

# Grey County Natural Environment Study

## *Green in Grey*

Public Open House & Workshop #1  
Owen Sound & Durham



**NATURAL RESOURCE SOLUTIONS INC.**  
Aquatic, Terrestrial and Wetland Biologists



March 30 & 31, 2015



BOUNDLESS **INGENUITY**  
Macaulay Shiomi Howson Ltd.

# Natural Environment Study

- Natural Resource Solutions Inc. (NRSI)
  - David Stephenson
  - Katharina Walton
  - Elaine Gosnell
- Macaulay Shiomi Howson Ltd. (MSH)
  - Lorelei Jones

# Natural Environment Study

- Guide policies and approaches to dealing with the natural environment



# Natural Environment Study

- Guide policies and approaches to dealing with the natural environment
- What is the “natural environment”?
  - Forests
  - Wetlands
  - Rivers and streams





# “Made in Grey” Approach

- Est. 1852
- Land area: 4,513.21 km<sup>2</sup>
- Population: 96,500+
- Rich history of aboriginal peoples, settlement, and agriculture
- Industry of agriculture, tourism, recreation, and resource extraction

➡ Balanced approach

# “Made in Grey” Approach

- Public consultation
  - Open House / Workshops
- Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
  - Conservation Authorities
  - Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
  - Niagara Escarpment Commission
  - Municipalities
- Stakeholder groups

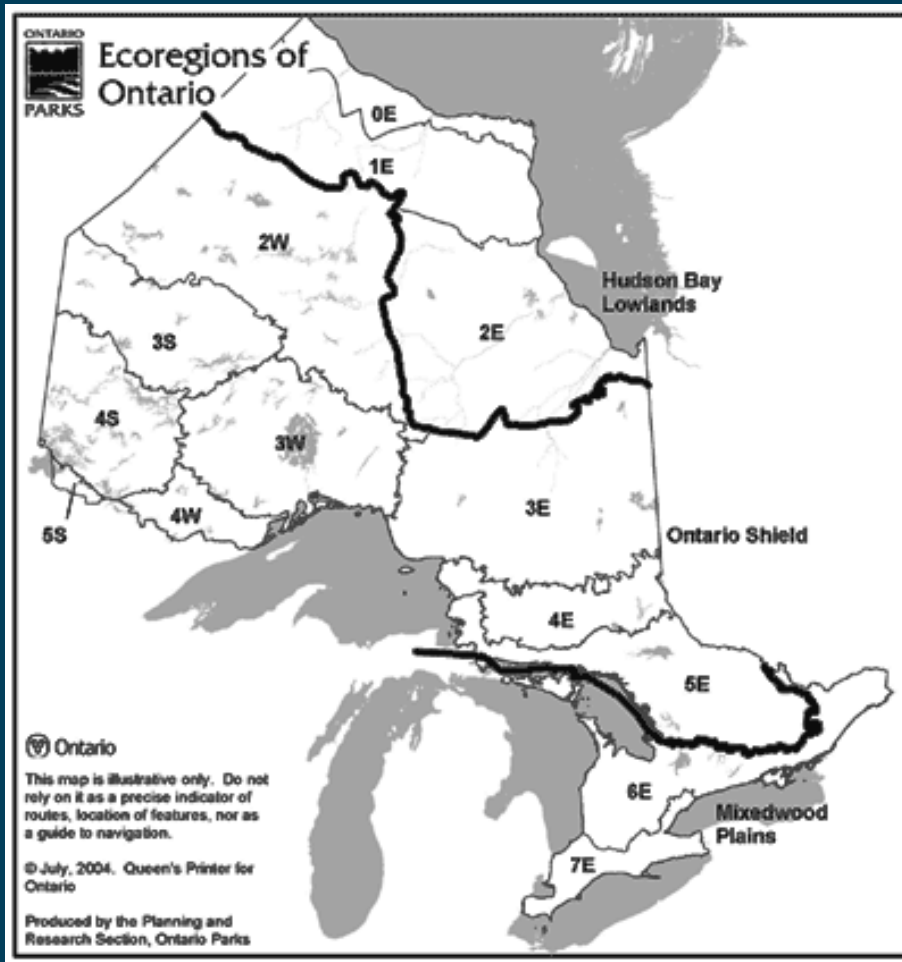
# 2014 Provincial Policy Statement

Under the *Planning Act*

Ontario.ca/PPS



- Policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development
- Vision includes wise use and management of natural heritage resources to conserve biodiversity, protect ecological processes, protect public health and safety, and minimize environmental impacts



