

Living Landscape

A Biodiversity Action Plan for Greater Sudbury

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With additional support from:



SUDBURY
INTEGRATED NICKEL
OPERATIONS
A GLENCORE COMPANY



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Definitions

This Plan uses a few terms that may not be familiar to all readers, especially the way in which the terms are applied in the context of this Plan.

Barrens – The areas within the City of Greater Sudbury that were impacted by past forestry, mining and smelting activities, resulting in the disappearance of virtually all of the vegetation cover.

Biodiversity – The variety of life on Earth, including plants, animals and ecosystems.

Ecological Recovery – In Greater Sudbury, it is the process by which areas damaged by past smelting activities are returning to healthy, functional ecosystems.

Greater Sudbury Biodiversity Partnership – An informal association of groups, agencies, institutions, individuals and companies that work individually and collectively to monitor, manage and promote animals, plants and ecosystems.

Interventions – The actions we do to help nature heal the damaged areas in our City.

Lime – Refers here to agricultural lime made from crushed limestone rock; not the product of a lime kiln.

Semi-barrens – have slightly more vegetation cover than barrens, but are still considered heavily impacted.

VETAC – City Council’s Advisory Panel on Regreening.



Why a Biodiversity Action Plan?

On March 31st, 2009, the Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA) portion of the Sudbury Soils Study was released. One of the most comprehensive studies of its kind ever undertaken in North America, the ERA evaluated the ecological risks associated with seven Chemicals of Concern (COCs): arsenic, cadmium, cobalt, copper, lead, nickel, and selenium. While the COCs occur naturally in the area, their levels in the soil have increased over the years through particle deposition from smelter emissions.

The ERA found that terrestrial plant communities in large areas of Greater Sudbury have been and continue to be impacted by the COCs in the soil. The study also found that local plant communities are affected by other factors, such as soil erosion, low nutrient levels, lack of soil organic matter, and soil acidity.

As for wildlife, the ERA concluded that the COCs are not exerting a direct effect on local wildlife populations. The COCs' impact on area plant communities, however, has affected habitat quality and therefore is likely having an indirect influence on birds and mammals on the barrens and semi-barrens within Greater Sudbury.

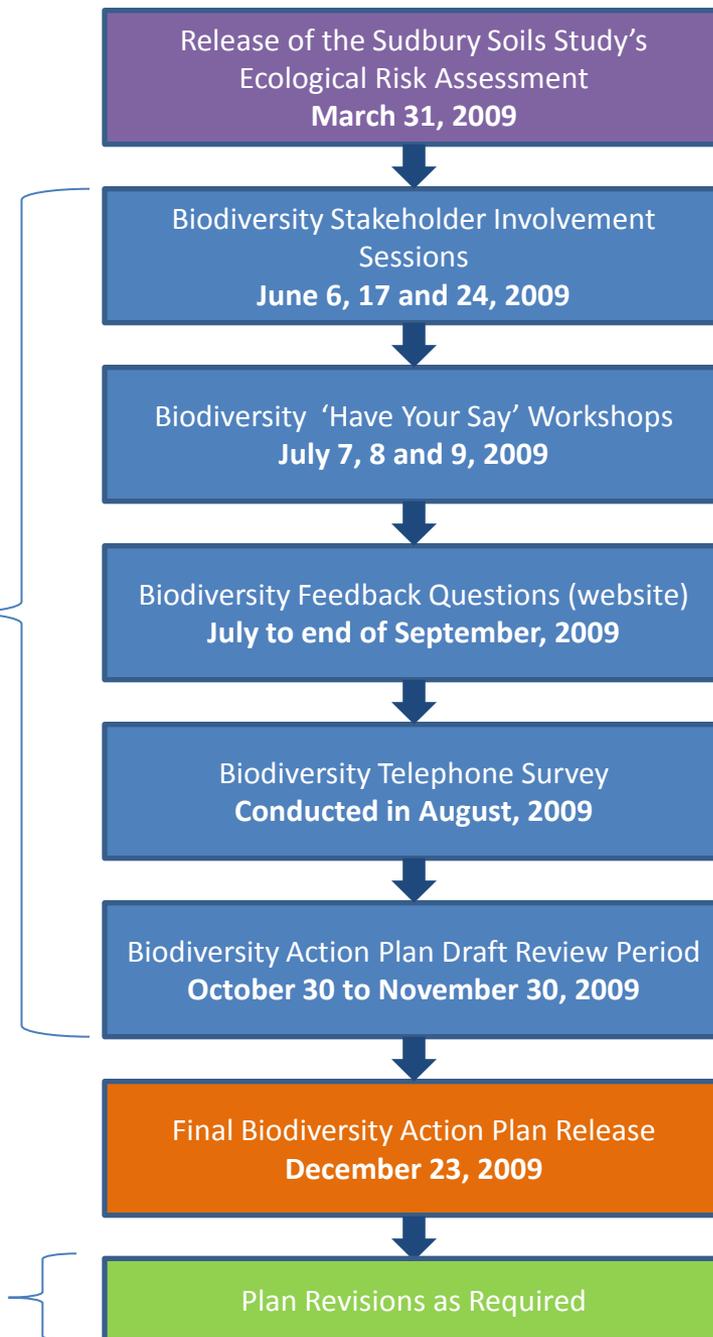
A Biodiversity Action Plan provides a comprehensive way to address the risks to plant communities and wildlife habitat identified by the ERA. While biodiversity is a broad topic, this Plan focuses primarily on ecological recovery in Greater Sudbury.

