



MEDIA RELEASE

December 4, 2020

OTF Grant Boosts Conservation of Ontario's At-risk Turtles and Wetlands

Peterborough – Over the past year, the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre (OTCC) has been busy completing renovations to its hospital for Ontario's at-risk turtle species. Thanks to a \$143,500 Capital grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation in 2019, OTCC was able to make needed renovations and add 3,100 square feet to the hospital as well. The Centre, founded in 2002, is Canada's leading turtle hospital and multi-faceted conservation centre for at-risk native Ontario turtles.

"The Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre has been one of Ontario's best kept secrets and it is my genuine hope that we can use this announcement to change that and bring to the forefront the amazing work that this organization does," said Dave Smith, MPP. "They are seemingly single-handedly reversing the declining turtle population with their rehabilitation of injured turtles and recovery and fertilization of turtle eggs from those turtles injured beyond the ability for even Dr. Carstairs to save. We are blessed to have such a world leader in this area of conservation in our backyard and I couldn't be more emphatic in my support for the work she and her team do."

This November, OTCC completed work at two buildings, completely renovating and re-designing them to house injured turtles in its care. In addition to substantially increasing capacity, the new facility ensures that turtles admitted to the hospital have larger enclosures that allow for maximum rehabilitative exercise, decreasing hospital stays and accelerating the turtles' return to their source wetlands. Turtles play a critical role in maintaining the health of the life-sustaining wetland ecosystems upon which all of us depend.

"The impact that this Ontario Trillium Foundation grant will have on conservation of Ontario's declining turtle populations is extensive" said Dr. Sue Carstairs, Executive and Medical Director of OTCC. "The rapid increase in turtle admissions over the past few years had pushed our current facility well beyond capacity. The OTF Capital Grant to renovate the buildings will not only greatly increase our capacity to conserve turtle populations it will also allow us to more effectively involve the community, with more volunteers able to work concurrently to care for the turtles."

About the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF)

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada's leading granting foundations. OTF awarded \$115 million to 644 projects last year to build healthy and vibrant communities in Ontario.

About the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre (OTCC)

Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre is a fully integrated turtle hospital and conservation centre for at-risk native Ontario turtles. OTCC measurably mitigates threats to Ontario's declining turtle populations through a comprehensive multi-pronged approach which includes a teaching hospital, egg incubation and hatchling program, scientific research, and education and outreach.

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