Measuring the Possibilities
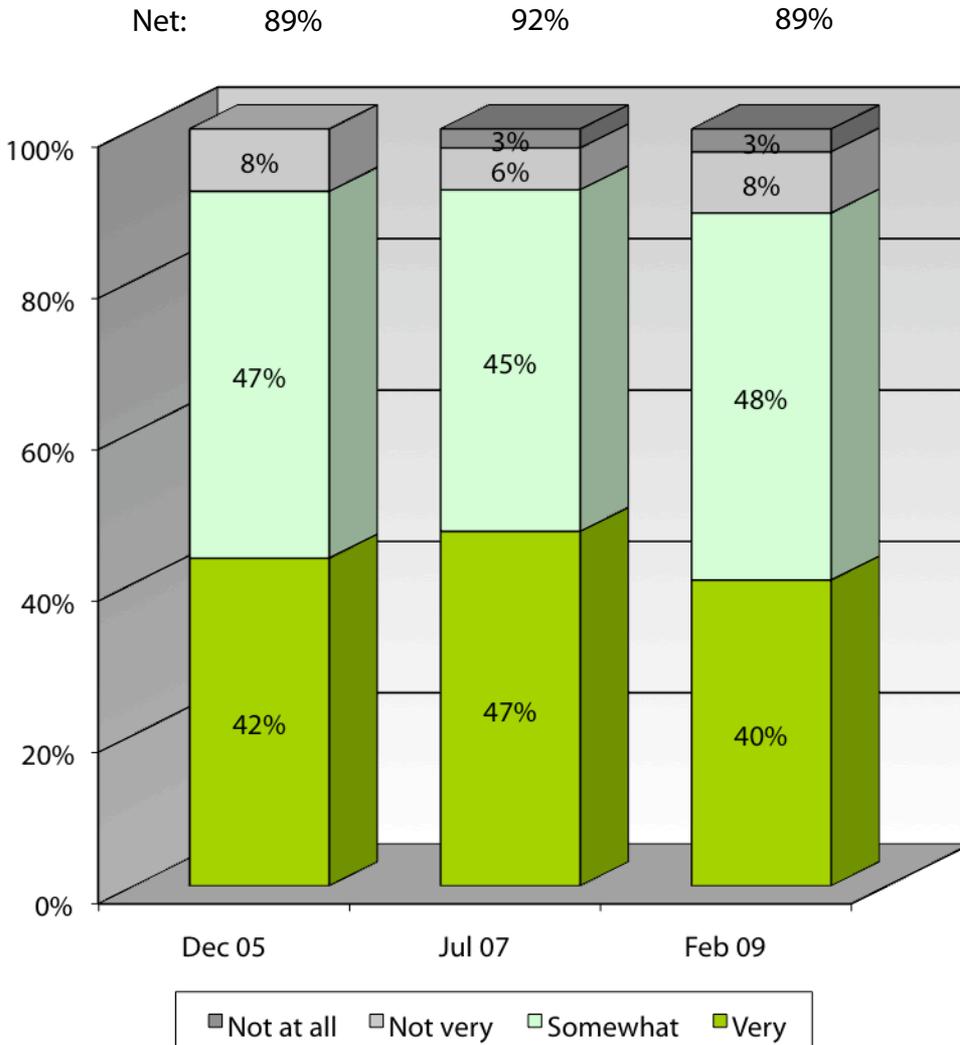## Greenbelt Public Awareness 2009
Environics poll sponsored by
Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation

Key Results

- Support for Ontario's Greenbelt is at a high at 93%.

- The most important benefit of the Greenbelt is protecting the natural water systems (36%) followed by protecting wildlife habitat (17%) and preserving agricultural lands (17%).

- Most encouraging is that 91% of those surveyed agree that "The Greenbelt is one of the most important contributions of our generation to the future of Ontario."

The *Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation* would like to acknowledge Environics Research Group and Vice President David MacDonald for all of their work and support.

How concerned are you with the state of the natural environment in Ontario?

