



NORTH BAY - MATTAWA  
**CONSERVATION  
AUTHORITY**

## Conservation Area Strategy

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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 Nibisiing 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.

## Acknowledgments and Authors

The Conservation Area Strategy for the North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority (NBMCA) was developed following Conservation Ontario's Guidance on the Conservation Authority Mandatory Conservation Area Strategy.

Watershed partners, Indigenous communities, and the NBMCA Board of Directors are sincerely appreciated for their valuable input and feedback during the development of the NBMCA Conservation Area Strategy.

The authors of the NBMCA Conservation Area Strategy are Troy Storms, Manager, Lands and Stewardship; David Ellingwood, Director/Deputy CAO; Valerie Murphy, Regulations Officer; Chitra Gowda, CAO, Secretary-Treasurer.

The NBMCA Board of Directors provided final review and approval on (date to be inserted later).

## 1. Legislative Background

The North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority (NBMCA) was formed under the Conservation Authorities Act of Ontario in 1972 at the request of its member municipalities. The 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.

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

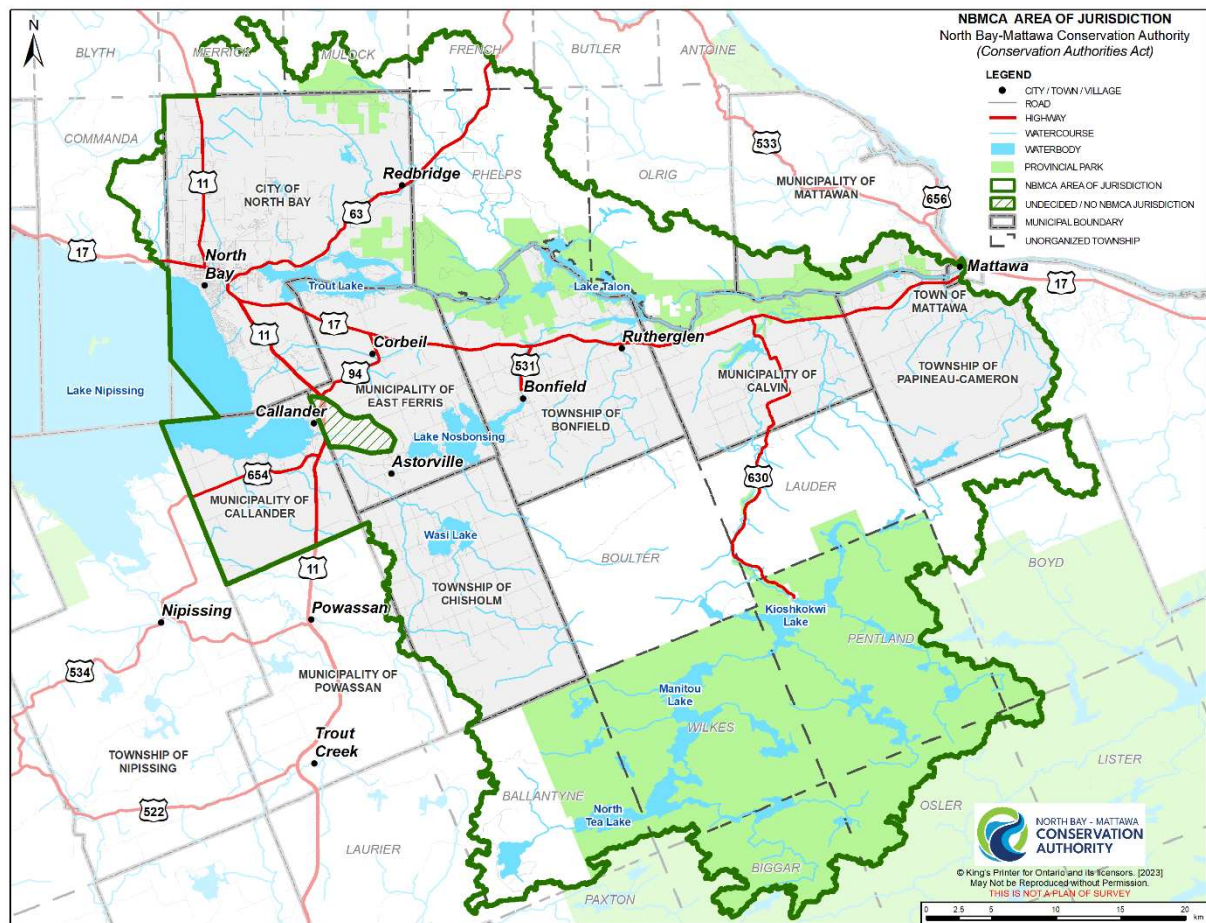
O. Reg. 686/21 sets out the mandatory programs and services which must be delivered by CAs in Ontario. Specifically, subsection 9(1)1 sets out the required (mandatory) components of the Conservation and Management of Lands program and service area for all CAs. As outlined in subsection 9(1)1, each CA 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. While these components must be included in each Conservation Authority Strategy, the framework / formatting of the Strategy may be determined by each individual Conservation Authority.

