



**Board of Directors**  
**Meeting No. BOD-07-23**  
**Friday, July 28, 2023**  
**9:00 a.m.**

## **Agenda**

**Meeting Location:**

120 Bayview Parkway, Newmarket  
Minutes and agendas are available at [www.LSRCA.on.ca](http://www.LSRCA.on.ca)

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### **Upcoming Events**

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**Board of Directors' Meeting**

Friday, September 22, 2023  
120 Bayview Parkway, Newmarket

**Conservation Awards Ceremony**

Tuesday, October 10, 2023  
NewRoads Performing Arts Centre, Newmarket

**Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation**

**5th Annual Invitational Golf Tournament**

Monday, August 21, 2023  
Oakdale Golf and Country Club

A full listing of events can be found at [www.LSRCA.on.ca](http://www.LSRCA.on.ca)

## I. Acknowledgement of Indigenous Territory

## II. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and Conflicts of Interest

## III. Approval of Agenda

Pages 1 - 5

**Recommended: That** the content of the Agenda for the July 28, 2023 meeting of the Board of Directors be approved as presented.

## IV. Adoption of Minutes

### a) Board of Directors

Pages 6 - 13

Included in the agenda is a copy of the draft minutes of the Board of Directors' Meeting, No. BOD-06-23, held on Friday, June 23, 2023.

**Recommended: That** the minutes of the Board of Directors' Meeting, No. BOD-06-23, held on Friday, June 23, 2023 be approved as circulated.

## V. Announcements

## VI. Presentations

### a) Second Quarter 2023 Financial Report and Year-End Forecast

Pages 14 - 24

General Manager, Corporate and Financial Services/CFO, Mark Critch, will provide an overview of the Second Quarter 2023 Financial Report and Year-End Forecast. This presentation will be provided at the meeting and will be available on the Conservation Authority's website following the meeting.

**Recommended: That** the presentation by General Manager, Corporate and Financial Services/CFO, Mark Critch, regarding the Second Quarter 2023 Financial Report be received for information.

Staff Report No. 39-23-BOD regarding the Second Quarter 2023 Financial Report and Year-End Forecast is included in the agenda.

**Recommended: That** Staff Report No. 39-23-BOD regarding the Conservation Authority's Second Quarter 2023 Financial Report and Year-End Forecast be received for information.

## **b) Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve Overview and Update**

Pages 25 - 57

Director, Conservation Lands, Phil Davies, will provide an overview of the Conservation Authority's property in the Town of Georgina, temporarily called the Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve. This presentation will be provided at the meeting and will be available on the Conservation Authority's website following the meeting.

**Recommended: That** the presentation by Director, Conservation Lands, Phil Davies, regarding an overview of the Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve be received for information.

Staff Report No. 40-23-BOD regarding the Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve is included in the agenda.

**Recommended: That** Staff Report No. 40-23-BOD regarding the Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve update and master planning process be received for information.

## **VII. Hearings**

There are no Hearings scheduled for this meeting.

## **VIII. Deputations**

There are no Deputations scheduled for this meeting.

## **IX. Determination of Items Requiring Separate Discussion**

(Reference Page 5 of the agenda)

## **X. Adoption of Items Not Requiring Separate Discussion**

## **XI. Consideration of Items Requiring Separate Discussion**

## **XII. Closed Session**

The Board will move to Closed Session to deal with confidential legal and human resources matters.

**Recommended: That** the Board move to Closed Session to deal with confidential legal and human resources matters; and

**Further that** the Chief Administrative Officer and members of the Executive Leadership Team remain in the meeting for the discussion on all items; and

**Further that** the Director, Development Services remain in the meeting for the discussion on Items a) and b);

**Further that** the consultant from Marianne Love Consulting remain in the meeting for the discussion on Item d).

The Board will rise from Closed Session and report findings.

**Recommended: That** the Board rise from Closed Session and report findings.

**a) Confidential Legal Matter**

Confidential Staff Report No. 46-23-BOD will be sent to Board members prior to the meeting.

**Recommended: That** Confidential Staff Report No. 46-23-BOD regarding a confidential legal matter be received for information.

**b) Confidential Legal Matter**

Confidential Staff Report No. 47-23-BOD will be sent to Board members prior to the meeting.

**Recommended: That** Confidential Staff Report No. 47-23-BOD regarding a confidential legal matter be received for information.

**c) Confidential Human Resources Matter**

Confidential Staff Report No. 48-23-BOD will be sent to Board members prior to the meeting.

**Recommended: That** Confidential Staff Report No. 48-23-BOD regarding a confidential human resources matter be received; and

**Further that** the recommendations contained within the report be approved.

**d) Confidential Human Resources Matter**

Confidential Staff Report No. 49-23-BOD will be sent to Board members prior to the meeting.

**Recommended: That** Confidential Staff Report No. 49-23-BOD regarding a confidential human resources matter be received; and

**Further that** the recommendations contained within the report be approved.

### **XIII. Other Business**

#### **Next Meeting**

There is no scheduled Board of Directors' meeting for the month of August. The next scheduled meeting is Friday, September 22, 2023. This meeting will be held in person at the Conservation Authority's Newmarket offices located at 120 Bayview Parkway, Newmarket.



## XIV. Adjournment

### Agenda Items

#### 1. Correspondence

There are no Correspondence items included in this agenda.

**Recommended: That** no Correspondence items be received.

#### 2. Monitoring Report – Planning and Development Applications January 1 to June 30, 2023

Pages 58 - 65

**Recommended: That** Staff Report No. 41-23-BOD regarding monitoring of development services applications for the period January 1 through June 30, 2023 be received for information.

#### 3. Update to Retroactive Permit Fees

Pages 66 - 81

**Recommended: That** Staff Report No. 42-23-BOD regarding implementing incentives for obtaining retroactive permits be received: and

**Further That** the approach for collecting retroactive permit fees be approved for implementation effective immediately.

#### 4. Georgina Island Fixed Link Project Update

Pages 82 - 89

**Recommended: That** Staff Report No. 43-23-BOD regarding an update on the status of the Georgina Island Fixed Link project be received for information.

#### 5. 2023 Annual Priorities Update for the Second Quarter

Pages 90 - 93

**Recommended: That** Staff Report No. 44-23-BOD regarding the second quarter status of the Conservation Authority's 2023 Annual Priorities be received for information.

#### 6. Oak Wilt Fungal Tree Disease

Pages 94 - 97

**Recommended: That** Staff Report No. 45-23-BOD regarding oak wilt fungal tree disease be received for information.

# Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority

## Board of Directors' Meeting

Board of Directors' Meeting No. BOD-06-23

Friday, June 23, 2023

120 Bayview Parkway, Newmarket

### Meeting Minutes

#### Board Members Present

Regional Chairman W. Emmerson (Chair), Councillor P. Ferragine (Vice Chair), Councillor S. Bell, Councillor A. Eek, Regional Councillor B. Garrod, Mayor R. Greenlaw, Mayor V. Hackson, Mayor I. Lovatt, Councillor C. Pettingill, Mayor M. Quirk, Councillor C. Riepma, Deputy Mayor and Regional Councillor T. Vegh

#### Board Members Absent

Councillor F. Drodge, Councillor B. Hamilton, Councillor S. Harrison-McIntyre, Councillor D. Le Roy, Councillor M. Thompson, Councillor E. Yeo

#### Staff Present

S. Auger, R. Baldwin, T. Barnett, A. Brown, M. Critch, A. Cullen, P. Davies, C. Eves, D. Goodyear, D. Lembcke, G. MacMillan, S. McKinnon, G Peat, K. Read, C. Taylor, K. Yemm, K. Zeppieri

#### Visitors Present

R. Gilliland

### I. Land Acknowledgement

Chair Emmerson acknowledged the Lake Simcoe watershed as traditional Indigenous territory and thanked all generations of Indigenous peoples for their enduring and unwavering care for this land and water.

### II. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest or Conflict of Interest

None noted for the meeting.

### III. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: C. Riepma

Seconded by: C. Pettingill

BOD-085-23 **Resolved That** the content of the Agenda for the June 23, 2023 meeting of the Board of Directors be approved as circulated. **Carried**

## IV. Adoption of Minutes

### a) Board of Directors' Meeting

Moved by: P. Ferragine

Seconded by: T. Vegh

BOD-086-23 **Resolved That** the minutes of the Board of Directors' Meeting, No. BOD-05-23, held on Friday, May 26, 2023 be approved as circulated. **Carried**

### b) Conservation Ontario Council Meeting

Moved by: P. Ferragine

Seconded by: T. Vegh

BOD-087-23 **Resolved That** the minutes of Conservation Ontario's Council meeting held on Monday, April 3, 2023 be received for information. **Carried**

## V. Announcements

Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation Executive Director, Cheryl Taylor, updated the Board on some recent fundraising news:

- a) The 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Conservation Dinner was held on June 14<sup>th</sup>. This sold-out event, attended by over 350 guests, generously supported the Foundation by raising over \$250,000! A big thanks to everyone for making it such a success.
- b) The Bradford West Gwillimbury Mayor & Council's Golf Classic was held on June 16<sup>th</sup>. This year's charity of choice was the new Nature Centre at Scanlon Creek Conservation Area. The tournament donated \$100,000, and we can't thank the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury Council and staff enough for this generous donation.
- c) The Connect Campaign has received its largest private donation. Mr. Paul Sadlon has donated \$850,000 to help build the new Nature Centre at Scanlon Creek Conservation Area, and we are so honoured to receive this generous donation.
- d) The next planned event is the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation Golf Invitational being held on Monday, August 21<sup>st</sup> at Oakdale Golf and Country Club. This event is sold out, but anyone interested in sponsoring or volunteering may contact Lee Hanson @ [l.hanson@lsrca.on.ca](mailto:l.hanson@lsrca.on.ca)

## VI. Presentations

### a) 2024 Budget Assumptions

General Manager, Corporate and Financial Services/CFO, Mark Critch, provided an overview of the 2024 proposed budget assumptions, first noting that the annual budget process begins mid

year of the previous year with the Board's approval of budget assumptions. This sets a clear direction for budget targets, enables staff to work with municipal funding partners to secure preliminary budget approvals, and allows staff to build the 2024 budget while providing for Board of Directors' influence on the general direction of the budget, thereby strengthening the advocacy role of Board members at municipal budget presentations. He noted the principles guiding the recommendations include inflation and cost-of-living allowance in line with local comparators, adjusting for municipal funding challenges, use municipal targets to guide budget development where feasible, recommended investment in the Conservation Authority's Strategic Plan [Transformation 2022-2024](#) up to 1.5% increase, and long term funding for asset management to be addressed in a financial strategy being tabled in the fall with a small placeholder to be included in the 2024 budget. GM Critch advised that changes to funding guidelines in Bill 229 will replace General Levy/Special Capital/Special Operating with:

- Category 1 (Mandatory: Core & Lake Simcoe Protection Plan), using CVA apportionment;
- Category 2 (requested by municipality), MOU required; and
- Category 3 (requested by Authority), MOU required.

Governance rules will require multiple budget votes, including new areas to vote on Lake Simcoe Protection Plan budget, and new rules on what is core will require budget changes to correct funding irregularities, resulting in increases for some funders and decreases for others.

The summary of budget recommendations for Board of Directors' approval included:

1. Inflation: up to 2.00%, only for applicable expenditures (2023: 4.0%);
2. Cost of Living Allowance: up to 2.00% (2023: 2.00%) plus applicable step increases;
3. Infrastructure levy for Asset Management: up to 0.50% (2023: 0.50% capital levy only);
4. Investment in Strategic Priorities: 1.50% (2023: 0.00%);
5. No new FTEs in 2024, unless fully funded from grants and/or fees, and salary review to be covered within funding envelopes; and
6. Mandatory expenditures: Up to 2.00% (2023 - Levy: 1.83%).

Once approval of the budget assumptions, staff will develop the 2024 budget and continue to look for efficiencies and cost savings. To learn more or to view this presentation, please click this link: [2024 Budget Assumptions Presentation](#)

Moved by: A. Eek

Seconded by: R. Greenlaw

BOD-088-23 **Resolved That** the presentation by General Manager, Corporate and Financial Services/CFO, Mark Critch, regarding the proposed 2024 Budget Assumptions be received for information. **Carried**

Included in the agenda was Staff Report No. 31-23-BOD regarding the proposed 2024 Budget Assumptions.

Moved by: A. Eek

Seconded by: R. Greenlaw

BOD-089-23 **Resolved That** Staff Report No. 31-23-BOD regarding the Conservation Authority's recommended budget assumptions for the 2024 fiscal year be approved.

**Carried**

### **b) The Conservation Authority's Role in Stormwater Management**

General Manager, Integrated Watershed Management, Don Goodyear, and General Manager, Development, Engineering and Restoration, Glenn MacMillan, provided an overview of the Conservation Authority's role in Stormwater Management, noting that stormwater is defined as excess or runoff water generated when it rains. Often seen as a waste product, stormwater should be viewed as a resource to manage. The Conservation Authority has a team of professionals (engineers, scientists, hydrologists, to name a few), who actively collaborate to manage stormwater runoff in the Lake Simcoe watershed through policy and research, exploring innovative technologies, and through urban restoration projects. Managing stormwater runoff is essential in protecting against flooding, and understanding it is a key component in supporting municipal partners to assess flood risk. It is also worth noting there's a difference between riverine flooding and urban flooding, and the drivers and opportunities for remediation and risk may differ.

As stormwater travels across the landscape, making its way to streams and rivers, and, ultimately Lake Simcoe, it picks up contaminants along the way; such as, sediments, phosphorus, other nutrients, chemicals, oils, greases, etc. Urban stormwater runoff represents an estimated 28% of the phosphorus entering Lake Simcoe, and accordingly managing it is an area of focus for phosphorus load reduction and water quality maintenance in the lake. All urban areas across the watershed contribute to the stormwater phosphorus load.

Pre the 1980s, in historical urban areas, stormwater was generally piped to watercourses without quantity or quality controls. From the 1980s to approximately 2010, stormwater management typically relied on stormwater ponds for quantity and quality control to meet design objectives such as peak flow reduction, total suspended solids, and associated phosphorus removal.

The Lake Simcoe Protection Plan developed by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and released in 2008 introduced water quality policies that encourage a treatment train approach for stormwater management. This approach promotes Low Impact Development features that mimic the natural hydrologic cycle, moving away from reliance on

stormwater management ponds alone. Since 2010, there has been an evolution from ponds to a treatment-train approach to manage stormwater.

The Conservation Authority has been providing leadership and expertise to promote environmentally sustainable development practices for stormwater management for almost two decades. To learn more, please click this link to view the presentation: [Stormwater Management Presentation](#)

Moved by: A. Eek

Seconded by: S. Bell

BOD-090-23 **Resolved That** the presentation by General Manager, Integrated Watershed Management, Don Goodyear, and General Manager, Development, Engineering and Restoration, Glenn MacMillan, regarding an overview of the Conservation Authority's role in Stormwater Management be received for information. **Carried**

Included in the agenda was Staff Report No. 32-23-BOD regarding the Conservation Authority's role in stormwater management.

Moved by: A. Eek

Seconded by: S. Bell

BOD-091-23 **Resolved That** the Staff Report No. 32-23-BOD regarding the Conservation Authority's role in stormwater management be received for information. **Carried**

## VII. Hearings

There were no Hearings at this meeting.

## VIII. Deputations

There were no Deputations at this meeting.

## IX. Determination of Items Requiring Separate Discussion

No items were identified under items requiring separate discussion.

## X. Adoption of Items not Requiring Separate Discussion

Items No. 1 - 4 were identified under items not requiring separate discussion.

Moved by: B. Garrod

Seconded by: P. Ferragine

BOD-092-23 **Resolved That** the following recommendations respecting the matters listed as "Items Not Requiring Separate Discussion" be adopted as submitted to the

Board, and staff be authorized to take all necessary action required to give effect to same. **Carried**

#### 1. Correspondence

BOD-093-23 **Resolved That** no Correspondence Items be received. **Carried**

#### 2. *Conservation Authorities Act Transition - Quarterly Progress Report No. 5 for June 2023*

BOD-094-23 **Resolved That** Staff Report No. 33-23-BOD regarding the Conservation Authority Transition Quarterly Progress Report No. 5 be received; and

**Further that** the June 2023 Conservation Authority Transition Quarterly Progress No. 5 be approved for submission to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. **Carried**

#### 3. Updates to Ontario Regulation 179/06 Implementation Guidelines

BOD-095-23 **Resolved That** Staff Report No. 34-23-BOD regarding the updates to the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority's Ontario Regulation 179/06 Implementation Guidelines and the revised document 'Attachment A' be received; and

**Further That** the revised 'Ontario Regulation 179/06 Implementation Guidelines' be approved for implementation effective July 1, 2023. **Carried**

#### 4. Procurement results for Nature Centre Development Project: Owner's Representative Consultant

BOD-096-23 **Resolved That** Staff Report No. 35-23-BOD regarding the results of Request for Proposal 2021-CL-0003 Owner's Representative Services for the Scanlon Creek Nature Centre Project be received; and

**Further that** staff's recommendation to award the contract to CBRE be endorsed; and

**Further that** the Chief Administrative Officer be directed to finalize a contract to retain the services of CBRE. **Carried**

### XI. Consideration of Items Requiring Separate Discussion

No items required separate discussion.

### XII. Closed Session

The Board moved to Closed Session to deal with confidential human resources matters.

Moved by: T. Vegh

Seconded by: R. Greenlaw

BOD-097-23 **Resolved That** the Board move to Closed Session to deal with confidential human resources matters; and

**Further that** the Chief Administrative Officer, members of the Executive Leadership Team, and the Event and Marketing Specialist remain in the meeting for the discussion on Item a);

**Further that** the Director, Human Resources and the Chief of Staff remain in the meeting for the discussion on Item b);

**Further that** the Chief Administrative Officer and the Chief of Staff remain in the meeting for the discussion on Item c). **Carried**

The Board rose from Closed Session to report findings.

Moved by: A. Eek

Seconded by: S. Bell

BOD-098-23 **Resolved That** the Board rise from Closed Session and report findings. **Carried**

**a) 2023 Conservation Awards Recipients**

Moved by: P. Ferragine

Seconded by: I. Lovatt

BOD-099-23 **Resolved That** Confidential Staff Report No. 36-23-BOD regarding the 2023 Conservation Awards Recipients be received; and

**Further that** the Board's selection of the George R. Richardson Award recipient be approved. **Carried**

**b) Confidential Human Resources Matter**

Moved by: P. Ferragine

Seconded by: I. Lovatt

BOD-100-23 **Resolved That** Confidential Staff Report No. 37-23-BOD regarding a confidential human resources matter be received; and

**Further that** the recommendations contained within the report be approved. **Carried**

**c) Confidential Human Resources Matter**

Moved by: P. Ferragine

Seconded by: I. Lovatt

BOD-101-23 **Resolved That** Confidential Staff Report No. 38-23-BOD regarding a confidential human resources matter be received; and

**Further that** the recommendations contained within the report be approved. **Carried**



### **XIII. Other Business**

- a) Chair Emmerson noted that the next meeting will be held on Friday, July 28, 2023 at 9:00a. This meeting will be held in person at the Newmarket Administrative Offices.
- b) Regional Councillor Garrod was pleased to advise that the Township of Uxbridge received a grant of close to \$49,000 from the Conservation Authority for their South Balsam Street Pond Retrofit project to install catch basin seals. Key performance indicators and milestones for the project are to reduce 1.365 kg/year of additional phosphorus, to reduce Phosphorus inputs to Uxbridge Brook, and to install 65 catch basin shields.

### **XIV. Adjournment**

Moved by: C. Riepma

Seconded by: C. Pettingill

**BOD-102-23 Resolved That** the meeting be adjourned at 11:10 a.m. **Carried**

Original to be signed by:

Original to be signed by:

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Wayne Emmerson  
Chair

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Rob Baldwin  
Chief Administrative Officer

## Staff Report

To: Board of Directors

From: Katherine Toffan, Manager of Finance

Date: July 9, 2023

### **Subject:**

Second Quarter 2023 Financial Report and Year-End Forecast

### **Recommendation:**

**That** Staff Report No. 39-23-BOD regarding the Conservation Authority's Second Quarter 2023 Financial Report and Year-End Forecast be received for information.

### **Purpose of this Staff Report:**

The purpose of this Staff Report No. 39-23-BOD is to provide the Board of Directors with a summary of financial activities for the period ending June 30, 2023, as they relate to the 2023 Budget approved by the Board. Staff have also used this report to review the forecasted year-end financial position of the Conservation Authority, along with high level issues and trends that staff have observed through June 30, 2023.

### **Background:**

The Budget Status Reports have been developed for the use of the Board and management, use the same format as the approved budget and provide a status update on the programs and projects that fall under the Conservation Authority's seven service areas: Corporate Services, Ecological Management, Education & Engagement, Greenspace Services, Planning & Development Services, Water Risk Management and Watershed Studies & Strategies.

### **Issues:**

The Corporate Budget Status report attached in Appendix 1 presents a surplus position of \$285K on June 30, 2023. The drivers of this surplus are outlined in the table below:

Service Area	Surplus/ (Deficit)	Drivers
Corporate Services	227K	Open positions in HR, Communications and operational savings in utilities, vehicle leases and insurance
Education and Engagement	52K	Salary gapping and increase in Revenue for programming
Greenspace Services	1K	Small surplus on a Fee for Service project
Planning and Development Services	5K	Shortfall in Revenues offset with salary gapping
Total	285K	Overall Operational Surplus at June 30, 2023

### Relevance to Conservation Authority Policy:

In keeping with Conservation Authority policy, this staff report has been prepared to provide a Second Quarter financial update on the current overall financial position, project expenditures, opportunities, and risks as they relate to the 2023 approved budget, as well as highlight variances identified through the year-end forecast.

### Impact on Conservation Authority Finances:

#### a) Revenues

Revenues are recognized based on the source of the revenue stream and by the expenditures that are incurred to cause recognition of revenue. General Levy is recognized in line with operational expenses throughout the year and any surplus of General Levy is recognized in full at year end. Special Capital Levy and Provincial & Federal funding revenues are recognized throughout the year as related expenses are incurred and any unused funds are held in deferred revenue at year end. Revenue Generated by the Conservation Authority include fees from our Planning and Development program, and revenue generated from service agreements which are recognized when invoiced for projects or as services are delivered as well as Offsetting funding and Donations from the Foundation which are recognized as the related expenses are incurred.

Overall revenues realized at June 30<sup>th</sup> are lower than what is expected against the year-to-date budget.

The variance of about \$1.8M in Special Capital against the year-to-date budget is mainly driven by the timing of recognition in line with projects in our Ecological and Water Risk Management programs. Details of the projects driving these timing variances are outlined in section c below.

Provincial and Federal funding recognized is below year-to-date budget at the end of Q2 related to timing of work on some of provincial grant agreements. The Restoration, Monitoring and Watershed Planning groups are aligning work with the timing of the agreement deliverables.

The Generated-by-Conservation Authority revenues that are related to service agreements are trending in line against year-to-date budget. Planning and Development Services fees are down against the year-to-date budget, and details on what is driving this variance this can be found in Staff Report No. 41-23-BOD prepared this month.