## Section 2.1 Natural Heritage

*Natural heritage systems shall be identified in Ecoregions 6E & 7E, recognizing that natural heritage systems will vary in size and form in settlement areas, rural areas, and prime agricultural areas.*



- Development and site alteration will not be permitted in:
    - Significant wetlands
    - Significant coastal wetlands
  - Development and site alteration will not be permitted in:
    - Significant woodlands
    - Significant valleylands
    - Significant wildlife habitat
    - Significant areas of natural and scientific interest
- Unless there is no negative impacts on features or their functions.



- Development and site alteration will not be permitted in:
  - Fish habitat
  - Habitat of endangered and threatened speciesExcept in accordance with provincial and federal requirements.



- Development and site alteration are not permitted on adjacent lands to natural heritage features and areas unless there is no negative impact on the features or their functions.
- Not intended to limit the ability of agricultural uses to continue.





*Natural. Valued. Protected.*

# Natural Heritage Reference Manual

for Natural Heritage Policies of the  
Provincial Policy Statement, 2005

Second Edition



# Grey County Official Plan

- Official Plan has a policy section dealing with the Natural Environment which addresses:
  - Background
  - Hazard lands
  - Provincially significant wetlands
  - Significant woodlands
  - Special policy areas
  - Natural functions



# Grey County Official Plan

- Currently the land use designation mapping only includes Hazard lands and provincially significant wetlands
- In Appendices have constraint mapping that includes significant woodlands, earth and life science ANSIs and other wetlands and special policy area mapping
- Development on adjacent lands is subject to an Environmental Impact Study

# Natural Heritage System

- Systems based vs. features based approach
  - Top down vs. bottom up approach
- Systems based approach
  - Supported by Provincial Policy Statement
  - System of Cores and Linkages



# Natural Environment Study

- Stage 1 – Study Initiation
- Stage 2 – Drafting Criteria and Mapping
- Stage 3 – Policy Setting and Finalization of the Natural Heritage System Identification



# Natural Environment Study

## Stage 1 – Study Initiation

- Collecting and reviewing background information
  - Compiled species lists
  - Reviewed other NHSS (Oxford, Huron, Middlesex)
  - Reviewed Natural Environment section of the OP
  - Reviewed SWH Criteria for the Eco-Region 6E
  - Reviewed SAR list for Grey County

# Natural Environment Study

## Stage 2 – Drafting Criteria and Mapping

- Preparing criteria for identifying significant natural features
- Preparing base maps
- First round of stakeholder and public consultation
- Detailed aerial and roadside inspections to refine mapping and verify natural features.
- Preparing a series of maps for each component of the Natural Heritage System
- Analyzing the connectivity between natural features
- Drafting a Natural Heritage System Report