For more information on the Sudbury Soils Study visit:

www.sudburysoilsstudy.com

Public Input

Public Input



The Process that We Followed

The two primary local mining companies, Vale and Sudbury Integrated Nickel Operations (Sudbury INO), a Glencore Company, accepted to work with the Greater Sudbury community to manage the risks identified by the Sudbury Soils Study's ERA.

This Action Plan is for the benefit of our shared community. So we developed it with your help. In 2009, over several months, local residents participated in Biodiversity Stakeholder Involvement Sessions and in 'Have Your Say' Workshops. You also provided feedback through our website questionnaire. Over 600 Sudburians participated in a telephone survey on local biodiversity matters.

Stephen Monet, Manager of Environmental Planning Initiatives at the City of Greater Sudbury, prepared the Draft Biodiversity Action Plan, taking into consideration the input provided by the community. VETAC reviewed the Draft Action Plan and oversaw the public input process.

The community had a chance to review and comment on the Draft Biodiversity Action Plan before release of the final version in December, 2009.

The Biodiversity Action Plan is intended to be a 'living' document, so the community will continue to have an opportunity to provide input into the future as Plan revisions are made. See page 36 for details.



What You Told Us

The message from community members was both powerful and clear:

- When asked which environmental action was most desirable to be undertaken, 49% of Sudburians selected 'lake and stream clean-up'. This was followed closely by 'regreening' (46%), 'education of the public' (44%) and 'wildlife habitat creation' (38%).
- 66% told us the most important reasons for improving our local environment is to leave a healthier environment for the next generation, and 42% want to improve the quality of our outdoor leisure activities.

We also heard that community members want to get involved, and to act on a sense of personal accountability. We heard that the actions we take should be based on science, while also taking the community's priorities into account.

And we heard that funding these actions should include significant commitment from Vale and Sudbury INO, a Glencore Company.

Each and every comment we received was valued, and we thank you for your input.

The views and wishes of community members were important contributors to this Action Plan. We hope you see them reflected in the pages that follow.



Impacted landscape near Falconbridge - 2004

“Imagination is everything. It is the preview of life's coming attractions” Albert Einstein



Greater Sudbury – Year 2050

Thirty years from today...

The wild blueberry bushes are much fewer. A changing climate has made the area far less suitable for their growth.

The hills along the Kingsway, and many parts of the former barren areas, now have pine trees that are more than 80 years old. There's talk about selectively harvesting some trees in the near future. White, red and jack pines still thrive here, at least for a few more decades.

Birds are now abundant in these forests. Some residents have expressed concern over the loud, wild calls of the barred owls at night in some neighbourhoods. Bald eagles have become a common sight, soaring above Lake Ramsey.

Forest fires sometimes erupt, but fortunately fire breaks were created around neighbourhoods years ago in anticipation of the new forests.

The Valley provides much of the fresh and frozen food consumed in Greater Sudbury and northeastern Ontario.

Greater Sudbury's forests, lakes and thriving food industry serve as powerful attractors for students, young families, professionals, artists and retirees. Tourism is booming.

Do these statements accurately describe our City as it will be 30 years from now ?



Today, the 'bones' of ancient trees still litter the many barren areas



What's the Problem ?

Our mining heritage has brought us prosperity. But it's also had profound impacts on the living systems that nurture, protect, and thrill us.

In the decades past, smelting the ore from the mines created significant amounts of sulphur dioxide. Most plants are highly sensitive to this gas and died as a result. Without plants there was nothing to keep the soil in place resulting in widespread erosion.

Smelting also released metal particles in the air. These particles eventually landed and accumulated in the soil. Many of these metals are harmful to plants when levels get too high. When soil is acidic, as it tends to be in northern Ontario, these metals can be easily taken up by plants, which die or remain stressed.

As a result, over 82,000 hectares (202,630 acres) in Greater Sudbury were left in a barren or semi-barren state.

Changes in provincial air quality legislation over the years as well as voluntary continual improvements in industrial processes by Vale and Sudbury INO have resulted in over 90% reductions in sulfur dioxide and air-borne metal emissions since the 1970s. As a result, some trees and other plants have been able to take hold. But plants still struggle because of the accumulated metals, high soil acidity, and low organic matter content of the shallow soils that bake in the summer and freeze solid in the winter.



Getting from Here to There

We've come a long way since the early, dusty days of black rock and clouds of sulfur dioxide. We've learned that liming reduces the toxic effects of metals in soil on plants. So we spread lime on over 3500 hectares. As a community we also planted more than 12 million trees. Young forests are now growing on formerly barren hillsides. Songbirds and other wildlife are slowly returning to our City. Liming and increasing forest cover in watersheds has also helped the health of our lakes.

We've been working on it since 1978. But we still have a long way to go.



By our calculations about **28,000 hectares** of formerly barren or semi-barren land have never been limed or had trees planted on them. Much of this land still has little more than a few stunted birch trees growing on it.

