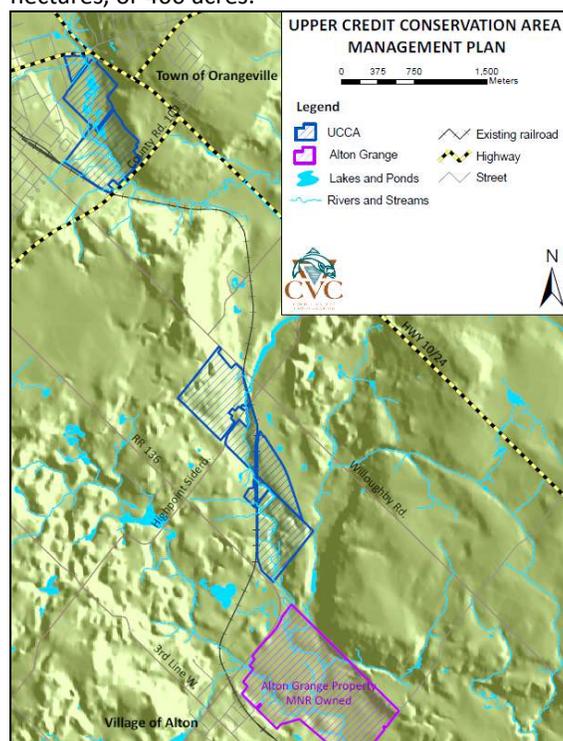


# Upper Credit Conservation Area (UCCA)

## Executive Summary – Management Plan Background Report

### Background

Located within the Towns of Caledon and Orangeville, the Upper Credit Conservation Area is one of Credit Valley Conservation’s (CVC) newest acquisitions. Commencing with the purchase of the Safari parcel in 2005, the past eight years has seen Upper Credit Conservation Area (UCCA) quadruple in size with the acquisition of additional lands. Securement of these lands is a CVC success story made possible through donations and funding from several sources, including private individuals, provincial and municipal governments, the Nature Conservancy of Canada and Ducks Unlimited. Today UCCA spans an area of 162 hectares, or 400 acres.



CVC is in the initial phases of developing a management plan for UCCA. This process will provide the framework that will guide future management of the property. CVC’s objectives for conservation area planning are designed to ensure sustainable management. In order, they include:

- protection
- appreciation
- recreation

The goal of the UCCA Management Plan will be to balance the protection of natural heritage features and their functions with development of appreciation and

recreation opportunities and the values of the local community and general public. The management plan will also identify the role of UCCA within the context of CVC’s larger conservation areas system.

### Natural Heritage Features

The varied landscape of UCCA acts as an important wildlife corridor. It provides a network of physically and functionally linked natural areas and green space that are part of the natural heritage system. Many significant regional and provincial environmental features are also found with UCCA. There are two Provincially Significant Wetlands, a candidate Earth Science Area of Natural and Scientific Interest, the Credit River Valley and Ontario’s Greenbelt Natural Heritage System.



The Credit River serves as the ecological backbone of UCCA, connecting the various parcels of land as well as the diverse ecosystems found throughout the property. Historic uses on the property were largely agricultural in nature. Evidence of this exists within the current landscape, especially in regard to the meadow communities that exist on the property. UCCA is largely comprised of wetland (26.7%), forest (including coniferous plantations, 30%), and meadow habitats (33%). Sixty-seven (67) unique vegetation communities have been identified within UCCA.

The diverse habitats present in UCCA support hundreds of species of plants and animals, including multiple rare and uncommon species and eight (8) Species at Risk.

Over twenty (20) species of fish have been identified in the Credit River and the tributaries that pass through UCCA, including brook trout, a species that depends on high-quality coldwater habitat.

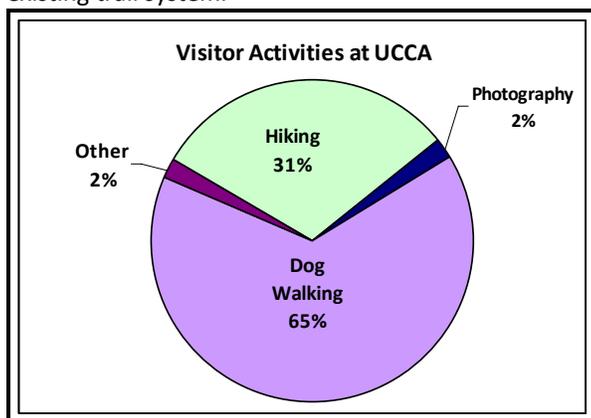
Several stewardship projects have taken place near or within UCCA in recent years, including restoration of riparian and instream habitat, restoration of existing meadows and tree plantings. The important ecological features and species found within UCCA provide opportunities for continued restoration as well as educational programming for conservation area visitors.

### Recreation and Visitation

UCCA provides public access to the Credit River and offers opportunities for hiking, fishing and nature appreciation. UCCA does not contain any permanent buildings, but boasts an extensive trail network, a parking lot and signage.



The majority of UCCA’s visitors travel from Orangeville (65%), Alton (10%) and Caledon (9%). As demonstrated by 2010 visitor survey results, visitors generally spend 30 minutes to one hour at UCCA and take advantage of the existing trail system.



\* Other includes: jogging, fishing and picnics

The main entrance to UCCA is located off Porterfield Road. This access is the most popular and has seen a steady increase in visitation over the past three years. An estimated 25,000 individual visits occurred at UCCA from all combined access locations in 2012.

### Future Management Directions

The management recommendations for UCCA are largely based on the three objectives outlined above: protection, appreciation and recreation. These objectives are interconnected and careful planning is required to ensure that each objective is met. For instance, the development of a trail system can provide recreation opportunities but if it disturbs a sensitive habitat, it could also affect ecological integrity and decrease overall protection.

Ongoing activities at UCCA are largely related to maintenance of existing infrastructure as well as restoration of habitats for specific species, whether it is planting native meadows for grassland birds or naturalizing the river channel to provide better habitat for brook trout.

Preliminary recommendations for future uses at UCCA include development of a more unified trail system, additional visitor related infrastructure and signage, and implementation of additional restoration and stewardship projects. Managing unsanctioned activities is also a priority.

Next steps in the UCCA Management Plan process include a public consultation open house. This is an opportunity for everyone to provide feedback about UCCA. The information gathered from the open house will be used to prepare the management plan. The date and time of the open house is listed below:

**Date:** Wednesday, June 12 2013

**Time:** 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

**Location:** Alton Community Centre (Alton Library) 35 Station St. Alton Ontario L7K 0E2

**Contact:** [lmcdonald@creditvalleyca.ca](mailto:lmcdonald@creditvalleyca.ca) / (905) 670 – 1615 ext. 535

