

The Greenbelt

Ontario's Greenbelt is a vast area of protected land covering 800,000 hectares including farmlands, wetlands, grasslands, and forests. It is a critical habitat for a range of diverse plant and animal species. This section of land was chosen specifically because it is made of "ecologically significant areas like wetlands, forests, and important wildlife corridors."

Biodiversity thrives in the Greenbelt, and is especially beneficial to several species at risk. Biodiversity works within the Greenbelt to keep the natural processes working. "For example, there are many different insects — bees, butterflies, beetles, and more — that pollinate flowering plants. With many species doing the same job, the ecosystem can keep humming along even if one is impacted by disease, droughts, or heat waves."

The interconnectedness of habitats within the Greenbelt facilitates the movement of wildlife, allowing species to migrate, forage, and reproduce across the landscape.

The Greenbelt also provides many benefits to humans, such as providing food, clean water, clean air, and even the joy of walking through the woods. "The Greenbelt scoops up an estimated 71 million tonnes of carbon annually. For context, the average Canadian is responsible for about 20 tonnes of carbon entering the atmosphere over the same period." This absorption of carbon is increasingly important. Wetlands are one area of the Greenbelt that remove this carbon and offer flood control as well as clean the water and air.

When habitats are destroyed for agricultural purposes or development, biodiversity is lost. Therefore, protecting the Greenbelt is very important, not only for nature, but also for erosion protection, flood protection, and climate regulation. "Protecting ecologically rich areas like the Greenbelt bolsters biodiversity and, in turn, the Earth's life-support systems."