



# Quinte Field Naturalists

*The Quinte Field Naturalists Association is affiliated with Ontario Nature, a non-profit organization sponsoring nature education, conservation and research.*

Dear Minister Kathryn McGarry,

(cc: Ala Boyd, Manager Natural Heritage Section, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry)  
Re: EBR 013-1014: Proposed regional Natural Heritage System for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

Quinte Field Naturalists are pleased to see the government is moving ahead to better protect nature across the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) by identifying and protecting a Natural Heritage System (NHS). Effective protection will help to recover biodiversity and better prepare the region for the impacts of climate change. To be effective, the NHS must have appropriate regional variations, integrate municipal and conservation authority expertise, and be supported by the community.

Before your ministry finalizes the Natural Heritage System, QFN members urge you to:

- 1) Identify smaller core natural areas in highly fragmented landscapes. The minimum core size of 100 hectares must be reduced in areas with low natural cover as even smaller features can have high value biodiversity.
- 2) Integrate other identified natural heritage systems into the Province's map. Many municipalities and conservation authorities have led the identification of natural heritage mapping and these data layers must be included in the final map.
- 3) Improve the opportunities for community involvement. A diversity of perspectives and expertise will more accurately identify community values and help develop consensus around the vision, objectives and targets that should guide the development of the Natural Heritage System for the GGH.

A strong, robust and community-supported natural heritage system will be an effective tool to better recover biodiversity and prepare the region for the impacts of climate change. We need to get this right now. The Province's plan will be an important legacy to ensure future generations have access to a healthy natural environment with clean air, land and water across the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input.

Yours sincerely,

George Thomson, President of Quinte Field Naturalists