

CVC avoids getting bogged down with wetland benefits study

Wetlands (which include bogs, marshes and swamps) provide many benefits, but are disappearing from the landscape. Credit Valley Conservation (CVC), with financial support from the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, is developing an Environmental-Benefit Index (EBI) tool to measure the benefits of restoring wetlands.

Understanding the value wetlands provide to society helps conservation specialists communicate the need for wetland protection and enhancement, said CVC's Mark Eastman. The EBI will be a tool for measuring the social and environmental benefits of wetland restoration projects, so landowners and other stakeholders understand the importance of taking action to protect and restore them.

Wetlands improve water quality, reduce flooding and drought, control erosion and help mitigate the impact of climate change. They also increase commercial and recreational fishing and hunting opportunities. An estimated 48 per cent or 13,331 acres of wetland have been lost or degraded in the Credit River watershed since 1954. Without protection and restoration, an additional 2,573 acres of wetland and their benefits could be lost by 2020.