A Place in Time

The Natural Resources of Lanark County

Directed and produced by the

Community Stewardship Council of Lanark County

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Introduction

Our forests afford a great variety of timber. The kinds most used for exportation are oak, pine, birch, and maple; the two former for building, and the two latter for cabinet work. They are also in demand here for the same purpose, mahogany being little used. From maple trees sugar is made, and the wood is the best of any for fuel....

The wild animals found in the woods are numerous; but few of them are either troublesome or dangerous as they generally retire, and keep at a distance from the habitations of man. The most common are bears, foxes, wolves, raccoons, beavers, otters, martins, minks, squirrels, hares, rabbits, muskrats, and a few others....

Of birds there are many kinds. The principal are eagles, vultures, owls, night hawks, fish hawks, cranes, geese, wild ducks, partridges, snow birds, teal, wild pigeons, black birds, thrushes, larks, and various other kinds. The wood-pigeons pass to the northward in the spring, and return in the fall in immense numbers. When they happen to alight upon a newly sown field, they scarcely leave a grain, if not disturbed. Great numbers of them are taken in nets; but they are more frequently shot, and are generally found to be fat, and good eating.

The rivers and lakes, with which the country abounds, are well stocked with fish of various kinds; such as salmon, chub, carp, pike, black bass, pickerel, and sturgeon, which are both large and good. In catching them, hooks and lines are seldom employed. They are generally speared, or taken in nets in the rapids of rivers.


Early settlers of Lanark County were in awe of this area’s beauty and described a land rich in natural resources and diverse in ecology. Dense forests, abundant clean water and wild game appeared to be limitless. With much hard work they made their living from the land and their survival depended on the use of its natural resources.

To these emigrants, the possibility of owning a large piece of land watered by streams and rivers, the potential for endless fishing and hunting and the readily available lumber for building and heating promised great wealth compared to the restrictions in the old country. Their hopes were not that different from those of newcomers to the county today. To the average urbanite, Lanark County still appears to have considerable undeveloped land. What, in fact, has changed since those early days?

Almost two centuries later the surnames of many of the early settlers still grace the rural mailboxes of this county. Over generations experience has shown us and science has taught us that no natural resource is so limitless that we can use it indiscriminately. As more people are choosing to come to this county because of its natural beauty, the long-term sustainability of our precious resources deserves our serious attention.

Formed in 1996, the Community Stewardship Council of Lanark County has a mandate to work with a broad range of partners to sustain and enhance the natural environment of Lanark County. Council members represent a wide range of skills, interests and connections to the community: farmers, foresters, educators, naturalists, hunters, business people, filmmakers and others. Each member brings his or her own perspective to the discussions on the numerous and varied projects of the council.
To mark its tenth anniversary, the council commissioned a document that would lay out a broad picture of the county’s natural resources, their evolution, current issues and future challenges. *A Place in Time: The Natural Resources of Lanark County* tries to fulfill that broad mandate. The council plans to provide this document to people and organizations in the county who are interested in working with us to achieve common goals and identify priorities for stewardship.

For some newcomers to Lanark County, this document will introduce them to our natural resources, how they have changed and how they will continue to evolve. It may also reveal to them something more than merely an inventory or survey; they will see a record of a long-standing and continuing attachment to the land by the residents of Lanark County.

*A Place in Time* clearly shows how much has been done in the past – a legacy of caring, commitment and effort that we should not squander. Certainly there have been errors, simplistic policy, good intentions misapplied and outright abuse. No sector is without mistakes. Nevertheless, many people have been actively involved in good land stewardship. The big picture is one of a strong commitment to this county and its natural assets.

It is certainly true that not all residents of Lanark County agree on the best use and management of our resources. Disagreements can be sharp and strongly held, all the more because so many of us care. It has been the experience of the council that disagreements are more specific than fundamental and that there is more common ground than first appears. One thing this document can do is help us to find this common ground; to see our shared concerns, values and obstacles.

Even more than in the past the continued health of the natural landscape of this county will depend on the actions of individuals. Whether simply acting on their own land, with others in the county or with others in the province, the people of Lanark County will shape its future landscape.

