

## 4.0 Conclusions and Next Steps

The Property Assessment Team's detailed review of parcels results in 278 parcels (260 + 18) land parcels out of the 301 UTRCA land parcels (92%) being identified as core conservation parcels of importance to the UTRCA. As for the remaining 23 parcels, additional site specific information will need to be accumulated to determine how they meet the UTRCA's conservation objectives.

The next steps to developing a comprehensive and strategic natural heritage approach are:

1. Set a natural heritage cover target for the watershed to help guide the development of management plans and the review of additional properties.
2. Conduct additional review of the remaining 23 parcels to determine their importance in furthering the UTRCA's conservation objectives.
3. Develop a targeted map of areas of interest throughout the Upper Thames River watershed in the hopes of expanding natural cover in priority areas. Land parcels will be selected based on either the characteristics of the natural heritage features found within their boundaries, or the characteristics of the landscape in which they are found (i.e., they either meet a large number of the landscape criteria or they support the core conservation properties). At the end of the analysis, all land parcels in the watershed will be classified as either a parcel of UTRCA interest or a parcel not of interest at this time.
4. Develop implementation and funding strategies for all properties currently owned by the UTRCA as well as for all land parcels not owned by the UTRCA but identified as parcels of interest. The implementation plans will determine the best method for protecting the areas of UTRCA interest (e.g., ownership, easements, stewardship, education, and/or policy). Land use agreements/ restrictions on parcels acquired with funding from federal, provincial or municipal sources will have to be considered, as well as partnerships with the eight adjacent Conservation Authorities and the 21 municipalities within the Upper Thames River watershed (Map 10) for land parcels of interest not owned or managed by the UTRCA.
5. Management plans should be developed for core conservation lands where it has been determined that the most appropriate implementation tool for achieving UTRCA objectives is UTRCA ownership.