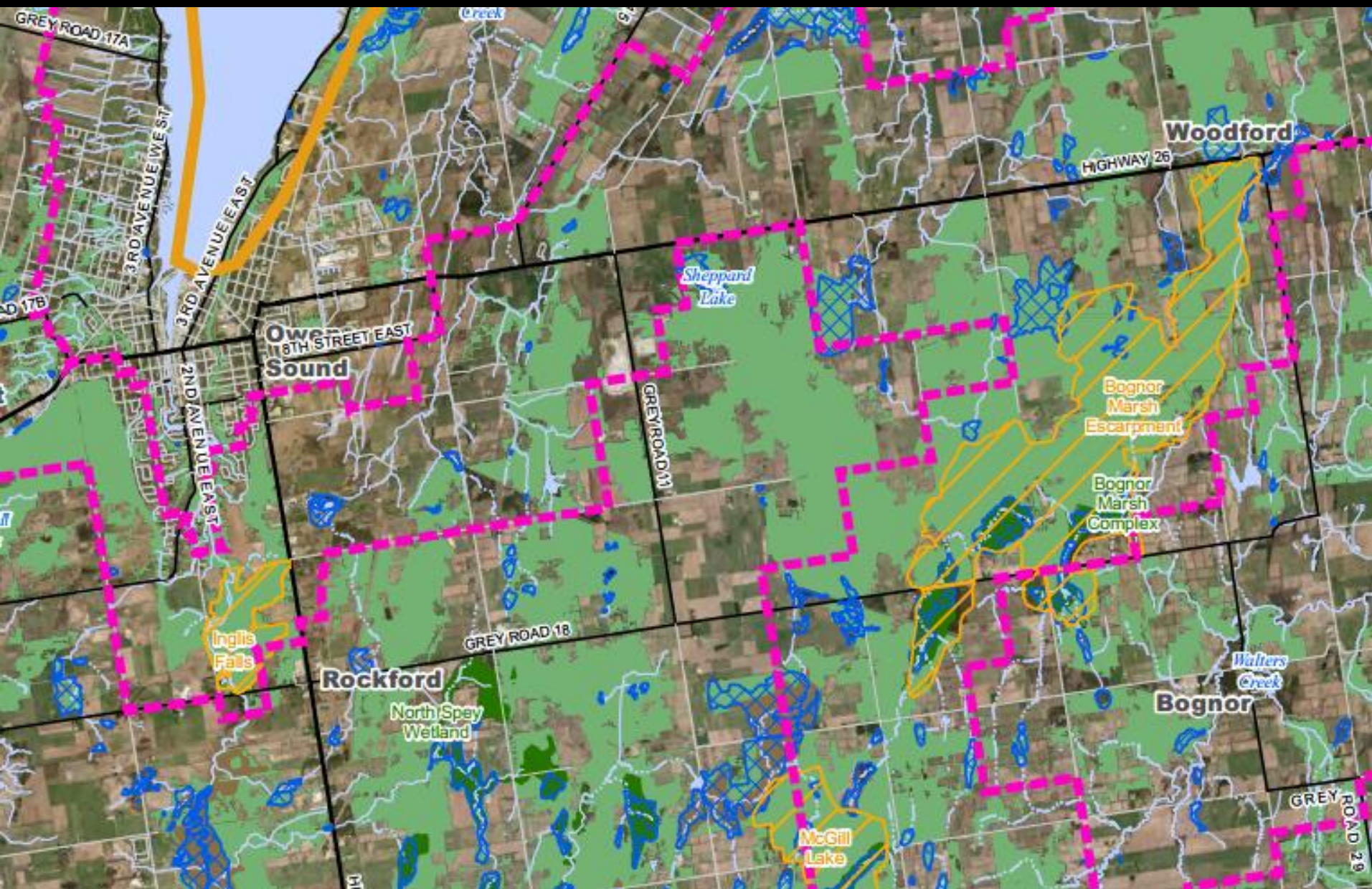
# Natural Environment Study

## Stage 3 – Policy Setting and Finalization of the Natural Heritage System Identification

- Second round of stakeholder and public consultation
- Finalizing the Natural Heritage System Study and developing policy and recommendations for implementation
- Presenting to the Grey County Planning and Community Development Committee and Grey County Council for approval











# Natural Heritage System

- Significant features
  - Significant wetlands
  - Significant coastal wetlands
  - Significant woodlands
  - Significant valleylands
  - Significant Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest
  - Fish habitat





