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For immediate release

Natural heritage lands protected in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry

TORONTO – Today, The Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander, Chairman of the Ontario Heritage Trust, Donna Cansfield, Minister of Natural Resources, and Aileen Carroll, Minister of Culture, announced four natural heritage conservation easement agreements to protect significant heritage lands in the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry.

“These properties in Eastern Ontario will now be preserved for the future,” said Mr. Alexander.

“Ensuring the protection of ecologically significant lands helps to conserve our heritage and improve the quality of life for all Ontarians.”

The conservation easements announced today will ensure the protection of four properties acquired by South Nation Conservation through the Ontario Heritage Trust’s Natural Spaces Land Acquisition and Stewardship Program. The properties represent a total of 416 hectares (1,035 acres).

“Protecting natural landscapes across Ontario supports our efforts to conserve the province’s biodiversity and helps us ensure we pass on a healthy environment to future generations,” said Minister Cansfield.

“These forests and wetlands not only provide habitat for many species, but also help keep our air and water clean and fight climate change.”

Two of the properties are part of a large block of public land that includes a significant area of forest and wetland habitat known as the Warwick Demonstration Forest, and they contain part of the North Stormont (Finch) Recreational Trail. Another of the properties forms part of the Newington Bog, a Provincially Significant Wetland. The fourth property is the site of the Two Creeks Forest Recreation Trail and contributes to a block of forest and wetland containing the headwaters of the Doran’s Creek Marsh, a Provincially Significant Coastal Wetland adjacent to the St. Lawrence River. The protection of these properties will preserve wildlife habitats and wetlands, and secure large blocks of contiguous forest cover – rare in Eastern Ontario.

“Ontario’s diverse landscapes are part of the unique heritage of this province,” said Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry MPP Jim Brownell. “Protecting these lands is an important aspect of preserving our legacy.”

Nearly half of the funding for the acquisition of these properties was provided through the Natural Spaces Land Acquisition and Stewardship Program. The program supports the acquisition of natural heritage lands, which the Ontario Heritage Trust may hold directly or protect through natural heritage conservation easements. It also supports land stewardship activities on newly acquired lands.

“Eastern Ontario will undergo significant development over the next few decades,” said Dennis O’Grady, General Manager of South Nation Conservation. “This acquisition will help achieve the goal of 30 per cent forest cover in this part of Eastern Ontario, which is recommended as the minimum to sustain a healthy ecosystem. With multiple partners, including the Ontario Heritage Trust, and with the assistance of Domtar and Lafleche Environmental, the local watershed community was able to protect over 1,000 acres of greenspace for the future.”

The Ontario Heritage Trust is an agency of the Government of Ontario dedicated to identifying, preserving, protecting and promoting Ontario’s built, cultural and natural heritage for the benefit of present and future generations.

Quick facts:

- The Ontario Heritage Trust began implementing the Natural Spaces Land Acquisition and Stewardship Program in 2006 with a \$6-million grant from the Ministry of Natural Resources.
- The program covers southern Ontario, where 90 per cent of the land is privately owned.

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