Net: 89%   92%   89%
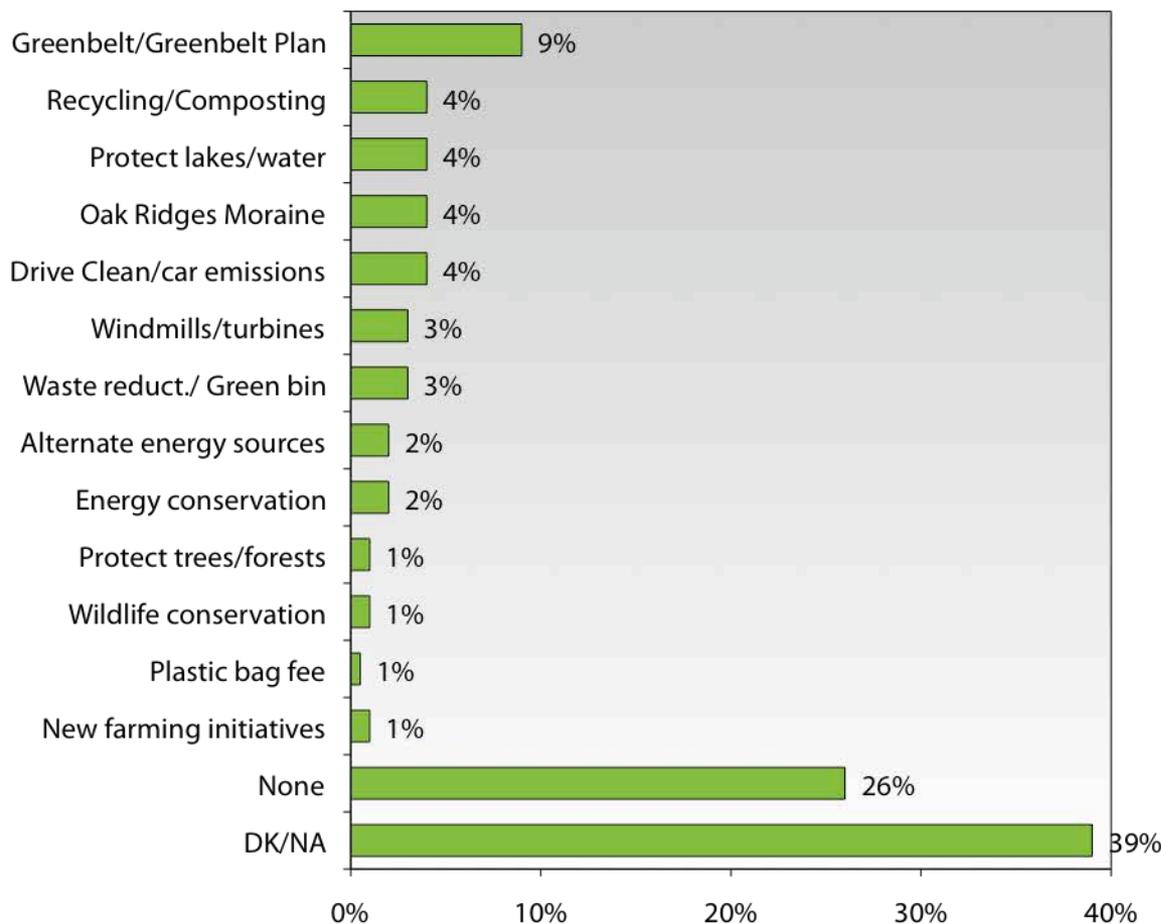

Findings:

- The proportion who are concerned about the environment remains very high.

- The proportion who are very concerned has declined from 47 percent to 40 percent since 2007.

Key Differences:

- <u>More</u> likely to be very concerned:
  - Women (47%)
  - Post-grads (45%)
  - Higher income (HHI$80+ 57%)
  - Those supporting the Greenbelt (46%)

- <u>Less</u> likely to be very concerned:
  - Men (34%)
  - 18-29 (22%, down from 33% in 2007)