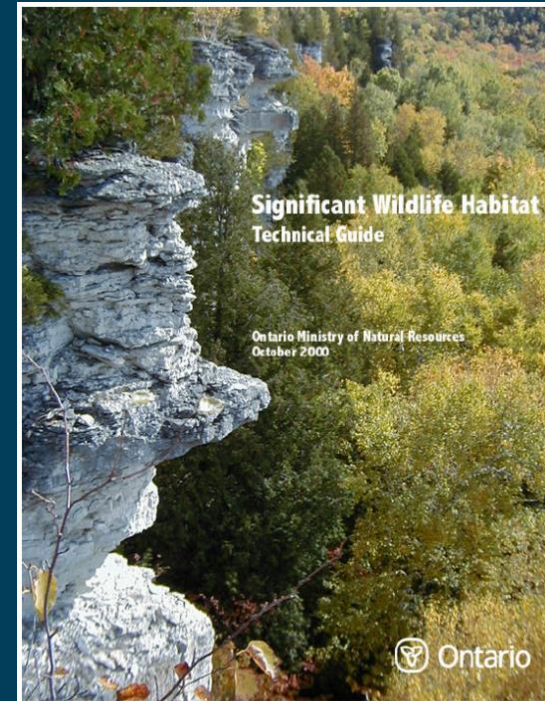
# Natural Heritage System

- Significant features
  - Significant Wildlife Habitat (SWH)
  - Habitat of Endangered and Threatened Species



# Significant Wildlife Habitat

- Deer yarding areas
- Bat maternity colonies
- Amphibian breeding habitat
- Woodland area-sensitive bird breeding habitat
- Woodland raptor nesting habitat
- Waterfowl stopover and staging areas (aquatic)
- Old growth forest





# Significant Wildlife Habitat

- Hibernacula (bats, snakes)
- Rare vegetation communities
- Colonial breeding sites (birds)
- Shorebird migratory stopover areas
- Waterfowl stopover and staging areas (terrestrial)
- Open country breeding bird habitat
- Shrub/early successional bird breeding habitat



# Open County, Early Successional Habitats

- Large grasslands >30ha in size (pastures, hayfields)
- $\geq 15$ ha of meadows and thickets adjacent to woodlands
- Large areas of successional habitat >10ha



# Species at Risk

- Protected through the Endangered Species Act, 2007





# Species at Risk

- Barn Swallow
- Bobolink
- Cerulean Warbler
- Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake
- Jefferson Salamander
- Little Brown Myotis
- Grey Fox
- Hungerford's Crawling Water Beetle
- Rainbow Mussel
- Redside Dace
- American Ginseng
- Butternut