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 will also inform the mandatory CA Land Inventory, through establishing land use categories for the lands it owns.

## 2. Jurisdiction

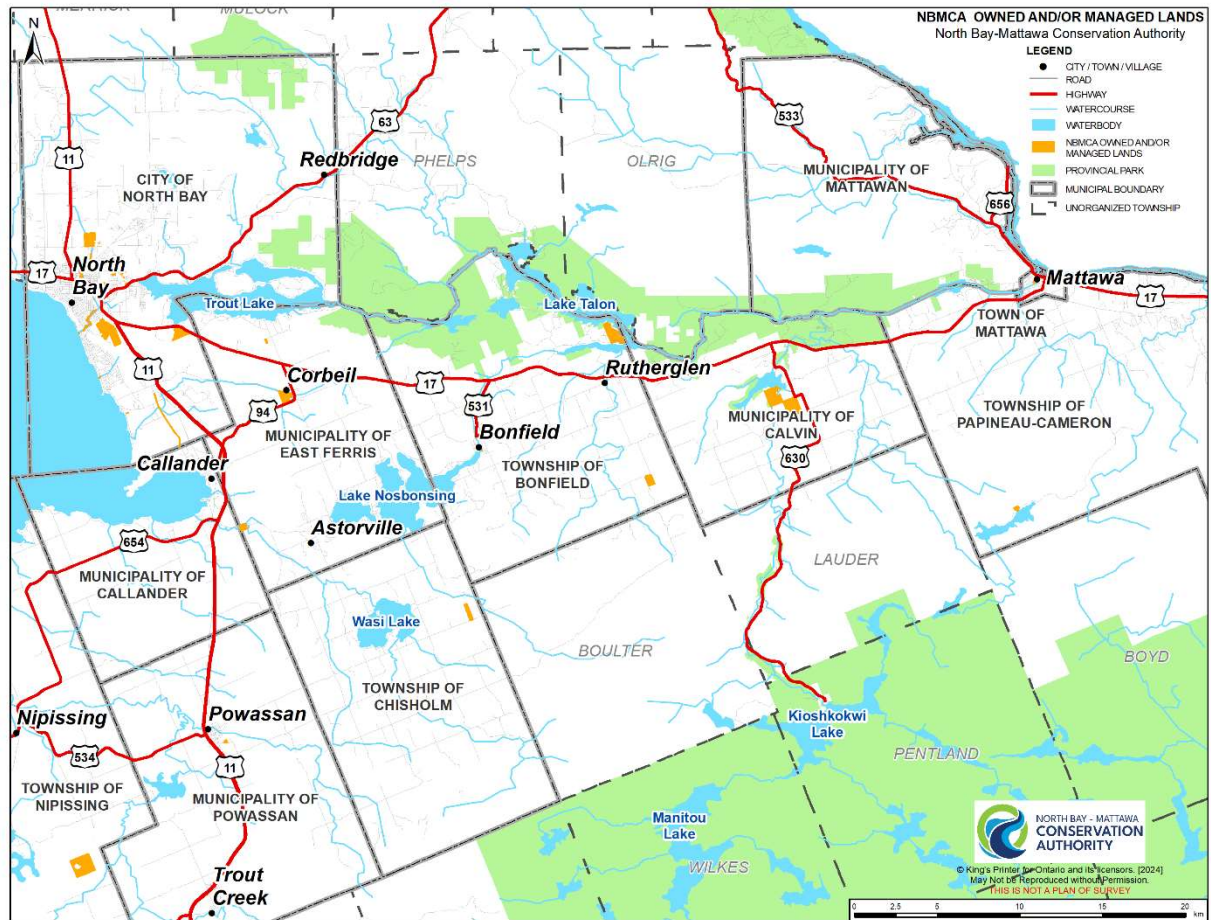
The NBMCA was formed under the Conservation Authorities Act of Ontario in 1972 at the request of its member municipalities. NBMCA administers its objects and responsibilities as defined in the Conservation Authorities Act within a 2900 sq km area, based on the watersheds within the Lake Nipissing and 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. NBMCA also manages the JP Webster Nature Reserve in Nipissing Township, outside the Conservation Authorities Act jurisdiction. See **Figure 1**.