Bringing back healthy forest ecosystems on affected lands won't be easy. It will take time, energy and renewed commitment. It will take money.

We've shown the world what we can do. Now it's time to finish the job that we started four decades ago.

This Action Plan will help guide us in the right direction.



Barrens near Coniston in 2018 – smelter was shut down in 1972

Time heals all wounds ... the question is how much time is needed ?



Why We Need to Help

Wildlife species, from lowly ants to timber wolves, need food, water and shelter to survive. These requirements define a species' habitat. Every species' habitat is different; porcupines don't live in cattail marshes and mallard ducks don't live in spruce forests.

Some larger species, like moose, need different habitats depending on the season.

Wildlife habitat is largely defined by the types of plant communities in an area. In turn, the plant communities depend on conditions like moisture, shade and soil types.

As a result, the landscape is like a quilt of different habitat patches.

Greater Sudbury's barrens used to be covered by large patches of spruce and pine forests so it's only natural that nature wants to return the barrens to these types of forests.

But that could take centuries.

There are a number of things we can do to help nature along.



Wolf Lake landscape - unaffected by past smelter emissions



How We Can Help – The Basics

Our target habitat might be healthy and diverse spruce or pine forests, but before we can get there we need to do a few basic things.

Spreading lime (agricultural lime derived from crushed limestone rock) on the affected areas is the first step. Lime makes the soil less acidic so metals present there can't be easily taken up by plants. Lower levels of some metals in plants means healthier plants.

Next, we need to add fertilizer to the soil, which has lost much of its fertility and organic matter due to erosion.

Next we apply a grass and legume seed mixture. These plants cover the ground quickly and create a more suitable environment for the tree seedlings that will follow. The grasses and legumes eventually die out when the trees get old enough to shade the area.

Tree seedlings are then introduced. Mostly pines and spruces are planted, along with smaller numbers of various other tree species, like oaks and maples. Birches and poplars come in on their own.

In a few decades, these seedlings grow into stands of trees that begin to look like forests.

This basic process will be followed into the future.



Beyond the Basics – Part 1

Forests are more than groups of trees

Groups of planted trees might look like a forest, but they're not. When soil erodes from a hillside, it takes with it all the plants, seeds, insects and micro-organisms that are in the top layer of soil. These are vital to the development of a healthy, diverse forest.

Here's just one way to correct the situation.

After about 30 years, the groups of young planted trees are old enough to shade the ground and keep conditions cool and moist enough for the forest floor species to live. It's now time to focus on planting forest shrubs and wildflowers in these areas. These in turn will attract the many insect communities that will help healthy forest soil to develop.

Shrubs and wildflowers can be planted individually from purchased stock. They can also be carefully gathered by cutting small mats from healthy forests. The mats are then placed under older groups of planted trees. In time, plants in the mats will spread. This can't be done everywhere due to cost and availability of material. But with enough small diverse pockets over the landscape the recovery of forest floor vegetation should be faster than leaving nature to do the job alone.

Dozens of species of trees and shrubs will be transplanted as seedlings, some from seeds we've picked locally, in order to further add diversity to the developing forest.

Transplanted forest floor mats in an otherwise bare tree plantation

Beyond the Basics – Part 2

Jump-starting life on bare rock

Trees can't be planted on bare rock. They need at least moderate-sized cracks filled with soil.

But bare rock is a habitat too!

In natural systems, bare rock is first covered by lichen communities, which trigger the soil building process. As individual lichens and insects living among them die, organic matter is created. In time, enough organic matter accumulates in the lichen communities to allow small plants to grow. These create more organic matter so that eventually small trees can take hold. Over decades the bare rock becomes completely covered with organic matter and some mineral soil from the bedrock and a forest develops.

Lichens have been returning to Greater Sudbury's barren areas, but the process is slow.

To help nature along, the City's Regreening Program has been able to jump-start lichen communities by spreading small bits of lichens carefully collected from other sites. These can be rapidly spread by hand. We've even included lichen fragments inside the airplane hoppers that Vale contractors use to spread lime and fertilizer. We'll continue with this technique as required.



Exposed bedrock on the barrens



Exposed bedrock on a site not influenced by historical smelter emissions



“We know more about the movement of celestial bodies than about the soil underfoot”

Leonardo da Vinci



Soil – Earth’s Life Support

Soils are much more than just mineral particles. Complex networks of living organisms weave together the organic, clay, silt and sand particles of which all soils are made as well as the air spaces between the particles. Healthy soils contain a vast diversity of life that include, from smallest to largest: micro-organisms (bacteria, fungi, protozoa and nematodes), meso-fauna (mites and springtails), and macro-fauna (earthworms, termites, soil insects). The quantity of such organisms in healthy soils is huge. A teaspoon of such soil can contain hundreds of mites, thirty thousand protozoa, fifty thousand algae, half a million fungi, and billions of bacteria.

Micro-organisms serve important functions such as extracting nutrients from minerals and organic matter. Certain fungi can fuse to fine plant roots and assist in the transfer of nutrients from the soil to the plants. Some specialized bacteria live in the roots of certain plants and extract nitrogen (a plant nutrient) directly from the air.

Mites and springtails break down organic matter into very fine particles, making nutrients more available.

