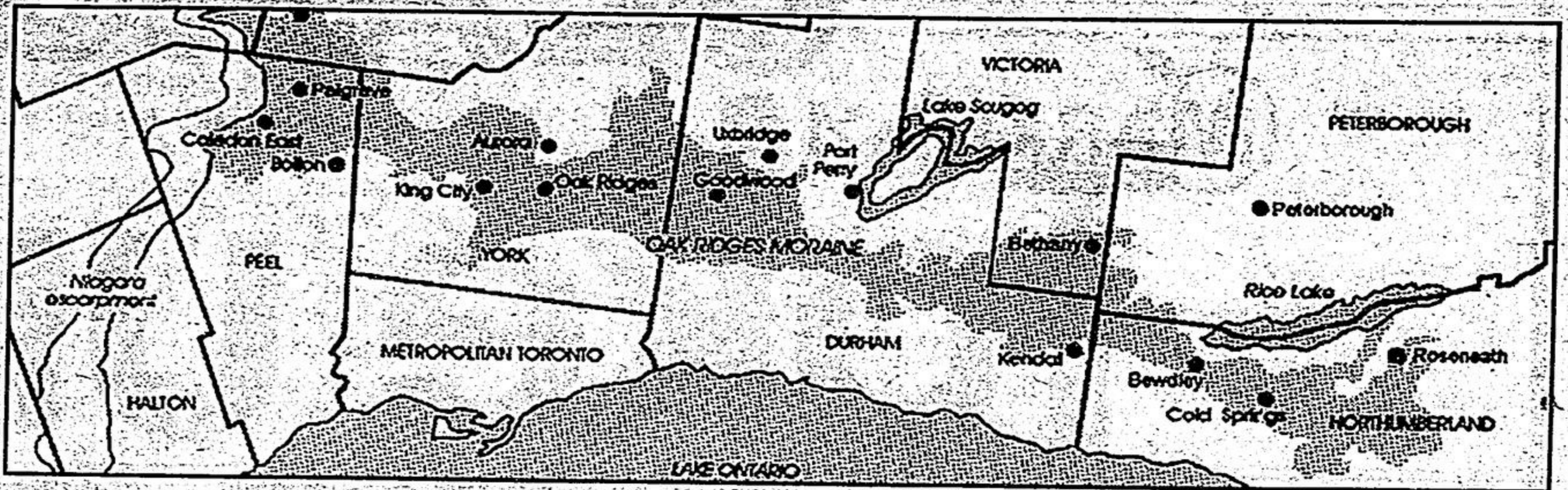
Superbly designed and produced, the book would make a delightful gift, an excellent resource for schools and a valuable reference guide for anyone who cares about conserving

our natural heritage.

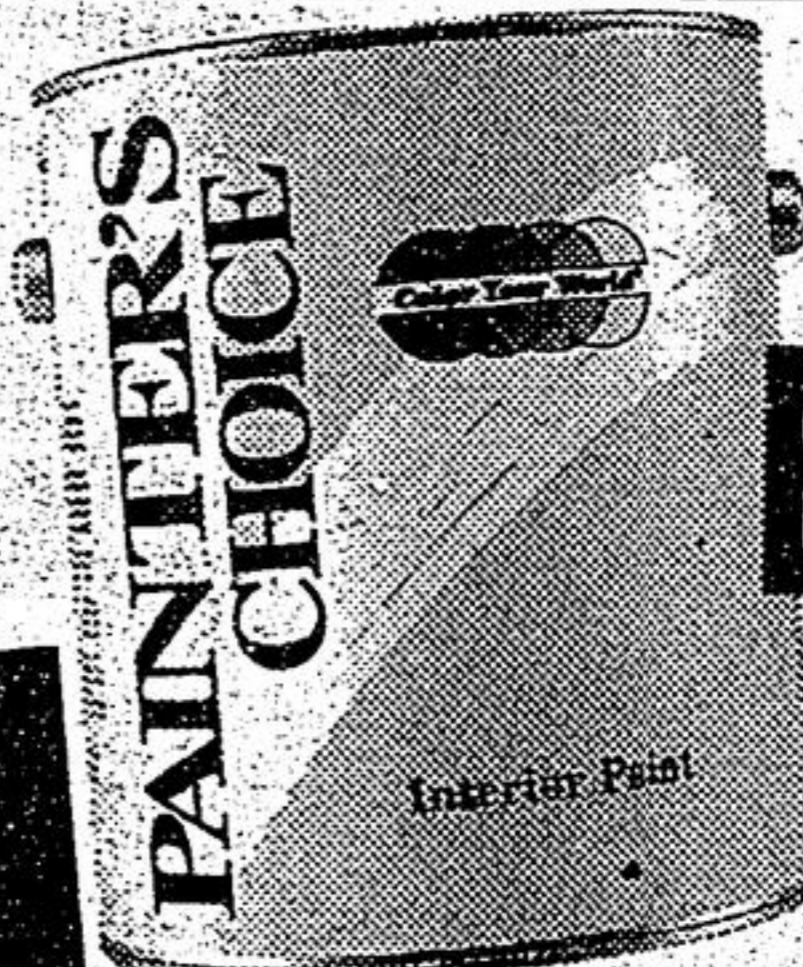
Published by The Boston Mills Press, *Oak Ridges Moraine* is available from Blue Heron Books in Uxbridge and Chap-

ters in Markham.

For more information about STORM, contact David McQueen at 649-5276.



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