



# Quinte Field Naturalists

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

November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Dear Minister McGarry,

Quinte Field Naturalists would like to express our concern about the 'Wetland Conservation Strategy for Ontario'. We fully support Premier Kathleen Wynne's pledge to reverse wetland loss in our province by 2025. However, we do not believe that the proposed Wetland Conservation Strategy for Ontario, as drafted, will serve to achieve this objective. On the contrary, given weak overall targets, loose commitments and the failure to earmark areas for government investment, it is a recipe for inaction and delay.

Wetlands provide habitat for well over 20 percent of Ontario's species at risk. They also provide benefits to society valued at more than \$51 billion per year in southern Ontario alone, according to a 2009 study commissioned by your ministry.

The overarching target of the proposed strategy is to achieve no net loss of wetlands by 2030, leaving the door wide open to another 14 years of wetland loss. This target is unacceptable. It makes a mockery of the Premier's pledge and the urgent need to protect our precious remaining wetlands.

We need your leadership on this issue. We ask that you:

- Set a clear goal and target to achieve a net gain in wetland area and functions in Ontario by 2025.
- Commit to enhancing protections for Provincially Significant Wetlands, Great Lakes coastal wetlands and wetlands identified as locally, regionally or internationally significant.
- Earmark funds for wetland evaluation, securement and restoration sufficient to achieve a net gain in wetland area and functions by 2025.

Please act now to preserve and restore our wetlands so that generations to come can appreciate and enjoy the rich biodiversity and quality of life that we have experienced for many years on this beautiful planet.

Sincerely,

George W. Thomson  
Quinte Field Naturalist President