**Figure 1: North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority Area of Jurisdiction**



The NBMCA owns 700 hectares of land within the North Bay regional area. See **Figure 2**.

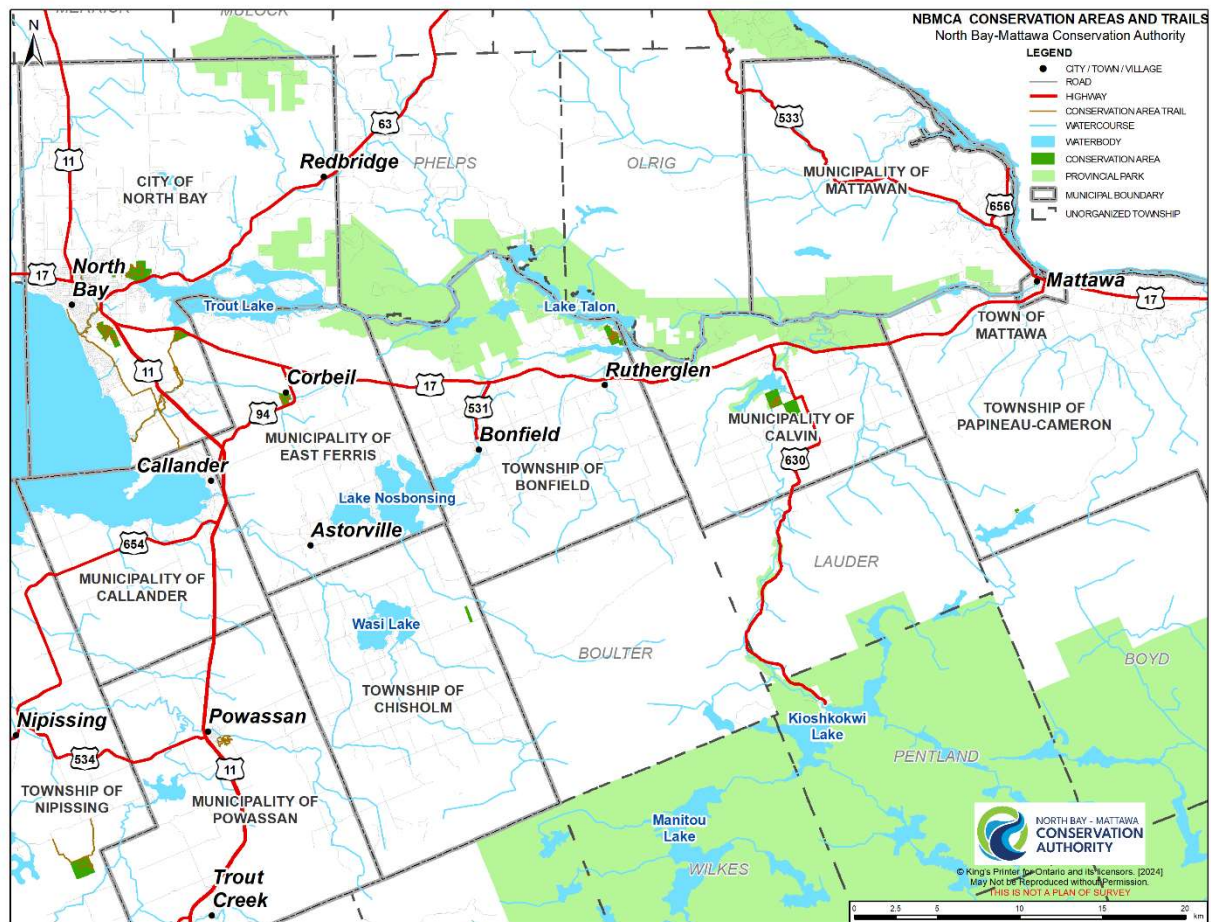
**Figure 2: NBMCA Owned and/or Managed Lands**