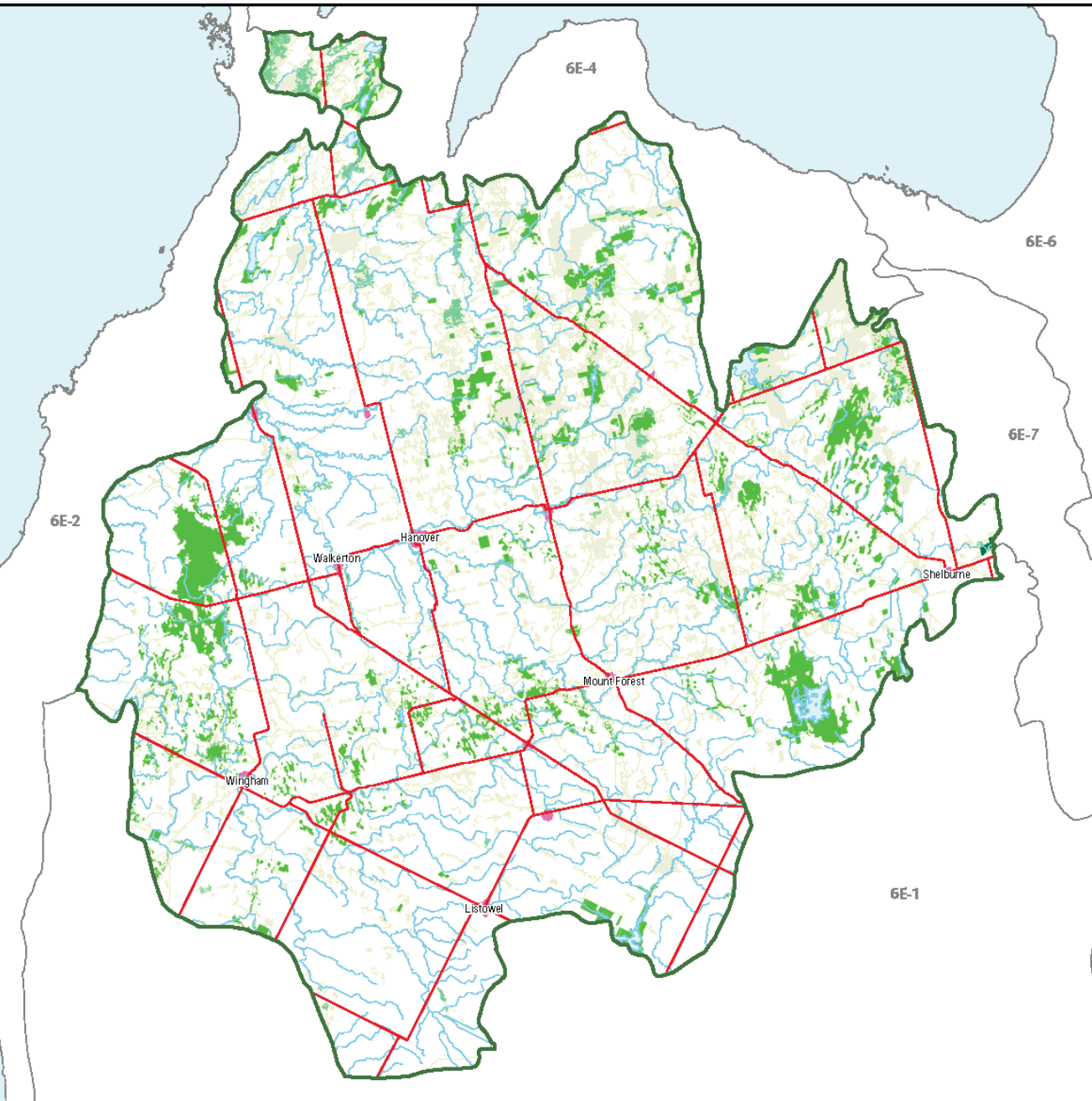


# Other Studies

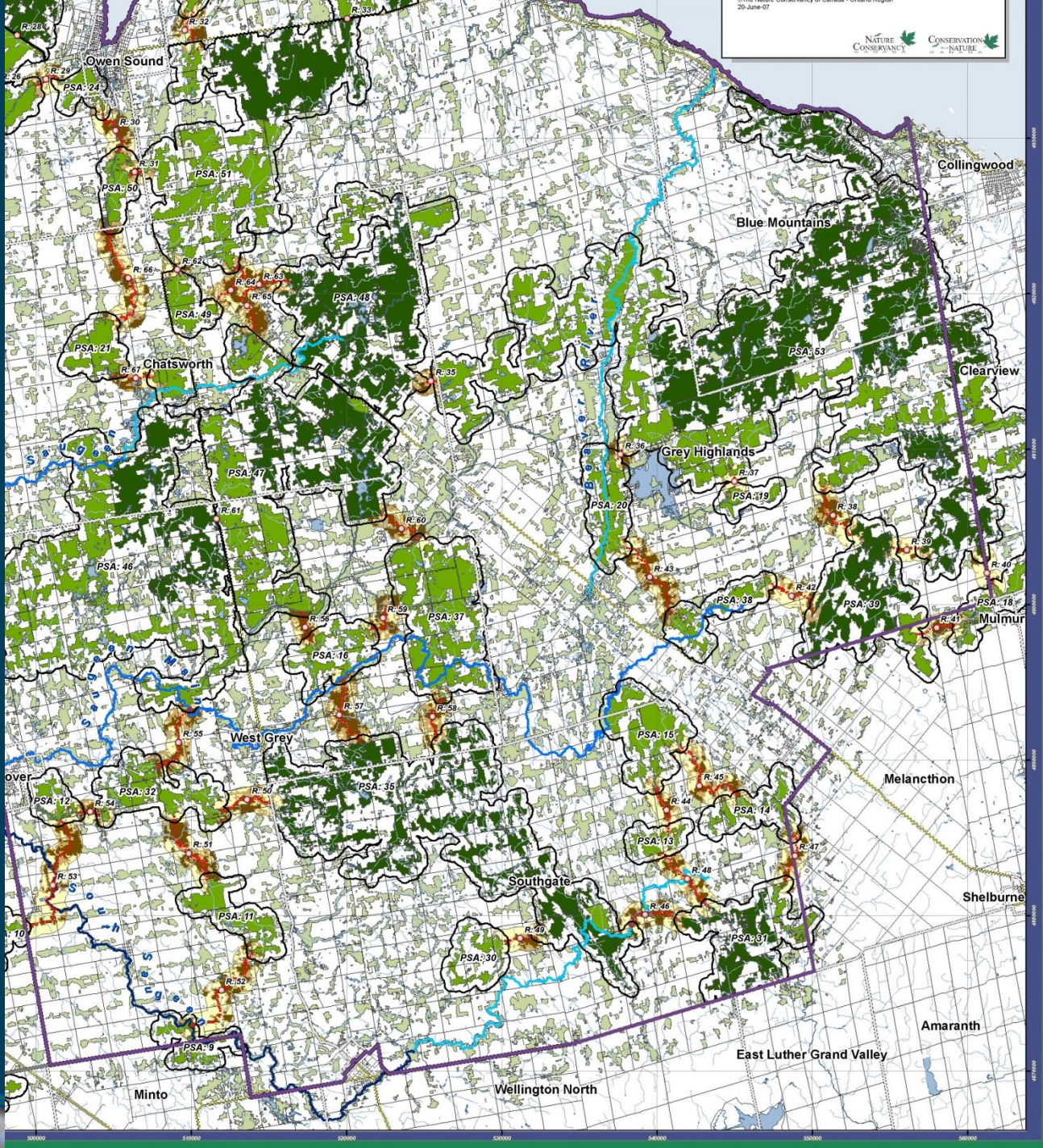
- Big Picture 2002 (MNRF & NCC)
- Great Lakes Conservation Blueprint (Environment Canada & MNRF)
- Greenway (Ontario Nature & NCC)
- Niagara Escarpment Plan

# Great Lakes Conservation Blueprint for Biodiversity

- Terrestrial and Aquatic Protected Areas and Priority Stewardship Areas to protect biodiversity