What programs, initiatives or government acts have you heard of, if any, that will protect the natural environment in rural or agricultural spaces of land in Ontario?
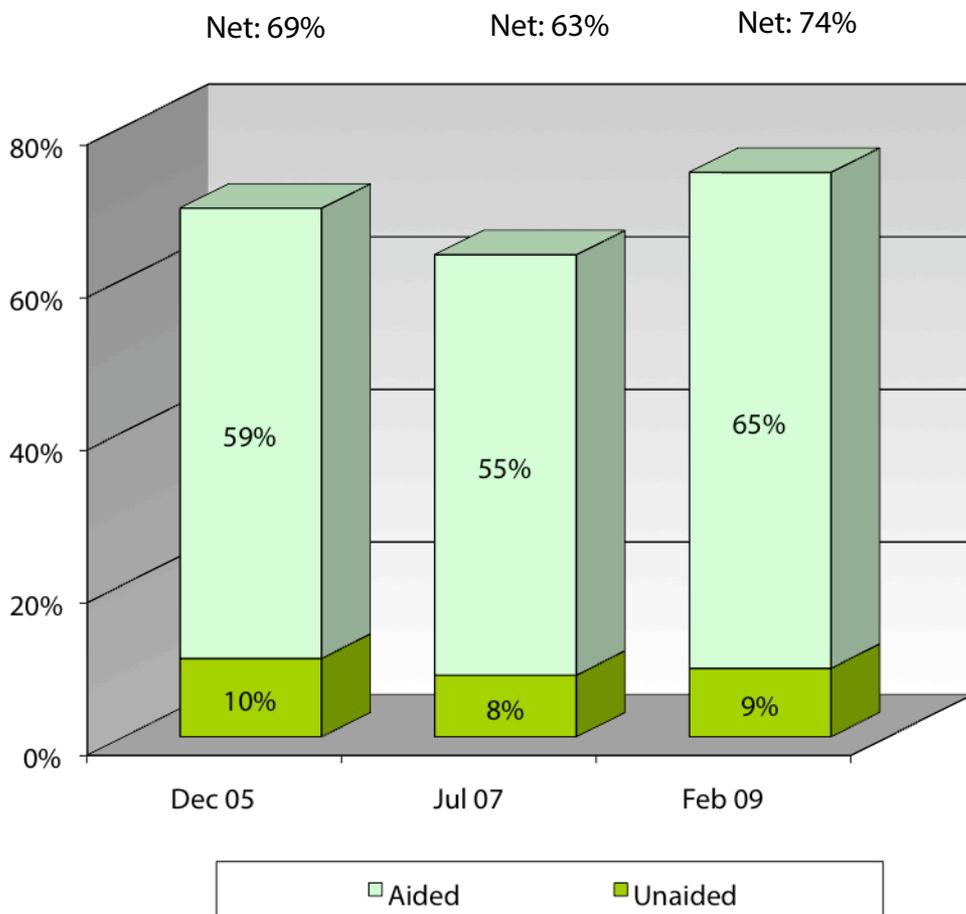– All Respondents, multiple responses

Findings:

- Unaided awareness of the Greenbelt outranks all other mentions, cited by 9 percent.

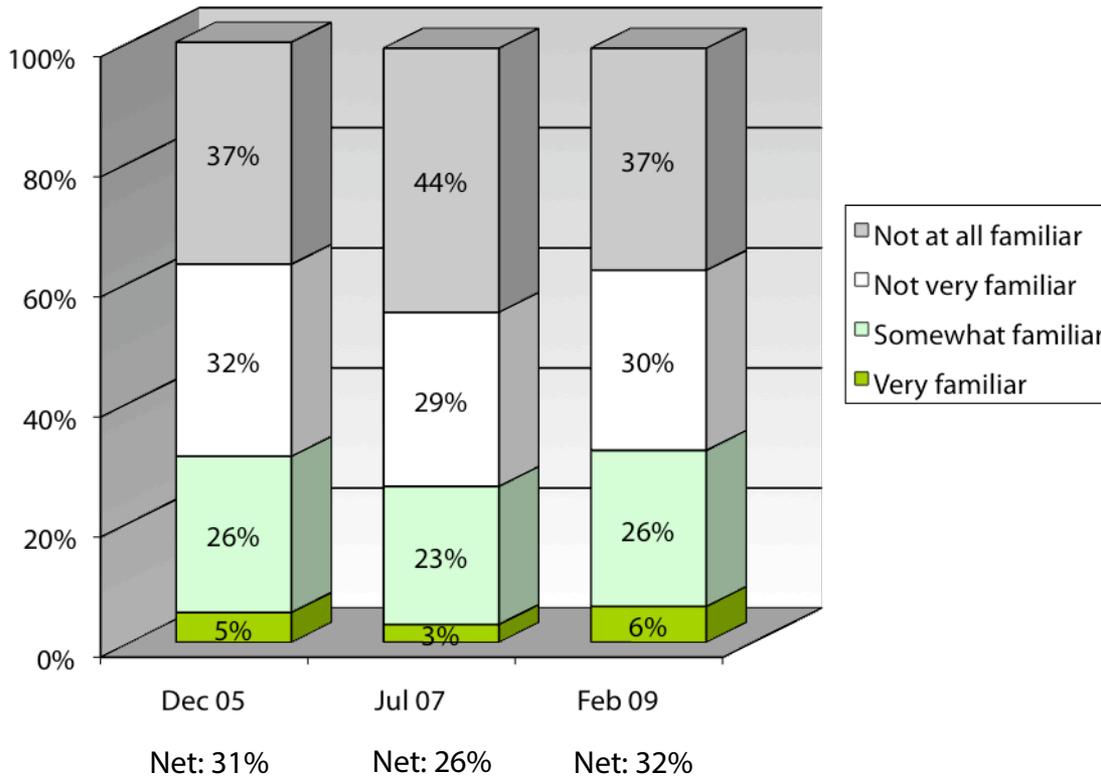- Nearly 4 in 10 (39%) cannot name any, and a quarter (25%) say 'none'.

Key Differences:

- Middle age respondents (11%) and high income earners (HH$80+, 15%) are more likely to mention the Greenbelt.