Revenue in our Education program is exceeding year to date budget. Indications from our school board partners are that there will continue to be an increase in programming requested throughout the Fall.

Offsetting Revenues and Foundation Donations in the Revenue Generated by Conservation Authority line are down against year-to-date budget by \$1.6M. These revenues are only recognized as expensed if the projects are incurred. Details of the projects driving these timing variances are outlined in section c) below.

The Other Revenue funding line contains investment interest, and grants received from non-government partners. The investment income earned through June 30 has exceeded the year-to-date budget as interest rates have come up over the last few months.

Staff work closely with the program and project managers on year-end revenue forecasts and will continue to monitor the ongoing impact to the Conservation Authority's operations for year end.

#### **b) Expenditures:**

Variances in staffing and operational expenses in within the Corporate Services are contributing to the mid year surplus in this service area.

Although Planning and Development fees are down through June there are variances in expenditures with this program that are offsetting the shortfall in revenues. These variances through June are being realized in staffing vacancies, legal expenses, insurance and fleet usage.

#### **c) Timing Variances:**

There are year-to-date revenue and expense variances that can be attributed to timing. Timing variances occur when expenditures have not yet happened, and recognition of the related revenue is deferred until the project work commences.

Expenditures in the Facility Management program within Corporate Services are below year-to-date budget. This reflects timing related to the spending that will take place for the Scanlon Creek Nature Centre which is funded by Donations from our Foundation and Federal funds. Staff have engaged CBRE as the Owner's Representative for the project and the Conservation

Authority will collect both the Connect Campaign and Federal funding from the Foundation over the next few months as work proceeds and expenditures are incurred. The 2023 Facility Management budget also included expenditures for asset replacements, sound system upgrades and a background study at the Scanlon Campus that are expected to take place in the next half of the year.

Capital and Restoration projects in the Ecological Restoration & Regeneration and Water Management & Restoration are in progress or continuing into Quarter 3 and Quarter 4. These projects are covered by Special Capital, Provincial, Offsetting Funds and/or Partner funding. Key areas of these variances include:

- i. Ecological Management - The \$1.1M variance in the Ecological Restoration programs are related to timing and delivering the following:
  - Ecological Offsetting Capital and Tree Planting projects
  - Restoration Grants to Partner/Landowners for projects funded by Special Capital Levy

Projects in progress:

- Park Road and Innisfil Beach Park Wetland and Channel Realignment
- Hamilton Park Wetland in the Town of Aurora
- Queensville Park in East Gwillimbury
- Scanlon Creek Restoration work
- Lake Simcoe Preserve program field studies
- Simcoe Hydrology

- ii. Water Risk Management – The \$2.0M variance in the Water Management & Restoration programs are related to timing and delivering the following:

- Water Balance and Phosphorus Offsetting Capital Projects
- Stormwater Monitoring Projects
- Provincial Funding Agreements – Lake Simcoe Protection Plan

Projects currently underway:

- Barrie Floodplain Mapping Update
- East Holland Monitoring
- York Region - Mouth of Western Creek Restoration
- City of Barrie - SPO3 Stormwater retrofit and bypass channel
- Concentration of Contaminants Study
- Stormwater Coefficient Monitoring

**d) High Level Forecast to the End of 2023:**

Staff have conducted a program and project review to provide a forecast on the year-end financial position. Through working with program managers, staff are forecasting an overall year-end operational surplus position of \$570K. Outlined below are some of the main drivers contributing to the forecasted surplus:

- i) Staff forecast a surplus in the Corporate Services, Education & Engagement and Planning & Development programs. The surplus being forecasted in Corporate Services is related to operational savings for insurance, staff training, utilities, and vehicle leases as well as salary gapping for open positions and staff on leave.

The Education & Engagement program is also forecasting a year end surplus mainly driven by the volume of revenue related to increased programming expected to take place in the Fall.

This is an area staff will monitor closely and report back on in Quarter 3.

A modest surplus is being forecasted for the Planning and Development programs. Staff are forecasting that revenues will be down compared to budget however staffing vacancies and operational expenses area being managed to offset this shortfall.

- ii) There are deficits currently being forecasted for Ecological Management, Greenspace Services and Watershed Studies and Strategies for year end.

The deficits in Ecological Management are related to staffing overages and some project work related to the York Region Urban Forest Study. Staff are currently working with our partners at York Region to ensure funding for this project, with any updates being incorporated into the third quarter forecast.

The deficits in Water Risk Management and Watershed Studies and Strategies are related to staffing overages and consulting. We believe these will be reduced by the third quarter as program managers review the need to engage consultants or not and project work on the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks' Lake Simcoe Protection Plan projects ramp up.

- iii) Based on the recommendations in the Conservation Authority's land disposition strategy, previously approved by the Board of Directors, staff are expecting to transfer priority properties later this year. The anticipated expense for this is \$1.1M.

It is anticipated that most budgeted reserve transfers and draws will be met as presented in the 2023 budget. Staff are forecasting higher than budgeted transfers related to investment interest earned. Staff continually monitor interest rates in the various accounts that the Conservation Authority can access to ensure that funds are invested at the highest rate available in a timely manner. Budgeted reserve draws will only be made if the related expenditure is made.

Staff will continue to monitor the ongoing financial position of the organization through to year-end and will conduct regular updates with program managers to ensure that there are no unexpected financial transactions that would materially affect the forecasted year end position.

### **Summary and Recommendations:**

It is therefore **Recommended That** Staff Report No. 39-23-BOD regarding the Conservation Authority's Second Quarter 2023 Financial Report and Year-End Forecast be received for information.

### **Pre-Submission Review:**

This Staff Report has been reviewed by the General Manager, Corporate and Financial Services/CFO and the Chief Administrative Officer.

Signed by:

Signed by:

Mark Critch  
General Manager, Corporate and Financial  
Services/CFO

Rob Baldwin  
Chief Administrative Officer

### **Attachments:**

Appendix 1 – Second Quarter Corporate Budget Status Report  
Appendix 2 –Service Area Budget Status Reports

**Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority**  
**Corporate Budget Status Report**  
For period ending June 30, 2023 (shown in 000's)

<b>Revenue:</b>	Full Year Budget	YTD Budget	Actual YTD	% of YTD Budget
General Levy	\$ 4,171	\$ 2,087	\$ 1,928	92%
Special Capital Levy & Municipal Partners	9,524	4,762	2,895	61%
Provincial & Federal Funding	2,041	1,022	776	76%
Revenue Generated by Authority	8,749	4,375	2,489	57%
Other Revenue	563	282	318	113%
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	<b>25,048</b>	<b>12,528</b>	<b>8,406</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>				
Corporate Services	7,293	3,649	2,713	74%
Ecological Management	4,744	2,373	1,471	62%
Education & Engagement	859	430	414	96%
Greenspace Services	1,471	736	603	82%
Planning & Development Services	5,291	2,646	2,219	84%
Water Risk Management	6,230	3,116	1,168	37%
Watershed Studies & Strategies	2,009	1,005	832	83%
<b>Total Gross Expenses:</b>	<b>27,897</b>	<b>13,955</b>	<b>9,420</b>	<b>68%</b>
<b>Expenses included above related to:</b>				
Tangible Capital Assets	-	-	-	
Internal Fee for Service	2,940	1,471	1,502	102%
<b>Expenses before Amortization</b>	<b>24,957</b>	<b>12,484</b>	<b>7,918</b>	<b>63%</b>
Amortization	-	-	-	
<b>Net surplus before reserve activity</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>488</b>	
Board approved draws on reserve:	1,235	620	406	
Board approved transfers to reserves:	(1,326)	(664)	(620)	
<b>Other reserve activity:</b>				
Draw on Offsetting Administrative Reserve	-	-	11	
<b>Operational surplus at June 30</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 285</b>	



**Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority**  
**Service Area Budget Status Report**  
For period ending June 30, 2023 (shown in 000's)

	2023 Full Year Budget	2023 YTD Budget	2023 YTD Actual	% of YTD Budget
<b>Corporate Services</b>				
<b>Revenue:</b>				
General Levy	\$ 1,864	\$ 932	\$ 791	85%
Special Capital Levy & Municipal Partners	1,355	679	584	86%
Provincial & Federal Funding	4	2	2	100%
Revenue Generated by Authority	825	413	75	18%
Other Revenue	343	172	195	113%
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	<b>4,391</b>	<b>2,198</b>	<b>1,647</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>				
Corporate Communications	899	450	337	75%
Facility Management	2,189	1,095	589	54%
Financial Management	1,277	639	578	90%
Governance	698	349	359	103%
Human Resource Management	631	316	204	65%
Information Management	1,599	800	646	81%
<b>Total Gross Expenses:</b>	<b>7,293</b>	<b>3,649</b>	<b>2,713</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>Expenses included above related to:</b>				
Internal Fee for Service	2,921	1,461	1,492	102%
<b>Net Expenses (excluding TCA entries):</b>	<b>4,372</b>	<b>2,188</b>	<b>1,221</b>	<b>56%</b>
Net surplus before reserve activity	19	10	426	
Board approved draws on reserve:	924	462	390	
Board approved transfers to reserve:	(943)	(472)	(589)	
<b>Operational surplus at June 30</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 227</b>	

	2023 Full Year Budget	2023 YTD Budget	2023 YTD Actual	% of YTD Budget
<b>Ecological Management</b>				
<b>Revenue :</b>				
General Levy	\$ 297	\$ 149	\$ 148	99%
Special Capital Levy & Municipal Partners	2,748	1,374	842	61%
Provincial & Federal Funding	479	240	140	58%
Revenue Generated by Authority	1,244	622	262	42%
Other Revenue	90	45	58	129%
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	<b>4,858</b>	<b>2,430</b>	<b>1,450</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>				
Ecosystem Science & Monitoring	1,311	656	565	86%
Forestry Services	774	387	580	150%
Restoration & Regeneration	2,659	1,330	326	25%
<b>Total Gross Expenses:</b>	<b>4,744</b>	<b>2,373</b>	<b>1,471</b>	<b>62%</b>
<b>Expenses included above related to:</b>				
Internal Fee for Service	19	10	10	100%
<b>Net Expenses:</b>	<b>4,725</b>	<b>2,363</b>	<b>1,461</b>	<b>62%</b>
Net surplus/(deficit) before reserve activity	133	67	(11)	
Board approved draws on reserve:	14	7	-	
Board approved transfers to reserve:	(147)	(74)	-	
<b>Other reserve activity:</b>				
Draw on Ecological Offsetting Administrative Reserve	-	-	11	
<b>Operational (deficit) at June 30</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	

**Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority**  
**Service Area Budget Status Report**  
For period ending June 30, 2023 (shown in 000's)

	2023 Full Year Budget	2023 YTD Budget	2023 YTD Actual	% of YTD Budget
<b>Education and Engagement</b>				
<b>Revenue :</b>				
General Levy	\$ 499	\$ 250	\$ 249	100%
Revenue Generated by Authority	360	180	217	121%
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	859	430	466	108%
<b>Expenses:</b>				
Community Programming	158	79	60	76%
School Programming	701	351	354	101%
<b>Total Gross Expenses:</b>	859	430	414	96%
<b>Expenses included above related to:</b>				
Internal Fee for Service	-	-	-	
<b>Net Expenses:</b>	859	430	414	96%
<b>Operational surplus at June 30</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 52	

	2023 Full Year Budget	2023 YTD Budget	2023 YTD Actual	% of YTD Budget
<b>Greenspace Services</b>				
<b>Revenue :</b>				
General Levy	\$ 510	\$ 255	\$ 255	100%
Special Capital Levy & Municipal Partners	433	216	129	60%
Provincial & Federal Funding	92	46	61	133%
Revenue Generated by Authority	194	97	78	80%
Other Revenue	124	62	65	105%
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	1,353	676	588	87%
<b>Expenses:</b>				
Management	1,286	643	500	78%
Securement	185	93	103	111%
<b>Total Gross Expenses:</b>	1,471	736	603	82%
<b>Expenses included above related to:</b>				
Internal Fee for Service	-	-	-	
<b>Net Expenses:</b>	1,471	736	603	82%
Net surplus/(deficit) before reserve activity	(118)	(60)	(15)	
Board approved draws on reserve:	118	60	16	
<b>Operational surplus at June 30</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1	

**Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority**  
**Service Area Budget Status Report**  
**For period ending June 30, 2023 (shown in 000's)**

	2023 Full Year Budget	2023 YTD Budget	2023 YTD Actual	% of YTD Budget
<b>Planning and Development</b>				
<b>Revenue :</b>				
General Levy	\$ 505	\$ 253	\$ 253	100%
Special Capital Levy & Municipal Partners	420	210	210	100%
Provincial & Federal Funding	22	11	18	164%
Revenue Generated by Authority	4,313	2,156	1,743	81%
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	5,260	2,630	2,224	85%
<b>Expenses:</b>				
Development Planning	2,840	1,420	1,155	81%
Permitting & Enforcement	2,451	1,226	1,064	87%
<b>Total Gross Expenses:</b>	5,291	2,646	2,219	84%
<b>Expenses included above related to:</b>				
Internal Fee for Service	-	-	-	
<b>Net Expenses:</b>	5,291	2,646	2,219	84%
Net surplus/(deficit) before reserve activity	(31)	(16)	5	
Board approved draws on reserve:	31	16	-	
Board approved transfers to reserve:	-	-	-	
<b>Operational surplus at June 30</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5	

	2023 Full Year Budget	2023 YTD Budget	2023 YTD Actual	% of YTD Budget
<b>Water Risk Management</b>				
<b>Revenue :</b>				
General Levy	\$ 318	\$ 159	\$ 143	90%
Special Capital Levy & Municipal Partners	3,165	1,583	474	30%
Provincial & Federal Funding	1,195	598	487	81%
Revenue Generated by Authority	1,726	863	95	11%
Other Revenue	6	3	-	0%
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	6,410	3,206	1,199	37%
<b>Expenses:</b>				
Flood Management & Warning	762	381	215	56%
Source Water Protection	755	378	316	84%
Water Management & Restoration	4,125	2,063	318	15%
Water Science & Monitoring	588	294	319	109%
<b>Total Gross Expenses:</b>	6,230	3,116	1,168	37%
<b>Expenses included above related to:</b>				
Internal Fee for Service	-	-	-	
<b>Net Expenses:</b>	6,230	3,116	1,168	37%
Net surplus before reserve activity	180	90	31	
Board approved draws on reserve:	53	27	-	
Board approved transfers to reserve:	(234)	(117)	(31)	
<b>Operational position at June 30</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	

**Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority**  
**Service Area Budget Status Report**  
For period ending June 30, 2023 (shown in 000's)

<b>Watershed Studies and Strategies</b>	2023 Full Year Budget	2023 YTD Budget	<b>2023 YTD Actual</b>	% of YTD Budget
<b>Revenue :</b>				
General Levy	\$ 178	\$ 89	\$ 89	100%
Special Capital Levy & Municipal Partners	1,402	700	<b>656</b>	94%
Provincial & Federal Funding	249	125	<b>68</b>	54%
Revenue Generated by Authority	87	44	<b>19</b>	43%
Other Revenue	-	-	-	
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	<b>1,916</b>	<b>958</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>87%</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>				
Climate Change Adaptation	417	209	<b>154</b>	74%
Research & Innovation	734	367	<b>401</b>	109%
Watershed Subwatershed Planning	858	429	<b>277</b>	65%
<b>Total Gross Expenses:</b>	<b>2,009</b>	<b>1,005</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>83%</b>
<b>Expenses included above related to:</b>				
Internal Fee for Service	-	-	-	
<b>Net Expenses:</b>	<b>2,009</b>	<b>1,005</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>83%</b>
Net (deficit) before reserve activity	(93)	(47)	-	
Board approved draws on reserve:	95	48	-	
Board approved transfers to reserve:	(2)	(1)	-	
<b>Operational position at June 30</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	

## Staff Report

**To:** Board of Directors

**From:** Phil Davies, Director, Conservation Lands

**Date:** July 28, 2023

### Subject

Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve

### Recommendation

**That** Staff Report No. 40-23-BOD regarding the Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve update and master planning process be received for information.

### Purpose of this Staff Report

The purpose of this Staff Report No. 40-23-BOD is to provide the Board with an update on activities undertaken to date at the Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve (the Preserve), and next steps to initiate the development of a 20 to 25-year master plan to guide property development and management.

### Background

The Conservation Authority acquired the Preserve lands on March 28, 2022. The property is comprised of five parcels with a total area of 360 hectares (890 acres), larger than nearby Sibbald Point Provincial Park, and Central Park in New York. The property contains a variety of vegetation communities including deciduous, coniferous, and mixed wood swamps and forests, meadows, and thickets. There are permanent and intermittent streams and small ponds, and several agricultural fields that are leased to local farmers. There are no permanent buildings or other structures, but there are several unmaintained trails that were established before the lands were transferred to the Conservation Authority. The lands provide habitat for many flora and fauna, with a total of 294 species of vascular plants, 38 vegetation community types, and 110 wildlife species identified to date. Some species of note include blue-spotted salamander, ovenbird, and black-throated green warbler, all of which benefit from the natural conditions of this large property.

Prior to the lands being donated to the Conservation Authority, portions were designated for residential development containing a 1,073-unit recreational retirement community (1984). The proposed development was the subject of an Ontario Municipal Board hearing and ultimately approved in 1987. Following that decision, roadways and access points were cleared through the forest and can still be seen on the northern property. In 2016, during the Town of

Georgina Official Plan update, the land use residential designations for the property were appealed to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal. An appeal was granted, and the lands were designated under the Environmental Protection classification in December 2019.

Concurrent with transfer of the lands to the Conservation Authority on March 28, 2022, the Province of Ontario designated the lands “Environmental Protection” through a Minister’s Zoning Order (Ontario Regulation 251/22). Under the Order, the permitted uses include forest, fish and wildlife management, conservation, flood and erosion control projects, infrastructure, passive recreation uses, and existing legal uses, which includes agriculture. The designation effectively removes the ability for the lands to be used for any other purposes in the future.

To complete the Conservation Authority’s standard land acquisition protocols, additional property survey work was undertaken by an Ontario Land Surveyor to update property descriptions and identify boundaries on the ground. To inform short- and long-term management and maintenance activities, North South Environmental Consulting was retained to prepare a [Baseline Documentation Report](#), [Stewardship Plan](#), and the attached Opportunities and Constraints mapping.

Completed in February 2023, the Baseline Documentation Report details existing site conditions, significant ecological features, and provides general stewardship recommendations for managing the lands. As defined by and in keeping with the Conservation Authority’s mandate, the goal for this natural heritage area is to manage the lands for conservation and wildlife protection. This includes enhancing existing natural features, expanding and enhancing wetland features and functions, minimizing the impacts of invasive species, promoting natural succession, and enhancing the ecological functions of the property for future generations.

The Stewardship Plan expands on the Baseline Documentation Report and provides more detailed recommendations for short term stewardship actions, timing, and additional monitoring for each of the Preserve’s properties. The Opportunities and Constraints Mapping has provided additional context and detail to support short term management objectives and highlight the most sensitive areas for protection and initial restoration activities.

The documents prepared by North South Environmental incorporate information collected using western scientific methods. To enhance understanding of the lands, staff are pursuing the opportunity to engage with a local First Nations consultant to undertake an additional review using Traditional Knowledge. Applying the principle of Two-Eyed Seeing, combining different knowledge and ways of knowing, will support more comprehensive and informed planning.

The property studies and reports will guide Conservation Authority management activities in the near term and inform the development of a 20–25-year master plan, directing the development and long-term management of the Preserve. The development of a master plan is

scheduled to commence in early 2024 and is expected to require 18 to 24 months to complete. It will involve application of existing background materials and broad community engagement. Due to the size of the property, its importance to the local community, amount of significant natural heritage it contains, and since the Conservation Authority has not developed a property master plan for any landholdings since 1990, the services of an environmental consultant will be retained to guide the process. Staff will seek a consulting firm with environmental, engineering, First Nations and public consultation, facilitation, and other relevant expertise to assist with defining and implementing the master planning workplan, facilitate community engagement, and develop multiple management options for consideration by the stakeholders and selection by the Conservation Authority. The anticipated timeline for master planning development is as follows:

Timeline	Task
<b>September – December 2023</b>	Request for Proposal development and Consultant procurement
<b>January – March 2024</b>	Project Initiation
<b>April – June 2024</b>	Advisory Committee establishment, Community Engagement
<b>July – September 2024</b>	Management Concept Development
<b>October 2024 – September 2025</b>	Concept review and Revision
<b>October – December 2025</b>	Master Plan Completion
<b>January 2026</b>	Master Plan Initiation

Of critical importance to the success of this initiative will be meaningful consultation and respectful relationship development with First Nations communities and the incorporation of Traditional Knowledge. Conservation Authority staff have initiated dialogue with the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation to explore any interests they may have in the property and master planning process, long-term partnership opportunities, and most appropriate approach to considering the interests of all First Nations whose traditional territories this land lies.

### Opportunities and Challenges

Due to the level of community interest that the property has garnered, and significant opportunities it presents for ecological protection, restoration, and passive recreation, a high level of interest in the master planning process is anticipated. The effective development of a robust master plan and management of partner and stakeholder expectations will require the establishment of clear parameters for community engagement to manage expectations, and clear timelines for development and implementation.

As mentioned in the Background section, the Baseline Document Report, Stewardship Plan and Opportunity and Constraints Mapping have been completed using western science methods

which focus on current site conditions. This provides an opportunity to also incorporate Traditional Knowledge that typically includes oral knowledge, a place specific collective, holistic, and culturally based approach. This will involve working with Indigenous communities to build this knowledge, with the goal of presenting it in a way that both types of information can be used to make decisions related to the property using a more comprehensive and holistic approach.

The large size of this property creates many opportunities for enhancement but must be balanced with conservation, restoration, and enhancement of its significant natural features. Creating a comprehensive master plan to guide the development of this property into a sustainable property with passive recreation opportunities for the community will take time to ensure all potential opportunities are investigated and the preferred option selected.

### **Relevance to Conservation Authority Policy**

Ongoing management of the Preserve will contribute to the Conservation Authority's Strategic Plan by addressing the Strategic Direction of sparking a passion and action for nature, helping to ensure that the Conservation Authority's landholdings provide ecological and human health benefits in a sustainable way. The development and implementation of land management strategies and conservation area management and master plans assist in achieving this goal by providing a consistent approach to Conservation Authority land management throughout the watershed.

Management of the Preserve meets criteria set out in the Conservation Authority's Natural Heritage System Land Securement Project 2019 – 2025 and provides opportunity to protect and restore natural spaces as noted in the Conservation Authority's Natural Heritage System and Restoration Strategy.

### **Impact on Conservation Authority Finances**

Projects identified for delivery in 2023, including completion of the Baseline Documentation and supporting reports, master plan process development, and property monitoring and limited maintenance, have been included within the 2023 budget.

