



Laurentian Escarpment Conservation Area

Conservation Area Strategy

December 2024



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Acknowledgement of Traditional, Ancestral and Treaty Lands

As we work towards reconciliation with Indigenous people, we respectfully acknowledge that we are in Robinson-Huron Treaty territory and the land on which we live and work is the Traditional Territory and Treaty Lands of the Nbisiing Anishinaabeg (ah-nish-nah-beg) as well as the unceded and ancestral Traditional Territory of the Algonquin People and the Metis Nation.

As shared stewards of Ontario's land and water resources – along with these First Nations communities – the North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority appreciates and respects the history and diversity of the land and its peoples and are grateful to have the opportunity to live in this Territory.

1.0 Conservation Area Strategy Overview

1.1 Purpose

Under the Conservation Authorities Act, Ontario Regulation 686/21: Mandatory Programs and Services, each Conservation Authority in Ontario is required to prepare a Conservation Areas Strategy (Strategy) and Land Inventory (Inventory). The purpose of the Conservation Areas Strategy is to satisfy provincial regulatory requirements and provide an integrated, high-level framework that helps guide and inform future decision making on all NBMCA-owned and controlled lands. For the purposes of this Strategy, this includes lands categorized as conservation areas, conservation lands, controlled/limited access lands and nature preserves. The Land Inventory provides information on each NBMCA property and is the basis for the Strategy and management of NBMCA lands.

1.2 Goal

The Conservation Area Strategy is to provide a framework for the protection of North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority's significant and representative ecosystems and offer sustainable natural heritage appreciation and recreational benefits to its residents and visitors.

The Strategy reflects the importance of protecting the natural heritage within a watershed, while recognizing the need to provide for public interaction with natural heritage through appreciation and recreation opportunities. While significant features warrant the greatest attention, there is also a need to include examples of representative landscapes that define the character of the NBMCA Watershed.

Conservation Authorities are unique in that they manage natural environmental systems within the units that nature defines – watersheds – rather than by social or geo-political boundaries. Within this context, the primary goal of this Strategy is:

- Promote sustainable management of conservation authority lands – as it is used in the goal statement, sustainable means that development and use of conservation areas for public benefit must be accomplished in a manner that does not reduce the quality of the natural heritage features.
- Manage conservation areas in a manner that meets the needs of both residents and visitors in the watershed.

2.0 Legislative Background

North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority (NBMCA) was formed under the Conservation Authorities Act of Ontario in 1972 at the request of its member municipalities. NBMCA is a community-based, environmental organization dedicated to conserving, restoring, developing, and managing renewable natural resources on a watershed basis. It is one of 36 conservation authorities (CAs) in Ontario, governed by a Board of Directors comprised of its ten member municipalities. It is a member of Conservation Ontario, the network organization of all CAs.

The Conservation Authorities Act, and accompanying regulations have been amended by the Province of Ontario since 2017, including the following updates made in 2021. O. Reg. 686/21 sets out the mandatory programs and services which must be delivered by CAs in Ontario.

Conservation Area (CA) programs and services are categorized as follows per legislation:

- **General Functions:** Corporate-wide services that support several/all program areas
- **Category 1:** Mandatory programs and services
- **Category 2:** Municipal programs and services provided on behalf of a municipality
- **Category 3:** Programs and services advisable by the Conservation Authority to implement in the CA's jurisdiction

Subsection 9(1)1 sets out the required (mandatory) components of the Conservation and Management of Lands program and service area for all CAs. As outlined in subsection 9(1)1, each CA is required to prepare a "conservation area strategy" on or before December 31, 2024. The required components of the Strategy are further outlined in subsection 10(1) of the regulation, as reproduced below.

Objectives established by the authority that will inform the authority's decision-making related to the lands it owns and controls, including decisions related to policies governing the acquisition and disposition of such lands.

