

MEDIA RELEASE

**For Immediate Release
Date Friday July 8, 2011**

FOTEK Presents Donation at HCA Board of Directors Meeting

Friends of the Eramosa Karst (FOTEK) presented a cheque for \$3000.00 to the Hamilton Conservation Foundation at HCA's monthly Board of Directors meeting on July 7, 2011. The funds are earmarked specifically for the future needs of the Eramosa Karst Conservation Area (EKCA) feeder lands, once transferred.

FOTEK is a community based volunteer organization formed in 2008. Their goal was to ensure the lands adjacent to the EKCA (feeder lands), owned then by the ORC, were protected and ultimately become part of the existing Eramosa Karst Conservation Area. With the recent announcement that the Province has accepted the City of Hamilton's new Urban Official Plan which protects the land from development, FOTEK is now re-aligning their mission statement to look to the future.

The group's presentation to the Board included a review of past activities and accomplishments and an update on how the group plans to move forward. FOTEK's Board plans to partner with the Conservation Foundation (HCA's fundraising partner) to expand fundraising and specifically donate towards the needs of proposed new lands, with a new goal of raising \$15000 over the next 3 years. The cheque presented to Foundation Chair David McInnis represents the first instalment towards that commitment. They also plan to modify their mission statement, to "entrench into the future, the financial and physical needs of the EKCA including the new lands", and to align their board and internal operational practices to ensure the continued success of FOTEK for generations to come.

Since its inception, FOTEK has become an important voice in the community, gaining the support of residents, environmentalists and environmental groups such as Environment Hamilton, the Hamilton Naturalists Club, and the Coalition of the Niagara Escarpment (CONE). To-date members of FOTEK have raised awareness and support in the community by holding a number of events including four annual dinner-dances, organized clean-ups, guided hikes, tree plantings, Garlic Mustard pulls and numerous informal tours and clean-up days.

As a result, since 2008 FOTEK members have contributed in excess of 5,000 volunteer hours and have raised \$5,000 for the conservation area. Funds have been used to install a dedicated bench and to erect a community bulletin board near the entrance. They have played an integral role in gaining support for the protection of the feeder lands and the anticipated transfer of those lands to the Conservation Authority.

Ward councillor Brad Clark said: "This group has changed the city's position; they've changed the ORC's position --- and they did it in such a meaningful and professional way that made such a significant difference. Watching this type of positive community engagement and involvement unfold over the past few years reminds me of why I got into politics."

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