Property taxes for such a large parcel of land are significant, and at the time of transfer (March 28, 2022) the tax liability for the Conservation Authority was approximately \$136,000 (for 9 remaining months of 2022). Every effort has been made to reduce this tax obligation moving forward. Following transfer of the lands to the Conservation Authority, staff appealed the 2022 taxes; however, the appeal was denied as the deadline of March 31, 2022 (just three days following the transfer) had been missed. One final appeal option remains and will be submitted to the Assessment Review Board in 2023.



To initiate conservation tax exemptions, staff commenced to submit applications for the Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry in the summer 2022. Portions were approved commencing January 2023 with subsequent approvals in February 2023 to be applied at the time of the 2023 final tax notice. This will reduce the total annual property tax burden from \$181,000 (12 months) to \$4,350 and potentially to approximately \$2,500 once all exemptions have been applied.

At the time of the transfer of the lands to the Conservation Authority, the previous owner rented some of the agricultural lands to local farmers. Until the future use of the land has been determined through a formal master plan process, the Conservation Authority will continue to lease 226 acres of the agricultural lands to the previous tenants. Based on current rates these leases will generate revenue of \$25,538 for 2023. These leases are to be reviewed on an annual basis. Given the reduced property taxes and farm lease revenue, the Conservation Authority will generate between \$17,700 and \$23,000 of net revenue for 2023.

In accordance with Conservation Authority Purchasing Policies and Procedures, a formal Request for Proposal process will be applied to secure the services of an environmental consulting firm to undertake the development and delivery of the Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve Property Master Plan. The Request for Proposal will be distributed in the fall of 2023 to support budget development and project start-up in early 2024.

## Summary and Recommendations

It is therefore **Recommended That** Staff Report No. 40-23-BOD regarding the Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve update and master planning process be received for information.

## Pre-Submission Review

This Staff Report has been reviewed by the General Manager, Corporate and Financial Services/CFO and the Chief Administrative Officer.

Signed by:

Mark Critch  
General Manager, Corporate and Financial  
Services and CFO

Signed by:

Rob Baldwin  
Chief Administrative Officer

## Attachments

- i) Map: Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve
- ii) Memorandum: Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve – Opportunities and Constraints Mapping



# Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve

## Legend

- Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve
- Arnold C. Matthews Nature Reserve



This product was produced by the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and some information depicted on this map may have been compiled from various sources.

While every effort has been made to accurately depict the information, data / mapping errors may exist. This map has been produced for illustrative purposes only.

LSRCA GIS Services DRAFT DC pd created October 2022 .

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# Memorandum

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**To:** Kevin Kennedy, Land Securement Officer, Lake Simcoe and Region Conservation Authority

**From:** Izabela van Amelsvoort, Senior Ecologist, North-South Environmental Inc. (N.S.E.)

**Date:** February 17, 2023

**Re:** Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve – Opportunities and Constraints Mapping

---

The Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (L.S.R.C.A.) acquired several properties in March 2022 through a donation of significant ecological and agricultural lands. The land holdings comprising the Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve total an area of 360 hectares in the Town of Georgina (the ‘Subject Lands’) (**Figure 1**). The properties are located north of the Keswick urban area within the Georgina Creeks sub-watershed.

The Subject Lands are the subject of a Minister’s Zoning Order (M.Z.O.) (Regulation 251/22) which designates the property as Environmental Protection Area and describes permitted uses and intent for the long-term use of the land. The L.S.R.C.A. is in the process of developing a long-term plan that will provide direction for the development and future management of the Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve.

A Baseline Documentation Report (B.D.R.; N.S.E. 2023a) has been prepared to document the existing site conditions of the Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve, identify significant ecological features, develop priority management actions, and provide high-level stewardship recommendations for managing the conservation area over the next several years.

Subsequently, a Stewardship Plan (N.S.E. 2023b) was developed to provide high-level management recommendation / consideration which reflect Conservation Goals for this conservation preserve. The goals of the authority are to protect, enhance and restore these lands for future generations.

Opportunities and constraints mapping has been prepared in parallel to the Stewardship Plan to inform decision making related to land use management. This memorandum has been prepared to document the evaluation criteria of mapped opportunities and constraints. Constraints are considered relative to management objectives and consider uses such as passive recreation and associated low impact infrastructure (defined below), as well as site restoration / rehabilitation.

## Constraints

Constraints are informed based on existing form and function (sensitivity) of features / vegetation communities surveyed during field investigations, in consideration with the management objectives for the conservation preserve, and relative to desired opportunities for use, which includes passive recreation and ongoing agriculture.

Detailed criteria considered in the classification of constraints is provided in **Table 1** and mapped on **Figures 2(a)-2(d)**. Based on the mapped criteria and overall tolerance (see 'Tolerance' in **Table 1**) constrained areas for passive recreation and site restoration / rehabilitation have been classified in three categories, described below, and mapped on **Figures 3(a)-3(d)**. Rationale used to support identification of constraint levels is provided in **Appendix 1**.

It should be noted that fieldwork completed in support of the B.D.R. included opportunistic mapping of invasive species, wildlife habitat features (e.g., crayfish burrows, vernal pools), etc. Constraints mapping and overall tolerance should be reviewed as new information becomes available, or as stewardship management activities are undertaken. Recommendations for additional field investigations and annual monitoring have been provided in the B.D.R. (N.S.E. 2023a) as well as the accompanying Stewardship Plan (N.S.E. 2023b).

Delineation of Provincially Significant Wetlands (P.S.W's) is based on wetland community mapping undertaken during 2022 fieldwork (completed in support of the B.D.R.). Ecological Land Classification wetland boundaries which are partially overlapped by Land Information Ontario's P.S.W. mapping are assumed to be entirely P.S.W.; this approach reflects greater accuracy / current site conditions. It is recommended that P.S.W. mapping be updated to reflect current on-site conditions.

**Table 2** identifies the total area of each constraint type identified within the Subject Lands.

**Table 2. Total Area per Constraint Type within the Subject Lands**

Constraint	Area (hectares)
High	158.1
Medium	93.0
Low	109.1

### High Constraint Areas

- Include areas which uncommon to the local landscape, have a higher level of sensitivity to anthropogenic activities or in an undisturbed state, representing the best quality habitat or features on the property/properties
- Includes:
  - P.S.W's except those where anthropogenic / physical disturbance (specifically, wide-spread vegetation removal) has resulted in altered site conditions (this does not include 'natural' disturbances caused by e.g., invasive plant or insect species). In the case of the

- Subject Lands, the only community which matches this exception is the meadow marsh / cultural thicket (M.A.M./C.U.T.) community occurring on Property 1.
  - Unevaluated wetlands which are contiguous to P.S.W's (it is assumed that, because of their contiguity would result in them being included as P.S.W. in any future P.S.W. mapping updates.)
  - Other considerations: vegetation communities with a high proportion of native species, sensitive S.W.H. types (e.g., Candidate Terrestrial Crayfish Habitat)
- These areas may be most suited for protection / enhancement (to be retained in their natural state), with no or limited trails (e.g., limited only to a boardwalk required as a trail connector)

### Medium Constraint Areas

- Include areas which are relatively common in the local landscape and are not highly sensitive to some anthropogenic activity / activity is not a high-risk factor; they are tolerant to some passive recreation. They may also be areas of higher levels of existing disturbance but demonstrating naturalization that should be encouraged / supported.
- Examples include:
  - P.S.W's where anthropogenic / physical disturbance (specifically, wide-spread vegetation removal) has resulted in altered site conditions (this does not include 'natural' disturbances caused by e.g., invasive plant or insect species). In the case of the Subject Lands, the only community which matches this exception is the meadow marsh / cultural thicket (M.A.M./C.U.T.) community occurring on Property 1.
  - Unevaluated wetlands which are discontinuous from P.S.W's (based on 2022 wetland community delineation)
  - Buffers: 15-metre buffer to all warm-water streams (no cold-water streams are known in this area), and 30-metre buffer to all high-constraint areas (e.g., P.S.W's and Significant Woodlands) that abut low-constraint areas; this reflects consistency with Ontario Regulation 179/06 Implementation Guidelines
  - Upland vegetation communities with moderate impact by invasive species
- These areas may be suited for some passive recreation and may also present some opportunities for enhancement

### Low Constraint Areas

- Include areas which are less sensitive to anthropogenic activity (i.e., risk of impact is lower), are already in an altered / managed state, and/ or those which are already highly affected by invasive species
- Examples: areas which have relatively recently been cleared / disturbed, existing agricultural fields, etc.
- These areas may be most suited for higher intensity passive recreation uses / activities and supportive amenities / infrastructure needed to support broader objectives such as increased trails, demonstration plantings, programmatic uses, parking areas, or may also provide



opportunities for restoration (e.g., restoration of agricultural field to grassland habitat, depending on prioritization of management objectives)

## Opportunities

Opportunities for restoration / rehabilitation and passive recreation uses were mapped as a series of layers as follows: sensitive areas most suitable for protection / enhancement, priority and possible restoration areas, areas suitable for passive recreation, programmatic opportunities, parking / user access, and agriculture. Certain communities / areas may provide more than one type of opportunity, to be prioritized based on management objectives. All opportunities are collectively mapped on **Figures 4(a)-4(d)**. Rationale used to support identification of opportunities is provided in **Appendix 2**.

**Table 3** identifies the total area of each opportunity type identified within the Subject Lands. Note that, opportunity types are overlapping and, therefore, the sum of all opportunity types is greater than the total area of the Subject Lands.

**Table 3. Total Area per Opportunity Type within the Subject Lands**

Opportunity	Area (hectares)
Sensitive Areas for Protection and/or Enhancement	163.6
Priority Restoration Areas	196.6
Possible Restoration Areas	109.1
Programmatic Opportunities and Uses	164.7
Areas Suitable for Passive Recreation	32.0
Areas Suitable for Public Access / Parking	n/a
Agriculture	91.5

Mapped opportunities include:

### Sensitive Areas for Protection and/or Enhancement

- Typically, highly constrained areas as described above, e.g., P.S.W's
- Buffers to sensitive features (e.g., buffers to watercourses and P.S.W's)
- These areas present opportunities for enhancement through habitat feature implementation, habitat diversification (e.g., habitat structures), overseeding for diversification, etc. to further their biodiversity potential

### Priority Restoration Areas

- May include areas where restoration activities will have the greatest benefit to effort ratio, e.g., filling in forest gaps to create more interior woodland habitat
- Areas which still have low invasive species where management would be most effective in eradicating / stopping spread

- Areas which are adjacent to and provide a supportive function to Sensitive Areas / Areas for Protection that should: a) minimize risk to highest function / highest sensitivity areas, b) to enhance and build upon those highest value areas (e.g., buffers to watercourses and P.S.W's)

### **Possible Restoration Areas**

- Areas which, following restoration / habitat creation, have the potential to create the right conditions for S.W.H., e.g., creation of meadow and shrub habitat (Open Country Breeding Bird Habitat, Shrub / Early Successional Breeding Bird Habitat, Raptor Wintering Areas [currently missing upland meadow / thicket component of criteria])
- Areas affected by invasive species, human disturbance (e.g., dumping, informal trails) which are recommended for restoration / management
- Areas of existing or recent agricultural use, that would be considered suitable for restoration or rehabilitation abutting High or Medium Constraint areas
- Areas identified as possible local linkages according to the Natural Heritage System & Restoration Strategy for the Lake Simcoe Watershed (L.S.R.C.A. 2018)
- Generally, these areas have a greater potential cost, represent potential opportunities, etc.

### **Areas Suitable for Passive Recreation**

- Generally, only excludes areas of highest sensitivity to impact from passive access (e.g., areas where access could create impacts / mortality, introduce invasive species to sensitive areas, where high sensitivity species occur)
- Typically, medium, and low constrained areas. Some portions of high constraint areas may be included based on proximity and broader goals for connectivity across the property / properties
- May include those where trail networks already exist

### **Programmatic Opportunities and Uses**

- Generally, include portions of low constraint areas. These represent potential areas that could support higher intensity uses such as school groups, outdoor education areas, gathering areas, low-impact amenities (e.g., benches) or other built forms (excludes large, enclosed structures, etc., small open-air structures may be considered, informed by management objectives)

### **Areas Suitable for Public Access / Parking**

- Portions of low constraint areas, focused on potential areas of preferred access and centralizing access for visitors
- Particularly those at property boundaries or where current access points exist

### **Agriculture**

- Areas of existing agricultural use, that would be considered suitable for being maintained as agricultural use (informed by management objectives or opportunities)

Table 1. Criteria Used for Identifying Constraints

Criteria		High	Medium	Low
Landscape Type	<b>Presence of Rare Species (S.A.R., S1-S3, Locally Rare)</b> Requires species-specific consideration	<b>Sensitive Rare Species</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within 25 m of Butternut (area where seedlings may be present)</li> </ul>	<b>'Less' Sensitive Rare Species</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area 25-50 m of Butternut (area where seedlings may be present)</li> <li>• Communities with breeding Eastern Wood-pewee and/or Wood Thrush</li> </ul>	<b>No rare species</b>
	<b>Uncommon Areas to the Local Landscape</b> (e.g., rare vegetation communities, uncommon S.W.H. types, landscape features (eskars), A.N.S.I.'s) Requires area-specific consideration	<b>Sensitive Uncommon Areas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None currently identified in the L.S.C.P.</li> </ul>	<b>'Less' Sensitive Uncommon Areas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None currently identified in the L.S.C.P.</li> </ul>	<b>None</b>
	<b>Native Species Diversity</b> Relative / qualitative measure (Could be quantitative in future and considered relative to average)	<b>High Diversity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notably higher (above 'average', based on qualitative observation) native species diversity</li> </ul>	<b>Medium Diversity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Average' native species diversity relative to the study area (based on qualitative observation)</li> </ul>	<b>Low Diversity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally, includes communities with cultural origin (e.g., cultural meadows / thickets / woodlands)</li> </ul>
	<b>Wetlands</b> Requires area-specific consideration (P.S.W's and unevaluated wetlands are considered more sensitive than [evaluated] non-significant wetlands)	<b>Sensitive Wetlands</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P.S.W's except those where anthropogenic / physical disturbance (specifically, wide-spread vegetation removal) has resulted in altered site conditions (i.e., meadow marsh / cultural thicket (M.A.M./C.U.T.) community occurring on Property 1)</li> <li>• Unevaluated wetlands which are contiguous to P.S.W's</li> <li>• Bogs / fens (not applicable to L.S.C.P.)</li> <li>• Wetlands supporting / containing permanent or intermittent streams</li> <li>• Wetlands supporting vernal pools (area within 20 m of vernal pool is considered High Constraint)</li> </ul>	<b>'Less' Sensitive Wetlands</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P.S.W's where anthropogenic / physical disturbance (specifically, wide-spread vegetation removal) has resulted in altered site conditions (i.e., meadow marsh / cultural thicket (M.A.M./C.U.T.) community occurring on Property 1)</li> <li>• Unevaluated wetlands which are discontinuous from P.S.W's</li> </ul>	<b>None</b>
	<b>Relatively Sensitive types of Significant Wildlife Habitat (S.W.H.)</b> Those S.W.H. types which may be more sensitive to disturbance / impact (e.g., Terrestrial Crayfish S.W.H., Rookeries, Snake Hibernacula, Seeps / Springs)	<b>Sensitive S.W.H.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terrestrial Crayfish S.W.H.: Consider boardwalks in areas of terrestrial crayfish</li> </ul>	<b>'Less' Sensitive S.W.H.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None currently identified in the L.S.C.P.</li> </ul>	<b>None</b>



Criteria		High	Medium	Low
Site Disturbance	<b>Site Disturbance</b> Relative / qualitative measure (Considers level of site alteration history / remaining in disturbed state - clearing, cultural influence [C.U.... communities], impact by E.A.B., dumping, density of trails, laneways, etc.)	<b>Undisturbed / Low Disturbance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low level of disturbance relative to 'average' level of disturbance in the study area (based on qualitative observation)</li> </ul>	<b>Moderately Disturbed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'Average' level of disturbance relative to the study area (based on qualitative observation)</li> <li>Area impacted by E.A.B., but understory is intact, and canopy has recovered / remains 60% cover</li> </ul>	<b>Highly Disturbed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Areas already in an altered / managed state</li> <li>Active agricultural fields</li> <li>Areas impacted by extensive dumping / site clearing</li> </ul>
	<b>Impact by Invasive Species</b> (Invasiveness categories defined according to Urban Forest Associates Inc., 2002*; Dog-strangling Vine considered Category 1 based on descriptions provided in Anderson 2012*; abundance is identified according to E.L.C. codes)	<b>No / Limited Impact</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Rare" abundance of any category of invasive species; and/ or "Occasional" of Category 2 species</li> </ul>	<b>Moderate Impact</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Occasional – Abundant" of Category 1 invasive species; and / or "Abundant" of Category 2 species</li> </ul>	<b>High Impact</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Abundant – Dominant" of Category 1 or 2 invasive species</li> </ul>
<b>Buffers</b> (In consideration with Ontario Regulation 179/06 Implementation Guidelines)		n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15-metre buffer from all warm-water streams (Note: there are no known cold-water streams in this area).</li> <li>30-metre buffers around High constraint areas (e.g., P.S.W's, Significant Woodlands) that abut Low Constraint Areas</li> </ul>	n/a
<b>Tolerance to Passive Recreation Activities</b> (i.e., trails, gathering areas, low impact amenities, benches, privy's, open air structures, parking) Cumulative assessment informed by remaining criteria		<b>Low Tolerance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally, areas which mainly fall under the 'high' category</li> <li>May include areas which uncommon to the local landscape, occur in an undisturbed state, representing the best quality habitat or features on the property/properties</li> <li>E.g., areas where access could create negative impacts / mortality, introduce invasive species to sensitive areas, where high sensitivity species occur</li> <li>Typically identified as suitable for the following Opportunities:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitive Areas for Protection and / or Enhancement</li> <li>Priority Restoration Areas</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Medium Tolerance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally, areas which mainly fall under the 'medium' category</li> <li>May include areas which are relatively common in the local landscape where activity is not a high-risk factor; they are tolerant to some passive recreation. They may also be areas of higher levels of existing disturbance, but demonstrating naturalization that should be encouraged / supported</li> <li>May include those where trail networks already exist</li> <li>Typically identified as suitable for the following Opportunities:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible Restoration Areas (including Agriculture which could be restored to expand / enhance adjacent communities / habitats)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>High Tolerance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally, areas which mainly fall under the 'low' category</li> <li>May include areas already in an altered / managed state, areas already highly affected by invasive species, and / or areas which have relatively recently been cleared / disturbed</li> <li>Areas that could support higher intensity uses such as school groups, outdoor education areas, gathering areas, low-impact amenities (e.g., benches), parking areas, or other built forms (excludes large, enclosed structures, etc., small open-air structures may be considered, informed by management objectives)</li> <li>Typically identified as suitable for the following Opportunities:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Areas Suitable for Passive Recreation (including existing / ongoing Agriculture)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Criteria	High	Medium	Low
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Areas Suitable for Passive Recreation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programmatic Opportunities and Uses</li> <li>- Areas Suitable for Public Access / Parking</li> <li>- Possible Restoration Areas (e.g., restoration of agricultural field to grassland habitat, depending on prioritization of management objectives)</li> </ul>

\* Urban Forest Associates Inc. 2002. Invasive Exotic Species Ranking for Southern Ontario. Society for Ecological Restoration Ontario (S.E.R.O.).

Category 1: Aggressive invasive exotic species that can dominate a site to exclude all other species and remain dominant on the site indefinitely.

Category 2: Exotic species that are highly invasive but tend to only dominate certain niches or do not spread rapidly from major concentrations.

Anderson, H. 2012. Invasive Dog-strangling Vine (*Vincetoxicum rossicum*) Best Management Practices in Ontario. Ontario Invasive Plant Council, Peterborough, ON.

## APPENDIX 1 | Identification of Constraints

**Appendix 1. Rationale for Identification of Constraint Categories**

E.L.C. / Other Feature	Overall Constraint	Overall Tolerance	Rationale	Wetland	Black Ash	E.A.B. impact	Overall Invasive Disturbance	DSV	Buckthorn	Honeysuckle	Native Species Diversity	Notes
<b>Property 1</b>												
M.A.S2-1	H	L	P.S.W.. Small pocket of cattail marsh	Y			M					Purple Loosestrife = A
S.W.D2-1	H	L	P.S.W.. High invasives but also high native species diversity - high restoration potential	Y	X	H	H	O	D	O	H	mostly snags in canopy
S.W.D3	H	L	P.S.W.. High invasives but also high native species diversity - high restoration potential	Y	X	M	M		O		H	no snags remaining, 60% maple cover, Crayfish Chimneys
S.W.D4-5	H	M	P.S.W.. High invasive species	Y			H	D	A			
S.W.D7	H	L	Wetland, high invasive species, but presence of Black Ash	Y	X	M	H	R	D	O		few snags, >60% canopy aspen and willow, small section of old road that is high in Coltsfoot and DSV
S.W.M3-2	H	M	P.S.W.. High invasive species.	Y			H	A	D	O		
OTHER	H	L	Within 25 m of butternut, within 20 m of vernal pools									
S.W.D2-2	H/M	L/M	Includes P.S.W. and discontinuous unevaluated wetland. Moderate invasive species	Y		H	M					mostly snags in canopy
F.O.D5-1	M	M	Intact upland forest, affected by invasive species, moderate diversity				L					
F.O.D8-1	M	M	Intact upland forest, affected by invasive species, moderate diversity				H	D	D			
M.A.M2/C.U.T.	M	M	P.S.W. where anthropogenic / physical disturbance has resulted in altered site conditions				H	A-D		O		Patches of Phragmites (O), community recently cleared for previously proposed development
A.N.T.H.	L	H	Disturbed cultural site, low diversity								L	
C.U.M1	L	H	Disturbed cultural site, low diversity				M	O-A	O-A			
C.U.T.	L	H	Disturbed cultural site, low diversity				M				L	
C.U.W./C.U.W1	L	H	Disturbed cultural site, low diversity			M	H	A	A	R	L	Coltsfoot = O-A
F.O.C4/4-1	L	H	Intact upland forest, affected by invasive species, low diversity				H	A-D			L	
I.A.G.	L	H	Active agriculture									
<b>Property 2</b>												
M.A.S2-1	H	L	P.S.W.. Small pockets of cattail marsh	Y			M					Purple Loosestrife = A Portion associated with local linkage
S.A.F1-3	H	L	P.S.W.. Ponds	Y			L					ponds
S.W.M1-1	H	L	P.S.W.. High invasives but also high native species diversity - high restoration potential	Y	X	M	M	A	O		H	
S.W.T2-2	H	L	P.S.W.. Moderate invasive species	Y			M	O	O			
OTHER	H	L	Within 25 m of butternut, within 20 m of vernal pools									
M.A.M2	H/M	L/M	High where P.S.W.. Moderate were discontinuous unevaluated wetland. Narrow meadow marsh supporting overland drainage	Y			M					Purple Loosestrife = A Portion associated with local linkage
M.A.S2-4	H/M	L/M	High where P.S.W.. Moderate were discontinuous unevaluated wetland. Small pockets of shallow marsh	Y			M		O		H	
F.O.D5-6	M	M	Intact upland forest, affected by invasive species, moderate diversity				H	D	A			
F.O.M4	M	M	Intact upland forest, affected by invasive species, moderate diversity				M	A	O			
F.O.M4-2	M	M	Intact upland forest, affected by invasive species, moderate diversity				H	O	D			