- Younger respondents (76%) and those with incomes below $40k (75%) are more likely to say 'none' or 'don't know'.

Before today, have you ever heard of the Greenbelt, the Greenbelt Plan, or the Greenbelt Act in Ontario?

Net: 69%   Net: 63%   Net: 74%

Findings:

- Combined aided and unaided awareness is the highest ever recorded, with 74 percent now aware of the Greenbelt.

Key Differences:

- Those more likely to be aware of the Greenbelt include:
  - Those 50+ (79%)
  - HHI$80k+ (79%),
  - Those in rural areas (81%),and
  - Those in Hamilton/Niagara/Brant (83%)

- Those less likely to be aware of the Greenbelt include:
  - Those 18-29 (60%)
  - Immigrants (61%)
  - Those in Toronto (67%)

How familiar would you say you are with the issues and objectives of the Greenbelt?
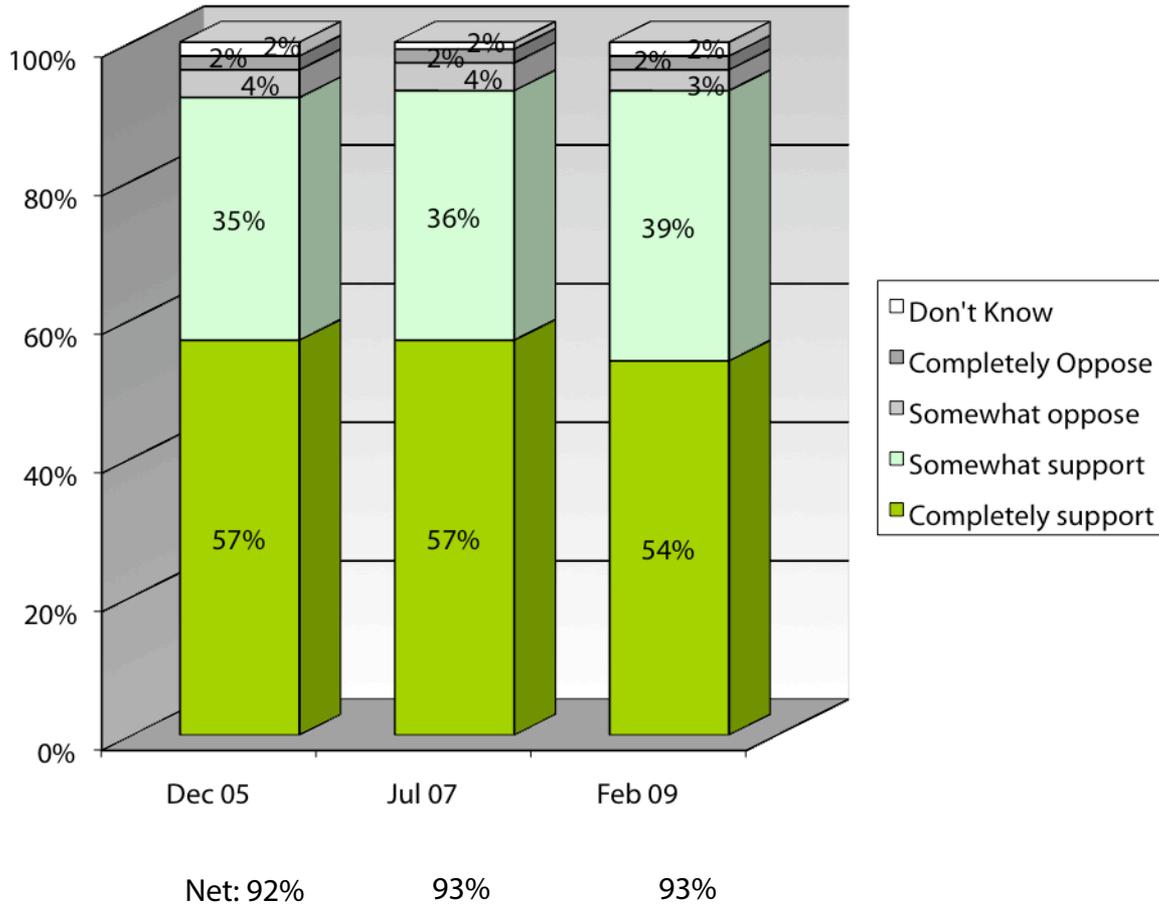

Dec 05 — Net: 31%
Jul 07 — Net: 26%
Feb 09 — Net: 32%

Findings:

- One-third (32%) are very (6%) or somewhat (26%) familiar with the issues and objectives of the Greenbelt, in line with findings from 2005 and up from 2007.

- A similar proportion say they are either not very (30%) or not at all (37%) familiar.