Although earthworms are not native to most of Canada, they have a strong influence on soil ecology. They not only break down larger pieces of organic matter but also mix soils which improves aeration, drainage and nutrient availability for plants and other life forms. Numerous native soil insects, like ants, also mix and aerate the soil.



Lakes & Rivers

Greater Sudbury's hundreds of lakes are important to us. They need our protection. Several groups and agencies, along with the City, play a role in protecting our lake and river resources.

The Cooperative Freshwater Ecology Unit, located in the Vale Living With Lakes Centre, has been monitoring and studying our lakes and training young researchers for decades. They've found that our lakes are improving greatly compared to the old days. They've also identified remaining challenges. For example, lakes within the barren areas are not recovering to their full potential due to a lack of organic matter from fallen leaves, tree trunks and woody debris in the water. These features greatly increase the food and shelter for aquatic organisms, including several fish species.

As a result of these findings, the City's Regreening Program will focus on increasing tree density within a 100-metre belt around lakes and streams. In time, these trees will add leaves, branches and trunks to the water's aquatic system.

The City's Lake Water Quality Program, along with other groups and agencies, will continue to promote best practices for waterfront residents. This includes protecting or re-planting a wide vegetation buffer along the water's edge.

Although shoreline stewardship is crucial, a lake's ecosystem and water quality are also highly dependent on the health of the entire watershed.



Lake Ramsey provides nearly half of Greater Sudbury's drinking water

Healthy Land = Healthy Water

All of the land that drains into a specific water feature, like a stream or a lake, is called a watershed. The greater the amount of tree cover in a watershed, the healthier the receiving stream or lake. That's because the vegetation in the watershed helps to soak up and filter the rainwater.

Stormwater runoff is a major factor that determines the quality of streams and lakes in a watershed.

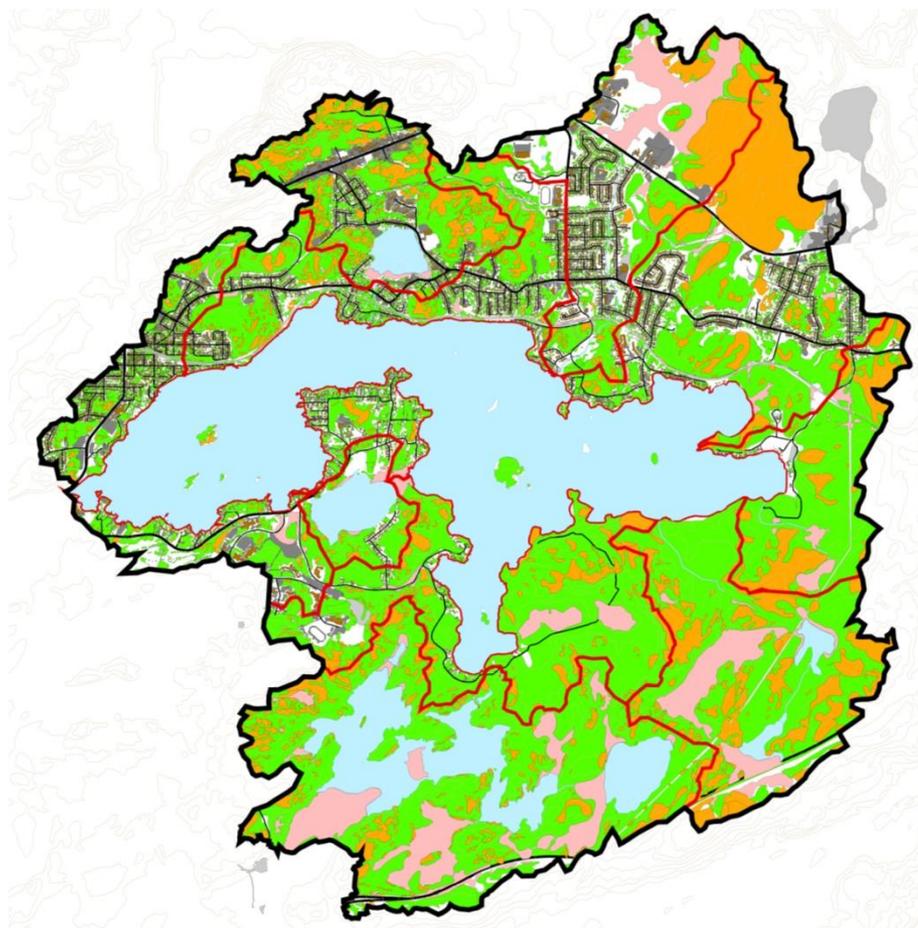
In general, the more pervious or porous surfaces in a watershed the healthier it is. Pervious surfaces, like lawns, forests and wetlands, allow rain to soak in and retain water, delaying its release to the receiving stream or lake. This decreases the likelihood of flooding, keeps water cooler and reduces sediment deposits and contaminants from surface runoff.

Impervious surfaces, like driveways, roads and roofs, have the opposite effects and reduce the health of a watershed.

Regreening barren areas in Greater Sudbury's watersheds will directly benefit streams and lakes.

The City has created a [Regreening App](#) based on watersheds that will help in determining priority lands for regreening.

