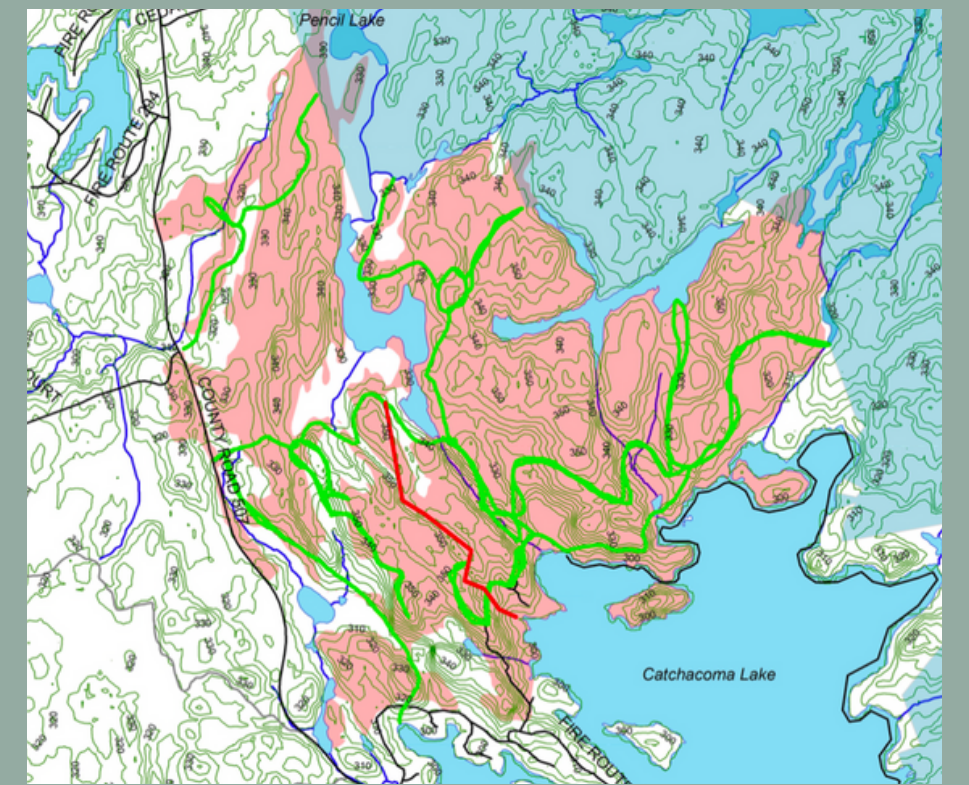


Catchacoma Old-Growth Forest: Why Protect It?

Accessible Location

- **The Catchacoma Forest** is a 662 ha stand of Crown land old-growth forest located north of Catchacoma Lake, west of the Kawartha Highlands Provincial Park and east of Highway 507.
- **Only 45-minutes from Peterborough** and 2 hours from Toronto, the Catchacoma Forest is one of few remaining large intact old-growth forests that is easily accessible to many people in the Kawartha Lakes, City of Peterborough area, and GTA region.
- There is **easy public access from a trailhead parking lot** off highway 507.



Ecological Values

- It is the **largest documented old-growth eastern hemlock stand in Canada**.
- Natural (unlogged) eastern hemlock forests are **“endangered” ecosystems** in Ontario’s temperate forest region.
- The Forest is a regionally significant site for **wildlife connectivity and forest carbon** sequestration and storage.
 - It is conservatively estimated that if proposed 2021-31 logging occurs in the Forest then **291,739 tons of above-ground CO2** would be removed from the Forest.
- **13 species-at-risk** have been documented in the Forest: Algonquin wolf, black ash, Blanding’s turtle, cerulean warbler, common five-lined skink, eastern ribbon snake, eastern wood pee-wee, hog-nosed snake, lichen Coenogonium pineti, monarch butterfly, rusty blackbird, snapping turtle and wood thrush.
- The Forest’s **natural capital value** (measured in dollars) is conservatively estimated to be ten times greater than its timber market value.
- Intact areas (east of Pencil Creek) have an incredibly **high density of old-growth trees: 149 per hectare**. These old-growth trees **increase the resilience** of the surrounding forest.
- The Forest’s extensive old-growth provides significant **ecosystem services** such as air and water purification, nutrient cycling, carbon storage, wildlife habitat, and species diversity.

Educational Values

- The Forest provides valuable outdoor **environmental education opportunities** for students and the general public.
- **General Public** - Since 2019, 11 public hikes have been held in the Catchacoma Forest, bringing roughly 350 people into the Forest to experience its unique landscape and old-growth.
- **Students** - The Forest has also seen 7 class visits since 2019, bringing roughly 120 students from the Peterborough Youth Leadership in Sustainability Program, Fleming College, and Roger Neilson School to learn about citizen science and old-growth ecology.

Recreational Values

- Many easily accessible hiking, ATV, hunting, trapping, and snowmobile **trails** (which support Trent Lakes Council’s **Draft Open Space Plan**)
- **Health & well-being** benefits of time spent in large intact forests.

Poised for Protection

- Could be annexed to Kawartha Highlands Provincial Park, which borders the Forest’s eastern boundary.
- The Forest is **part of the Highlands Corridor**, a significant wildlife corridor that the Haliburton Highlands Land Trust and Ontario Nature are advocating for the protection of (to increase wildlife connectivity, biodiversity and climate change mitigation)
- Protection would advance the goals of the **Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan** to add to and enhance Ontario’s protected areas.

The Catchacoma Forest Stewardship Committee (CFSC)

Contact Us: katie@wildernesscommittee.org ; info@ancientforest.org

For More Information: wildernesscommittee.org/ontario ; peterborougholdgrowth.ca ; ancientforest.org