Key Differences:

- Those more likely to say they are familiar with the issues and objectives of the Greenbelt include:
  - Men more than women (36% vs. 28%)
  - Those 50+ more than those 18-29 (41% vs. 18%)
  - Post-grads (37%)
  - Those earning $80K+ than those earning <$40K (38% vs. 29%)
  - Those with unaided awareness (71%, up from 55%), or aided awareness (37%)
  - Those living in York/Durham/Simcoe (38%).

Do you completely support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or completely oppose the Greenbelt?

Findings:

- Support for Ontario's Greenbelt is at a high with 93 percent now completely supporting (54%) or somewhat supporting (39%) the Greenbelt.

- Only 4 percent remain opposed.

Key Differences:

- As in 2007, support increases across all groups, but is especially higher amongst those 18-29 (59% completely support).

- 61% of those with unaided awareness and 58 percent of those with aided awareness completely support it.

- Those in urban areas are more likely to completely support the Greenbelt than those in rural areas (55% vs. 46%), with those in rural areas more likely to somewhat support it than those in urban areas (46% vs. 38%).

Do you completely support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or completely oppose the Greenbelt?

Completely Support (54%)

- Those aged 18-29 (59%)

- University (57%) and Post-Grads (59%)

- Household income of $40-$60,000 (59%)

- York/Durham/Simcoe (58%)

- Very concerned about environment (62%)

- Unaided (61%) or aided (58%) awareness of the Greenbelt

- Very/somewhat familiar with objectives of the Greenbelt (60%)

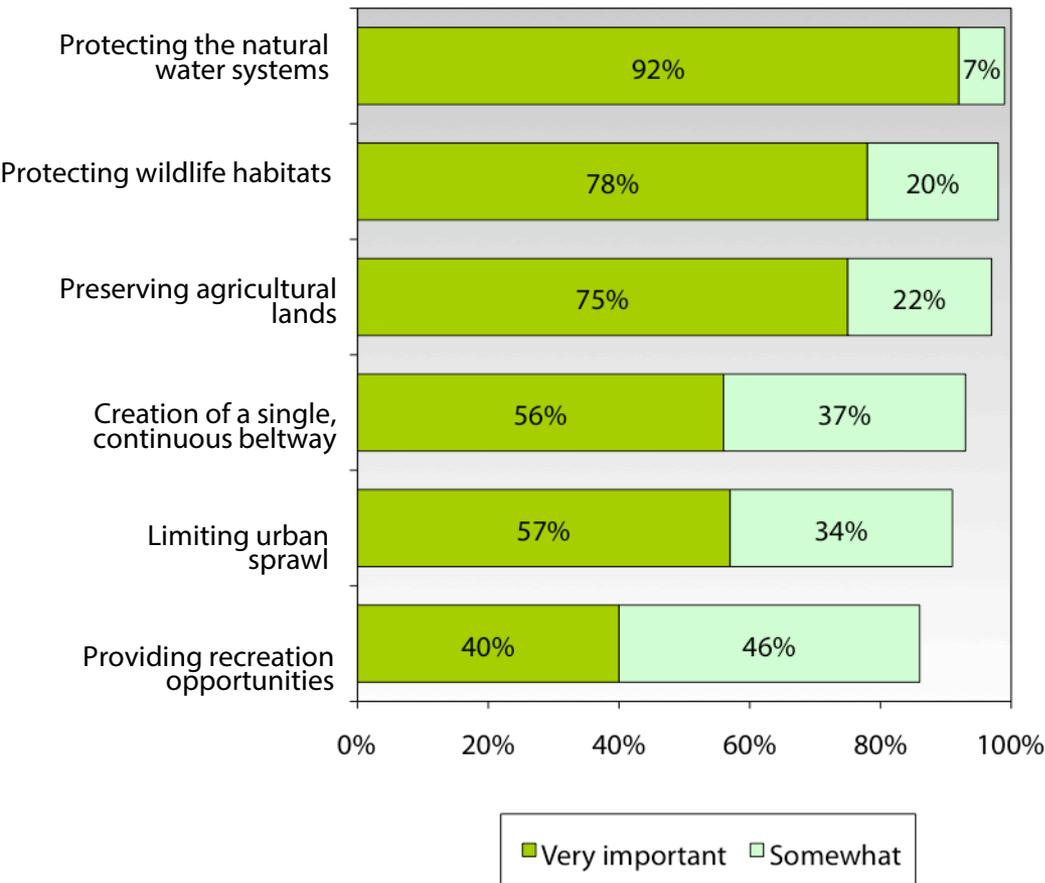- Saw news stories (62%) or advertising (61%)

Somewhat Support (39%)

- Women (41%), 30-49 (43%)

- Those with children (42%)

- Those with college/vocational education (44%)

- Toronto (43%), rural (46%)

- Somewhat concerned about environment (45%)

- Aided (48%) awareness of the Greenbelt

- Not very/at all familiar with the objectives of the Greenbelt (42%)

Please indicate whether each of the following goals or benefits of the Greenbelt is important to you?

