

Protecting Windsor's Natural Heritage

Construction of The Windsor-Essex Parkway will stimulate the local economy and create jobs but not at a cost to Windsor's unique and sensitive natural environment, especially the Tallgrass Prairie and associated plant and animal species at risk.

Species at risk were the focus of extensive study during the Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) environmental assessment. This study included hundreds of hours of fieldwork over several seasons to monitor and assess location, migration patterns and lifecycle of wildlife.

Through this study, we discovered that construction of The Windsor-Essex Parkway will affect eight species protected under Ontario's *Endangered Species Act* (ESA) including six plants (Colicroot, Common Hoptree, Dense Blazing Star, Dwarf Hackberry, Kentucky Coffee-tree, and Willowleaf Aster) and two reptiles (Butler's Gartersnake and Eastern Foxsnake).



Protecting Species at Risk

The information collected on species at risk and their habitat was taken into consideration during the planning for the Parkway. We avoided impacts as much as possible.

We continue to work closely with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) to ensure all necessary steps are taken to mitigate impacts. We have developed scientifically supported approaches for relocation of individual plants and animals, and restoration and enhancement of habitat which supports their life cycle requirements. An ecosystem approach is being followed to help ensure the success of mitigation practices. Measures will be put in place to ensure that all relocation areas will be protected for the long-term, not just during the construction period. We are committed to protecting Windsor and Essex County's unique ecosystems for years to come.



Habitat Restoration, Enhancement and Creation

Habitat will be restored, enhanced or created for Butler's Gartersnakes and Eastern Foxsnakes prior to construction of The Windsor-Essex Parkway. Snakes will be relocated to protected areas that meet their habitat requirements.

Common Hoptree, Dwarf Hackberry and Kentucky Coffee trees will be transplanted and used as part of the landscaping for the green space and recreational trail network. If transplanting is not feasible, new trees will be planted in their place.

Willowleaf Aster and Dense Blazing Star are being relocated through transplanting of individual plants, use of plant cuttings, growth and planting of plugs and seeding. The overall objective is to increase the population of these species. The plants will be moved to sites that will be protected over the long term.

Colicroot plants located near The Windsor-Essex Parkway but outside the construction area will be protected. All plants directly affected by construction will be moved to protected sites. MTO and its expert consultants are working with MNR to develop effective strategies to propagate and plant new plants. The restoration sites will be protected well into the future.

In key locations, including across tunnel tops, ecological connections that are vital to the long-term survival of species and their habitat will be created.

The Windsor-Essex Parkway will provide protection for species at risk and their habitats for the long-term. Species at risk will be relocated to areas that are restored, enhanced or created and protected through the measures outlined above promoting their survival and recovery.

