

What are Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs)?

ESAs are meant to capture the most locally and regionally significant terrestrial natural areas within the City's natural heritage system. The Official Plan identifies criteria for the identification of ESAs as follows:

Areas of land or water within the natural heritage system with any of the following characteristics:

a) habitats for vulnerable, rare, threatened or endangered plant and/or animal species and communities that are vulnerable, threatened or endangered within the City or the Greater Toronto Area; or

b) rare, high quality or unusual landforms created by geomorphological processes within the City or the Greater Toronto Area; or

c) habitats or communities of flora and fauna that are of a large size or have an unusually high diversity of otherwise commonly encountered biological communities and associated plants and animals; or

d) areas where an ecological function contributes appreciably to the healthy maintenance of a natural ecosystem beyond its boundaries, such as serving as a wildlife migratory stopover or concentration point, or serving as a water storage or recharge area.