

Hoary Mountain-Mint

Ontario Government Response Statement



Photo: Ted Bodner, USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

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 Hoary Mountain-mint was completed on February 18, 2011 (http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/Species/2ColumnSubPage/STDPROD_075650.html).

The response statement is the government's policy response to the scientific advice provided in the recovery strategy. In addition to the strategy, input on the response statement was requested from stakeholders, other jurisdictions, Aboriginal communities and members of the public. The statement 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.

Hoary Mountain-mint is a perennial herb that grows up to 1 m in height. The flowers of Hoary Mountain-mint are small, white, and purple-spotted and are clustered towards the end of the stem.

MOVING FORWARD TO PROTECT AND RECOVER HOARY MOUNTAIN-MINT

Hoary Mountain-mint is listed as an endangered species under the ESA, which protects both the plant and its habitat. The ESA prohibits harm or harassment of the species and damage or destruction of its habitat without authorization. Such authorization would require that conditions established by the Ministry be met.

Only two occurrences of Hoary Mountain-mint are currently known in Ontario, extending between Hamilton and Burlington. This species has likely always been rare in Ontario where it is at the northern extent of its range but it is secure at the core of its range. Potential threats to the species in Ontario include loss of habitat from succession and fire suppression, competition from invasive species, erosion and hazards associated with small population size.

The government's goal for the recovery of Hoary Mountain-mint is to ensure the long-term survival of existing Ontario populations.

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 Hoary Mountain-mint, the government will directly undertake the following actions:

- Educate other agencies and authorities involved in planning and environmental assessment processes on the protection requirements under the ESA.
- Encourage the submission of Hoary Mountain-mint observation data to the Ministry's central repository at the Natural Heritage Information Centre.
- Undertake communications and outreach to increase public awareness of species at risk in Ontario.
- Protect the Hoary Mountain-mint and its habitat through the ESA.
- Support conservation, agency, municipal and industry partners to undertake activities to protect and recover the Hoary Mountain-mint. Support will be provided through funding, agreements, permits (including conditions) and advisory services.
- Establish and communicate annual priority actions for government support across multiple species 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 Hoary Mountain-mint. Actions identified 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: Protection and Management

Objective: Implement measures to protect and improve habitat for Hoary Mountain-mint.

Actions:

1. **(HIGH)** Implement and evaluate the effectiveness of management actions to improve Hoary Mountain-mint habitat and surrounding areas which may include prescribed burning and the removal of invasive species.
2. Develop and provide information to landowners to increase awareness and promote protection and recovery of Hoary Mountain-mint.

Focus Area: Monitoring and Research

Objective: Improve knowledge of the abundance and population dynamics of Hoary Mountain-mint and factors that may be limiting their viability within Ontario.

Actions:

3. Monitor populations periodically to determine any changes in population abundance and evaluate the extent of threats.

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, Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program or Conservation Lands Tax Incentive Program. Conservation partners are encouraged to discuss project proposals related to the actions in this response statement with the Ministry. The Ministry can also advise if any authorizations under the ESA or other legislation may be required to undertake 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 if adjustments are needed to achieve the protection and recovery of the Hoary Mountain-mint.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to thank all those who participated in the development of the "Recovery Strategy for Hoary Mountain-mint 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
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