

Academic contributions to Global Biodiversity Framework Target 3 and Canada's 30x30 commitments

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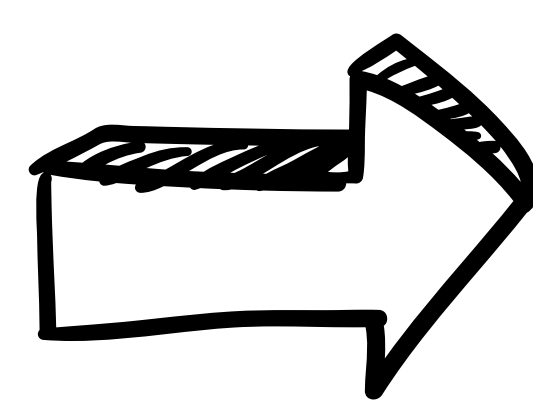
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Overview

Research Questions

Can academic lands contribute to Target 3 and Canada's 30x30 goal?

Do they want to?



Yes! Academic lands have significant potential to contribute to Target 3 and Canada's 30x30 goal, with preliminary assessments showing promise for future recognition.

Collaborative Engagement:

Partnerships with academic institutions can build community and engage students in conservation, making OECM recognition a point of pride & providing meaningful experiential learning opportunities.

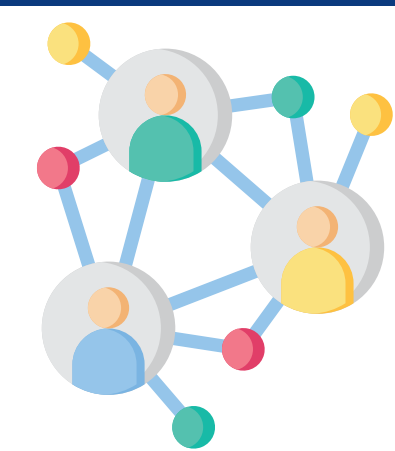
Defining Success: These institutions are positioned to address gaps in OECM research and align environmental initiatives with social targets, ultimately shaping how the value of an OECM value assessed both nationally and internationally.

Abstract

In 2020, Queen's University's Biological Research Station (QUBS) was recognized as the world's first and only Other Effective area-based Conservation Measure (OECM) on academic land. Following this recognition, research was conducted to understand and quantify if Canadian academic institutions could meaningfully contribute to Canada's broader conservation targets, such as the **Target 3 initiative to conserve 30% of land and waters by 2030**. To do so, extensive outreach and communications with over **170 English-language universities and colleges** across Canada were conducted in an effort to establish the viability of these partnerships as potential avenues for future OECM recognition. Institutions with eligible lands were encouraged to submit their completed assessments for federal recognition in the Canadian Protected and Conserved Area Database (CPCAD). With a **response rate of only 18% and discussions for over 30 000 hectares of potential future OECMs**, academic institutions hold meaningful promise for OECM gains.

Methods

- Reached out to 170 academic institutions, including universities, colleges, and field stations, across Canada, to assess their interest in pursuing OECM recognition.
- Eligible land was assessed with the Pan-Canadian Decision Support Tool (DST).