1. *Identification of the mandatory and non-mandatory programs and services that are provided on land owned and controlled by the authority, including the sources of financing for these programs and services.*
2. *Where the authority considers it advisable to achieve the objectives referred to in paragraph 1, an assessment of how the lands owned and controlled by the authority may,*
 - i. *augment any natural heritage located within the authority's area of jurisdiction, and*
 - ii. *integrate with other provincially or municipally owned lands or other publicly accessible lands and trails within the authority's area of jurisdiction.*

3. *The establishment of land use categories for the purpose of classifying lands in the land inventory described in section 11 based on the types of activities that are engaged in on each parcel of land or other matters of significance related to the parcel.*
4. *A process for the periodic review and updating of the conservation area strategy by the authority, including procedures to ensure stakeholders and the public are consulted during the review and update process.*

The objective of the Strategy is to ensure NBMCA has a documented and current set of objectives to inform decision-making related to the land they own or manage. As part of the regulatory requirements, the Conservation Area Strategy is accompanied by a inventory of CA owned or managed lands (Land Inventory [ONTARIO REGULATION 686/21](#) (S11)). The inventory contains confidential information and will not be made publicly available.

3.0 Jurisdiction

NBMCA was formed under the Conservation Authorities Act of Ontario in 1972 at the request of its member municipalities. NBMCA administers its objectives and responsibilities as defined in the Conservation Authorities Act within a 2900 sq km area, based on the watersheds within the Lake Nipissing and the Ottawa River Basins. Highlights of the NBMCA's jurisdictional area include the shoreline of Lake Nipissing with the City of North Bay and the Municipality of Callander, Trout Lake, Wasi Lake, the Mattawa River, the North Bay Escarpment, and parts of Algonquin Park. NBMCA owns and manages lands within its jurisdiction. **See Figure 1.**

Table 1: Conservation Areas and Lands Sources of Funding for the Conservation and Management of Lands

Conservation Areas (see map above for location using number below)	Classification	Size (ha)	Activities permitted	Funding/Programs and Services Support
6. Corbeil Conservation Area (2 parcels)	Passive Recreation	37.64	Hiking, Biking, Snowshoeing, Wildlife Viewing, Photography	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
8. Eau Claire Gorge Conservation Area (6 parcels)	Passive Recreation	147.0	Hiking, Snowshoeing, Wildlife Viewing, Photography, Portage access	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
12. Elks Lodge 25 Family Park Conservation Area	Passive Recreation	0.4	Swimming, Canoeing/Kayaking, Stand-up paddle boarding, Wildlife viewing, photography, picnic area	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
11. Eva Wardlaw Conservation Area	Passive Recreation	0.49	Swimming, Canoeing/Kayaking, Stand-up paddle boarding, Wildlife viewing, photography, picnic area	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
10. JP Webster Nature Preserve (3 parcels)	Passive Recreation	111.0	Hiking, Biking, Snowshoeing, Wildlife Viewing, Photography	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
3. Kate Pace Way (4 parcels)	Passive Recreation	7.0	Accessible multi- use trail (biking, walking, in-line skating), photography, picnic area	Category 1 - Municipal Levy Co -managed with the City of North Bay
4. Kinsmen Trail (section from Thomson Park to Lake Nipissing at	Passive Recreation	7.51	Accessible multi- use trail (biking, walking, in-line skating),	Category 1 - Municipal Levy

Chippewa Creek EcoPath) (56 parcels)			photography, picnic area	Co -managed with the City of North Bay
5. La Vase Portages Conservation Area	Passive Recreation	42.83	Hiking, Snowshoeing, Wildlife Viewing, Photography, Portage access	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
1. Laurentian Escarpment Conservation Area (4 parcels)	Passive Recreation	3.61	Hiking, Biking, Snowshoeing, Wildlife Viewing, Photography	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
1. Laurentian Escarpment Administrative Office	Administration Areas	48.21 (includes ski hill)	Office supports the administration and operation of NBMCA.	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
1. Laurentian Ski and Snowboarding Club	Active Recreation	48.21 (includes admin offices)	Downhill skiing and snowboarding	Category 3 – Self Generated Fees
2. Laurier Woods Conservation Area (7 parcels)	Passive Recreation	100.0	Hiking, Biking, Snowshoeing, Wildlife Viewing, Photography, picnic areas	Category 1 - Municipal Levy Co-own with Friends of Laurier Woods
14. Mattawa Island Conservation Area	Passive Recreation	4.446	Swimming, Canoeing/Kayaking, Stand-up paddle boarding, Wildlife viewing, photography, picnic area, ball hockey, tennis, basketball	Category 1 - Municipal Levy Co-managed with the Town of Mattawa
15. Papineau Lake Conservation Area	Passive Recreation	4.942	Swimming, Canoeing/Kayaking, Stand-up paddle boarding, Boating, Wildlife viewing, Fishing	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
9. Powassan Mountain Conservation Area	Passive Recreation	2.312	Hiking, Biking, Snowshoeing, Wildlife Viewing, Photography	Category 1 - Municipal Levy

