MSc or PhD project on the design optimization for private protected areas

Institution: Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada (www.trentu.ca)

Supervisor: Dennis Murray (http://www.dennismurray.ca)

We are seeking an MSc student to develop a robust and universal strategy for selecting private land parcels for conservation. Using a variety of GIS tools, we will develop models for quantifying the conservation value of individual land parcels based on natural characteristics, anthropogenic effects, zoning, and connectivity, and assess their application using the highly fragmented southern Ontario landscape as test case. The models will be further tested across a range of restrictions to ultimately provide a set of general guidelines to assist NGOs in optimizing their choice of land parcels for protection. Ultimately, we aim to optimize procedures for designing protected areas networks across southern Ontario and beyond. If the position is filled by a PhD candidate, there will be additional opportunity to tailor specific research questions within the scope of the larger project.

The funding package includes a competitive stipend, foreign tuition waiver (if the student is not a Canadian citizen or permanent resident) as well as coverage of all research/travel expenses. The successful candidate will have a BSc or MSc degree in Biology, Ecology, Geography, or related field, with GIS experience and an understanding of basic principles in design of protected areas. PhD candidates must demonstrate evidence of peer-reviewed publication. The successful candidate must be competitive for scholarship funding and will join the Integrative Wildlife Conservation laboratory at Trent University (www.dennismurray.ca).

To apply, send a cover letter, curriculum vitae, unofficial academic transcript, and contact information for 3 references, to: Dennis Murray (dennismurray@trentu.ca). The successful candidate will begin enrolment by January or May 2018, and we will accept applications until a suitable candidate is found, so apply early.