*A Lanark County sunset*  
Joanne Ewart
Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the many people who assisted us with the production of this document. Our council could not have done it in isolation. We owe a very special thanks to Susan Sentesy, who worked tirelessly on this document for the past year. It has been her creativity, dedication to detail and research that has made it a resource about which we can be proud. Our thanks go to Barb King and Franziska von Rosen, who spent many hours reviewing drafts and directing the vision of this project on behalf of our council. Stephanie Gray’s professional editing gave our document a cohesive voice; our thanks go out to her.

Numerous people, groups and resource agencies gave freely of their time in support of this project. Their knowledge of the natural resources of Lanark County has helped to make this a very valuable resource for years to come. Finally, our thanks go out to the local photographers who generously allowed us to use their photos in this document. More powerfully than words, their pictures capture the natural beauty of Lanark County.

Jeff Ward, Stewardship Coordinator

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# Table of Contents

## Significant Natural Areas ............................................................................. 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Is a Significant Natural Area?</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Are Significant Areas Selected?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is Officially Responsible for Identification and Protection?</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where Are Significant Areas in Lanark County?</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Are Some Alternative Approaches to Conservation and Stewardship?</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Resources and Incentives Are Available?</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Are Some Opportunities and Challenges for Stewardship?</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Forests ........................................................................................................ 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Is the History of Lanark County Forests?</th>
<th>19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Were Lanark's Forests Regenerated?</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Are Our Forests Managed Now?</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Are the Economic Benefits of Forests?</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Disturbs Forest Health?</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Are Good Forest-Management Practices?</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Are Some Opportunities and Challenges for Stewardship?</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Plants, Animals and Habitat ...................................................................... 39

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Effect Did Settlement Have on Our Plants and Animals?</th>
<th>39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What Is the Current State of Wildlife and Its Habitat in Lanark County?</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Are the Species at Risk?</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Is Wildlife and Its Habitat Managed?</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Is It Important to Maintain Biodiversity?</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Are Some Opportunities for Stewardship?</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Water ........................................................................................................... 59

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Is the History of Lanark County’s Waterways?</th>
<th>59</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where Are Lanark County’s Watersheds?</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Is Our Water Regulated?</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Is Our Water Monitored?</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Concerns Do We Have About Water?</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Can We Protect Water?</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Do We Use Water Recreationally?</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Are Some Resources for Stewardship?</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Are Some Future Challenges for Protecting Our Water?</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table of Contents (Cont'd)

## Agriculture
- How Did Agriculture Begin in Lanark County? ................................................................. 79
- What Are the Growing Conditions in Lanark County? ..................................................... 81
- What Is Farmed in Lanark County? ...................................................................................... 82
- How Is Farming Regulated? .................................................................................................. 86
- What Concerns Lanark County Farmers? ............................................................................. 87
- How Are Lanark County Farmers Practising Stewardship? .............................................. 89
- What Stewardship Programs Are Available to Farmers? .................................................. 92
- What Future Challenges Do Farmers Face? ......................................................................... 93

## Mineral and Aggregate Resources
- What Is Lanark County’s Geological History? .................................................................... 97
- What Is the Current State of Mineral and Aggregate Resources in Lanark County? ........... 99
- How Is Mining Regulated? .................................................................................................... 104
- What Issues Exist About Mining in Lanark County? .......................................................... 106
- How Are We Practising Stewardship of Mineral and Aggregate Resources? .................... 108
- What Are the Future Challenges with Our Mineral and Aggregate Resources? ................ 111

## Landowners and Stewardship
- Why Is Landowner Stewardship Important? ....................................................................... 115
- How Is Landowner Stewardship Encouraged? .................................................................... 116
- How Are Lanark County Landowners Practising Stewardship? ....................................... 119
- What Other Resources and Opportunities Are Available? ................................................. 123
- What Are the Challenges of Stewardship? .......................................................................... 124

## What Comes Next?
- ........................................................................................................................................ 129

## Appendix
- ........................................................................................................................................ 133

# Lanark County Maps

- Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest ............................................................................ 7
- Evaluated Wetlands ............................................................................................................. 8
- Forest Cover ....................................................................................................................... 26
- Quaternary Watersheds with Lakes, Rivers and Streams .................................................. 62
- Surficial Geology ............................................................................................................... 101