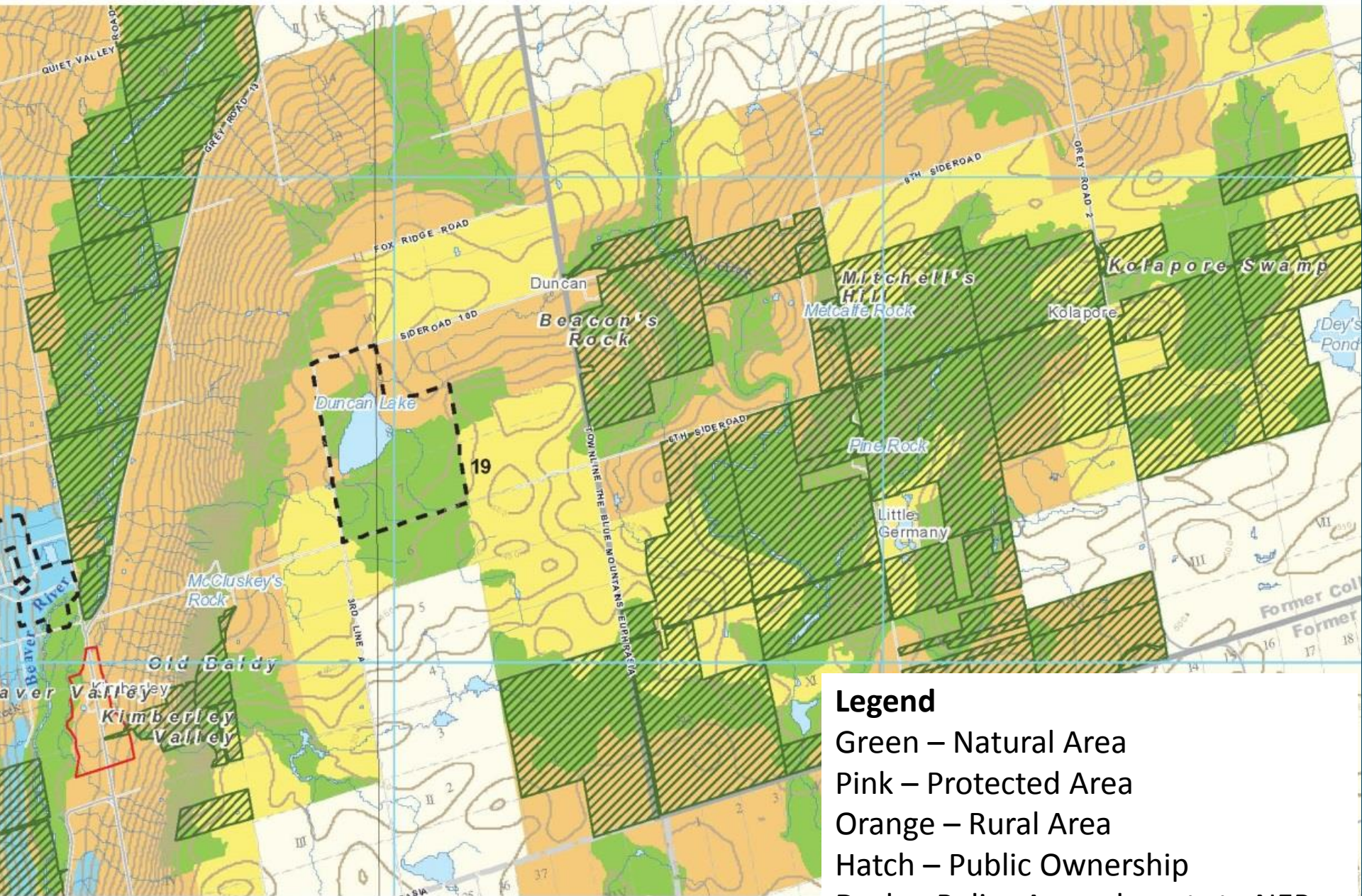
# Ontario Nature Greenway

- Used combination of size, fragmentation and landscape context to identify cores
- Linkages are 1.5 km wide with good natural cover
- Identified Priority Stewardship Areas





# Niagara Escarpment Plan Area



## Legend

Green – Natural Area

Pink – Protected Area

Orange – Rural Area

Hatch – Public Ownership

Dash – Policy Amendments to NEP

Red – Settlement Areas



# Policy Implementation

- Policies for identified and mapped features
  - Significant features (existing and newly mapped)
  - Difficult to map features
  - Linkages, supporting features, restoration areas
- Features not represented within NHS
  - Features outside of the NHS
  - Consistent policy language and approach
  - Best Practices Guide to NHS Planning provides examples (Georgina, Central Frontenac, Vaughan, Clearview Township)



# Questions



# Workshop Discussion



# Next Steps

- Collection and review of comments
- Provide additional comments by email to Sarah Morrison (County)
- Detailed aerial and roadside inspections to refine mapping and verify natural features (April)
- Revision of maps
- Analyzing the connectivity between natural features
- Technical Advisory Committee meeting #2 (summer)



# Next Steps

- Drafting a Natural Heritage System Report (summer)
- Drafting policy (late summer)
- Technical Advisory Committee meeting #3 (October)
- Public Open House/Workshop and Stakeholder meetings #2 (October)
- Final Natural Heritage System Report (November)
- Presentation to the Grey County Planning and Community Development Committee and Grey County Council for approval (November/December)



***Thank you!***