Case Study

Sheridan College

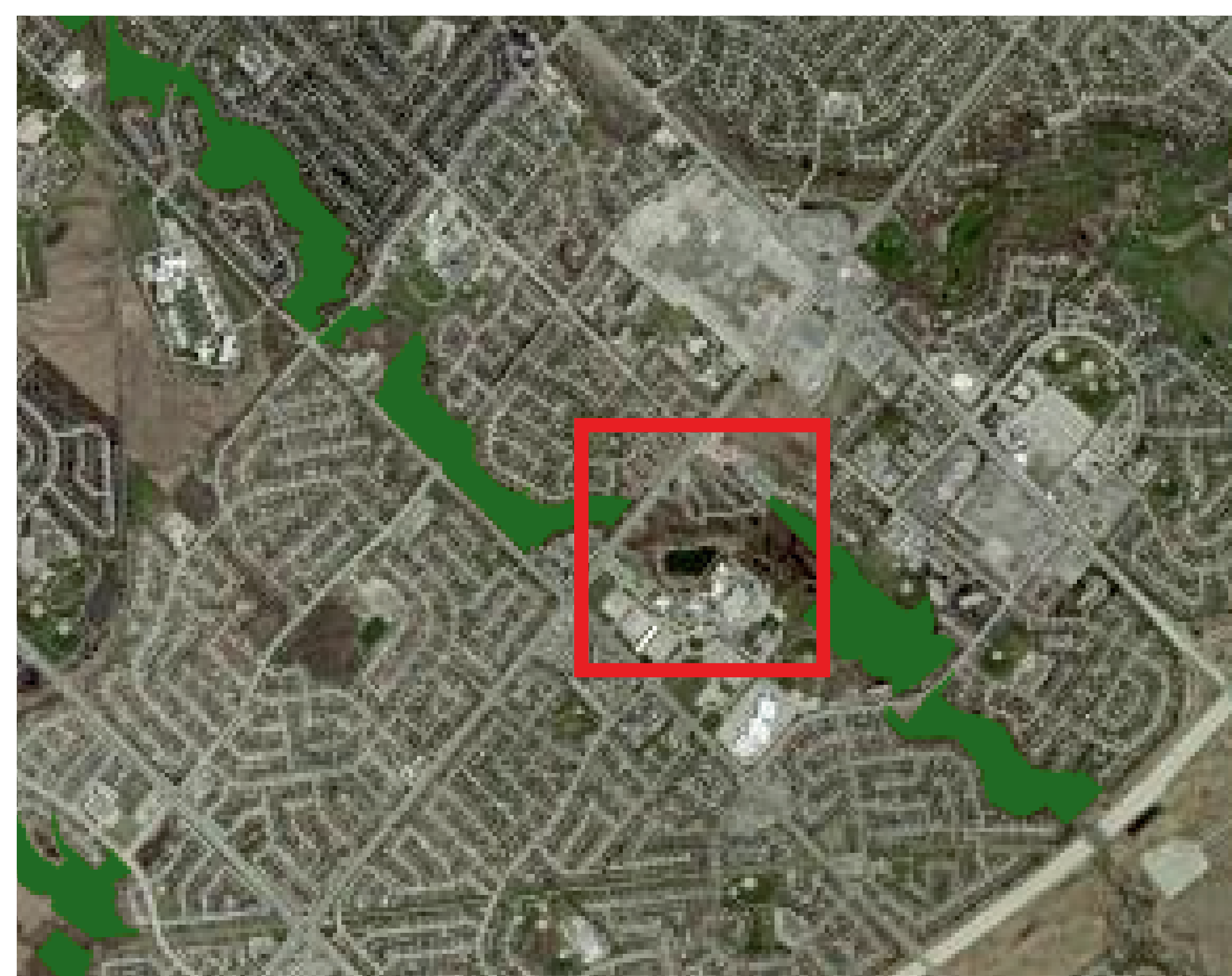


FIGURE 1: Map of Brampton, green represents areas already included in CPCAD. Red box outlines Sheridan College's Davis Campus (CPCAD, 2024)

- Sheridan College requested an assessment of **campus set-asides** on their Oakville and Brampton campuses as potential OECMs. Combined, these areas total a combined **~20ha**.
- Sheridan is committed to sustainability and was the first Ontario post-secondary institution to adopt the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.
- The campus set-asides are **zoned as floodplains by both their municipalities and their respective conservation authorities**. This prohibits most type of development. This means Sheridan could not build on these areas without extensive rezoning. As such, **there are significant mechanisms or "effective means" protecting the land**.
- Preliminary assessments suggest that Sheridan's lands are likely **eligible for OECM recognition**. If successful, their recognition could **increase the connectivity** of Brampton's existing municipal conserved lands (Figure 1)

Results

Overview



- Received responses from 31 institutions, leading to a response rate of 18% and discussions with >20 institutions for >30,000 hectares of potential OECMs.

- Targeted outreach to sustainability offices proved more effective than contacting faculty.
- **Leased Lands:** Although many parcels of land were owned by institutions, many larger areas, such as research forests, are on provincially leased land, requiring additional consent from provincial governments for OECM recognition.

Institutional Motivation

- Many academic institutions see OECM recognition as aligning with their sustainability goals, driven by initiatives like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and student recruitment
- Of 20 institutions involved in the project, 9 had a Sustainable Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS) rating, 4 were members of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), and 6 were signatories of the Sustainable Development Goals Accord.



Acknowledgements

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