The Cooperative Freshwater Ecology Unit, numerous professors at Laurentian University and local colleges, Conservation Sudbury and the City's Regreening Program will continue studying and monitoring the ecological recovery of our local watersheds.



Lake Ramsey Watershed and Subwatersheds

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Lake Ramsey Watershed | Man-Made Impervious Surface |
| Subwatershed | Road |
| Surface Water | Railroad |
| Tree Canopy | Paved Parking |
| Wetland | Building |
| Elevation Contour | Scraped to Bedrock |
| | Natural Impervious Surface |
| | Bedrock and Sparse Scrubland |

The types of land cover in a lake's watershed affects its water quality

Wetlands – Giant Filters

Wetlands are vital parts of a healthy landscape. They act as giant sponges soaking up rainwater and snow melt and slowly releasing these to streams and lakes. Without wetlands, spring melts and heavy downpours would quickly run into lakes and streams. As a result, flooding would be much more frequent.

Wetlands can also prevent erosion from wave action on lakes and rivers, provide wildlife habitat, help replenish groundwater and act as giant filters, serving as a buffer between the pollutants, sediments and animal excrement washed off the land, and the receiving water.

Wetlands need recognition and protection for the valuable services they provide. To that end, the City will continue to implement its Official Plan policies that address wetland protection. Furthermore, Conservation Sudbury regulates the activities that can occur within or adjacent to wetlands.

The City's Regreening Program will increase the diversity of wetland plants, especially shrubs, in the impacted areas through supplemental plantings.

Peat mosses, which are very sensitive to sulphur dioxide emissions, are now absent from many wetlands on former barrens and semi-barrens. Yet these mosses are very important in retaining and filtering water. Laurentian University researchers will continue to track the return of peat mosses that disappeared from impacted wetlands and will determine what regreening practices could accelerate their return.





Greening the Urban Landscape

Although much of Greater Sudbury is covered by forests, our City still has large urban areas. Many of these areas don't have much tree canopy cover, which provides shade in summer, provides habitat for birds, lessens rainfall runoff and helps clean the air we breathe. Our urban areas need greening up too!

To achieve this, the City's Linear Infrastructure Services crews will continue to plant new trees along our urban streets. City parks will receive additional trees as well. Trees on municipal rights of way are regulated and protected by [By-law 2011-243](#).

Ecological recovery will also need to dovetail with other initiatives. For example, Council appointed a Green Space Advisory Panel to recommend a system of green spaces to be protected or enhanced. The Panel's 2010 [Final Report](#) identifies priorities for the ecological recovery of certain green spaces. Others, such as High Falls, will be protected but left untouched.

Local Conservation Areas, which are managed by Conservation Sudbury, also play an important role in providing public access to urban greenspaces. Likewise, community groups should also be recognized for their role in regreening our urban landscape. Groups such as the Junction Creek Stewardship Committee and the Rainbow Routes Association, among others, play an important role in making our City more attractive and accessible.

The City's Regreening Program will continue to work with various local organizations to regreen key greenspaces.



A Climate of Extremes

Climate change models indicate that Greater Sudbury is headed for a warmer and wetter climate. We'll be subjected to extremes in temperature and increased droughts and storms.

Depending on the climate change model used, the Canadian Forest Service predicts that by 2100, the majority of our common forest tree species will find the Greater Sudbury area unsuitable. These include jack pine, red pine, white pine, white spruce, black spruce, white birch, and trembling aspen.

Ecological recovery in Greater Sudbury will need to include species in our plantings that currently grow just to the south of our City. This will need to be continued over the coming decades including ever more southern species as climate change progresses. This type of intervention is called **assisted migration**. New species introduced to the local area will be tracked to gauge success and research will be required on the effects of climate change on species migration.

The City is collaborating with Laurentian University researchers to determine the carbon sequestration (capture) value of the recovering forest. Carbon storage in trees and soils assists in mitigating greenhouse gas effects on climate change.

In a few decades, plant communities in Greater Sudbury will likely be radically different than they are today. The time to prepare for these changes is

NOW !

What tree species will replace those that now make up the Greater Sudbury forests?



Blueberries

Based on some climate change scenarios, Canadian Forest Service modeling predicts that wild blueberry bushes in Greater Sudbury will be far fewer in the coming decades.

But that won't be for a while yet. In the meantime, blueberries remain important to the local economy and to people's enjoyment of the area. We need to make sure there's plenty of blueberry 'opportunities' for as long as possible. In a few decades, the climate should allow high-bush blueberries to grow. These are taller bushes and have larger berries.

The best blueberry site conditions are provided by nutrient-poor, acidic, sandy soils. The City's Regreening Program, with the guidance of VETAC, will continue to avoid planting and liming in areas dominated by significant patches of low-bush blueberries. This will ensure the soils supporting the blueberry patches remain acidic enough to help limit competition by other plant species.

Low-bush blueberry in fall



Biodiversity & Food

Biodiversity is not only important to the natural environment, but also to our crops and livestock. Reduced diversity of crops and livestock means fewer traits available for selective breeding to guard against diseases, insect pests, or changing climates. Biodiversity also impacts available pollinators and soil quality.