E.L.C. / Other Feature	Overall Constraint	Overall Tolerance	Rationale	Wetland	Black Ash	E.A.B. impact	Overall Invasive Disturbance	DSV	Buckthorn	Honeysuckle	Native Species Diversity	Notes
S.W.D./S.W.D2-2	M	M	Unevaluated wetland. Low impact by invasive species	Y			L					
C.U.M1/ C.U.M1-1	L	H	Disturbed cultural site, low diversity				M	O	O		L	
C.U.T.	L	H	Disturbed cultural site, low diversity				M				L	
C.U.P3-3	L	H	Disturbed cultural site, low diversity				H				L	Scots Pine= D
C.U.W.	L	H	Disturbed cultural site, low diversity				M	A	O	O	L	Garlic Mustard = O, South-Central C.U.W.s also have ash snags
C.U.W1	L	H	Disturbed cultural site, low diversity				H	O	O		L	Black Locust= D, Garlic Mustard= O
F.O.C4	L	H	Intact upland forest, low invasive b/c limited GC, low diversity				L				L	
F.O.D./F.O.D5	L	H	Intact upland forest, affected by invasive species, low diversity. Narrow communities between agricultural fields.				H	D	A	O	L	
I.A.G.	L	H	Active agriculture									
<b>Property 3</b>												
S.W.D.	H	L	P.S.W.. Low impact by invasive species	Y		M	L					
C.U.M1	L	H	Disturbed cultural site, low diversity				M	O			L	
C.U.W.	L	H	Disturbed cultural site, low diversity				H		D	O	L	
I.A.G.	L	H	Active agriculture									
<b>Property 4</b>												
F.O.D5-2	H	L	Intact forest, high invasives but also high native species diversity - high restoration potential				H	D	O		H	
F.O.M7-2	H	L	Intact forest, high invasives but also high native species diversity - high restoration potential		X		H	D	A	O	H	
M.A.M2	H	L	P.S.W.. Narrow meadow marsh supporting overland drainage	Y			L					
M.A.S.	H	L	P.S.W.. Small pockets of shallow marsh	Y			L					
S.W.D.	H	L	P.S.W.. High invasives as well as low diversity	Y			H	D	D		L	
S.W.D2-2	H	L	P.S.W.. Moderately disturbed (E.A.B., inv), presence of Crayfish burrows - high restoration potential	Y	X	M	M	A		O	H	European Black Alder = O, Purple Loosestrife = A
S.W.M1-1	H	L	P.S.W.. Moderately disturbed (invasive species), high native species diversity - high restoration potential	Y			M	O	A	O	H	
S.W.T2-2	H	L	P.S.W.. Moderate invasive species	Y			M					Purple Loosestrife = A
OTHER	H	L	Within 25 m of butternut, within 20 m of vernal pools									
F.O.D6-5	M	M	Intact upland forest, affected by invasive species, moderate diversity		X	M	M	A				
S.A.F1-3	M	M	Unevaluated wetland. Man-made pond impacted by Common Reed	Y			M				L	Man-made pond with Common Reed on edge
C.U.M1	L	H	Disturbed cultural site, low diversity				M				L	Cow Vetch = A
C.U.T.	L	H	Disturbed cultural site, low diversity				L				L	
C.U.W./C.U.W1	L	H	Disturbed cultural site, low diversity				H	D	O		L	
F.O.C4-1	L	H	Intact upland forest, affected by invasive species, low diversity				H	D	O		L	
I.A.G.	L	H	Active agriculture									

L = low, M = moderate, H = high, Y = yes, X = present

O = occasional, A = abundant, D = dominant (according to E.L.C abundance codes, Lee et al. 1998)

## APPENDIX 2 | Identification of Opportunities



**Appendix 2. Rationale for Identification of Opportunity Types**

Opportunity Type	Property 1	Property 2	Property 3	Property 4
<p><b>Sensitive Areas for Protection and/or Enhancement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typically, highly constrained areas as described above</li> <li>These areas present opportunities for enhancement through habitat feature implementation, habitat diversification (e.g., habitat structures), overseeding for diversification, etc. to further their biodiversity potential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All highly constrained areas, unless exceptions identified below</li> <li>Buffers to watercourses and wetlands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All highly constrained areas, unless exceptions identified below</li> <li>Buffers to watercourses and wetlands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All highly constrained areas, unless exceptions identified below</li> <li>Buffers to watercourses and wetlands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All highly constrained areas, unless exceptions identified below</li> <li>Buffers to watercourses and wetlands</li> </ul>
<p><b>Priority Areas for Restoration and/or Enhancement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May include areas where restoration and/or enhancement activities will have the greatest benefit to effort ratio, e.g., filling in forest gaps to create more interior woodland habitat</li> <li>Areas which still have low invasive species where management would be most effective in eradicating / stopping spread</li> <li>Areas which are adjacent to and provide a supportive function to Sensitive Areas / Areas for Protection that should: a) minimize risk to highest function / highest sensitivity areas, b) to enhance and build upon those highest value areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>S.W.D3</b> (low impact by E.A.B., only moderate invasives, high native diversity)</li> <li>Buffers to watercourses and wetlands which are not currently in a naturally vegetated state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>S.W.M1-1</b> (low impact by E.A.B., only moderate invasives, high native diversity)</li> <li><b>S.W.D.</b> (low impact by invasive species)</li> <li>Buffers to watercourses and wetlands which are not currently in a naturally vegetated state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>S.W.D.</b> (low impact by E.A.B., only low invasives)</li> <li>Buffers to watercourses and wetlands which are not currently in a naturally vegetated state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>S.W.D2-2</b> and <b>S.W.M1-1</b> (low impact by E.A.B., only moderate invasives, high native diversity)</li> <li>Buffers to watercourses and wetlands which are not currently in a naturally vegetated state</li> </ul>
<p><b>Possible Restoration Areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Areas which, following restoration / habitat creation, have the potential to create the right conditions for S.W.H., e.g., creation of meadow and shrub habitat (Open Country Breeding Bird Habitat, Shrub / Early Successional Breeding Bird Habitat, Raptor Wintering Areas [currently missing upland meadow / thicket component of criteria])</li> <li>Areas affected by invasive species, human disturbance (e.g., dumping, informal trails) which are recommended for restoration / management</li> <li>Areas of existing or recent agricultural use, that would be considered suitable for restoration or rehabilitation abutting High or Medium Constraint areas.</li> <li>Generally, these areas have a greater potential cost, represent potential opportunities, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>S.W.D2-1</b> (high impact by E.A.B., but high native diversity)</li> <li><b>S.W.D2-2</b> (impacted by E.A.B. leaving mostly snags in canopy)</li> <li><b>M.A.M2/C.U.T.</b> (to fill woodland gaps)</li> <li><b>A.N.T.H.</b> communities</li> <li><b>C.U.M1</b> and <b>I.A.G.</b> communities (to create pollinator habitat). (Note: no opportunity to create sufficient meadow or thicket habitat to create O.C.B.B. or S.E.S.B.B. S.W.H. types)</li> <li>Note: individual patches of invasive species or other disturbances recommended for management are identified in the Stewardship Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>C.U.M1</b> and <b>I.A.G.</b> (create 30 ha of C.U.M. for OCBB S.W.H., and/or 10 ha of C.U.T./C.U.S./C.U.W. for S.E.S.B.B. S.W.H., or 15 ha of C.U.M./C.U.T./C.U.S./C.U.W. for upland component or Raptor Winter Area S.W.H.; or to create pollinator habitat)</li> <li>Note: individual patches of invasive species or other disturbances recommended for management are identified in the Stewardship Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>C.U.M.1</b> and <b>I.A.G.</b> (create 30 ha of C.U.M. for OCBB S.W.H., and/or 10 ha of C.U.T./C.U.S./C.U.W. for S.E.S.B.B. S.W.H., or 15 ha of C.U.M./C.U.T./C.U.S./C.U.W. for upland component or Raptor Winter Area S.W.H. -- achievable when considered with adjacent Property 2; or to create pollinator habitat)</li> <li>Note: individual patches of invasive species or other disturbances recommended for management are identified in the Stewardship Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>FOM7-2</b> and <b>FOD5-2</b> (high invasive impact, but high native diversity)</li> <li><b>C.U.M.1</b> (western community: fill in forest gap and increase interior woodland habitat; or both communities: to create pollinator habitat [no potential to meet 30 ha criteria for OCBB S.W.H.])</li> <li><b>I.A.G.</b> (create 10 ha of C.U.T./C.U.S./C.U.W. for S.E.S.B.B. S.W.H., or 15 ha of C.U.M./C.U.T./C.U.S./C.U.W. for upland component or Raptor Winter Area S.W.H.; or to create pollinator habitat)</li> <li>Note: individual patches of invasive species or other disturbances recommended for management are identified in the Stewardship Plan</li> </ul>
<p><b>Areas Suitable for Passive Recreation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally, only excludes areas of highest sensitivity to impact from passive access (e.g., areas where access could create impacts / mortality, introduce invasive species to sensitive areas, where high sensitivity species occur)</li> <li>Typically, medium, and low constrained areas. Some portions of high constraint areas may be included based on proximity and broader goals for connectivity across the property / properties</li> <li>May include those where trail networks already exist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All except highly constrained areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All except highly constrained areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All except highly constrained areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All except highly constrained areas</li> </ul>
<p><b>Programmatic Opportunities and Uses</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All low constraint areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All low constraint areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All low constraint areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All low constraint areas</li> </ul>

Opportunity Type	Property 1	Property 2	Property 3	Property 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally, include portions of low constraint areas. These represent potential areas that could support higher intensity uses such as school groups, outdoor education areas, gathering areas, low-impact amenities (e.g., benches) or other built forms (excludes large, enclosed structures, etc., small open-air structures may be considered, informed by management objectives)</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Areas Suitable for Public Access / Parking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Portions of low constraint areas, focused on potential areas of preferred access and centralizing access for visitors</li> <li>Particularly those at property boundaries or where current access points exist</li> </ul>	See <b>Figure 4a</b>	See <b>Figure 4b</b>	See <b>Figure 4c</b>	See <b>Figure 4d</b>
<p><b>Agriculture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Areas of existing or recent agricultural use, that would be considered suitable for being maintained or returned to an agricultural use (informed by management objectives or opportunities)</li> </ul>	• All I.A.G.	• All I.A.G.	• All I.A.G.	• All I.A.G.

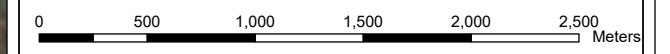




**Figure 1 | Lake Simcoe CP Study Area**

**Legend**

Subject Property

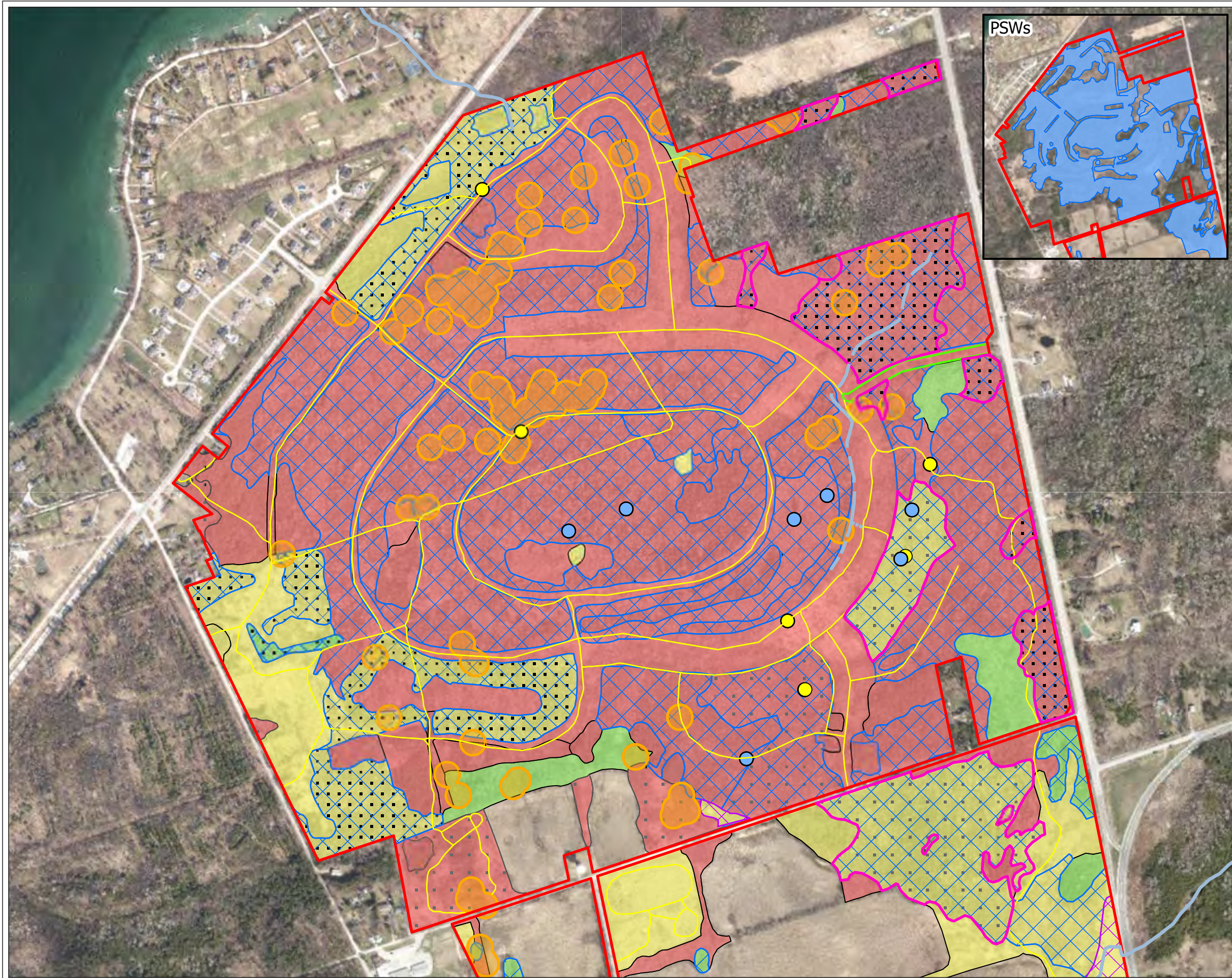


Project Number 22-1313	Date: 2022-12-16	N ▲
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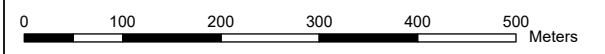




**Figure 2a | Lake Simcoe CP**  
Property 1 - Constraints Criteria

**Legend**

- Subject Property
- High Native Species Diversity
- Invasive Species Disturbance**
- High
- Medium
- Low
- EAB Impact**
- High
- Medium
- Wetland**
- Swamp
- Marsh
- Shallow Water
- Butternuts**
- 25m Buffer
- Observations (Other)**
- Vernal Pool
- Crayfish Burrow
- Trail
- Laneway
- Watercourses
- Ephemeral Watercourse



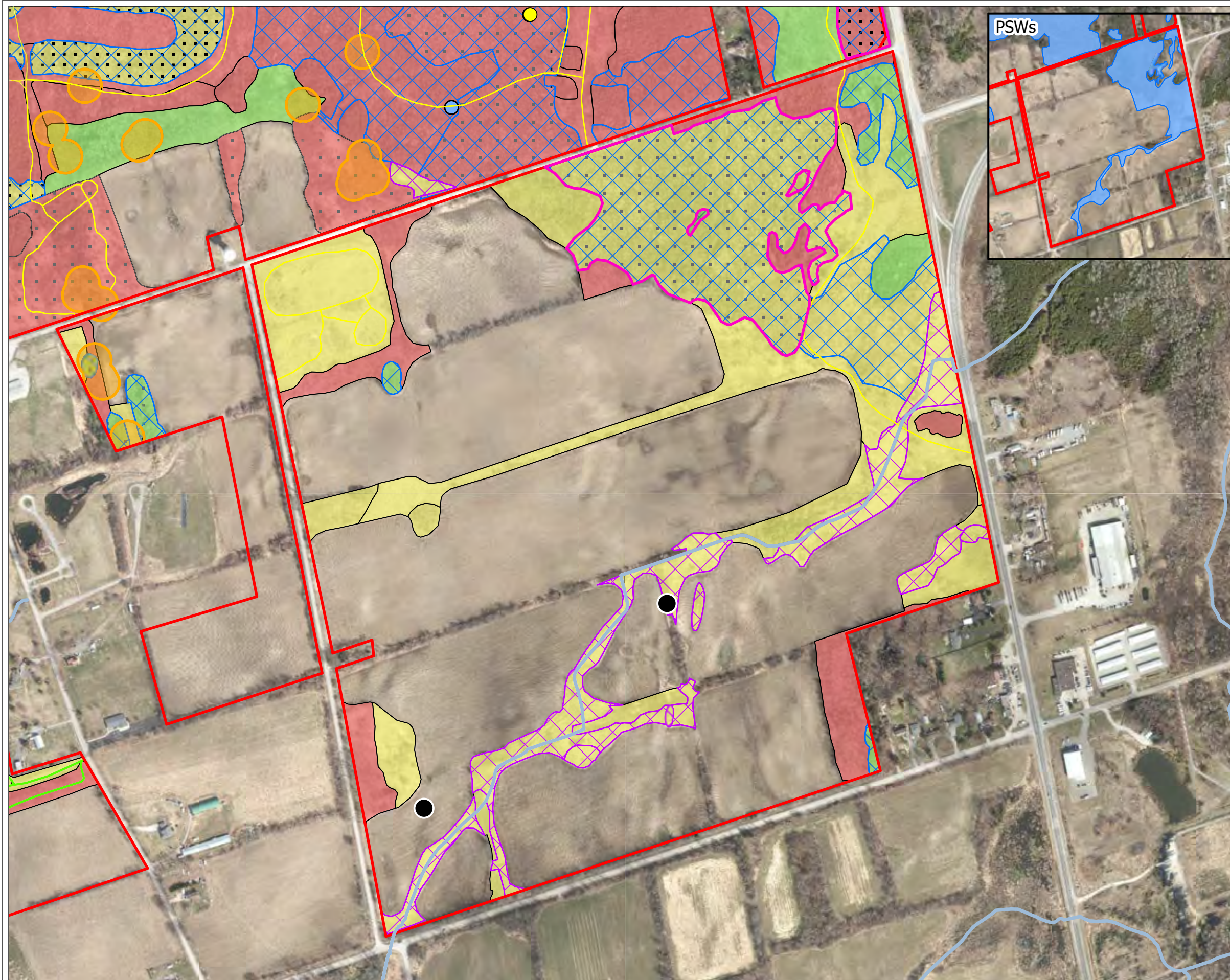
Project Number 22-1313	Date: 2023-02-06	N ▲
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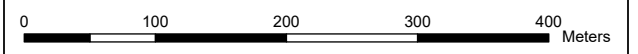


**Figure 2b | Lake Simcoe CP**  
Property 2 - Constraints Criteria



**Legend**

- Subject Property
- High Native Species Diversity
- LSRCA NHS Local Linkage
- Invasive Species Disturbance**
- High
- Medium
- Low
- EAB Impact**
- High
- Medium
- Wetland**
- Swamp
- Marsh
- Shallow Water
- Butternuts**
- 25m Buffer
- Observations (Other)**
- Vernal Pool
- Crayfish Burrow
- Trail
- Laneway
- Watercourses

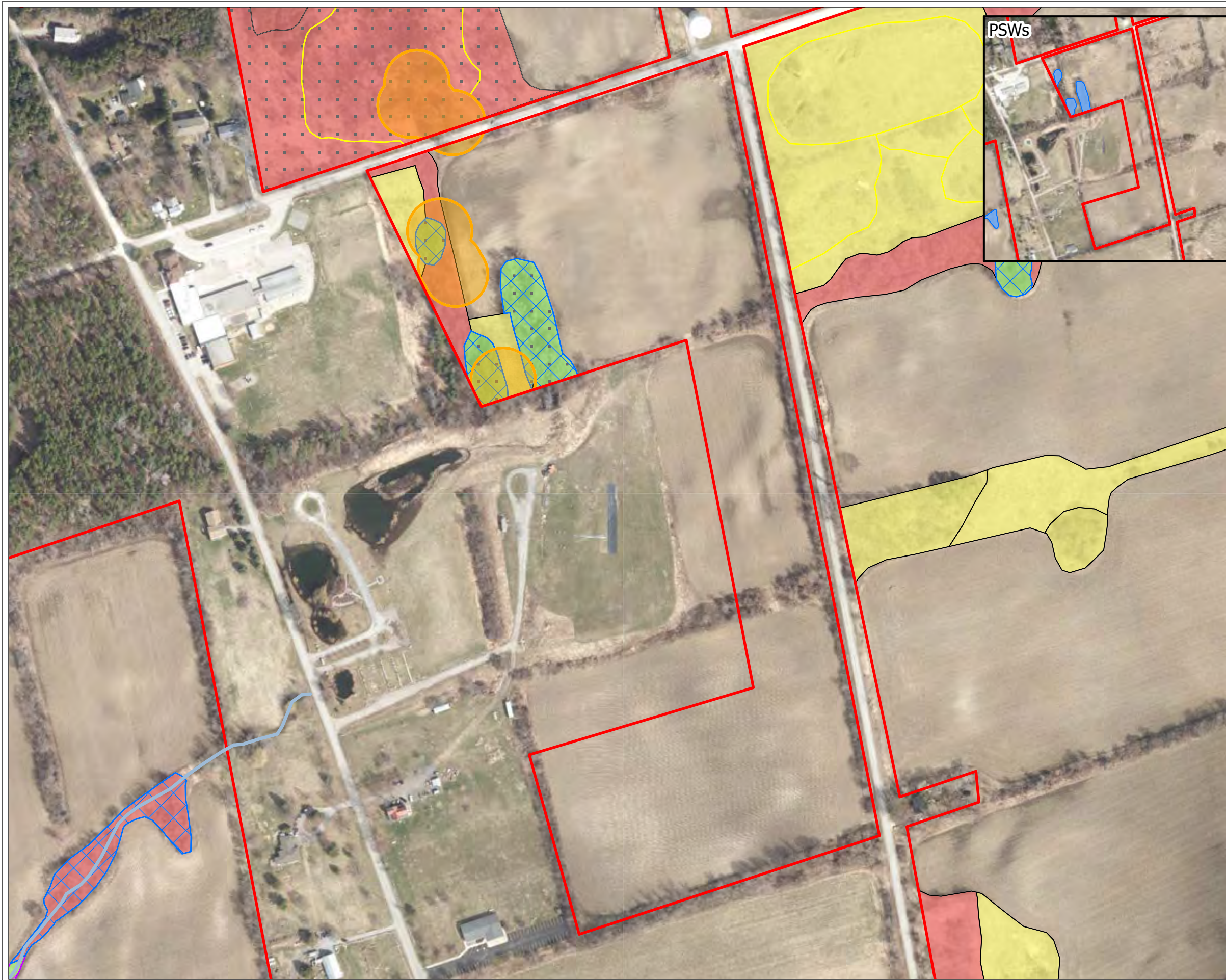


Project Number 22-1313	Date: 2023-02-06	N ▲
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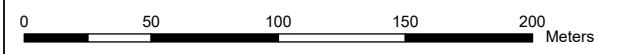