7. Shields McLaren Conservation Area (6 parcels)	Management Area	66.0	No maintained/marked trails	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
13. Shirley Skinner Conservation Area	Management Area	18.958	No maintained/marked trails	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
NBMCA Owned Lands (not mapped)	Classification	Size	Activities permitted	Funding/Programs and Services Support
Chippewa Creek Property (7 parcels)	Management Area	1.5	None	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
Chippewa Creek – Tupper Drive	Management Area	0.042	None	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
Chippewa Creek – Vanier Street	Management Area	0.053	None	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
Chippewa Creek – Dudley & Hutcheson Avenue (4 parcels)	Management Area	0.24	None	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
Chippewa Creek – Cassells Street	Management Area	0.118 ha	None	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
Chippewa Creek – Fisher Street	Management Area	0.020 ha	None	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
Chippewa Creek – Second Avenue (3 parcels)	Management Area	0.134	None	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
Chippewa Creek – Regina Street (3 parcels)	Management Area	0.101	None	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
Chippewa Creek – Worthington Street East	Management Area	0.023	None	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
Chippewa Creek – Queen Street (2 parcels)	Management Area	0.075	None	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
Bonfield Waterfront (2 parcels)	Passive Recreation	0.197	None	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
Lovell Property	Management Area	46.1	None	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
Premier Road Property	Management Area	0.389	None	Category 1 - Municipal Levy

PGWMN Property	Management Area	22.976	None	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
Wasi River Property	Management Area	13.43	None	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
Eastview Tributary – Laurentian Avenue (9 parcels)	Management Area	2.43	None	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
Johnston Creek Tributary – Ski Club Road (3 parcels)	Management Area	0.66 ha	None	Category 1 - Municipal Levy
Trout Lake Tributary – Carriere Road	Management Area	1.75	None	Category 1 - Municipal Levy

