

# Eastern Flowering Dogwood

## Ontario Government Response Statement



Photo: Wasy Bakowsky, NHC Archives

### PROTECTING AND RECOVERING SPECIES AT RISK IN ONTARIO

Species at risk recovery is a key part of protecting Ontario's biodiversity. Biodiversity – the variety of living organisms on Earth – provides us with clean air and water, food, fibre, medicine and other resources that we need to survive.

The *Endangered Species Act, 2007* (ESA) is the Government of Ontario's legislative commitment to protecting and recovering species at risk and their habitats. As soon as a species is listed as extirpated, endangered or threatened under the ESA, it is automatically protected from harm or harassment. Also, immediately upon listing, the habitats of endangered and threatened species are protected from damage or destruction.

Under the ESA, the Ministry of Natural Resources (the Ministry) must ensure that a recovery strategy is prepared for each species that is listed as endangered or threatened. A recovery strategy provides science-based advice to government on what is required to achieve recovery of a species.

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE STATEMENTS

Within nine months after a recovery strategy is prepared, the ESA requires the Ministry to publish a statement summarizing the government's intended actions and priorities in response to the recovery strategy. The recovery strategy for Eastern Flowering Dogwood was completed on February 18, 2010.

(<http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/stdprodconsume/groups/lr/@mnr/@species/documents/document/286964.pdf>)

The response statement is the government's policy response to the scientific advice provided in the recovery strategy. In addition to the strategy, the response statement is based on input from stakeholders, other jurisdictions, Aboriginal communities and members of the public. It reflects the best available traditional, local and scientific knowledge at this time and may be adapted if new information becomes available. In implementing the actions in the response statement, the ESA allows the Ministry to determine what is feasible, taking into account social and economic factors.

The Eastern Flowering Dogwood is a small tree with a layered branching pattern and simple, opposite leaves. In Ontario, the Eastern Flowering Dogwood is found only in the Carolinian Zone, a narrow band extending from the southeastern shore of Lake Huron to the west end of Lake Ontario. The number of Eastern Flowering Dogwood trees is declining steeply, mostly due to the aggressive dogwood anthracnose fungus.

## **MOVING FORWARD TO PROTECT AND RECOVER EASTERN FLOWERING DOGWOOD**

The Eastern Flowering Dogwood is listed as an endangered species under the ESA which protects both the tree and its habitat. The Act prohibits any damage or destruction of that habitat without authorization. Such authorization would require that conditions established by the Ministry of Natural Resources be met.

The government's goal for the recovery of the Eastern Flowering Dogwood is to protect and conserve existing populations, reduce its rate of decline, and where possible, restore populations of the species across its range in southern Ontario.

Protecting and recovering species at risk is a shared responsibility. No single agency or organization has the knowledge, authority, or financial resources to protect and recover all of Ontario's species at risk. Successful recovery requires inter-governmental co-operation and the involvement of many individuals, organizations and communities.

In developing the government response statement, the Ministry considered what actions are feasible for the government to lead directly, and what actions are feasible for the government to support its conservation partners to undertake.

### ***GOVERNMENT-LED ACTIONS***

To help protect and recover the Eastern Flowering Dogwood, the government will directly undertake the following actions:

- Educate other agencies and planning authorities on the requirement to consider the protection of the Eastern Flowering Dogwood and its habitat in planning activities and environmental assessment processes.
- Encourage the submission of Eastern Flowering Dogwood data to the Ministry of Natural Resources' central repository at the Natural Heritage Information Centre.
- Undertake communications and outreach to increase public awareness of species at risk in Ontario.
- Protect the Eastern Flowering Dogwood through the ESA. Develop and enforce a regulation protecting the specific habitat of the species.
- Support conservation, agency, municipal and industry partners to undertake activities to protect and recover Eastern Flowering Dogwood. Support will be provided through funding, agreements, permits (including conditions) and advisory services.
- Establish and communicate annual priority actions for government support in order to encourage collaboration and reduce duplication of efforts.

## GOVERNMENT-SUPPORTED ACTIONS

The government endorses the following actions as being necessary for the protection and recovery of the Eastern Flowering Dogwood. Actions which are noted as “high” will be given priority consideration for funding or for authorizations under the ESA. The government will focus its support on these high priority actions over the next five years.