**Figure 2c | Lake Simcoe CP**  
Property 3 - Constraints Criteria

**Legend**

- Subject Property
- High Native Species Diversity
- Invasive Species Disturbance**
- High
- Medium
- Low
- EAB Impact**
- High
- Medium
- Wetland**
- Swamp
- Marsh
- Shallow Water
- Butternuts**
- 25m Buffer
- Observations (Other)**
- Vernal Pool
- Crayfish Burrow
- Trail
- Laneway
- Watercourses

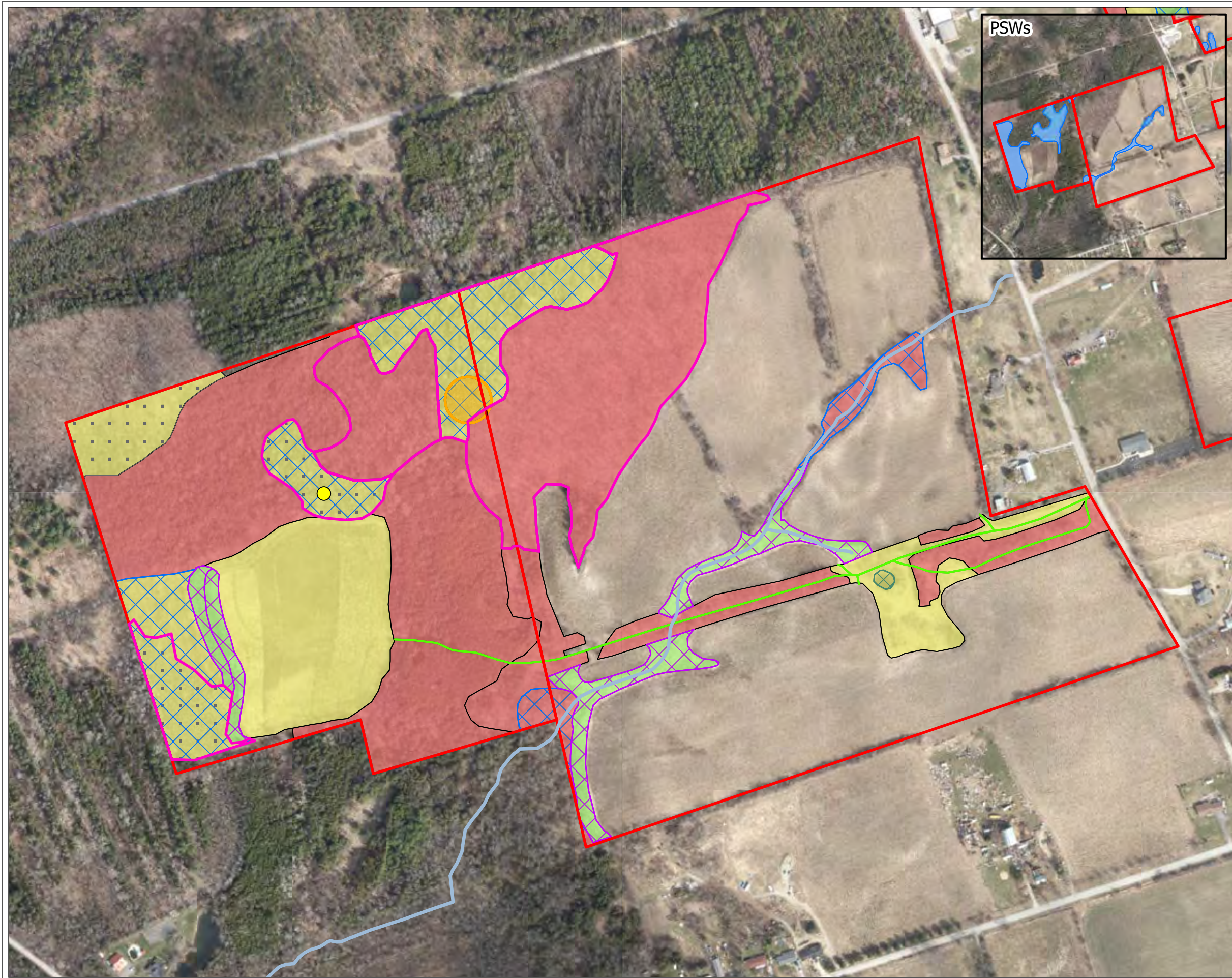


Project Number 22-1313	Date: 2023-02-06	N ▲
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**Figure 2d | Lake Simcoe CP**  
Property 4 - Constraints Criteria

**Legend**

- Subject Property
- High Native Species Diversity
- Invasive Species Disturbance**
- High
- Medium
- Low
- EAB Impact**
- High
- Medium
- Wetland**
- Swamp
- Marsh
- Shallow Water
- Butternuts**
- 25m Buffer
- Observations (Other)**
- Vernal Pool
- Crayfish Burrow
- Trail
- Laneway
- Watercourses



Project Number 22-1313	Date: 2023-02-06	N ▲
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**Figure 3a | Lake Simcoe CP**  
Property 1 - Mapped Constraints

**Legend**

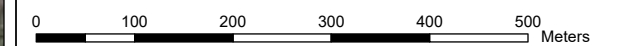
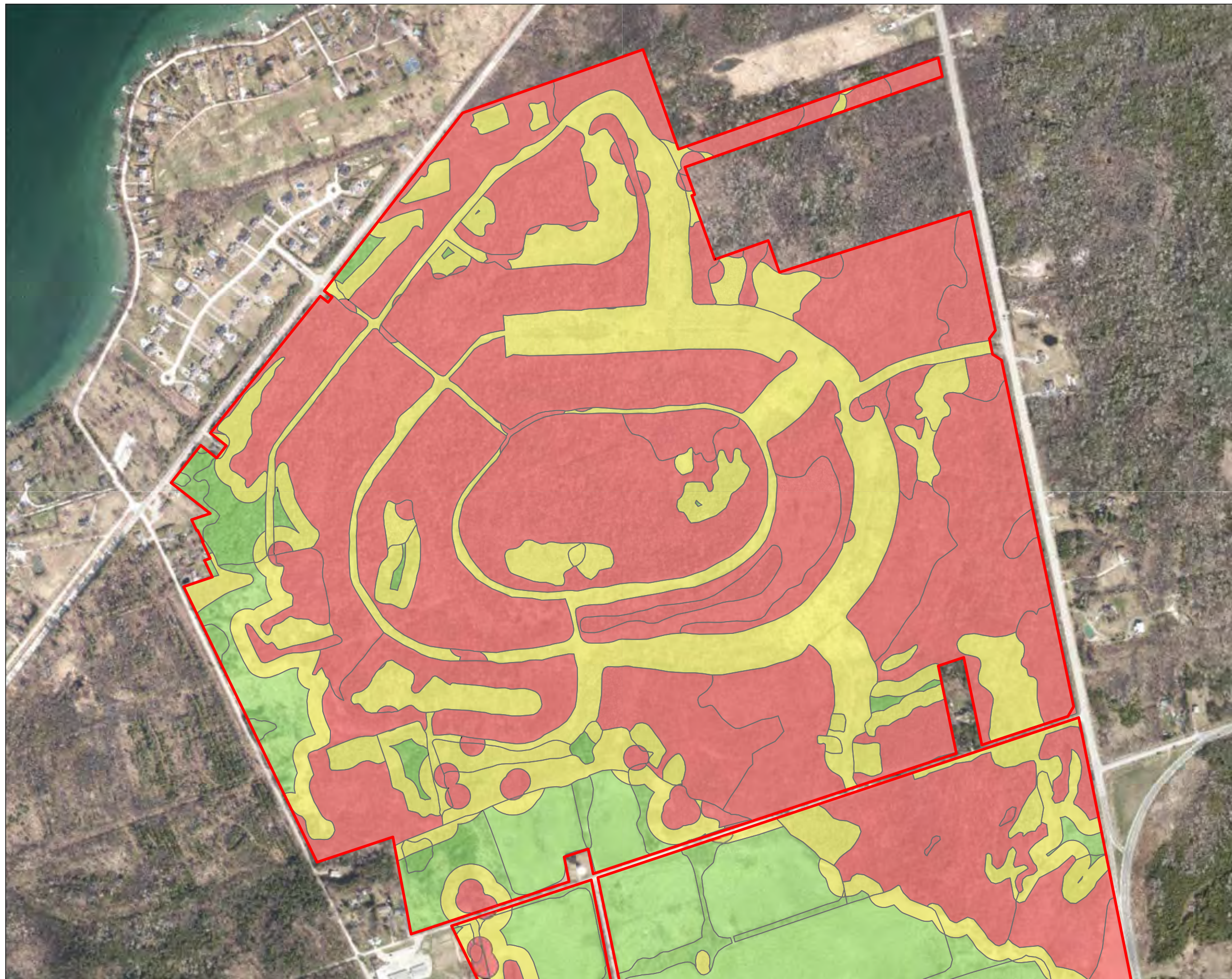
 Subject Property

**Overall Constraint**

 High

 Medium

 Low



Project Number  
22-1313

Date:  
2023-02-06



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**Figure 3b | Lake Simcoe CP**  
Property 2 - Mapped Constraints

**Legend**

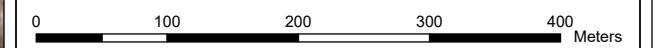
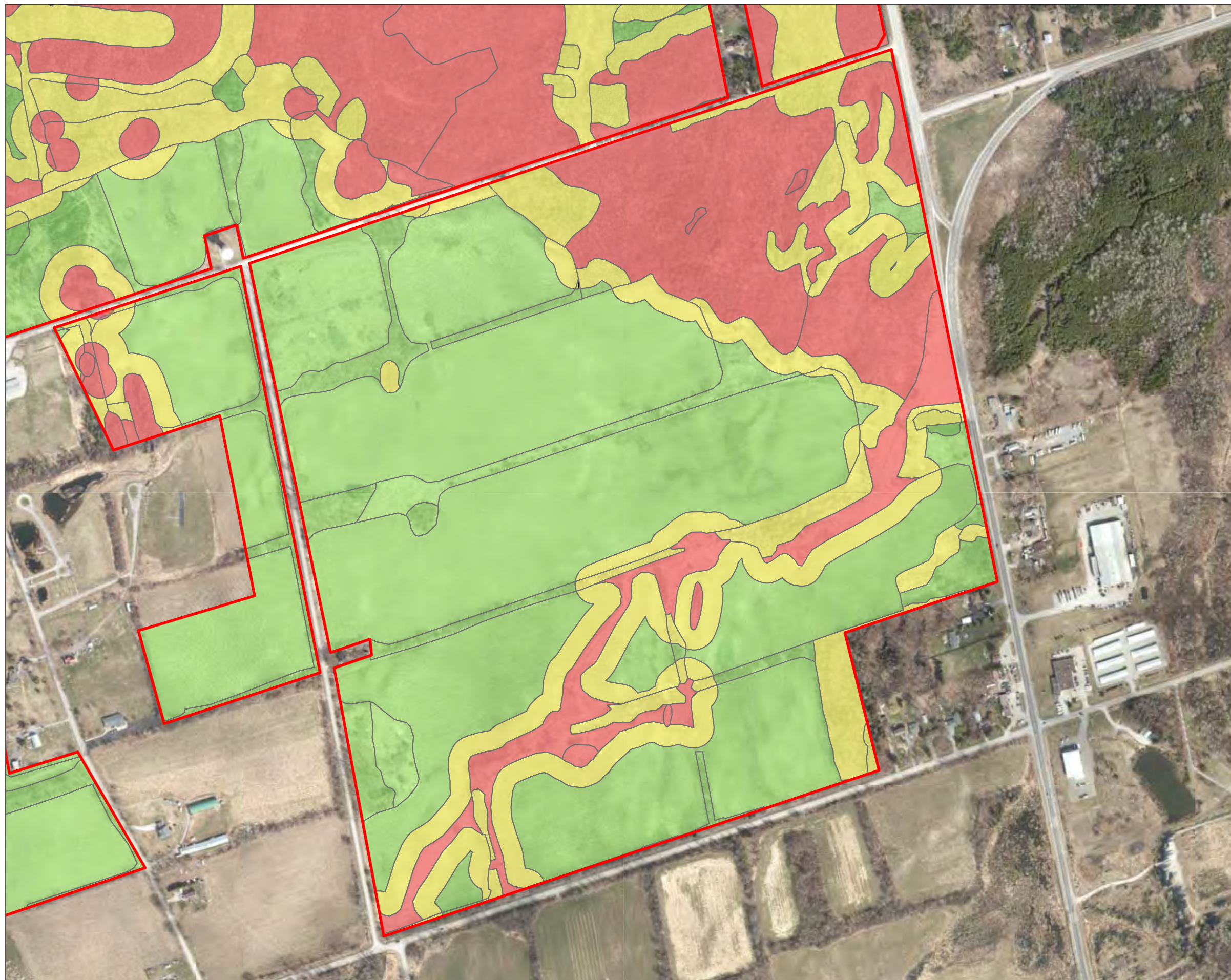
 Subject Property

**Overall Constraint**

 High

 Medium

 Low



Project Number  
22-1313

Date:  
2023-02-06



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**Figure 3c | Lake Simcoe CP**  
Property 3 - Mapped Constraints


**Legend**

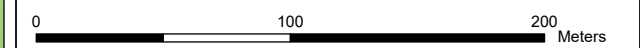
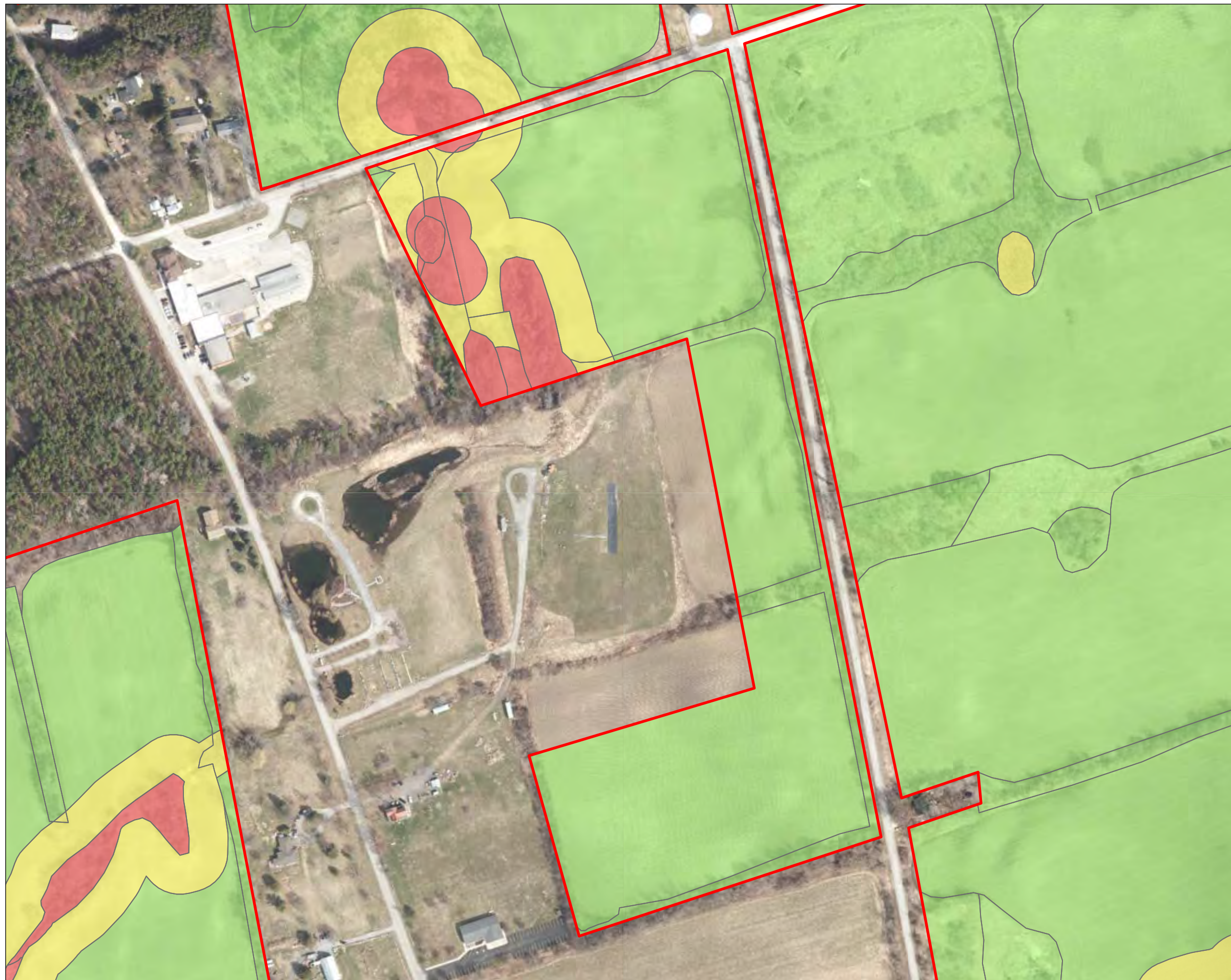
 Subject Property

**Overall Constraint**

 High

 Medium

 Low



Project Number  
22-1313

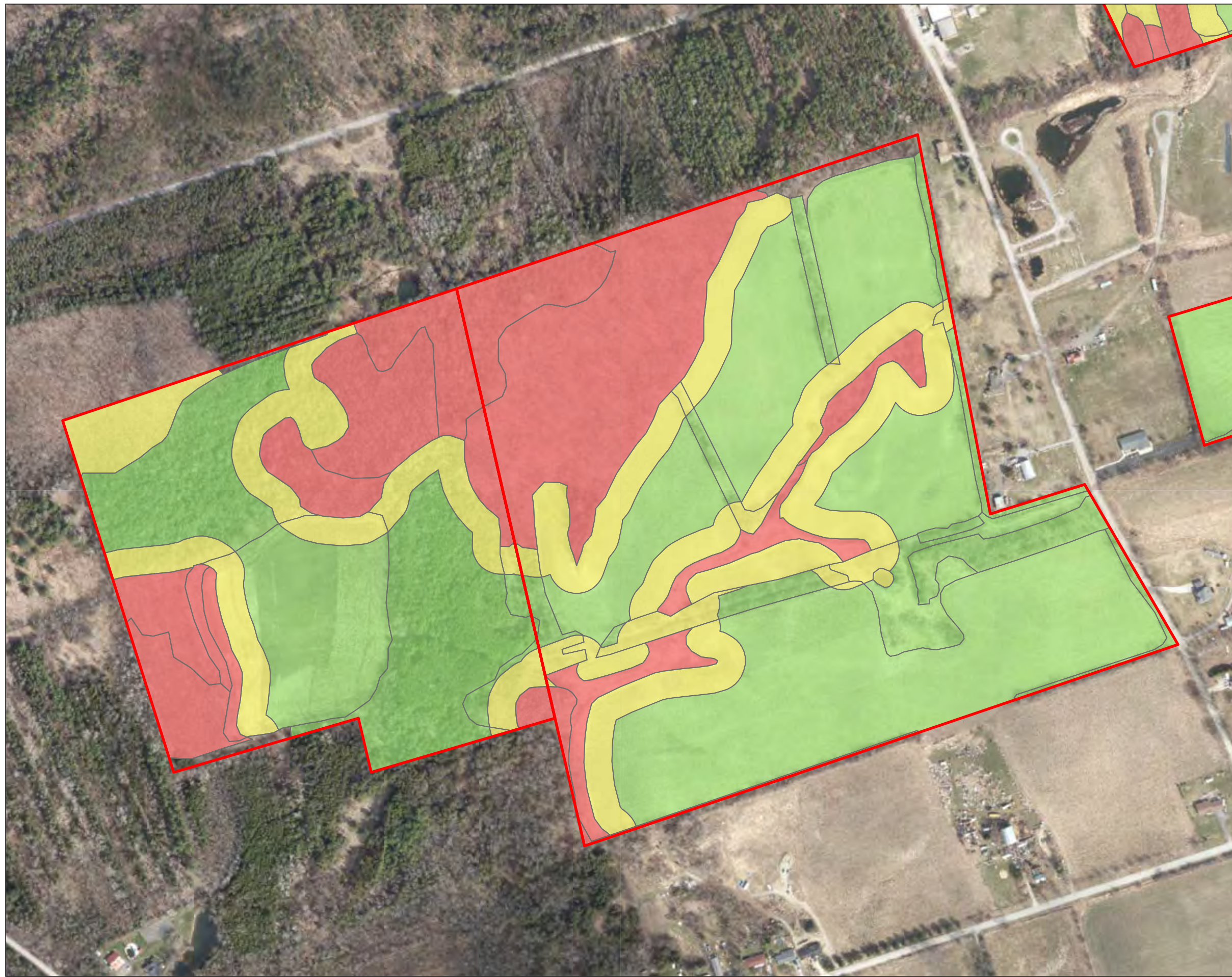
Date:  
2023-02-06



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**Figure 3d | Lake Simcoe CP**  
Property 4 - Mapped Constraints


**Legend**

 Subject Property

**Overall Constraint**

 High

 Medium

 Low



Project Number  
22-1313

Date:  
2023-02-06



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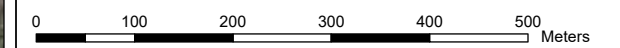




**Figure 4a | Lake Simcoe CP**  
 Property 1 - Mapped Opportunities

**Legend**

- Subject Property
- Sensitive Areas for Protection and/or Enhancement
- Priority Restoration Area
- Possible Restoration Area
- Areas Suitable for Passive Recreation
- Programmatic Opportunities and Uses
- Areas Suitable for Public Access / Parking
- Agriculture