4.3 Conservation Areas

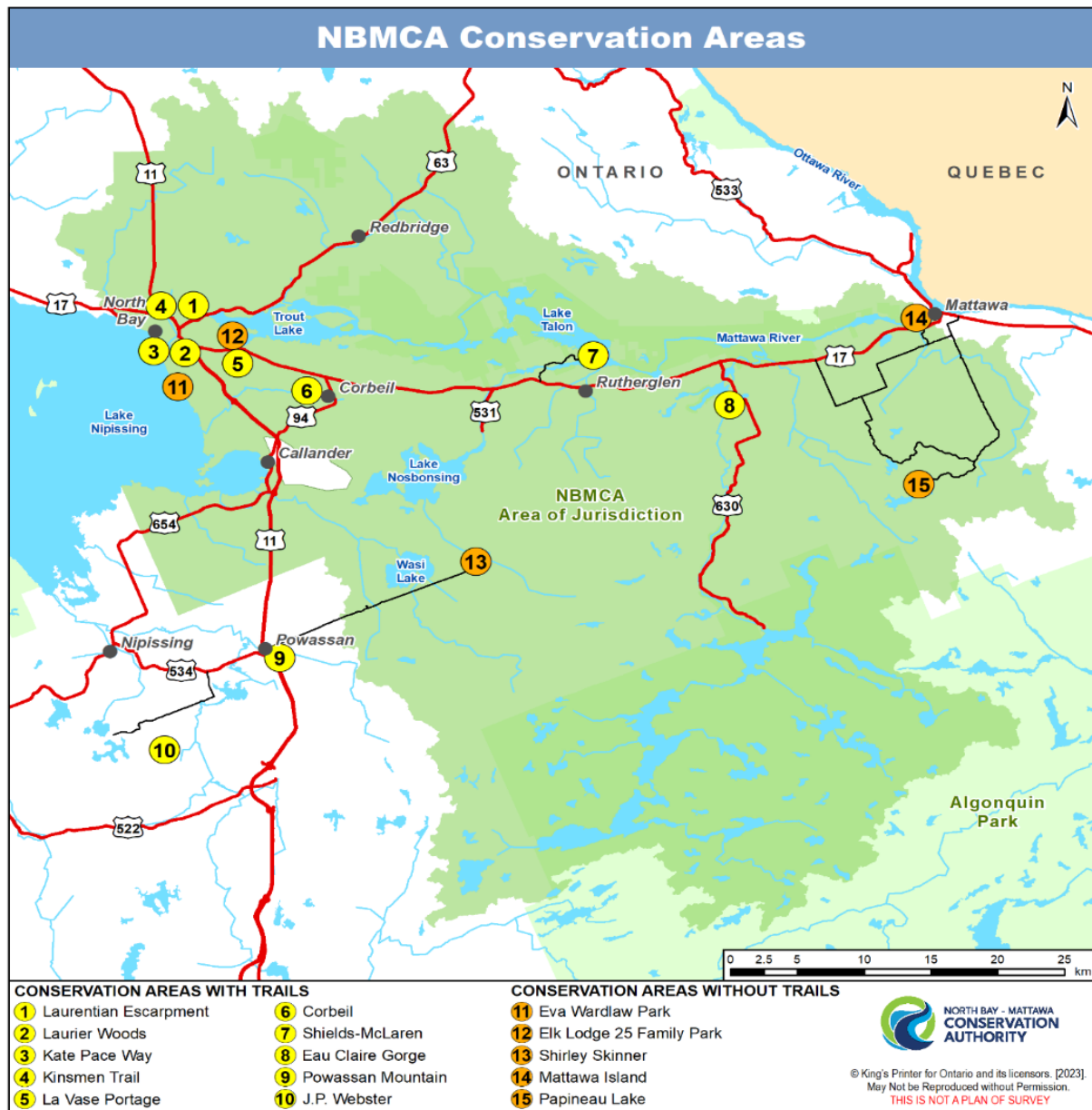
Conservation Areas encourage people to get outdoors and be active, as well as enjoy and appreciate nature! They provide outdoor recreational opportunities for people of all ages and a range of abilities, including picnicking, geocaching, birdwatching, boating, swimming, hiking, fishing, cycling, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and mountain biking. Although some Conservation Areas have limited access to protect sensitive lands and/or wildlife, many provide important public recreational opportunities at no cost.

NBMCA owns and operates 15 conservation areas throughout our watershed. They are classified as :

- Conservation Areas (Active Recreation, Accessible to the Public)
- Conservation Areas (Passive Recreation, Accessible to the Public)
- Management Areas (Public Accessibility Varies) (e.g., Natural Heritage Lands, Natural Hazard Lands, Water Management Areas, Forest Management Lands, Environmentally Sensitive Lands, etc.)
- Conservation Authority Administration Areas.

All Conservation Areas are passive recreation and accessible to the public, with two having no trails. The Laurentian Ski Hill within the Laurentian Escarpment Conservation Area is active recreation and the office at Laurentian Escarpment Conservation Area would be Conservation Authority Administration Areas. **See Figure 2.**

Figure 2: NBMCA Conservation Areas



4.4 Land Acquisition or Disposition

Land acquisitions have been more opportunistic than planned. The authority has not developed a land acquisition strategy to guide its decision making and fundraising.

NBMCA currently doesn't have a Land Disposition Policy to outline the framework, criteria and process for disposition of NBMCA lands.