### Focus Area: Threat Management

**Objective:** Develop, implement and assess management approaches for dogwood anthracnose and other threats in natural stands.

**Actions:**

1. **(HIGH)** Conduct research to identify potentially successful techniques of controlling dogwood anthracnose fungus in natural forest settings. These may include evaluating the use of prescribed burning or methods being used by the horticultural industry.
2. **(HIGH)** Develop and distribute best management practices for Eastern Flowering Dogwood stands (e.g., methods to slow the spread of dogwood anthracnose, habitat restoration opportunities) for use by landowners and land stewards.

### Focus Area: Monitoring

**Objective:** Undertake monitoring of health, threats and possible resistance to dogwood anthracnose.

**Actions:**

3. **(HIGH)** Develop and implement a monitoring program that may include:
  - Identifying significant and/or resistant populations across a representative range and across habitat types.
  - Monitoring tree health, the impacts of other threats, and identification of potentially resistant trees or stands.
  - Comparing the health of open-grown trees with those from more heavily shaded forests in Ontario.
  - Continued monitoring of EMAN (Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network) stands where Eastern Flowering Dogwood is present to evaluate decline rates.

### Focus Area: Protection

**Objective:** Identify and protect existing populations of Eastern Flowering Dogwood across their range in southern Ontario.

**Actions:**

4. **(HIGH)** Identify and describe typical vegetation communities in which Eastern Flowering Dogwood occurs across its southern Ontario range.
5. Develop educational materials for landowners and land stewards to help them identify Eastern Flowering Dogwood and the dogwood anthracnose fungus.
6. Encourage collaboration and stewardship among partners to implement habitat protection for the species.
7. As opportunities arise, support the securement of habitat with anthracnose resistant populations of Eastern Flowering Dogwood through existing land securement and stewardship programs.

**Focus Area:** Restoration  
**Objective:** Where possible, restore habitat and/or populations of Eastern Flowering Dogwood.

**Actions:**

8. Co-operate with existing initiatives to connect and expand forest fragments to increase potential suitable habitat.
9. Consider habitat management within the range of Eastern Flowering Dogwood (e.g. removal of some conifers in former conifer plantations, in order to promote natural seeding, growth and dispersal of Eastern Flowering Dogwood and other native species).
10. Develop a source(s) of seeds and/or seedlings for restoration plantings that are potentially resistant to dogwood anthracnose and define the maximum distance from the source that the seeds may be planted.
11. Consider re-establishing Eastern Flowering Dogwood in suitable habitat at previously documented locations using local, potentially resistant seeds. Manage habitat to maintain open conditions and limit the infection and spread of dogwood anthracnose. (Planting of Eastern Flowering Dogwood should only be considered at sites where the dogwood anthracnose fungus is absent and there will be ongoing management of the site to maintain habitat suitability.)

## IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

Financial support for the implementation of actions may be available through the Species at Risk Stewardship Fund, Species at Risk Farm Incentive Program, or Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program. Conservation partners are encouraged to discuss project proposals related to the actions in this response statement with the Ministry of Natural Resources. The Ministry can also advise whether any authorizations under the ESA or other legislation may be required for undertaking the project.

Implementation of the actions may be subject to changing priorities across the multitude of species at risk, available resources and the capacity of partners to undertake recovery activities. Where appropriate, the implementation of actions for multiple species will be co-ordinated across government response statements.

## REVIEWING PROGRESS

The ESA requires the Ministry to conduct a review of progress towards protecting and recovering a species not later than five years from the publication of this response statement. The review will help identify whether adjustments are needed to achieve the protection and recovery of the Eastern Flowering Dogwood.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to thank everyone who participated in the development of the "Recovery Strategy for the Eastern Flowering Dogwood in Ontario" for their dedication to protecting and recovering species at risk.

### **For additional information:**

Visit the species at risk website at  
[ontario.ca/speciesatrisk](http://ontario.ca/speciesatrisk)

Contact your MNR district office

Contact the Natural Resources Information Centre

1-800-667-1940

TTY 1-866-686-6072

[mnr.nric.mnr@ontario.ca](mailto:mnr.nric.mnr@ontario.ca)

[ontario.ca/mnr](http://ontario.ca/mnr)