Plant varieties and animal breeds represent decades or centuries of careful selection for specific traits and adaptability to local conditions. Prior to industrialization, these varieties and breeds were not only essential to local human populations but also added to the special character of a place. Hundreds of varieties exist for many of our common vegetables, for example, each with very specific characteristics, tastes, and growing requirements.

Yet, the diversity of the species that feed us is being reduced at an alarming rate due to the spread of industrial agriculture, which relies on relatively few varieties and breeds.

The Greater Sudbury Food Strategy, released in 2017, guides the community towards an equitable, vibrant and sustainable food system that includes forest and freshwater foods. The Greater Sudbury Food Policy Council is working with other local organizations to promote eating locally and enhancing the diversity of food crops. Seed exchanges, the Greater Sudbury Seed Library, and over 30 community gardens are examples of the many projects to help **YOU** participate in saving food diversity in your own neighbourhood.



Photos: The Foodshed Project



Species At Risk

Species at risk are those whose populations are low enough to merit special actions to prevent them from becoming extinct or from disappearing from the Province. An independent committee of scientific experts determines how imperiled a species is and then assigns it to one of four categories: Extirpated, Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern.

Species listed as 'endangered' or 'threatened' are protected from harm under Ontario's *Endangered Species Act*.

Species can become at risk due to a number of reasons. These include habitat loss, pollution, changing land use activities, as well as the spread of invasive species.

More than 190 of Ontario's wild species are at risk, and some of these, like the Common Nighthawk (Special Concern), Eastern Whip-poor-will (Threatened), and Blanding's Turtle (Threatened), occur in Greater Sudbury. The City's Official Plan includes policies that relate directly to the protection of endangered species and threatened species and their habitat.

Species at risk will be considered in planning and implementing the interventions associated with ecological recovery in Greater Sudbury.

Species at Risk stewardship and recovery are key parts of protecting our biodiversity. [Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy](#) includes a set of principles, goals and actions we all can take to protect and assist with the recovery of species at risk.



Tracking Change

Tracking or monitoring the changes to the recovering ecosystems is vital. It tells us whether the interventions are making a difference, whether additional interventions are needed, and whether interventions in an area should be ended and nature left to do the rest.

The Cooperative Freshwater Ecology Unit has been monitoring lake ecosystems in Greater Sudbury for decades. An equivalent, coordinated effort is now needed for ecosystems on land.

So what needs to be tracked ?

The number of different native plant species in a recovering forest is important as is the size and health of the trees. Numbers and variety of frogs and salamanders in wetlands and adjacent forests also can provide insight as to the health of these systems. Many birds are very choosy about their habitat so they make excellent indicators of a healthy forest at all stages of its development. Even the variety of insects in the forest soils reflect its health.

Although most of the monitoring will be undertaken by professional biologists, there will be opportunities for skilled naturalists to continue participating in specific monitoring projects, such as marsh monitoring and forest bird monitoring.



“My greatest reason for hope is the spirit and determination of young people, once they know what the problems are and have the tools to take action” Dr. Jane Goodall



World Youth Day 2002 – regreening participants



Roots and Shoots 2016 – regreening participants

Education for Life

We never stop learning. Educational opportunities arising from Greater Sudbury’s ecological recovery should be many and remain accessible to all.

The City’s Regreening Program has provided hands-on learning opportunities from the outset. The Program has worked with countless schools, as well as colleges, universities and organizations, including seniors and faith-based groups.

Building on its solid reputation and educational experience, the City’s Regreening Program will continue to provide leadership and support in identifying, planning and coordinating educational opportunities in collaboration with various participating organizations. The Regreening Program will continue conducting field trips, facilitating tree planting events, giving talks in classrooms and providing information to the public at important community events like Earth Day.

Young people are now growing up in an environment that is much greener than that of their parents or grandparents and did not experience the regreening changes themselves. In 2017 and 2018, a regreening education intern was employed by Conservation Sudbury, with partial funding by the City, to bring the regreening message into local classrooms. In addition, the City has developed [biodiversity postcards and posters](#) in print and electronic format.

Since 2005, VETAC has been holding an annual Ugliest Schoolyard Contest that has helped transform dozens of local schoolyards into greener places in which kids play and learn.



Research

Research students and faculty from the two local colleges and the university often build their projects, and associated grant funding, around the City's Regreening Program. This synergy increases the research capacity of the Program and helps train the next generation of environmental stewards.

Scientific research will remain an important component of the ecological recovery of Greater Sudbury. Research results will continue to be used to refine specific interventions and operations when appropriate. Research will also be required early on to identify baselines, plant community targets, and protocols for long-term monitoring of ecological recovery.

Research has also been directed at determining the carbon sequestration value of the regreening efforts. In 2018, the Landscape Carbon Accumulation through Reductions in Emissions (L-CARE) project collaborative was launched by Laurentian University. Among other objectives, L-CARE will test new protocols to maximize carbon storage while attempting to encourage biodiversity early in the regreening process.

The Sudbury Mining and Environment conference, which is hosted by Laurentian University every four years, provides an ideal venue for international researchers, practitioners and policy makers to gather and learn about the most recent findings and techniques in the field of mine, land and waterways rehabilitation and related environmental protection issues. The next conference will take place in 2019.





Working Together

We understand the meaning of ‘shared responsibility’. We’ve all taken part in healing our landscape.

