



THE W. GARFIELD WESTON
FOUNDATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 15, 2011

**875 Acres of Carolinian Canada Habitat Protected Thanks to
The W. Garfield Weston Foundation Gift to
the Nature Conservancy of Canada**

Backus Woods will become part of 4,300 acres protected in Norfolk County

Toronto, ON – The W. Garfield Weston Foundation, a private family foundation, has funded the permanent preservation of more than 875 acres (354 hectares) of Carolinian Canada land in Norfolk County in south-western Ontario through a new **\$6.1 million** donation to the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC).

The funding will be used by NCC for the purchase and long-term stewardship of ecologically sensitive lands, including Backus Woods, and two connecting forest properties from the Long Point Region Conservation Authority (LPRCA). Norfolk County is home to 60 nationally listed species-at-risk and 221 provincially rare species. Some of the oldest living trees in Ontario are found in Backus Woods.

The private family foundation has long been a national leader in support of land conservation. In May, 2010, the Foundation announced its multi-year Norfolk Carolinian Legacy Project – through which NCC is protecting 3,400 acres (1,375 hectares) of vital habitat for species at risk that will now connect directly to both Backus Woods and the St. Williams Conservation Reserve, providing important natural corridors. With this new announcement, the Foundation will have supported NCC in protecting more than 4,300 acres (1,740 hectares) in Norfolk.

“Backus Woods is a haven for at-risk species that is treasured by the people of Norfolk County,” said John Lounds, President and CEO of the Nature Conservancy of Canada. “We are inspired by the commitment of The W. Garfield Weston Foundation. Their generosity ensures the long-term protection and care of this unique piece of Canada’s natural heritage.”

“Our family is pleased to build upon earlier successes in conserving valuable parts of Carolinian Canada for the benefit of species at risk and the local community at large. In addition, NCC and LPRCA will ensure that educational programs at the Backus Conservation Education Centre highlight the importance of conservation,” said Geordie Dalglish, Chair, The W. Garfield Weston Foundation.

Since the early 1980s, The W. Garfield Weston Foundation has donated over \$100 million to conservation organizations such as the Nature Conservancy of Canada to conserve more than 100,000 acres (40,000 hectares) of significant natural habitats across Canada.

The Foundation's *Norfolk Carolinian Legacy* project will help the Nature Conservancy of Canada preserve land on the Southern Norfolk Sand Plain, part of the Carolinian Life Zone. This area comprises less than a quarter of one per cent of Canada's landmass, but is home to 25 per cent of all species at risk. The lands that are part of this initiative are outstanding examples of Norfolk County's best forests, savannahs and wetlands and home to many species at risk of extinction in Canada including the Acadian Flycatcher, Prothonotary Warbler, American Badger, Eastern Foxsnake, Spotted Turtle, American Chestnut and Eastern Flowering Dogwood.

The Foundation has previously worked with NCC to support the conservation of ecologically significant land from coast to coast, including the Waterton Park Front in Alberta, Old Man on His Back in Saskatchewan and the Musquash Estuary in New Brunswick.

The W. Garfield Weston Foundation

The W. Garfield Weston Foundation is a private Canadian family foundation, established in the 1950's by Willard Garfield Weston and his wife Reta. In 1924 Garfield inherited his father's company and during his life established bakeries and other successful enterprises throughout Canada and in many parts of the world. Today, these businesses include George Weston Limited and Loblaw Companies Limited, companies in food retailing, processing and distribution. The founders believed that as the funds are generated through the hard work and success of these Canadian companies, grants should be given in Canada for the benefit of Canadians. For three generations, The W. Garfield Weston Foundation has maintained a family tradition of supporting charitable organizations across Canada. Today the Foundation directs the majority of its funds to projects in the fields of land conservation, education, and science in Canada's North.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is the country's leading land conservation organization, working to protect our valuable natural areas and the plants and animals they sustain.

Since 1962 NCC and its partners have helped to protect more than 2 million acres (800,000 hectares) coast to coast. By investing in conservation we are ensuring our natural world remains a home for wildlife, a haven for recreation and a vital resource that filters the air we breathe and the water we drink. Through strong partnerships NCC works to safeguard our natural areas so that our children and grandchildren will have the chance to enjoy them.

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