



SOUTH NATION
CONSERVATION
DE LA NATION SUD



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WORLD WETLANDS DAY UNDERLINES IMPORTANCE OF WATER INTAKE ZONES

Feb. 1, 2010

With World Wetlands Day occurring Feb. 2, South Nation Conservation wants to remind watershed residents of the importance of these sites which serve as intake zones for much of the region's fresh water.

Wetlands are stretches of land covered with water all or most of the time. They include bogs, fens, swamps, marshes and shallows. Each type has different characteristics, but all perform important functions. Canada is home to about 14 per cent of the planet's wetlands.

Wetlands are **essential habitat** for as many as 600 species of wildlife in Canada. Many species of fish, including bass, perch and pickerel reproduce and spend part or all of their life cycles in wetlands. Amphibians like frogs and salamanders, and mammals such as muskrat and beaver use wetland habitats for food, cover and breeding. A number of bird species such as ducks and geese are closely associated with wetlands.

"Wetlands do much more than just sustain wildlife and vegetation," said Naomi Langlois-Anderson, SNC Senior Fish and Wildlife Technician. "They also perform many functions that improve water quality and quantity, such as flood reduction, moderating stream flows, and filtering sediments."

"Water stored in wetlands eventually seeps into the ground to feed the aquifers which supply drinking water to about 20 per cent of this province's population."

Environment Canada recommends that about 10 per cent of a watershed be comprised of wetlands. With wetlands content of about 8 per cent, the South Nation River watershed is home to some of the largest bogs in southern Ontario.

The 3,300-hectare Mer Bleu Bog near Navan is considered one of the most important natural areas in the Ottawa Greenbelt, and has been designated as an internationally significant wetland. With a one-km boardwalk trail, picnic shelter, and hiking and cross-country trails, the public can get a close-up look at a unique wetland.

At 4,200 hectares, the Alfred Bog in the Township of Alfred-Plantagenet is one of the largest bogs remaining in southern Ontario. It includes three different types of wetlands – bog, swamp and marsh – and is home to many nationally, provincially and regionally rare and endangered plants and animals. Other area wetland gems include the Groveton Bog in the Limerick Wetland east of Bishop's Mills, the Moose Creek Bog, the Hoasic Creek Wetland Complex in South Dundas, and the Winchester Swamp.

As of World Wetlands Day 2010, about 70 per cent of southern Ontario's pre-settlement wetlands have been converted to other uses, such as agriculture, housing and other development. With modern knowledge of the role they play, wetlands loss has become a national concern.

FOR MORE INFORMATION - Naomi Langlois-Anderson, 1-877-984-2948, Ext. 250.

Our Local Environment. We're in it Together.  *Notre environnement. Nous le partageons.*