Findings:

- As in prior polls, significant support exists for each of the stated goals and benefits. Protecting the natural water systems, protecting wildlife habitats, and preserving agricultural lands have the strongest support.
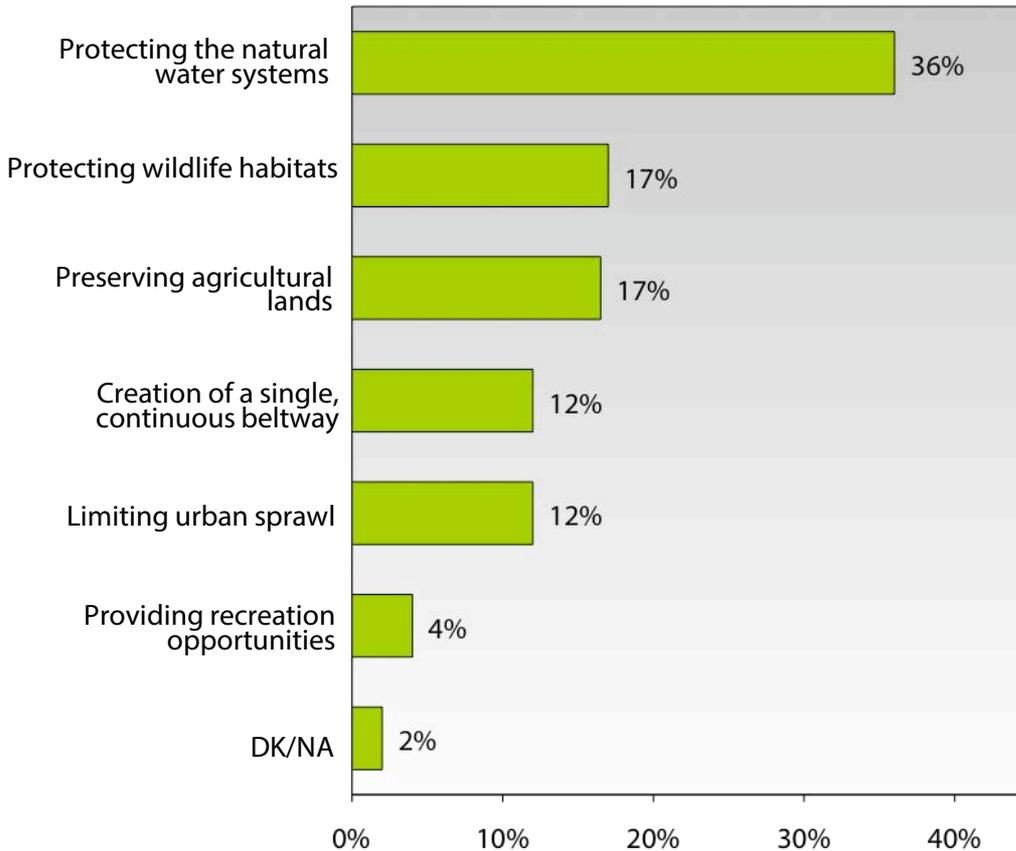
Key Differences:

- Women, older respondents, those in rural areas, and those familiar with the Greenbelt are generally more likely to say each of these is very important.

For you personally, which of the following is the <u>most important</u> benefit of the Greenbelt?

Benefit	Percentage
Protecting the natural water systems	36%
Protecting wildlife habitats	17%
Preserving agricultural lands	17%
Creation of a single, continuous beltway	12%
Limiting urban sprawl	12%
Providing recreation opportunities	4%
DK/NA	2%

Findings:

- Protecting the natural water systems is cited most frequently as the most important benefit of the Greenbelt, cited by 36 percent. Protecting wildlife habitats (17%) and preserving agricultural lands (17%) are mentioned next.

Key Differences:

- Those earning $80k+ (40%), immigrants (40%), and those in rural areas (41%) are more likely to cite 'protecting the natural water system.'

- Women more than men cite 'preserving agricultural lands' (20% vs. 14%)

- Those aged 18-29 are more likely than those aged 50+ to cite 'protecting wildlife habitats'.

