

Chapter 5. Implementation Advisory Committee

The Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) was formed to provide input from many perspectives to tackle the question of how the significant natural areas in the County could be preserved for the benefit of the entire region while respecting landowners and the rural and urban economies. This was a new approach, seldom taken in studies of this kind, but felt to be very important if the results and recommendations of the study were to be accepted by the community.

The Steering Committee invited representatives from agriculture, environmental stewardship agencies and groups, municipalities, provincial agencies and the development industry to sit on the IAC. Twenty-three groups accepted the invitation and agreed to send a representative. Jim Hayes, County Councillor and Mayor of South-West Oxford Township chaired the IAC and Kim DeKlein from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs worked as Facilitator. Staff from the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority and County of Oxford worked as support and technical staff, assisting the IAC.

A total of eight meetings were held between September 2005 and July 2006. The IAC worked on a parallel track with the technical part of the study. The IAC received the technical recommendations as they became available, discussed them at length, and developed their own set of implementation recommendations.

The IAC listed all of the possible tactics to achieve the technical recommendations in the form of Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs). The committee then proceeded to draw up a list of recommendations based on the following Implementation Measures:

- **Incentive Measures:** Cash, In-kind Assistance, Recognition programs, Funding from various levels of government and the private sector, User fees
- **Regulatory Measures:** Planning Act, Trees Act, Species at Risk Act, Municipal Act and Topsoil Preservation By-law, Drainage Act, Severances
- **Education and Outreach:** Workshops, Education, Trade Shows, Media, Official Plan Open House Process, Notification of landowners with designated patches, Natural Heritage Advisory Committee
- **Securement and Protection Measures:** Public Ownership, Conservation Easements
- **Taxation Measures:** Tax exemptions, Incentives, Rebates and Reductions

The discussions and outcomes validated the work of the Steering Committee and Technical Committees. This was a robust approach that brought many different perspectives and experiences to the table to achieve the ultimate goal of recommending ways to implement natural heritage conservation and enhancement on the ground in Oxford County.

The full Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) report is included as Appendix H.