Project Number 22-1313	Date: 2023-02-07	N ▲
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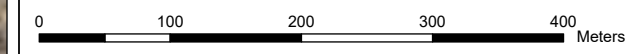
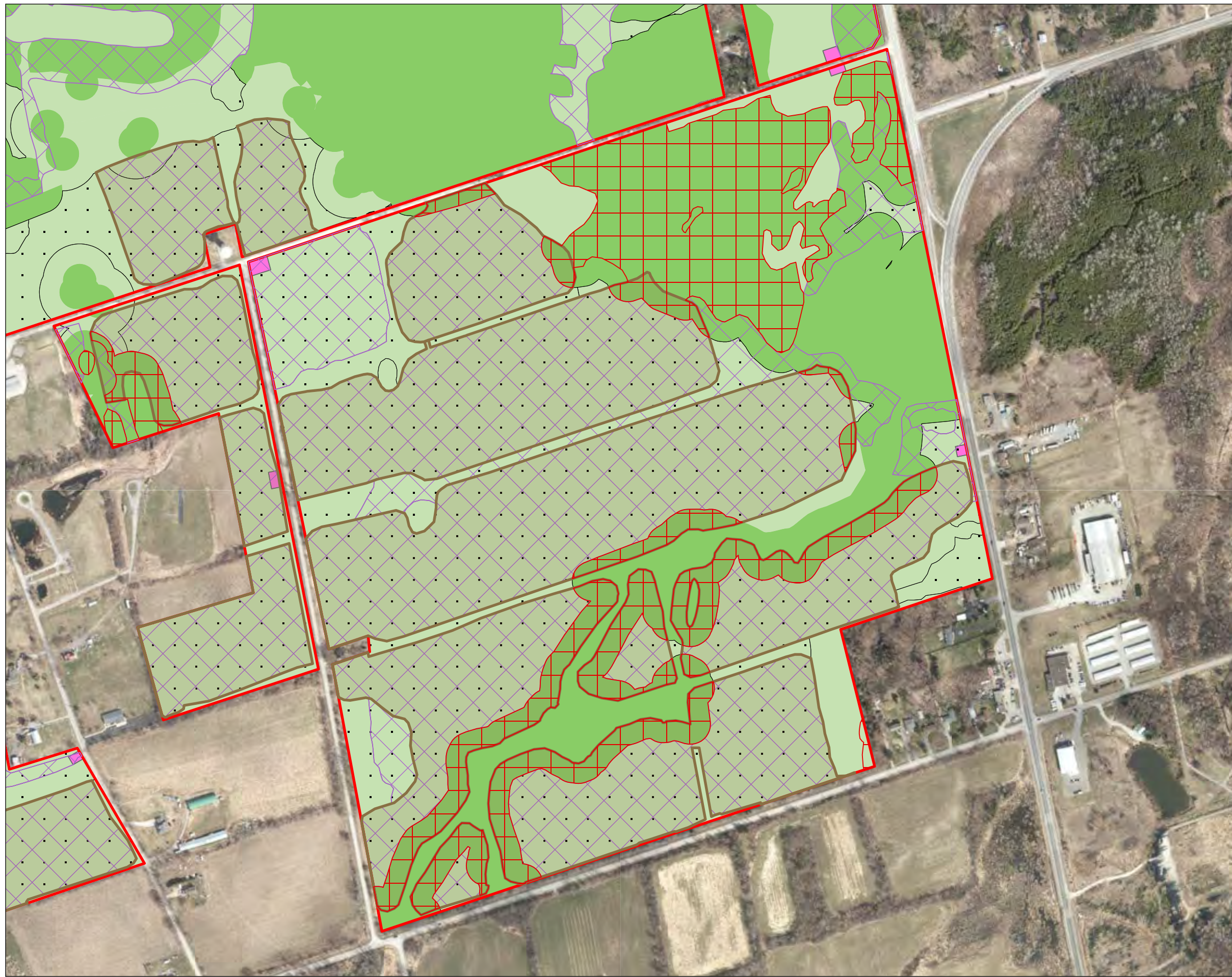




**Figure 4b | Lake Simcoe CP**  
**Property 2 - Mapped Opportunities**

**Legend**

- Subject Property
- Sensitive Areas for Protection and/or Enhancement
- Priority Restoration Area
- Possible Restoration Area
- Areas Suitable for Passive Recreation
- Programmatic Opportunities and Uses
- Areas Suitable for Public Access / Parking
- Agriculture



Project Number 22-1313	Date: 2023-02-07	N ▲
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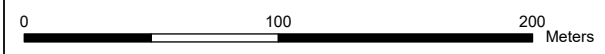
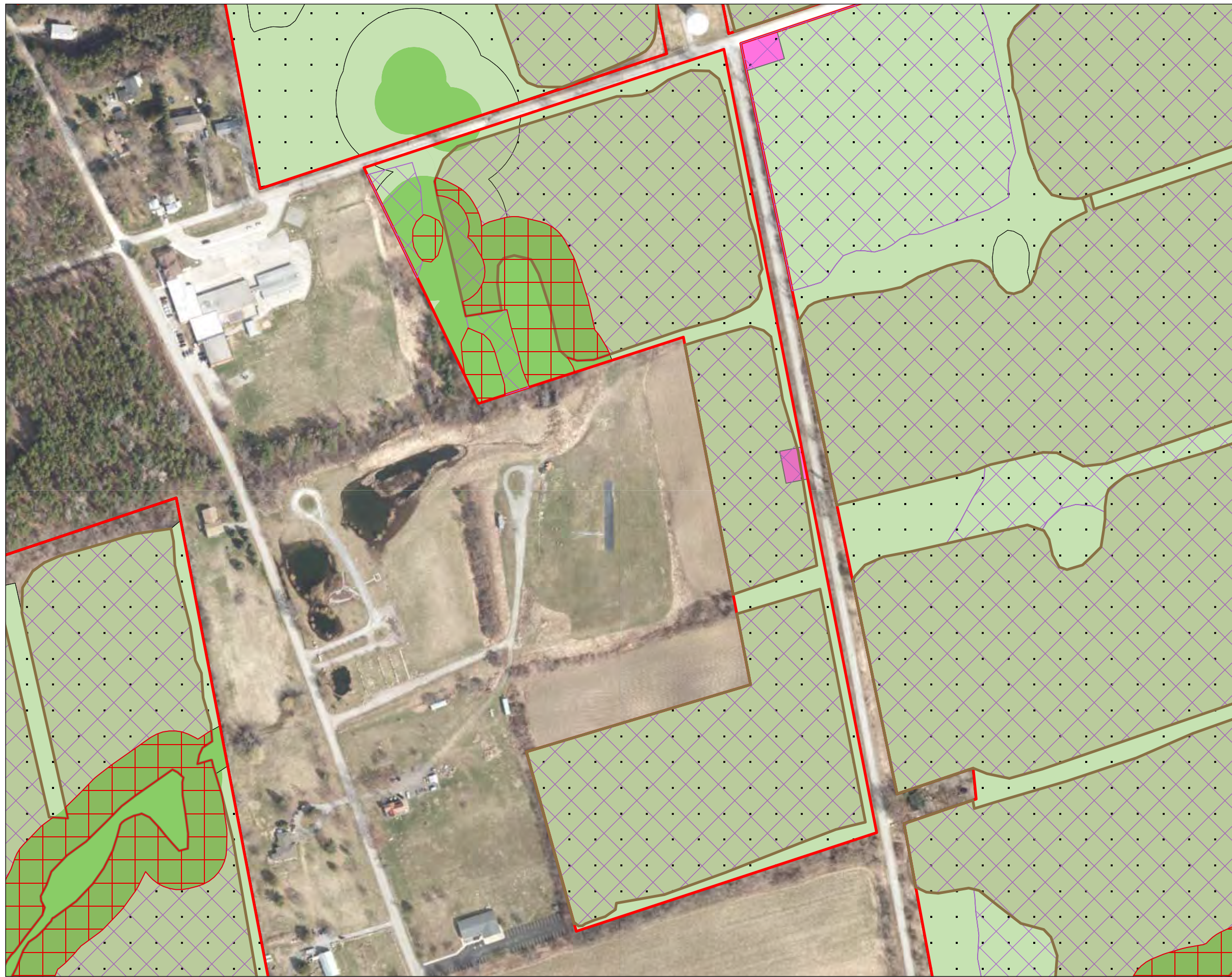




**Figure 4c | Lake Simcoe CP**  
**Property 3 - Mapped Opportunities**

**Legend**

- Subject Property
- Sensitive Areas for Protection and/or Enhancement
- Priority Restoration Area
- Possible Restoration Area
- Areas Suitable for Passive Recreation
- Programmatic Opportunities and Uses
- Areas Suitable for Public Access / Parking
- Agriculture



Project Number 22-1313	Date: 2023-02-07	N ▲
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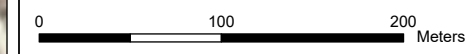
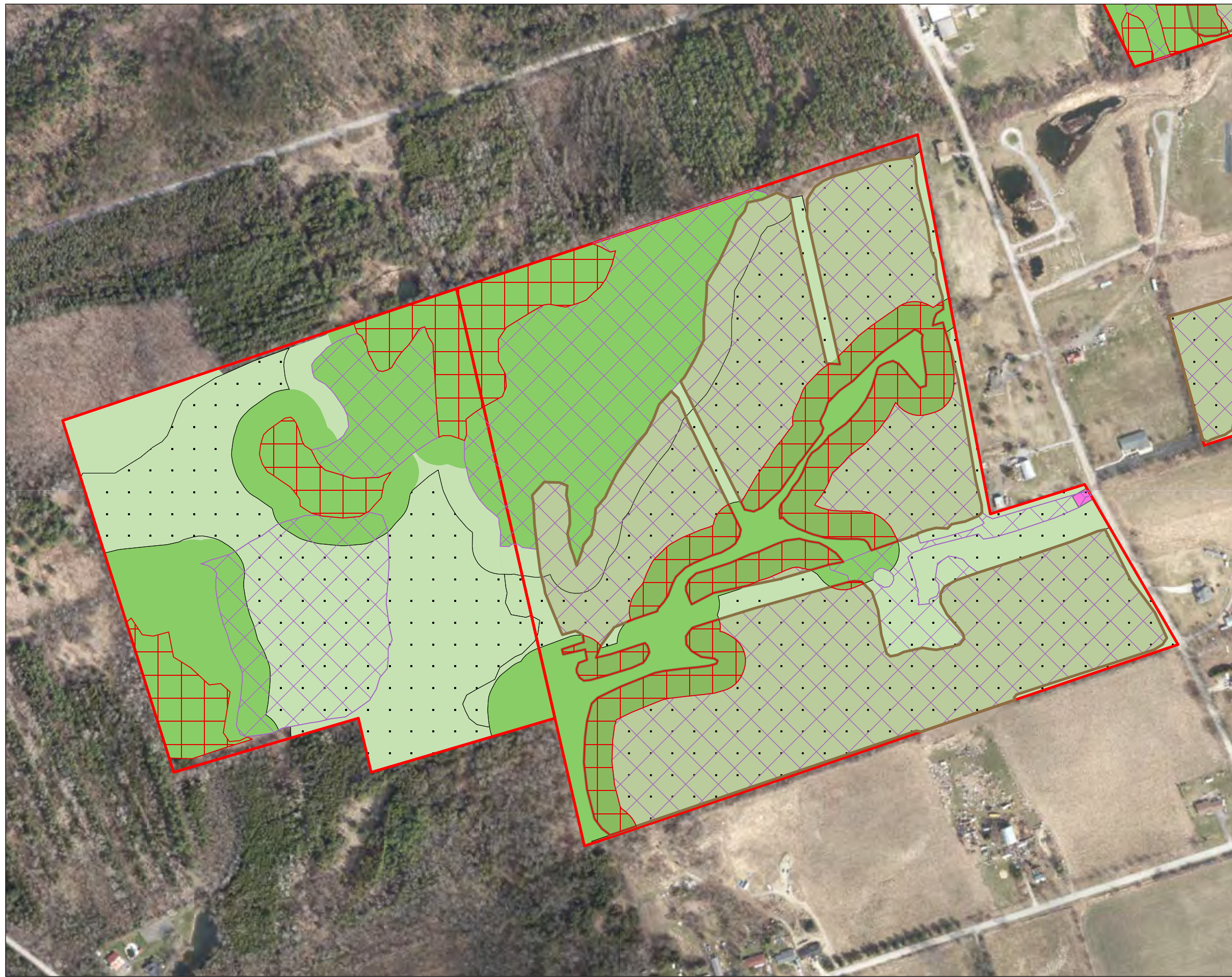




**Figure 4d | Lake Simcoe CP**  
Property 4 - Mapped Opportunities

**Legend**

- Subject Property
- Sensitive Areas for Protection and/or Enhancement
- Priority Restoration Area
- Possible Restoration Area
- Areas Suitable for Passive Recreation
- Programmatic Opportunities and Uses
- Areas Suitable for Public Access / Parking
- Agriculture



Project Number 22-1313	Date: 2023-02-07	N ▲
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## Staff Report

To: Board of Directors

From: Ashlea Brown, Director, Development Services and Dave Ruggle, Manager, Planning

Date: July 28, 2023

### Subject

Monitoring Report – Planning and Development Applications January 1 to June 30, 2023

### Recommendation

**That** Staff Report No. 41-23-BOD regarding monitoring of development services applications for the period January 1 through June 30, 2023 be received for information.

### Purpose of this Staff Report

The purpose of this Staff Report No. 41-23-BOD is to provide the Board of Directors with an update of the applications, under the *Planning Act* (Planning Approvals), *Conservation Authorities Act* (Permits), and Environmental Assessments submitted to the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority for the period January 1 through June 30, 2023.

### Background

A summary of the total number of applications for this period is shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3 attached. These tables summarize the number of applications received by application type and by municipality as well as the number of pre-consultations, non-application technical reviews, and general inquiries received by Conservation Authority staff. The type of applications reviewed and processed are statutory requirements under the following legislation:

#### Planning Act (Table 1)

- Official Plans, Secondary Plans, Community Plans and Amendments
- Comprehensive Zoning By-Laws and Amendments
- Consent and Minor Variance Applications
- Plans of Subdivision and Condominium
- Site Plan Applications

#### Conservation Authorities Act (Tables 2 and 3)

- Section 28 Permit Applications
- Public Information Requests (PIR)
- Site Clearances
- Solicitor Inquiries

## Other Legislation (Table 2)

- Undertakings in accordance with the Environmental Assessment Act.

To provide a comparison, Tables 4, 5, and 6 summarize the total number of development applications and inquiries for the period January 1 through June 30, 2022. Tables 1 and 4 also provide the number of non-application technical reviews, peer reviews and pre-consultation reviews which were carried out during this period in 2022 and 2023 for applications under the Planning Act. Tables 3 and 6 provide the number of general inquiries associated with permits under the Conservation Authorities Act received in 2022 and 2023 respectively.

### **Planning Act and Environmental Compliance Approval Applications**

As anticipated with the legislative changes resulting from Bill 23, staff have seen a decrease of 24% of Planning Act application compared to the same period in 2022. While the number of applications has decreased, we note that 2022 saw an unusually high number of planning applications compared to previous years.

Some of the most significant changes are with site plan applications which decreased by 46% and subdivision and site plan applications when combined with an Official Plan Amendment/Zoning By-Law Amendment where no applications have been submitted in 2023. This is a result of changes in municipal processes where combined development processes are no longer being accepted.

The number of pre-consultation applications also reduced by 22% in this period, and the number of site visits decreased by 68%.

In general, these decreases are consistent with the anticipated changes resulting from Bill 23 and Bill 109. It appears that the uncertainty related to the planning process due to legislative changes, the removal of site plan approval requirements for proposals with 10 or fewer residential units along with many municipalities removing combined development processes (i.e. combined Official Plan Amendment/Zoning By-Law Amendment/Site Plan) has resulted in a reduction in planning applications, in particular, site plans. As Conservation Authority's review of natural heritage for development applications have been significantly reduced, this is reflected in the reduction of site visits performed.

### **Conservation Authorities Act (Permits)**

The total number of applications received under the Conservation Authorities Act include, permit applications, lawyers' letters, site clearances and Environmental Assessments. The total numbers of applications received for this period were relatively the same as 2022.

Comparatively, we have received 621 applications so far in 2023 vs 615 for the same period in 2022, showing an increase of 1%. Permit applications numbers decreased slightly (5%) however there was a 167% increase in site clearances for 2023.

Tables 3 and 6 summarize the general inquiries regarding the Regulation and/or permitting for the period of January 1 to June 30, 2023, and the corresponding period in 2022. Regulations staff responded to 1004 inquiries, a 40% decrease in general inquiries.

## **Issues**

The statistics presented in the attached tables do not provide any indication of the complexity of the applications. It has been reported in the past that many of the new development applications are being proposed on lands that have previously been overlooked due to the constraints that are associated with them. We continue to highlight this as it has been identified as an increasing challenge every year. Additionally, the increasing pressures of shorter review and approval timelines, coupled with the legislative changes, have added layers of intricacy to many of the applications that we are reviewing.

## **Relevance to Conservation Authority Policy**

Client service and satisfaction was identified as an important guiding principle in the Conservation Authority's Strategic Plan 2016-2020 and continues to be going forward through our new Strategic Plan 2022-2024 "Transformation". Senior Conservation Authority staff have continued to work with Conservation Ontario, as well as our industry partners, to identify opportunities to further streamline the plan and permit review processes to facilitate more timely approvals. It is important to monitor the number and -complexity of applications to ensure we are capable of meeting customer service targets.

## **Impact on Conservation Authority Finances**

As Plan Review and Permit Review are carried out on a fee for service principle, the decrease in applications affect the budget. Continued monitoring of application numbers is important to understand staffing requirements of the departments and to assess revenue generation against the approved budget. As expected, the legislative changes resulting from Bill 23 and Bill 109 have resulted in less revenue. The loss of revenue has been dealt with through staff gapping. Staff will continue to monitor the revenue and determine the appropriate staffing requirements to ensure service delivery standards are achieved. Further financial details are available in Staff Report No. 39-23-BOD (July 2023 agenda).

## **Summary and Recommendations**

It is therefore recommended that Staff Report No. 41-23-BOD regarding monitoring of planning and development applications for the period January 1 through June 30, 2023 be received for information.



## Pre-Submission Review

This Staff Report has been reviewed by the General Manager, Development, Engineering and Restoration and the Chief Administrative Officer.

Signed by:

Signed by:

Glenn MacMillan  
General Manager, Development,  
Engineering and Restoration

Rob Baldwin  
Chief Administrative Officer

### Attachments:

Tables 1, 2, and 3 – Summary of Development Services Program Statistics – January 1 – June 30, 2023

Tables 4, 5, and 6 – Summary of Development Services Program Statistics – January 1 – June 30, 2022

**Table #1**
**Summary of Planning Program Statistics January 1- June 30, 2023 - Review of Applications under the Planning Act**

Application Type	City of Kawartha Lakes	City of Orillia	City of Barrie	County of Simcoe					Region of Durham				Region of York						Region of Peel (incl Caledon)	Township of Essa	Total Number of Applications by Type	
				Bradford West Gwillimbury	Innisfil	New Tecumseth	Oro-Medonte	Ramara	Brock	Scugog	Uxbridge	Region of Durham	Aurora	East Gwillimbury	Georgina	King	Newmarket	Whitchurch-Stouffville				Region of York
Official Plans, Official Plan Amendments/Secondary Plan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	2	0	0	0	11
Official Plan Amendment/Zoning Bylaw	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	11
Official Plan Amendment/Zoning Bylaw/Site Plan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Official Plan Amendment/Zoning Bylaw/Subdivision	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Site Visits	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	7
Zoning By-laws, Min.	0	0	3	1	0	0	3	2	1	0	3	0	0	0	2	5	0	1	0	0	0	21
Zoning By-laws, Major	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Plans of Subdivision, Plans of Condominium	0	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
Subdivision Request for Extension/Greater than 3 Submis./Redline	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Draft Plan of Subdivision Request for Extension of Approval	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Site Plans	0	2	12	4	6	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	6	6	4	3	5	4	0	0	0	55
Consents/MV Minor	0	0	6	6	6	0	13	5	4	0	12	0	5	4	22	0	1	16	0	0	0	100
Consents/MV Major	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	14
Peer Review	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Tech Review/ Special Studies	0	0	3	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	13
Preconsultation	1	0	16	11	17	0	5	3	4	1	4	0	13	20	27	3	15	7	0	0	0	147
<b>Total Number of Applications by Municipality</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>413</b>

**Table 2**

Summary of Regulations Program Statistics January 1- June 30, 2023 - Review of Applications under the Conservation Authorities Act and Environmental Assessment Act																						
Application Type	City of Kawartha Lakes	City of Orillia	City of Barrie	County of Simcoe					Region of Durham					Region of York						Region of Peel (Incl Caledon)	Total Number of Applications by Type	
				Bradford West Gwillimbury	Innisfil	New Tecumseth	Oro-Medonte	Ramara	Brock	Scugog	Uxbridge	Region of Durham	Aurora	East Gwillimbury	Georgina	King	Newmarket	Whitchurch-Stouffville	Region of York			
Section 28 Applications	4	0	35	21	59	0	28	51	19	2	31	0	20	42	96	24	18	15	0	0	0	465
Legal Inquiries	1	0	7	6	10	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	4	7	11	4	0	1	0	0	0	55
Site Clearances	1	0	6	4	20	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	5	11	12	11	4	9	0	0	0	88
Environmental Assessment Undertakings	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	2	2	0	1	0	0	13
<b>Total Number of Applications by Municipality</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>621</b>

**Table 3**

Summary of Regulations Program Customer Service Statistics January 1 - June 30, 2023																						
Application Type	City of Kawartha Lakes	Outside of Watershed & General	City of Barrie	County of Simcoe					Region of Durham					Region of York						Region of Peel (Incl Caledon)	General	Total Number of Applications by Type
				Bradford West Gwillimbury	Innisfil	New Tecumseth	Oro-Medonte	Ramara	Brock	Scugog	Uxbridge	Region of Durham	Aurora	East Gwillimbury	Georgina	King	Newmarket	Whitchurch-Stouffville	Region of York			
Calls / Emails	11	10	53	38	108	5	31	70	54	1	64	0	31	108	274	47	25	32	0	0	17	979
Counter Visits	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	6	1	0	1	0	1	1	8	1	2	0	0	0	0	25
<b>Total Number of Applications by Municipality</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1004</b>

**Table 4**

Summary of Planning Program Statistics January 1 - June 30, 2022- Review of Applications under the Planning Act																						
Application Type	County of Simcoe								Region of Durham				Region of York						Region of Peel (Incl Caledon)	Township of Essa	Total Number of Applications by Type	
	City of Kawartha Lakes	City of Orillia	City of Barrie	Bradford West Gwillimbury	Innisfil	New Tecumseth	Oro-Medonte	Ramara	Brock	Scugog	Uxbridge	Region of Durham	Aurora	East Gwillimbury	Georgina	King	Newmarket	Whitchurch-Stouffville				Region of York
Official Plans, Official Plan Amendments	0	0	3	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	15
Site Visits	0	0	3	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	3	1	4	1	1	4	0	0	0	22
Official Plans Amendments & Zoning	0	0	4	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	14
Official Plan Amendments, Zoning and Site Plan	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Official Plan, Zoning and Subdivision	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Zoning By-laws, Zoning By-law Amendments	0	0	14	5	2	0	1	2	1	0	4	0	0	5	6	1	2	2	0	0	0	45
Plans of Subdivision, Plans of Condominium	0	0	8	2	1	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	5	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	28
Site Plans	0	0	15	8	10	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	17	13	3	14	10	8	0	0	0	102
Consents/Minor Variance	0	0	7	5	2	0	23	7	13	0	4	0	7	8	9	1	3	4	0	0	0	93
Consents	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	9
Minor Variances	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	10
Peer Review	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tech Review/ Special Studies	0	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	11
Secondary Plan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Preconsultation	3	0	29	19	20	1	10	2	8	1	5	0	14	8	19	12	14	21	1	1	0	188
<b>Total Number of Applications by Municipality</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>545</b>

**Table 5**

Summary of Regulations Program Statistics January 1 - June 30, 2022 - Review of Applications under the Conservation Authorities Act and Environmental Assessment Act																						
Application Type	County of Simcoe								Region of Durham				Region of York							Region of Peel (Incl Caledon)	Total Number of Applications by Type	
	City of Kawartha Lakes	City of Orillia	City of Barrie	Bradford West Gwillimbury	Innisfil	New Tecumseth	Oro-Medonte	Ramara	Brock	Scugog	Uxbridge	Region of Durham	Aurora	East Gwillimbury	Georgina	King	Newmarket	Whitchurch-Stouffville	Region of York			
Section 28 Applications	7	0	36	25	84	1	52	51	18	0	20	0	19	24	103	28	14	6	0	0	0	<b>488</b>
Legal Inquiries	0	0	12	5	5	0	3	2	4	0	7	0	11	7	14	5	5	5	0	0	0	<b>85</b>
Site Clearances	0	0	5	1	8	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	9	1	0	2	0	0	0	<b>33</b>
Environmental Assessment Undertakings	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	<b>9</b>
<b>Total Number of Applications by Municipality</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>615</b>

**Table 6**

Summary of Regulations Program Customer Service Statistics January 1 - June 30, 2022																						
Application Type	County of Simcoe								Region of Durham				Region of York							Region of Peel (Incl Caledon)	Total Number of Applications by Type	
	City of Kawartha Lakes	Outside of Watershed & General	City of Barrie	Bradford West Gwillimbury	Innisfil	New Tecumseth	Oro-Medonte	Ramara	Brock	Scugog	Uxbridge	Region of Durham	Aurora	East Gwillimbury	Georgina	King	Newmarket	Whitchurch-Stouffville	Region of York			
Calls / Emails	23	49	60	61	245	3	85	91	95	9	108	0	37	161	443	77	57	44	0	2	0	<b>1650</b>
Counter Visits	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	0	1	1	5	3	0	1	0	0	0	<b>17</b>
<b>Total Number of Applications by Municipality</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1667</b>

## Staff Report

To: Board of Directors

From: Ashlea Brown, Director Development Services

Date: July 28, 2023

### Subject

Update to Retroactive Permit Fees

### Recommendation

**That** Staff Report No. 42-23-BOD regarding implementing incentives for obtaining retroactive permits be received: and

**Further That** the approach for collecting retroactive permit fees be approved for implementation effective immediately.