Some of us have been involved for years in local groups, clubs or associations that help promote and restore our local ecosystems or wildlife. Some of us are employed by colleges and universities, conducting ecological research and educating tomorrow’s environmental professionals. Some of us are employed by agencies or companies that manage and protect our ecological systems. While these agencies, educators, students and groups operated more or less in isolation, in 2009, many of these came together to form the Greater Sudbury Biodiversity Partnership.

The Greater Sudbury Biodiversity Partnership will work individually and collectively to help restore, protect, research, monitor and manage our natural systems and wildlife. The Partnership will also promote and educate on the importance of our local biodiversity.

Importantly, the Biodiversity Partnership will provide opportunities for people like **YOU** to get involved in restoring our ecosystems, creating and managing wildlife habitat and tracking plants and animals in our City.



Everyone Can Get Involved

There's much **YOU** can do to green up our City and help increase biodiversity:

- Plant shrubs and trees on your property.
- Join a garden club and learn how to propagate plants for greening our City.
- Volunteer to help with the Ugliest Schoolyard Contest and help regreen a place where kids can grow and learn.
- Get involved with a local naturalists group or fish and game club to learn about wildlife habitat projects.

There's also a host of different wildlife monitoring initiatives **YOU** can get involved with, like:

- Ontario Nature's Reptile & Amphibian Atlas
- Canadian Lake Loon Survey
- Christmas Bird Count
- Project FeederWatch
- Marsh Monitoring Program
- Ontario Forest Bird Monitoring Program

Seen individually these might seem like very small actions, but together they really make a difference.

[Find out more](#)





Moving Forward - Pulling It All Together

Liming, tree planting, lichens, blueberries, lakes and streams. How do we pull all these elements together and know when to do what and where?

The answer is the [5-Year Operations Plan](#). This plan will identify the interventions that will be applied to specific areas within a five-year period. The plan will be used to determine specific requirements for liming, tree planting, understory plants, and labour.

The Operations Plan will need to consider a large number factors, including property access, plant availability from various sources, aerial liming, and more.

VETAC has much experience in coordinating multiple considerations in the development of operations plans. As such, VETAC will oversee the development of the 5-Year Operations Plan.

The 5-Year Plan will also identify research requirements to measure progress of local ecological recovery.

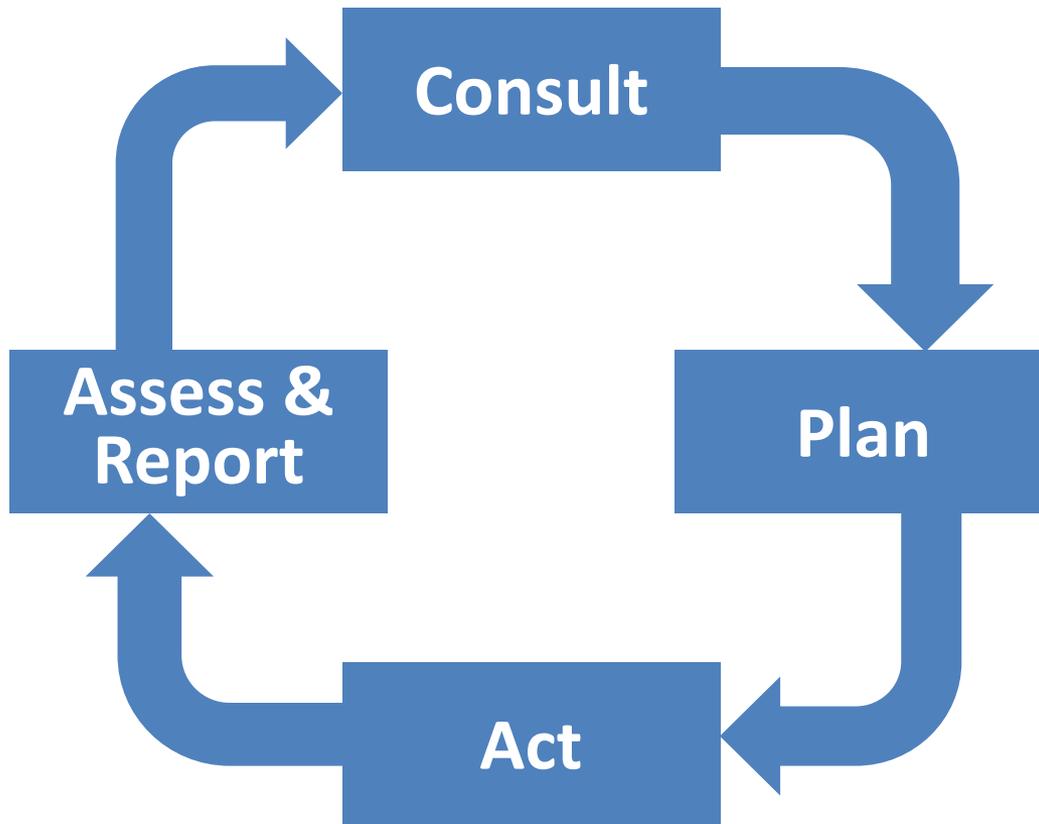
In addition to the 5-Year Operations Plan, the actions, responsibilities and timelines for various elements of this ecological recovery plan are outlined in the tables that follow.