5.0 Guiding Principles and Objectives

5.1 Guiding Principles

The following are the guiding principles of the NBMCA's Conservation Area Strategy:

- The Conservation Area Strategy forms the basis of conservation, restoration, development, and management of natural resources which are owned, or managed by NBMCA.
- NBMCA lands are vital natural assets that help manage climate change impacts, mitigate natural hazards, filter contaminants, assimilate waste, sustain biodiversity, and provide green spaces for recreation and other community benefits.
- The Conservation Area Strategy is the framework to identify and assess resource conditions, trends, risks, and issues that may impact NBMCA lands, and to implement programs and services to manage them.
- The Conservation Area Strategy informs policy and decision-making by NBMCA and others.
- Conservation area management decisions are transparent and take into consideration a broad range of community uses, needs, and values, including ecosystem needs.
- The Conservation Area Strategy guide and manage Conservation Authority properties in a financially sustainable manner with a variety of funding mechanisms.

5.2 Objectives and Actions

The intent of this Strategy is to ensure NBMCA has a documented and current set of objectives to inform decision-making related to the land we own and or manage. The objectives are aligned to the legislated scope of the Conservation Area Strategy, reflecting Category 1 programs and services and, where supported through agreements, Category 2 and 3 programs and services. Appendix 2.

Objective 1: Protection: Protect significant and representative natural heritage and cultural features, habitats and species through selective acquisition and resource management of NBMCA properties. This ensures that all present and future Conservation Authority's land holdings contribute to the goals and objectives of the Conservation Authority and support an integrated watershed management approach.

Action:

- Inventory the management areas and conservation areas to characterize their environment and condition.
- Develop and implement management plans for each conservation area.
- Develop policies, strategies, and procedures for the acquisition/disposition of land to support programs and services, including working with partners to identify opportunities to connect greenspaces to support the protection of lands.

- Determine current uses and user groups and identify opportunities and actions to preserve natural features while considering population growth, increased need for greenspace and visitor impact management.

Objective 2: Recreation: Provide high quality, accessible, affordable, and sustainable outdoor recreational opportunities in active and passive conservation areas.

Action:

- Develop management plans for each conservation area based on asset management plans and user surveys. NBMCA will ensure assets are managed for sustainable use while considering added opportunities.

Objective 3: Awareness and Education: Aim to provide the public with knowledge and understanding of the conservation area lands. This includes cultural and natural heritage features sites, their significance, sensitivities, and their ecological functions. Through Stewardship programs NBMCA will provide protection of lands, opportunities for education and awareness, promoting better understanding, and appreciation of NBMCA lands. Publicly accessible natural areas also provide places for mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Action:

- Develop and implement strategies and plans for education, communication, outreach and engagement that will help NBMCA promote and build community awareness of conservation lands and permitted uses and gain support for conservation land management objectives.
- Communicate and engage with the public to strengthen understanding, appreciation and support for conservation land stewardship and management.

Objective 4: Tourism: The Strategy will leverage NBMCA's natural assets to support and provide opportunities which promote sustainable ecotourism within the province. NBMCA will work with community partners, to market conservation lands, and to cross promote lands that are identified as opportunities for tourism.

Action:

- Develop management plans and policies for the management of NBMCA lands that balance park development, social demand, tourism, cultural heritage, and the environment.
- Seek partners to provide new and improved recreational opportunities

6.0 Implementation

Objectives will primarily be implemented through management plans, policies, procedures, strategies, visioning. Each of these management plans includes deliverables and metrics informed by the objectives and specific action areas to meet the needs of that NBMCA property. These more specific implementation measures will be enabled through the annual budget and yearly workplans.

7.0 Process for Review

Public Consultations were held in June 2024 for 30 days. The invitation to comment was posted on NBMCA's website and social media. No public comments were received.

This strategy will inform and guide NBMCA's conservation and management of lands over a period of five years and will be made available on NBMCA's website. Throughout this five-year period, revisions that do not alter the strategy in any significant way may be completed, as necessary. Subsequently, every five years the strategy will be reviewed in its entirety. If this formal review results in minor changes, consultation may not be undertaken, and the revised strategy will be made available online. If the review process leads to significant changes, NBMCA will engage with partners, stakeholders and the public to solicit feedback; an updated Conservation Area Strategy will then be presented to the NBMCA Board with a summary of changes and posted online. NBMCA will continue to leverage all suitable tools and platforms (e.g., targeted outreach via email, broad engagement via social media) to gather feedback from partners, stakeholders, and the public. Ongoing feedback will be especially important to the more visionary goals, objectives, and actions described in NBMCA's Conservation Area Strategy.