### Purpose of this Staff Report:

The purpose of this Staff Report No. 42-23-BOD is to obtain the support of the Board of Directors to implement an incentivized approach to the retroactive permit fees, encouraging early voluntary compliance.

### Background:

The regulatory landscape of conservation authorities has continued to evolve creating additional challenges and transforming how compliance and enforcement is dealt with. Over the past two years, the Enforcement program has undertaken a comprehensive review of processes and program effectiveness. Through this review, multiple process changes were identified to help achieve compliance. Staff have been working to implement new processes and continue to identify additional improvements to help achieve our objectives including obtaining resolution on files, attainable costs of delivery of service, effective file management and efficient time management. One of the identified improvements was to review the enforcement fee schedule and consider creating a fee schedule that encourages an increase in voluntary compliance by providing an incentive to landowners by starting with the base fee and incrementally increasing the costs of the retroactive approval for non-response.

When completing a review of outstanding files, it appeared that in many of the low-risk scenarios, non-compliance was an error on the landowner's part. In many of these cases, the landowner was willing to work with the Conservation Authority to obtain retroactive approval. However, a decrease in voluntary compliance associated with the immediate double permit fee was observed.

In 2021, the Conservation Authority undertook a comprehensive review of the Development Services Fees with the intent of a transparent and defensible fee schedule operating on a full cost recovery basis. While the Enforcement program was included as part of this review, it was recognized that cost recovery is not an attainable goal for the program. Enforcement is a mandated requirement of the Conservation Authority as outlined in the *Conservation Authorities Act* (Act) and Ontario Regulation 686/21 and is therefore included as part of the levy. While the program does receive levy, the amount does not cover all the costs, specifically increased costs of prosecution.

### Issues:

Currently the fee schedule dictates a retroactive fee of double the base fee. This double retroactive fee is utilized by most conservation authorities as a deterrent to illegal development. However, in most scenarios, it appears this cost is prohibitive and acting as a deterrent to applicants who may be willing to work with the Conservation Authority to achieve compliance. Considering the Conservation Authority's objective, a switch to promote early voluntary compliance is recommended. This approach is to provide the incentive of a lower retroactive fee of an additional 25% of the base fee for a response time of within 45 days from the date of the violation notice. After 45 days for a lack of response that requires additional staff time to follow up, the fee would be increased by another 25% of the base fee.

For example, if the works completed fall into an intermediate permit category, rather than requesting the retroactive double base fee of \$3,468, the fee would start at the base fee of \$1,734, and notice would be sent outlining a response timeline and the subsequent increase in the fee if a permit application is not made. Appendix A shows the current versus proposed fees. This approach is consistent with the intent of cost recovery and a decrease in staff time with the file being more quickly resolved.

On December 28, 2022, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry issued a Minister's Direction pursuant to subsection 21.3 (1) of the Act. This Direction required that conservation authorities not change the amount of any fee it charges or the way it determines the fee for any program or service that may be provided by the Conservation Authority. This relates to reviewing and commenting on planning and development related proposals or land use planning policies, or for permits issued by conservation authorities. The Direction is effective from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023 (Appendix B). in accordance with the Direction from the Minister, fees are not changing nor is the way in which fees are determined.

In accordance with the [Watson and Associates Plan Review and Permitting Fees Review](#), the fee implementation policies provide the Conservation Authority with the ability to modify fees should a review require a substantially greater or lower level of review and/or assessment. It was recognized through the fee review that situations in which this policy would be applicable for the Conservation Authority included retroactive applications.

Currently an average of 58% enforcement applications remains outstanding each year. Of the 42% of retroactive permit applications received, an average of 19% of permit fees are not paid. In total only 34% of the violation notices sent received a retroactive application and fee. The intent is to increase this number of retroactive approvals to 75% within the next five years, and incentivising the fees will help achieve this goal.

### **Relevance to Authority Policy:**

The enforcement of the Act is a Mandatory Program and Service under Ontario Regulation 686/21.

The Act provides the legislative basis to allow conservation authorities in Ontario to charge fees for services approved by the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Section 21 (2) of the Act allows for the collection of fees for the issuance of permits. The Conservation Authority's adopted Fee Policy approved by the Board of Directors ensures that the Development Services program operates on the user pay principal.

While the enforcement program is not considered cost recovery, the collection of fees associated with retroactive approvals allow for improved operating capacity.

### **Impact on Authority Finances:**

It is anticipated that the proposed changes will have a positive impact on finances as a result of an increase in retroactive permit application submissions.

### **Summary and Recommendations:**

It is therefore **Recommended that** Staff Report No. 42-23-BOD regarding implementing incentives for obtaining retroactive permits be received: and **Further That** the approach for collecting retroactive permit fees be approved for implementation effective immediately.

### **Pre-Submission Review:**

This Staff Report has been reviewed by the General Manager, Development, Engineering & Restoration and the Chief Administrative Officer.

Signed by:

Signed by:

Glenn MacMillan  
General Manager Development,  
Engineering & Restoration

Rob Baldwin  
Chief Administrative Officer

### **Attachments:**

Attachment A: Proposed Fees  
Attachment B: Minister's Direction on Fees



## Appendix A:

### Current Retroactive Application Fees

Category	Fee	Retroactive Fee
Major Permit Application  Development where there is a high risk to people or property, natural hazards, or natural features. One or more studies required. For example, an environmental impact study, hydraulic analysis, stormwater management report or geotechnical report.	\$5,183	\$10,366
Intermediate Permit Application  Development where there is moderate risk to people or property, natural hazards, or natural features. Detailed plans, or report is required.	\$1,734	\$3,468
Minor Permit Application  Development where there is low risk of impact on natural hazards or natural features. No technical reports are required. Small scale, and/or consistent with policy and guidelines.	\$765	\$1,530
Routine Permit Application  Limited review, minor in nature relative to cost, location, or impact.	\$612	\$1,224

## Proposed Retroactive Application Fees

Category	Early Response Fee	Late Response Fee	Maximum Fee
<p>Major Permit Application</p> <p>Development where there is a high risk to people or property, natural hazards, or natural features. One or more studies required. For example, an environmental impact study, hydraulic analysis, stormwater management report or geotechnical report.</p>	\$5,183	25% increase per correspondence (\$1,295.75)	\$10,366
<p>Intermediate Permit Application</p> <p>Development where there is moderate risk to people or property, natural hazards, or natural features. Detailed plans, or report is required.</p>	\$1,734	25% increase per correspondence (\$433.50)	\$3,468
<p>Minor Permit Application</p> <p>Development where there is low risk of impact on natural hazards or natural features. No technical reports are required. Small scale, and/or consistent with policy and guidelines.</p>	\$765	25% increase per correspondence (\$191.25)	\$1,530
<p>Routine Permit Application</p> <p>Limited review, minor in nature relative to cost, location, or impact.</p>	\$612	25% increase per correspondence (\$153)	\$1,224

**Ministry of Natural  
Resources and Forestry**

Office of the Minister

99 Wellesley Street West  
Room 6630, Whitney Block  
Toronto, ON M7A 1W3  
Tel.: 416-314-2301

**Ministère des Richesses  
naturelles et des Forêts**

Bureau du ministre

99, rue Wellesley Ouest  
Bureau 6630, Édifice Whitney  
Toronto ON M7A 1W3  
Tél.: 416 314-2301



December 28, 2022

**TO:** Conservation authorities as listed in the Attachment A “Minister’s Direction to Not Change Fees”

**SUBJECT:** Minister’s direction for conservation authorities regarding fee changes associated with planning, development and permitting fees

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In support of Ontario’s Housing Supply Action Plan: 2022-2023, the province made a series of legislative changes through the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* (Bill 23) to help achieve the goal of building 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. These changes accelerate housing development approvals while continuing to protect Ontario families, communities, and critical resources. A number of these changes affect conservation authorities and are intended to support faster and less costly approvals, streamline conservation authority processes, and help make land suitable for housing available for development.

To this end, pursuant to subsection 21.3 (1) of the *Conservation Authorities Act*, which is in effect January 1, 2023, I am issuing a Minister’s Direction (“Direction”), attached to this letter as Attachment “A”. Subsection 21.3 (1) provides that the “Minister may give a written direction to an authority directing it not to change the amount of any fee it charges under subsection 21.2 (10), in respect of a program or service set out in the list referred to in subsection 21.2 (2), for the period specified in the direction.”

The purpose of this Direction, which is effective from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023, is to require a conservation authority not to change the amount of the fee it charges or the manner in which it determines the fee for any program or service that may be provided by the conservation authority. This relates to reviewing and commenting on planning and development related proposals or land use planning policies, or for permits issued by conservation authorities. For greater certainty, the “Prescribed Acts – subsections 21.1.1 (1.1) and 21.1.2 (1.1) of the Act” regulation (O. Reg. 596/22), effective January 1, 2023, prohibits a CA from providing a municipal (Category 2) or other (Category 3) program or service related to reviewing and commenting on a proposal, application, or other matter

made under prescribed Acts. This regulation therefore precludes the charging of a fee by a conservation authority for these specific programs or services provided under subsections 21.1.1 (1) or 21.1.2 (1.1) of the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

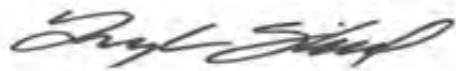
The conservation authorities listed in Appendix A of the Direction are encouraged to make the Direction publicly available on the Governance section of their websites.

Pursuant to subsection 21.2 (3) of the Act, I am also re-distributing the Minister's list of classes and programs and services in respect of which conservation authorities may charge a fee along with this Direction, with editorial changes to reflect the recent legislative and regulatory changes.

If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Keyes, Director, Resources Planning and Development Policy Branch, at [Jennifer.Keyes@ontario.ca](mailto:Jennifer.Keyes@ontario.ca) or 705-761-4831.

If it is in the public interest to do so, I will provide further direction or clarification at a later date related to the matters set out in this Direction.

Sincerely,



The Honourable Graydon Smith  
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry

c: The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
The Honourable David Piccini, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

**Minister’s Direction Issued Pursuant to Section 21.3 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*  
(this “Direction”)**

**WHEREAS** section 21.2 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*, in effect on January 1, 2023, permits a Conservation Authority to charge a fee for a program or service if the program or service is included in the Minister’s list of classes of programs and services in respect of which a Conservation Authority may charge a fee;

**AND WHEREAS** subsections 21.2 (6) and 21.2 (7) of the *Conservation Authorities Act* provide that a Conservation Authority shall adopt a written fee policy that includes a fee schedule listing the programs and services that it provides in respect of which it charges a fee, and the amount of the fee charged for each program or service or the manner in which the fee is determined (a “**Fee Schedule**”);

**AND WHEREAS** subsection 21.2 (10) of the *Conservation Authorities Act* provides that a Conservation Authority may make a change to the list of fees set out in the fee schedule or to the amount of any fee or the manner in which a fee is determined, provided the authority shall give notice of the proposed change to the public in a manner it considers appropriate;

**AND WHEREAS** section 21.3 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* provides the Minister with the authority to give a written direction to an authority directing it not to change the amount of any fee it charges under subsection 21.2 (10), in respect of a program or service set out in the list referred to in subsection 21.2 (2), for the period specified in the direction;

**NOW THEREFORE** pursuant to the authority of the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry under section 21.3, the Conservation Authorities set out under Appendix “A” of this Direction (the “**Conservation Authorities**” or each, a “**Conservation Authority**”) are hereby directed as follows:

**Fee Changes Prohibition**

1. Commencing on the Effective Date and for the duration of the Term of this Direction, a Conservation Authority is prohibited from making a change under subsection 21.2 (10) of the *Conservation Authorities Act* to the amount of any fee or the manner in which a fee is determined in its fee schedule if such a change would have the effect of changing the fee amount for the programs and services described in paragraphs 2 and 3 of this Direction.

**Program and Service Fees Impacted**

2. This Direction applies to any fee set out in the Fee Schedule of a Conservation Authority, including without limitation fees for any mandatory program or service (Category 1), municipal program or service (Category 2), or Conservation Authority recommended program or service (Category 3) related to reviewing and commenting on

planning and development related proposals, applications, or land use planning policies, or for Conservation Authority permitting.

3. For greater certainty, this Direction applies to any fees in respect of the following programs or services provided under the Mandatory Programs and Services regulation ([O. Reg. 686/21](#)):
  - a. Section 6: programs and services related to reviewing applications and proposals under the *Aggregate Resources Act*, *Drainage Act*, *Environmental Assessment Act*, and the *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act*, for the purpose of commenting on the risks related to natural hazards arising from the proposal,
  - b. Section 7: programs and services related to ensuring that decisions under the *Planning Act* are consistent with the natural hazards policies in the policy statements issued under section 3 of the *Planning Act* and are in conformance with any natural hazard policies included in a provincial plan as defined in section 1 of that Act,
  - c. Section 8: programs and services related to Conservation Authority duties, functions, and responsibilities to administer and enforce section 28 and its regulations, section 28.0.1, and section 30.1 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*,
  - d. Paragraph 4 of subsection 13 (3): programs and services related to reviewing and commenting on any proposal made under another Act for the purpose of determining whether the proposal relates to a significant drinking water threat or may impact any drinking water sources protected by a source protection plan, and
  - e. Subparagraph 4 iv of section 15: programs and services related to reviewing and commenting on proposals made under other Acts for the purpose of determining the proposal's impact on the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan and the Lake Simcoe watershed.

### **Application**

4. This Direction, applies to all Conservation Authorities in Ontario, listed in Appendix "A" to this Direction.
5. For greater certainty, this Direction also applies to the Conservation Authorities listed in Appendix "A" to this Direction when such Conservation Authorities are meeting as a source protection authority under the *Clean Water Act, 2006*.

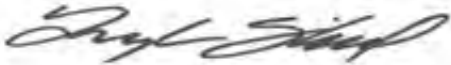
### **Effective Date and Term**

6. This Direction is effective from January 1, 2023 (the "**Effective Date**").
7. The term of this Direction is the period from the Effective Date to December 31, 2023 (the "**Term**").

**Amendments**

8. This Direction may be amended in writing from time to time at the sole discretion of the Minister.

**HIS MAJESTY THE KING IN RIGHT OF ONTARIO  
as represented by the  
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry**



The Honourable Graydon Smith  
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry  
December 28, 2022

**APPENDIX A**

**LIST OF CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES TO WHICH THE DIRECTION APPLIES**

**Ausable Bayfield CA**

R.R. #3  
71108 Morrison Line  
Exeter ON N0M 1S5  
Brian Horner  
bhorner@abca.on.ca

**Cataraqui Region CA**

Box 160  
1641 Perth Road  
Glenburnie ON K0H 1S0  
Katrina Furlanetto  
kfurlanetto@crca.ca

**Catfish Creek CA**

R.R. #5  
8079 Springwater Road  
Aylmer ON N5H 2R4  
Dusty Underhill  
generalmanager@catfishcreek.ca

**Central Lake Ontario CA**

100 Whiting Avenue  
Oshawa ON L1H 3T3  
Chris Darling  
cdarling@cloca.com

**Credit Valley CA**

1255 Old Derry Rd  
Mississauga ON L5N 6R4  
Quentin Hanchard  
quentin.hancard@cvc.ca

**Crowe Valley CA**

Box 416  
70 Hughes Lane  
Marmora ON K0K 2M0  
Tim Pidduck  
tim.pidduck@crowevalley.com

**Essex Region CA**

Suite 311  
360 Fairview Ave West  
Essex ON N8M 1Y6



Tim Byrne  
[tbyrne@erca.org](mailto:tbyrne@erca.org)

**Ganaraska Region CA**

Box 328  
2216 County Road 28  
Port Hope ON L1A 3V8  
Linda Laliberte  
[llaliberte@grca.on.ca](mailto:llaliberte@grca.on.ca)

**Grand River CA**

Box 729  
400 Clyde Road  
Cambridge ON N1R 5W6  
Samantha Lawson  
[slawson@grandriver.ca](mailto:slawson@grandriver.ca)

**Grey Sauble CA**

R.R. #4  
237897 Inglis Falls Road  
Owen Sound ON N4K 5N6  
Tim Lanthier  
[t.lanthier@greysauble.on.ca](mailto:t.lanthier@greysauble.on.ca)

**Halton Region CA**

2596 Britannia Road West  
Burlington ON L7P 0G3  
Hassaan Basit  
[hbasit@hrca.on.ca](mailto:hbasit@hrca.on.ca)

**Hamilton Region CA**

P.O. Box 81067  
838 Mineral Springs Road  
Ancaster ON L9G 4X1  
Lisa Burnside  
[lisa.burnside@conservationhamilton.ca](mailto:lisa.burnside@conservationhamilton.ca)

**Kawartha Region CA**

277 Kenrei (Park) Road  
Lindsay ON K9V 4R1  
Mark Majchrowski  
mmajchrowski@kawarthaconservation.com

**Kettle Creek CA**

R.R. #8  
44015 Ferguson Line  
St. Thomas ON N5P 3T3  
Elizabeth VanHooren  
elizabeth@kettlecreekconservation.on.ca

**Lake Simcoe Region CA**

Box 282  
120 Bayview Parkway  
Newmarket ON L3Y 3W3  
Rob Baldwin  
r.baldwin@lsrca.on.ca

**Lakehead Region CA**

Box 10427  
130 Conservation Road  
Thunder Bay ON P7B 6T8  
Tammy Cook  
tammy@lakeheadca.com

**Long Point Region CA**

4 Elm Street  
Tillsonburg ON N4G 0C4  
Judy Maxwell  
jmaxwell@lprca.on.ca

**Lower Thames Valley CA**

100 Thames Street  
Chatham ON N7L 2Y8  
Mark Peacock  
mark.peacock@ltvca.ca

**Lower Trent Region CA**

R.R. #1  
714 Murray Street  
Trenton ON K8V 5P4  
Rhonda Bateman  
rhonda.bateman@ltc.on.ca

**Maitland Valley CA**

Box 127

1093 Marietta Street  
Wroxeter ON N0G 2X0  
Phil Beard  
pbeard@mvca.on.ca

**Mattagami Region CA**

100 Lakeshore Road  
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**Mississippi Valley CA**

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**South Nation River CA**

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## Staff Report

To: Board of Directors

From: Ashlea Brown, Director Development Services

Date: July 28, 2023

### Subject

Georgina Island Fixed Link Project Update

### Recommendation

**That** Staff Report No. 43-23-BOD regarding an update on the status of the Georgina Island Fixed Link project be received for information.

### Purpose of this Staff Report:

The purpose of this Staff Report No. 43-23-BOD is to provide an update regarding the status of the Georgina Island Fixed Link Project.

### Background:

In 2021, the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority was informed of the Fixed Link Project being proposed by Georgina Island First Nation. The project, as described, is intended to provide passage from Georgina Island to the mainland. The project scope included two permanent causeway sections near shore and a bridge structure. The proposal was for a total of 3.3 km, consisting of 1 km of roadway and 2.3 km of 'fixed link' (causeway/bridge combination). The study area provided included two potential properties off Black River Road in Georgina which are owned by Georgina Island First Nations, and one location on Georgina Island for connection points. Additional information on the project is available on the Georgina Island Fixed Link webpage (<https://www.gifixedlink.com/>).

On August 11, 2021, the Conservation Authority met with the project team, including Cambium Indigenous Professional Services (Cambium), and WSP for a project introductory meeting. On September 24, 2021, Michael Jacobs, the Project Secretariat for Cambium, provided an overview of the project to the Conservation Authority's Board of Directors. Through these meetings it was identified that the project was going through the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada for review and would be determined if an impact assessment is required for the project.

On April 25, 2022, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada accepted the Initial Project Description for the Georgina Island Fixed Link Project under the Impact Assessment Act and initiated the 180-day planning phase. Through an invitation to provide feedback on the initial

project description as part of this process, the Conservation Authority provided comments in May 2022 (see Attachment 1 - Advice Record). All comments submitted to the Impact Assessment Agency are available for review on the agency's website at <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/83539?culture=en-CA>.

The cost estimate for the original 3.3 km roadway and fixed link was \$250 million. A new location may increase the overall length of the fixed link, which may result in increased project costs.

### Issues:

Through the Advice Record process, the Conservation Authority outlined considerations that should be given to the project including:

- 1) Coastal impacts resulting from the causeway construction: altered water currents, flow patterns, sediment disposition patterns, and ice jams. Additionally, there was concern with the location as it related to the 'sand islands' which has dynamic geomorphology.
- 2) Ecological Impacts: wetland areas were identified in the vicinity of the causeway as well as woodlands, fish and fish habitat, species at risk.
- 3) Erosion hazards: impacts from back eddy currents and water around the piers as well as restriction of the flow increasing velocities and creating bottom scour and turbidity.
- 4) Flooding: impacts to wave up-rush and shoreline flooding as a result of fill placement.

After receiving and reviewing comments through the Detailed Project Description process, the Georgina Island First Nation and Project team paused the process to take the time to gather more information to properly respond to the summary of issues.