Interventions

What	Who	When
Liming, Fertilization, and Seeding	City (by hand) Vale (by air)	<u>Ongoing</u> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 to 50 ha per year by hand depending on terrain. • 100 to 150 ha per year through aerial liming.
Planting of tree and shrub seedlings	City, Vale, Sudbury INO, and Volunteers	<u>Ongoing</u> – Target of 100,000 conifer seedlings per year starting in 2010 and 5000 shrubs and hardwood seedlings. May be any combination of the above in a given year.
Lichen ‘seeding’ on bare rock	City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although shown to be successful, use is dependent on availability of lichen and receptor sites.
Planting forest shrubs and wildflowers	City	Ongoing but dependent on availability of stock.
Transplanting of forest floor ‘mats’	City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing in tree plantations over 20 years old. • Dependent on availability of donor sites.
Collecting seeds and propagating native plants	City and other partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing. • Need to establish community partners for growing plants from local seed sources.
Planting trials to determine suitability of plants for ‘assisted migration’ due to climate change	City	Ongoing – initiated in 2009

Community-based Initiatives

What	Who	When
Development of 5-Year Operations Plans	City (oversight by VETAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current 5-Year Plan covers the period from 2016 to 2020. • Annual reporting to the community.
Conduct research on techniques to enhance both carbon sequestration and biodiversity values of the greening efforts.	Laurentian University, City, Vale, and other partner research institutions as part of the L-CARE project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018 -2021
Conduct research on the influence of soil amendments on tree growth on barren sites.	Collège Boréal as part of L-CARE project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018 - 2021
Support biodiversity curriculum through teaching aids and dedicated in-class lecture.	City and Conservation Sudbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity posters developed in 2015 • Regreening education intern – 2017-2018
Conduct research to identify baselines, plant community targets and protocols for long-term monitoring of ecological recovery.	City and other community partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research objectives outlined in 5-Year Operations Plan.
Ugliest Schoolyard Contest aimed at naturalizing local schoolyards.	VETAC, City, Glencore, and other community partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing
Community Tree Giveaway	VETAC, City and other community partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing (once a year)



The Biodiversity Action Plan will lead to actions, which in turn will lead to assessment of and reporting on the results of the actions.

Reporting

Transparency. Accountability.

These are two words we heard loudly and clearly when speaking with community members. It's important to know not only *what* we're doing, but how we're managing it, how it is being paid for, and how we are measuring our progress.

So we have created a structure for our efforts that ensures transparency and clearly outlines accountabilities.

Oversight: The biodiversity initiative is overseen by the City's Regreening Program and VETAC. As the City's Advisory Panel on Regreening, VETAC has been improving our City's environment since 1973, and is currently Chaired by Dr. Peter Beckett of Laurentian University.

Measurement/Reporting: Under VETAC, an annual report will be prepared detailing progress made in the prior year, outlining priorities and actions for the coming year, and providing an overview of funds spent in the previous year, and budget for the coming year.

A website dedicated to Greater Sudbury's [Regreening Program](#) will be maintained by the City and will showcase accomplishments in ecological recovery in our community and will provide information on biodiversity-related events.



Funding

Despite the remarkable achievements we've made together in greening our community, the work that remains is daunting. It won't be completed in a few years. It will take decades.

Regreening our City has been costly. So far, the City's Regreening Program has cost upwards of \$31.8 million since 1978. Aerial liming, tree planting and other reclamation projects conducted by Vale and Sudbury INO have cost millions more. Future ecological recovery costs will be at least as great as those that have brought us this far.

As involved members of this community, both Vale and Sudbury INO have committed to the long-term support of ecological recovery efforts. These budget commitments are in addition to the funds committed by each company to their independent activities including aerial seeding, land reclamation, tree planting and other environmental activities. Budget commitments and sources will be detailed in annual reports.

As in the past, the City of Greater Sudbury will assess the funding of its popular Regreening Program as part of the annual municipal budget process. Other funding partners, such as Tree Canada, may provide continued support as opportunities permit.



Next Steps

There's a lot of work to be done in the coming years. Just as the environment around us evolves and changes, so will this Action Plan.

We see this Action Plan as a 'living document' for the community, one we will review regularly and update according to our changing landscape and to the priorities of our community.

Accordingly, we want your views on the Action Plan.

Address your comments to **Stephen Monet, Manager of Environmental Planning Initiatives**, and send them by:

- Post: PO Box 5000, STN A, 200 Brady Street, Sudbury, ON, P3A 5P3
- Fax: (705) 673-2200
- Email: stephen.monet@greatersudbury.ca

A [5-Year Operations Plan](#) that covers the years 2016 to 2020 is available for review. The Operations Plan provides the details as to the specific actions will be done in this time period and what areas will be worked on.

Now, let's get to work !

A young child with curly hair, wearing a blue t-shirt and blue pants, is sitting on a dark, rocky slope. The child is looking down at their hands, which are resting on their lap. To the left of the child, a small, vibrant green pine tree is growing out of a crevice in the rock. The rock surface is dark and textured, with several cracks and small, light-colored spots. The overall scene is a natural, outdoor setting.

“Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning”

Albert Einstein