- Those with post-grad education more than those with HS/less cite 'Protecting the natural water systems' (40% vs. 29%)
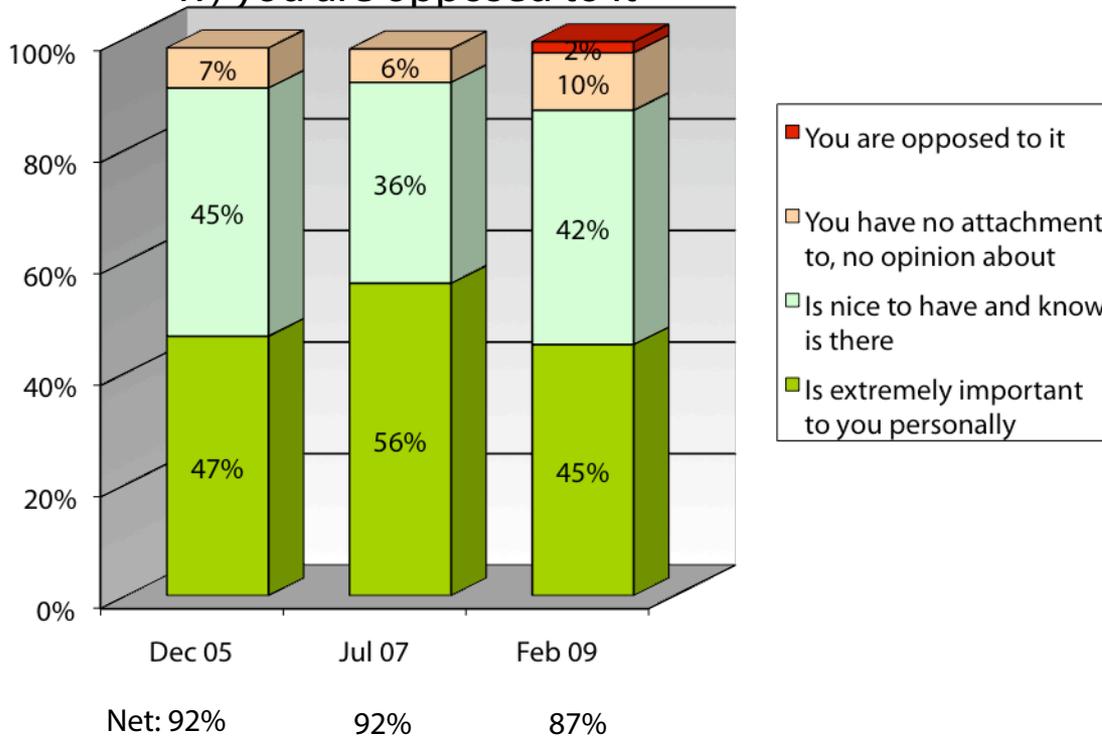
Is the Greenbelt something that:

i) is extremely important to you personally

ii) is nice to have and know is there
iii) you really have no attachment to and no opinion about, or
iv) you are opposed to it

Net: 92%   92%   87%

Findings:

- Almost half of respondents (45%) agree that the Greenbelt is extremely important to them personally, with a further 42 percent saying it is nice to have and know is there. Only 10 percent say they have no attachment to it, while 2 percent maintain they are opposed to it.
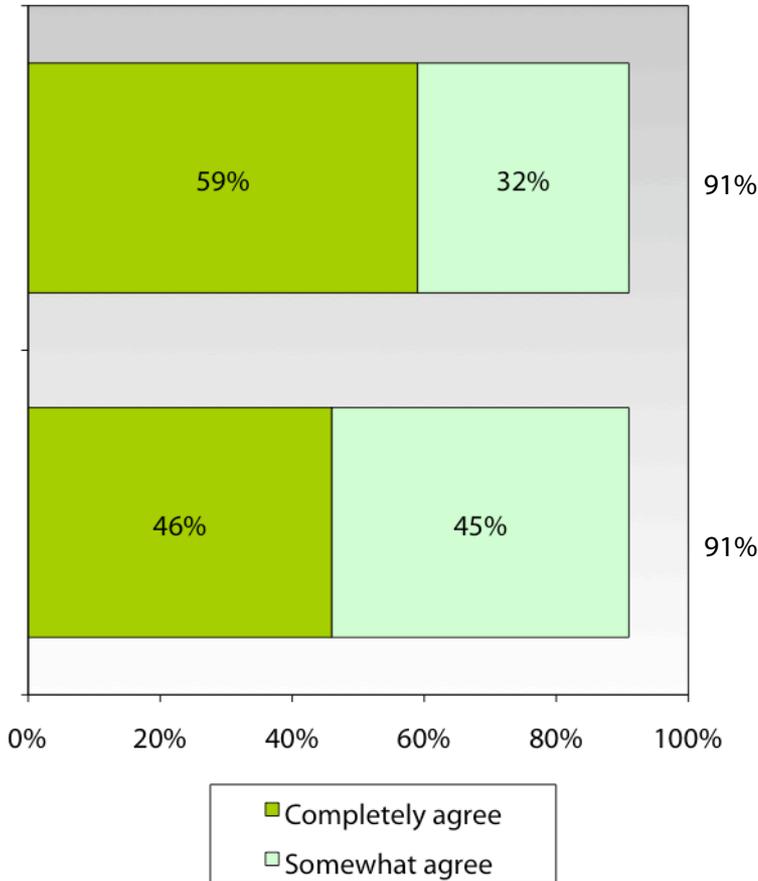
Key Differences:

- Those more likely to say it is extremely important to them personally include those aged 50+ (41%), those familiar with the goals and objectives of the Greenbelt (59%), and those who are very concerned about the state of the environment (64%).