On June 23, 2023, the Conservation Authority was invited to a stakeholder's session to provide updates on the progress of the project and next steps. At this meeting the following information was provided:

- The Project team is in the process of responding to the Summary of Issues and preparing the Detailed Project Description submission; the federal government will then decide if an Impact Assessment is required.
- A number of studies have been initiated including:
  - Costal Engineering, geophysical, geotechnical, ecological, hydrogeological, heritage, health assessment, stormwater management, traffic and transportation.
  - Civil engineering for the design and construction of the bridge has not started but consideration is being given for the design to allow water and sediment movement through the causeway portion.

- After considering the information collected, a new route has been proposed. 'Option 2' the current proposed configuration utilizes the existing ferry dock location on Georgina Island to avoid the Sand Islands and Wetlands.
- Submission of the Detailed Project Description is targeted for October 2023 after completion of a full year ecological review.

A technical/science meeting has been scheduled with the Project team and the Conservation Authority for August 22, 2023. The intent of the meeting is to review the technical information collected to date from the studies and to provide any supporting information or suggestions to the Project team.

### **Relevance to Conservation Authority Policy:**

The Conservation Authority has no legislative authority over this project as it is governed by the Federal government. The Conservation Authorities Act and the Lake Simcoe Protection Act and Plan are Provincial Legislation.

### **Impact on Conservation Authority Finances:**

There are no financial implications directly associated with this project. While Conservation Authority staff time is being utilized, funding through the Planning Phase of the Impact Assessment was received for staff time spent in the initial review, and additional funding may be available through the next phase of the project.

### **Summary and Recommendations:**

It is therefore **Recommended that** Staff Report No. 43-23-BOD regarding an update on the status of the Georgina Island Fixed Link project be received for information.

### **Pre-Submission Review:**

This Staff Report has been reviewed by the General Manager, Development, Engineering & Restoration and the Chief Administrative Officer.

Signed by:

Signed by:

Glenn MacMillan  
General Manager Development,  
Engineering & Restoration

Rob Baldwin  
Chief Administrative Officer

### **Attachments:**

Attachment A: Advice Record



## Advice Record – Information to Inform the Summary of Issues

**Project:** Georgina Island Fixed Link Project

**Proponent:** Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation

**CIAR No.:** 83539

**Response requested by:** **May 29, 2022**

All comments should be submitted via the **Submit a Comment** feature available on the Project's Canadian Impact Assessment Registry page (Reference #83539 at <http://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/83539?culture=en-CA>). Letters and forms can be uploaded using this feature. If you have any difficulties submitting this way, please contact the Agency at [GeorginaIsland-IleGeorgina@iaac-aeic.gc.ca](mailto:GeorginaIsland-IleGeorgina@iaac-aeic.gc.ca).

1. Confirm whether your organization would like to participate in the federal impact assessment process for this Project.  Yes  No

If yes, please provide contact details for the person(s) who will be working with the Agency.

Organization: Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority	
<i>Primary Contact Details:</i>	
Contact Name: Glenn MacMillan	Telephone: 905-895-1281 x 331
Address: 120 Bayview Parkway, Newmarket, ON, L3Y 3W3	Fax:
Email: <a href="mailto:g.macmillan@lsrca.on.ca">g.macmillan@lsrca.on.ca</a>	
<i>Alternate Contact Details (if applicable):</i>	
Contact Name: Rob Baldwin	Telephone: 905-895-1281 x 248
Address: 120 Bayview Parkway, Newmarket, ON, L3Y 3W3	Fax:
Email: <a href="mailto:r.baldwin@lsrca.on.ca">r.baldwin@lsrca.on.ca</a>	

2. Identify your organization's contact information for the public. This could be a generic email box or specific to your organization's role on the project (e.g. permits, authorizations, guidance or funding within your organization's mandate.)

Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority  
120 Bayview Parkway Newmarket, ON  
905-895-1281  
[Regulations@lsrca.on.ca](mailto:Regulations@lsrca.on.ca)  
[www.LSRCA.on.ca](http://www.LSRCA.on.ca)

3. Will your organization undertake any technical analysis (e.g. effects assessment) related to this Project? Would you be willing to cooperate with the Agency on this analysis?

*(considers potential environmental, health, social and economic impacts)*

Yes, the LSRCA regularly monitors and studies the health of Lake Simcoe. Part of our objective for our Lake Monitoring program is to assess the current ecological status and identify current and historical environmental trends as well as determine the impact of stressors on the nearshore water quality and biological communities.

The LSRCA is currently in the process of updating the 1981 Shoreline Flood Elevation Study prepared by Marshall Macklin Monaghan. The study currently underway by Baird is considering shoreline hazards, including at wave heights, wave uprush and shoreline flooding. The LSRCA would consider impacts associated with altered water currents, sedimentation, and ice jams/build ups as a result of the potential alteration of water currents resulting from the causeways.

In addition, to offshore and nearshore impacts, the LSRCA would consider impacts related to on shore activities such as impacts to woodlands, wetlands, and wildlife.

4. (a) Based on the Initial Project Description, will your organization be issuing any permits, authorizations or otherwise be involved in the Project in a regulatory manner?  Yes  No

(b) If yes:

- Name the permit, authorization or other function that your organization would provide;
- Provide a short description, including regulatory or legislative authority, of each permit, authorization or other function (please provide links or attach relevant documents to this form);
- Indicate the project component or activity to which the permit or authorization applies;
- Indicate, for each permit, authorization or other function, whether your organization would undertake Indigenous consultation, and if yes, provide a summary overview of the approach, including provision of any participant funding; and
- Indicate, for each permit, authorization or other function, whether your organization would undertake public engagement, and if yes, provide a summary overview of the approach, including provision of any participant funding.

LSRCA's legislation is Provincial and is not applicable to this project.

5. (a) Indicate whether the description of potential effects presented in the Initial Project Description sufficiently characterizes potential project effects as they relate to your organization's mandate.

Potential effects presented in initial project description include fish and fish habitat (fisheries act) aquatic species (SAR) migratory birds (MBCA). Potential direct and indirect impacts to aquatic and wetland habitats around the shallow peninsula of shoals. SWM and application of road salt, changes to aquatic habitats, snow removal and impacts, vehicle re-fuelling, spills management, changes to water flow, lake currents and fish movement, changes to avian, vascular, and mammal SAR and habitat, changes to terrestrial and wetland vegetation (and associated habitat) as a result of the bridge approaches and causeway, impacts to wildlife movement due to the roadway, potential groundwater contamination. In addition to these considerations, the Conservation Authority would highlight the below considerations:

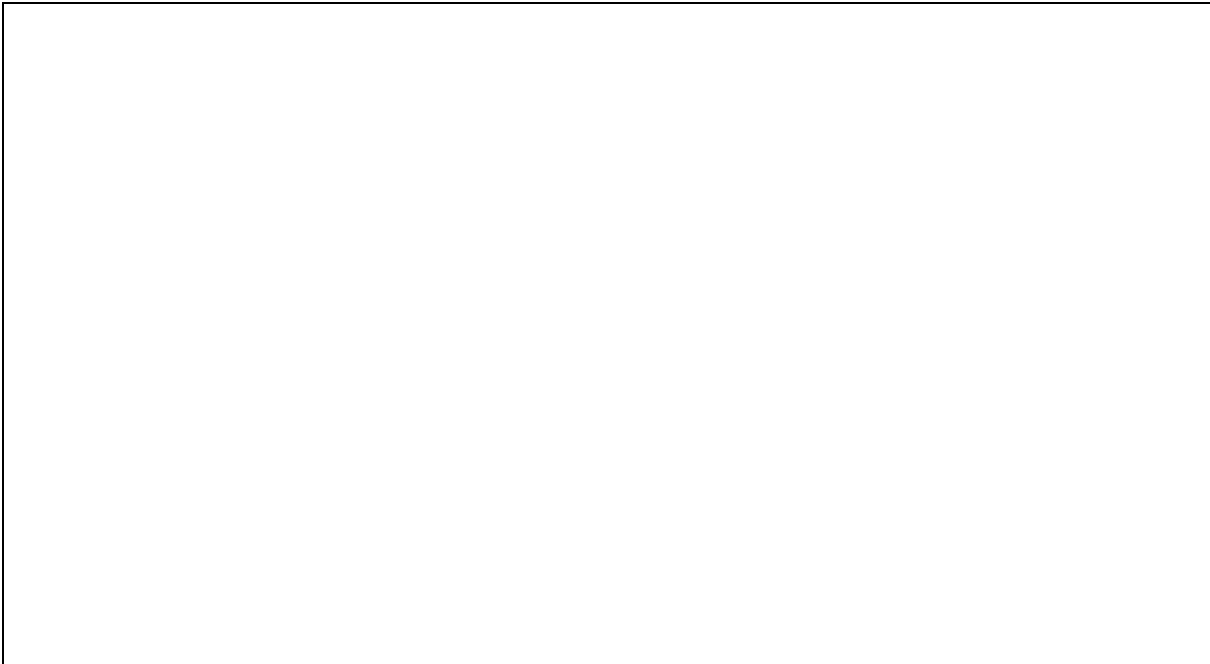
The causeway portions of the link may have more coastal engineering impacts than bridge/pier/pile sections. Considerations should be given to altered currents, flow patterns and sediment deposition patterns to assess the potential for impacts. Specifically, the proposed route of the fixed link is from the southwestern tip of Georgina Island across the channel to the mainland at either the "Bay Vista Property" or "Other GIFN Property" on the mainland (Figure 2 on p. 3 of the Plan), crossing an area commonly referred to as the "Sand Islands" that extend from Georgina Island to approximately halfway across the channel. This area is one of the few sandy substrate habitats in Lake Simcoe and has a dynamic geomorphology. Sand substrates, and sand from the islands, are constantly shifting due to wind and wave action, as well as currents that move in an east-west direction in the channel between the island and the mainland. The shape of the Sand Islands is in constant flux (as can be seen from a series of aerial photographs and satellite images taken over the years) and has more subtle changes on a seasonal and annual basis.

The potential erosion of both the on-shore areas as well as in water erosion around the rock structures/piers should be considered. Potential impacts from back eddy currents and water moving around the causeway as well as restriction if the natural flow and increase current velocities creating can create bottom scour and turbidity.

In addition to impacts to habitat as a result of sedimentation, impacts to the recreational use of Lake Simcoe may be considered. For example, an increase in sedimentation/build up on the leeward side would be significant from the causeway requiring eventual dredging to maintain boating and fishing activities in the channel as well as access to private docks, marinas and waterfront properties.

The impacts of ice pile-up should be assessed and considered as part of future modelling/design stages of the project. The alteration of water currents will change the dynamics of winter ice both on the lake side of the project and in the channel. Ice shoves onto land are common on shores that face a north / north-west direction on Lake Simcoe so it can be expected that significant ice build-up will occur on the western side of the causeways and in the passage under the bridge. On the channel side, ice movements will be altered and may impact the use of these areas for recreational and subsistence activities. In addition, the use of de-icing materials on the bridge and causeway roads may create unsafe ice conditions around the construction that could impact winter recreational and subsistence activities that rely on safe ice conditions.

Consideration for the removal of wetland and woodland for the roadway including impacts to the hydrologic function of the features should be considered. Where feasible these areas should be avoided.



(b) Provide input on whether these effects may be adverse and whether your regulatory instruments (ex. permit, authorization, or other function) could be used to address these effects.<sup>1</sup>

Based on a preliminary review of the concept, it is our opinion that the effects could be adverse. Again, we recognize that permissions are not required from the Conservation Authority in this scenario, however, our typical review and approval process would require demonstrating no negative impacts to the natural hazard and natural heritage features as described.

(c) Identify any additional potential effects of the Project that are not described in the Initial Project Description. Where potential effects have been overlooked, are missing or could be better described

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<sup>1</sup> Information on effects and direct and incidental effects as well as effects within federal jurisdiction are defined in section 2 of IAA. A link to IAA text can be found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-agency/corporate/acts-regulations/legislation-regulations.html>

and presented by the Proponent, provide a concise synopsis for the Summary of Issues. (Where possible, use plain language in your summary.)

Potential effects of the project beyond what has been identified in the initial project description include:

1. Impacts to sedimentation and erosion. While identified that sedimentation needs to be considered, we believe there are various aspects to be covered including, the hazards associated with sedimentation and erosion caused by the causeway, the impacts to the recreational aspect of the lake and private properties along the shoreline.
2. Impacts to significant woodlands.
3. Ice impacts (changes in ice from a recreational lake perspective, impacts on ice piling on the causeway and adjacent lands).
4. Impacts on shallow water habitats
5. Impacts to flooding and wave up-rush overtopping as a result of the causeway or roadway and any associated fill placement.
6. Construction methodology (specifically how fill will be brought to the island for construction and stability/suitability of material)

6. Provide any additional comments your organization would like to share with the Agency regarding the Project.

The Conservation Authority recognizes the importance of this project to the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation. We would be happy to provide our watershed expertise and work together through the completion and review of the environmental studies to ensure natural hazards are appropriately addressed and the ecological function of Lake Simcoe and surrounding area is maintained.

Glenn MacMillan

Name of Responder



Signature

General Manager, Planning, Development & Restoration

Title of Responder

May 27, 2022

Date

## Staff Report

To: Board of Directors

From: Rob Baldwin, Chief Administrative Officer

Date: July 16, 2023

### **Subject:**

2023 Annual Priorities Status Update for the Second Quarter

### **Recommendation:**

**That** Staff Report No. 44-23-BOD regarding the second quarter status of the Conservation Authority's 2023 Annual Priorities be received for information.

### **Purpose of this Staff Report:**

The purpose of this Staff Report No. 44-23-BOD is to update the Board of Directors on the status of the Conservation Authority's 2023 Annual Priorities.

### **Background:**

Early each year, the Executive Leadership Team selects Annual Priority projects or initiatives for the ensuing year. These projects or initiatives are considered to be other than business-as-usual activities and can be single or multi-year priorities.

The annual priorities and status updates for 2023 are as follows:

#### **1. Managing Bills 229 and 23**

Managing and implementing legislative changes introduced in Bills 229 and 23 have been priorities since 2020 and 2022, respectively. The Conservation Authority has met all deadlines for changes and submission of information. Senior staff have now met with all member municipalities within Simcoe County, City of Barrie, City of Kawartha Lakes and York Region. Meetings are scheduled with the City of Orillia and Durham Region. These meetings senior municipal staff focused on the required funding agreements and providing a pre-emptive overview of the change in funding mechanisms for Category 1,2, and 3 programs. A special virtual session was held for all municipal finance staff outlining similar information as the move toward developing a 2024 budget begins.

#### **2. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging**

Building the Conservation Authority's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging framework has been a priority since endorsing the York Region Inclusion Charter 2018. A final report and

roadmap framework have been received. Staff are currently developing an implementation plan which is scheduled to be presented with an overview of final report at a Board of Directors meeting in fall 2023. This is a multi-year priority, and implementation of recommendations will be ongoing.

### **3. Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve**

Develop a management plan and conduct community consultation for the Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve. The Board will receive an update presentation at their July 28, 2023 meeting, and a detailed report is included in Staff Report No. 40-23-BOD.

### **4. Scanlon Creek Nature Centre**

Finalize plans for construction of a new Nature Centre. Significant progress has occurred within the past quarter, with key aspects outlined below:

- Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Funding Agreement has been fully executed.
- Project Management Owner's Representative firm, CBRE, has been retained to administer project development.
- Building location confirmed and site assessments underway.
- Municipal approvals initiated with much of the required work completed to date.
- Concept designs in development by Gow Hastings Architects for Authority review in August.

### **5. Climate Change and Stormwater Management**

Advance business development opportunities for climate change and stormwater management

- Two Foundation board members with a background in carbon offsets provided valuable assistance in scoping a study to assess carbon credit potential on Authority lands. This feasibility assessment is in the process of being procured.
- Service agreements are currently executed with Aurora and East Gwillimbury to deliver stormwater inspection and monitoring services. Dialogue ongoing with other municipalities (King, Georgina, Oro-Medonte and Newmarket) to provide the same assistance in meeting recent provincial regulatory changes. Initial discussions have occurred with other watershed municipalities which may develop further over 2023.
- Watershed-wide receiver monitoring framework developed through Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks pilot study to ensure compliance with mandatory stormwater monitoring requirements, which are cost effective and provide meaningful insights. Municipal representatives on the steering committee for the pilot study are supportive of watershed-wide partnership approach to meet regulatory requirements.

## 6. Network Security

Assess and implement necessary network security solutions.

- Network security audit is complete. The next steps being presented to the Executive Leadership Team in the third quarter for implementation in the fourth quarter of 2023 and early 2024 (pending budget considerations).

## 7. Records and Asset Management

Implement corporate records management and asset management financial strategies.

- Records Management implementation plan under development, comparison of policy and retention with other conservation authorities underway. Conservation Ontario is organizing a session to discuss records management platforms, best practices, and approaches with a focus on consistency across conservation authorities.
- On track for fall 2023 Board of Directors' review of updated Asset Management financial condition assessment and strategy.

## Issues

Currently all Annual Priorities are tracking well. The Annual Priorities are established to identify those critical requirements and activities that require focused attention and management. All the priorities fully support the primary objectives of the strategic plan as supporting the day-to-day operations of the Conservation Authority.

Many of these annual priorities will evolve into aspects of ongoing or regular business for 2024 and beyond. Examples of these are implementing diversity, equity and inclusion actions and requirements, and evolving into the lead agency in supporting municipalities in stormwater inspection and maintenance.

It is exciting to see these priorities moving forward strongly during a significant time of transition and change for conservation authorities.

## Relevance to Conservation Authority Policy:

All Conservation Authority Annual Priorities are undertaken and implemented in accordance with Conservation Authority Policy. There is potential that the conclusions and/or recommendations from many of the priorities may lead to creating new policies or policy amendments. These will be brought before the Board as required.



### **Impact on Conservation Authority Finances:**

There is currently no direct impact on Conservation Authority finances as the Annual Priorities are funded within the 2023 budget. Any potential or future financial impacts will be identified as they arise. Business development priorities, such as stormwater inspections and monitoring, are likely to result in strengthening Conservation Authority revenue on a cost-recovery basis.

### **Summary and Recommendations:**

The 2023 Annual Priorities are all tracking well at the completion of the second quarter.

It is therefore **Recommended That** Staff Report No. No. 44-23-BOD regarding the status of the Conservation Authority's 2023 Annual Priorities be received for information.

Signed by:

Rob Baldwin  
Chief Administrative Officer

## Staff Report

**To:** Board of Directors

**From:** Cory Byron, Forestry Program Coordinator

**Date:** July 28, 2023

### Subject

Oak Wilt Fungal Tree Disease

### Recommendation

**That** Staff Report No. 45-23-BOD regarding oak wilt fungal tree disease be received for information.

### Purpose of this Staff Report

The purpose of this Staff Report No. 45-23-BOD is to provide the Board with information about oak wilt, a fungal disease impacting oak trees.

### Background

#### What is Oak Wilt?

Oak wilt, an invasive fungal disease prevalent in the United States, has now been reported in Ontario. The disease, caused by a fungus called *Bretziella fagacearum* primarily affects oak trees, has now been positively identified in Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake, and Midhurst.

The disease targets all species of oak trees, with red oak trees being especially vulnerable. According to the federal government's Invasive Species Centre website, oak wilt can kill a tree in a single season and is spread naturally through root grafts or beetles that carry the fungal spores. The disease does not affect humans or animals.

A Canadian Broadcasting Corporation article recently cited a retired forest program pathologist with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, who stated that oak wilt is similar to Dutch elm disease, beech bark disease, and white pine blister rust — all of which have done "widespread damage."

Oak wilt disease was discovered in Belle Isle, Michigan in 2016. It was estimated to have killed as many as 112 trees in late 2021, before reaching Canada (Michigan Department of Natural Resources via CBC News).

## Signs of Oak Wilt

Symptoms can vary depending on the disease stage and the oak tree species affected.

Signs can include:

- A white, grey, or black fungal mat beneath the bark.
- Cracking along the bark of the tree, which is an indicator of the fungal mats.
- A sweet, fruity smell, similar to Juicy Fruit gum.
- Falling leaves or wilting and bronzing edges of leaves, starting at the top of the tree and tips of branches.

Oak leaves impacted by oak wilt\*



Infected bark\*



Side by side comparison\*

*\*Images courtesy of Invasive Species Centre*

## Why is Oak Wilt a Problem?

Oak wilt can cause widespread tree death. The fungus disrupts the tree's water and nutrient-conducting system, leading to wilting, leaf discoloration, and in many cases, death. Oak trees play a crucial role in ecosystems, providing habitat and food for numerous wildlife species. In our urban and suburban areas, oak trees provide significant shade and protect from higher

temperatures that are consistent with a heat-island effect. Large-scale loss of oak trees can not only disrupt this balance and biodiversity, but could also have a significant, negative impact on property values.

### **How Can We Slow the Spread of Oak Wilt?**

Preventing and managing oak wilt requires a comprehensive approach. Following these strategies will help slow the spread:

- Only prune oak trees during the dormant season between November and March to minimize the risk of fungal transmission. Do not prune oak trees during the growing season (April 1 to October 31) to avoid attracting sap feeding beetles that transmit the disease. Contact a tree care professional if you must prune during this time or if a branch is damaged/broken. The tree care professional will employ proper pruning techniques, apply pruning paint, and dispose of the wood in accordance with rules and best practices.
- If pruning between November 1 to March 31, properly dispose of infected wood by burning it to prevent beetles from spreading the disease. During other months, contact a tree care professional for pruning.
- Do not transport firewood.
- Apply good arboricultural practises to improve the general health of the trees including watering, mulching, pruning for maintenance, and preventing injury.
- Stay informed about oak wilt in your area and report any suspected cases to the [Canadian Food Inspection Agency](#). Early detection and intervention can help prevent further spread.

### **Issues**

Currently, oak wilt has not been confirmed in the Lake Simcoe watershed. With three detections in Ontario and its widespread occurrence in the United States, we expect it to make its way into our watershed eventually.

The Lake Simcoe watershed is home to the Oak Ridges Moraine, one of Ontario's largest moraines and an ecologically sensitive area providing drinking water for millions of residents. The sandy soils of this landform make it an ideal habitat for red oak, one of the most susceptible species to oak wilt. As mentioned earlier, significant loss of oak trees could negatively impact wildlife habitat, property values, aesthetics, and slope stability.

While there is no known cure for the disease, early identification and reporting can help slow or stop the spread. Our staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of oak wilt and are monitoring our conservation authority properties for the disease. If discovered, we will follow the protocol outlined above and report it to the Federal and Provincial Governments. We will also continue

to work with our municipal partners to provide education and information to concerned residents and landowners.

### **Impact on Conservation Authority Finances**

There is currently no additional financial impact to the Authority beyond staff time to monitor and report on the issue.

### **Summary and Recommendations**

It is therefore **Recommended That** Staff Report No. 45-23-BOD regarding oak wilt be received for information.

### **Pre-Submission Review**

This Staff Report has been reviewed by the Director, Communications and Education, the Director, Conservation Lands and the Chief Administrative Officer.

Signed by:

Kristen Yemm  
Director, Communications and Education

Signed by:

Rob Baldwin  
Chief Administrative Officer