



Glossary

You may encounter these terms while completing your application form for the Nature Smart program.

Carbon Sequestration

The process of capturing, securing and storing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere in stable solid or dissolved forms so that it doesn't cause the atmosphere to warm.

Conservation Agreement

An agreement between OSCIA and an approved Nature Smart application, which commits the applicant to implement and maintain an approved project for a set duration of time (ten (10) years under Nature Smart). Under Nature Smart, it is encouraged, but not required, that the agreement be on title for the land where the project is implemented.

Flood plain

Lands next to stream, ditches, and wetlands that flood during periods of high water.

Groundwater

Water found below the water table.

Grassland

A grassland is dominated by grasses rather than by trees or shrubs. Growing with the grasses are many other kinds of non-grassy herbaceous plants known as "forbs". On moist soils, prairie blends into marshlands dominated by sedges rather than grasses. (adapted from Tallgrass Ontario). The terms tallgrass prairie/savanna/meadow all refer to grasslands.

Invasive Species

An animal or plant that has moved from its native habitat to a new area. It then reproduces so aggressively that it displaces species within native plant communities resulting in economic, ecological or social disruption. Information on invasive species can be found at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/managing-invasive-species-ontario>

Live Staking

Cutting live branches from native shrubs, like willows and dogwoods, and staking them into the ground along a bare streambank. These living branches will send roots into the ground and slowly grow into full-sized shrubs.

Mineral Soil

A soil consisting predominantly of, and having its properties determined predominantly by mineral matter (sand, silt, clay, coarse fragments). Horizons must contain less than 30 % organic matter by dry weight, except for the surface layer which may exceed 30 %, if it is less than 40 cm thick and comprised of mixed peat, or less than 60 cm thick and comprised of fibric peat.

Native species (grasses/trees/shrubs)

A species that occurs naturally that was part of the original animals or plants in an area.

Opportunity Costs

Potential income that may have been generated from the land had it been kept for agriculture production.

Organic Soil

A surface wetland soil made up of decomposed plant matter with minimal mineral grain (silt, sand, clay) content. This soil will feel very smooth (no grittiness when tasted!) and greasy (not sticky) when rubbed between two fingers. It can often be referred to as black muck, but some forms derived from different biomass components may not be black and may contain more discernible plant parts. The minimum thickness of this layer should be approximately 10 cm to provide reasonable assurance this is a black muck layer.

Riparian Area

Riparian areas are the transitional areas between upland soils and bodies of water. These areas can include ravine slopes, banks, flood plains and the ecosystems found in them.

Soil Erosion

The movement of soil particles from one place to another because of wind, water, or tillage. Your risk for erosion can be depending on your soil type, topography, and your management practices. You can learn more about your risk for erosion by participating in an Environmental Farm Plan workshop, or speaking with your local Conservation Authority, a certified crop advisor or a professional agrologist.

Species at Risk (SAR)

Any plant or animal threatened by, or vulnerable to extinction locally but may be found elsewhere. They are evaluated and assigned 1 of 4 categories of risk. Extirpated – any species that no longer exists in the wild in Ontario but still occurs elsewhere. Endangered – any native species facing extinction or extirpation. Threatened – any native species that is at risk of becoming endangered. Special Concern – species that may become threatened or endangered due to a combination of biological characteristics and

identified threats. SAR are listed under the provincial Endangered Species Act and the federal Species at Risk Act.

Shrub

A woody plant that normally does not grow taller than 3 m in height and often has a multi-stemmed growth form.

Tree

A woody plant that can reach a height of at least 3 m at maturity, usually has a growth form with 1 main stem.

Upland

Lands and vegetation that occur above the floodplain of a watercourse or wetland.

Water Table

The water table is defined as the level in the ground above which pores are unsaturated, and below which pores are saturated. Water in this saturated zone is called **groundwater**.

Wetland

Wetlands are “lands that are seasonally or permanently covered in water (up to 2 m deep) or have water tables close to or at the surface for most of the growing season”. They should be dominated by (at least 50% coverage) of wetland-adapted plants, and they will often have muck soils or soils with orange/rusty mottles and/or grey colours part way down the soil profile. They are distinguished from ponds by either water depth or the lack of plant cover.