Note: In 2009 the third response was changed from "You really have no attachment to and don't really care much about the Greenbelt," to "You really have no attachment to and no opinion about the Greenbelt." In addition, a fourth response "You are opposed to it" was added. According to polling experts, the decline in respondents who agree that the Greenbelt "is extremely important to you personally" could be attributed to the addition of another option for respondents.

Please indicate whether you completely agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or completely disagree with each of the following…

Urban growth can be accommodated by making more efficient use of existing urban lands rather than allowing them to encroach on the Greenbelt

The Greenbelt is one of the most important contributions of our generation to the future of Ontario

- 59% — 32% — 91%
- 46% — 45% — 91%

Legend:
- ■ Completely agree
- □ Somewhat agree

Findings:

- A majority or near majority completely agrees with both of the statements. Up 4 percent from 2007 and 2005, 91% of Ontarians completely agree (46%) or somewhat agree (45%) that the Greenbelt is one of the most important contributions of our generation to the future of Ontario.

Key Differences:

- Those 50+ (62%), those in rural areas (66%), and those very familiar with the objectives of the Greenbelt are more likely to agree that urban growth can be accommodated by using existing lands more efficiently.

- Those 50+ (54%) and those with incomes below $40k (60%) are more likely to agree that the Greenbelt is one of the most important contributions of our generation to the future of Ontario.

Conclusions

- Results from the 2009 *Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation* survey show a high level of support for the Greenbelt in Ontario.

- Overall awareness of the Greenbelt has increased significantly over time. The Greenbelt continues to be the most frequently cited top of mind program/initiative or government act to protect the environment and rural/agricultural lands.

- Protecting the natural waterways remains the most highly valued benefit of the Greenbelt, with preserving agricultural lands and protecting wildlife habitats also highly valued.

- Ontarians strongly agree that:

    - the Greenbelt should be protected from encroachment

    - urban growth can be better accommodated by making more efficient use of existing lands, and

    - the Greenbelt represents a lasting legacy of this generation to the next.

- Certain groups are more likely to show a deeper level of engagement with the Greenbelt, including older residents, higher income/education residents, and those living in rural areas. However, younger residents and those in urban areas also express very high levels of support of the goals and benefits of the Greenbelt.

Methodology

- A total of 750 interviews were conducted by telephone between February 15-21, 2009. A sample of this size can be considered accurate to within +/-3.6 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. A stratified sampling was employed with quotas set for each municipality. The breakdown of the sample plan appears below:
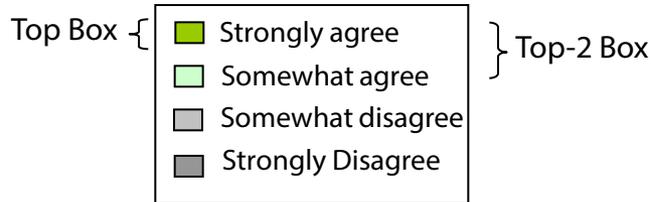
Region:	Sample Size	Target Urban	Target Rural
Toronto (416)	200	200	0
York	90	84	6
Durham	60	53	7
Dufferin	50	33	17
Peel	80	77	3
Halton	60	56	4
Brant	50	42	8
Hamilton	60	56	4
Niagara	50	44	6
Simcoe	50	35	15
TOTAL	**750**	**680**	**70**

Reporting & Analysis

- Results in this report are analyzed by unweighted data, highlighting key differences by respondent demographics and awareness of the Greenbelt.

- Consistently, for multi-item scales using 4-point agreement scales, few top 2-box differences (e.g. strongly agree + somewhat agree) were seen across most categories of respondents.

  To help the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation better understand where support and interest is strongest, this report focuses on the differences among the top-box respondents (e.g. strongly agree). Users should remember that total agreement would include the second-box respondents as well.

  Top Box {
  ☐ Strongly agree
  ☐ Somewhat agree   } Top-2 Box
  ☐ Somewhat disagree
  ☐ Strongly Disagree

- In most charts the "Don't Knows" are suppressed, unless they account for more than 10% of responses

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