



Quinte Field Naturalists

The Quinte Field Naturalists Association is affiliated with Ontario Nature, a non-profit organization sponsoring nature education, conservation and research.

2025 01 20

Nature Smart Climate Solution Fund (NSCSF)
Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)

Re: Letter of Support for Ontario Nature's Strengthening Local Wetland Conservation in Southern Ontario

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of Quinte Field Naturalists, I'm providing this letter of support for Ontario Nature's avoided conversion focused application to the NSCSF for their project entitled Strengthening Local Wetland Conservation in Southern Ontario.

Ontario Nature has the capacity and expertise to deliver on the project outcomes and support community groups across southern Ontario in strengthening wetland protections.

Quinte Field Naturalist Association has been a member of Ontario Nature's Nature Network since 1949 and throughout the years, our organization has benefited greatly from the guidance provided by Ontario Nature. Ontario Nature has an abundance of resources and skilled staff, both of which have been extremely helpful in informing and advancing conservation projects which we have undertaken. For example, they have supported us in educating the public about bird friendly windows, the protection of turtle eggs from predators and the wise management of beavers in urban settings. Currently, QFN is collecting species data and attempting to educate the public and the City of Belleville about the value of the Belleville Marsh, the Bell Creek Watershed and Belleville's Industrial Park which is the site of a heronry. All of these locations are threatened by development, so QFN is advocating strongly for the preservation of their natural state. It is important to maintain the existing biodiversity and protect threatened species as well as ensure that the wetlands remain intact so that they can perform ecosystem services such as climate regulation, water purification, flood control, disease regulation and pollination. We will be seeking support from ON to strengthen the efforts of a strong group of volunteers and committed Board members. ON's guidance in working with the municipal government and the residents of Belleville to educate about the value of wetlands would be invaluable.

In addition to assisting us with conservation projects in the Quinte Area, ON is an ongoing support for our advocacy work with all levels of government. Ontario Nature identifies key concerns which will impact natural surroundings across the province & the entire country: their staff follow up with direction for action and resources to support implementation. We always are well equipped for writing letters, phoning government officials or conducting peaceful

demonstrations. As QFN strives to protect wetlands in the Quinte area, we could benefit greatly from ON's insights into the most effective use of a variety of advocacy strategies in specific situations.

The proposed approach for this project of leveraging coalitions of groups within different regions of southern Ontario is a novel solution to strengthening grassroots capacity and aligning efforts to strengthen climate resilience and biodiversity protection of Ontario's vital wetlands. QFN embraces the concept of collaboration and looks forward to learning from other groups and supporting the projects of neighbouring organizations. QFN has been made aware of the wetland initiative that is being undertaken by West Lake Community Association, also a member of the ON Nature Network, to counteract the invasion of Phragmites and protect West Lake Wetlands. WLCA welcomes the support of QFN volunteers and the guidance of ON in educating the public and implementing recovery and preservation strategies. Grant money would enable ON staff to facilitate the collaboration of organizations by enhancing communication and providing advice.

The 145 members of Quinte Field Naturalists and the members of West Lake Community Association urge ECCC to fund this important initiative to safeguard the remaining wetlands in southern Ontario, which are essential assets in the fight against climate change.

Sincerely,

Dr. Elizabeth Churcher

Dr. Elizabeth Churcher
QFN Corresponding Secretary