



ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENCE CANADA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Environmental Defence Canada Joins the Fight to Protect Trafalgar Moraine

National environmental group supporting local efforts

Toronto, Ontario: Environmental Defence Canada is joining forces with the Clear The Air Coalition and Oakvillegreen Conservation Association Inc. to protect the environmentally-significant Trafalgar Moraine, next on the hit list of urban developers. The Board of Directors of the national environmental group voted Tuesday night to support the Oakville groups' efforts to ensure an "environment first" growth strategy.

"Environmentally sensitive lands do not make good housing tracts," said David Donnelly, Legal Director, Environmental Defence Canada. "The Trafalgar Moraine is the cornerstone of a regional, natural heritage system. Not one irrevocable decision should be made on its fate until proper protection is entrenched in perpetuity." A key player in the recent success in protecting the Oak Ridges Moraine, Environmental Defence Canada offers legal expertise on environmentally sensitive areas and urban development.

"Without organizations like Environmental Defence, citizens would not have the support they need to take action," said Allan Elgar, an Oakville Councillor.

The Clear The Air Coalition, an umbrella organization made up of concerned citizens and groups in the Oakville area, and Oakvillegreen, a grassroots conservation organization, are both working to protect the Trafalgar Moraine. Developers want Oakville to extend its urban boundaries to consume the Town's last rural areas without first completing natural heritage and other environmental studies.

"Environmental Defence Canada's support is vital to us," said Rob Burton, Executive Director of Clear The Air Coalition. "Environmental Defence's experts understand growth has to fit the environment. Our local planners told us 'it's not urban sprawl if we plan it'. They never looked at the costs to the environment, to our health, to our community."

"This area contains the lungs and kidneys of our community," said Renee Sandelowsky, President of Oakvillegreen. "The trees clean our air and the moraine recharges our waterways."

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The Trafalgar Moraine is a source of groundwater discharge for several local streams including Fourteen-Mile Creek. Home to over 220 wildlife species and almost 500 rare and common plant species, the Ministry of Natural Resources has proposed to designate the moraine as an Area of Natural and Scientific Interest. The Trafalgar Moraine contains over 20 woodlots and 26 wetlands. It is almost 20 kilometres in length and four kilometres wide. Oakville's target development area sits right on the heart of the moraine.

The Town of Oakville recently voted to send OPA 198 – the amendment to the Town's Official Plan that would allow development to go ahead – back to staff for the missing heritage and environmental studies. Developers immediately appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board, a tribunal that can overturn Oakville's decision. The developers are asking the Ontario Municipal Board to impose OPA 198 on Oakville without waiting for the environmental studies.

“Obviously, the developers aren't willing to sit down with the community and come up with a solution that will protect the land, and allow for some development in specific areas,” said Donnelly.

About Environmental Defence Canada

Founded in 1984, Environmental Defence Canada (www.edcanada.org) gives Canadians the tools and knowledge they need to protect and improve the environment and their health. Environmental Defence Canada was previously known as the Canadian Environmental Defence Fund.

Since its founding, Environmental Defence Canada has provided some \$6 million in assistance to citizen's groups across Canada. The organization was a key member of the coalition that fought to protect the Oak Ridges Moraine, and works with groups across Canada to protect wetlands and other environmentally-significant areas. Environmental Defence supported the Newfoundland Inshore Fisheries Association's appeal for a full environmental assessment of the quotas set by the federal government for Canada's dangerously over-fished cod stocks.

The organization also supports the Innu Nation of Labrador in its fight against low-level flight tests and other threats to their environment, and helped to get a full environmental assessment of the Confederation Bridge linking PEI with New Brunswick. Environmental Defence had standing at the Walkerton Inquiry where it focused on citizen's rights to safe drinking water. Last year, Environmental Defence helped to launch the most successful Canadian environmental web site: www.pollutionwatch.org.

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