NBMCA lands represent key Natural Landscapes that are protected by legislative acts, and associated regulations and policies. These lands are significant for NBMCA and its partners, as natural landscapes, and are characteristic of our watershed. They have provided protection for rare flora and fauna, Natural Heritage features and provided a place where watershed residents and visitors have been able to find enjoyment for over 50 years. As part of these lands, NBMCA owns, and manages 15 conservation areas and trails. See **Figure 3**.

**Figure 3: NBMCA Conservation Areas and Trails**



### 3. Conservation Area Strategy Overview

#### 3.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Conservation Area Strategy is to establish long term objectives that will serve as a framework to inform the Conservation Authority's decision-making related to the lands it owns and manages, including decisions related to policies governing the acquisition and disposition of such lands. The Conservation Area Strategy will align with the mandatory and non-mandatory programs and services that are provided on land owned by NBMCA and include sources of financing for programs and services.

#### 3.2 Goal

The goal of 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:

- Ensuring a solid foundation for making decisions relating to conservation areas.
- Promote sustainable management – 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 method that meets the needs of both residents and visitors in the watershed.



## 4. Guiding Principles and Objectives

The Conservation Authorities Act O.Reg 686/21 S.10 describes the guiding principles and objectives that inform Conservation Authority decision-making related to the lands it owns or manages including decisions related to for the acquisition and disposition of Conservation Authority properties.

### 4.1 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.
  - 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. I.e. Climate Change
  - The Conservation Area Strategy informs policy and decision-making by NBMCA and others.
  - The Objectives take into consideration subsection 10 (1) of O.Reg. 686/21 which outlines additional programs and services which may be provided as mandatory programs and services where NBMCA considers it advisable to meet the objectives on NBMCA lands.
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- Objectives will be established by NBMCA that will inform decision-making related to the lands it owns and manages, including decisions related to policies governing the acquisition and disposition of NBMCA lands.
  - Identification of the mandatory and non-mandatory programs and services that are provided on land owned managed by NBMCA, including the sources of financing for these programs and services.
  - Where the Conservation Authority considers it advisable to achieve the objectives, an assessment of how the lands owned by the NBMCA may Aument natural features and integrate provincially or municipally owned lands, or other public accessible owned lands and trails within the NBMCA Jurisdiction.
  - The NBMCA will establish land use categories for the purpose of classifying lands in the land inventory, described in section 11 of O.Reg. 686/21. These categories are integrated within the inventory, are based on the types of land use activities for each parcel, and other matters of significance related to the land inventory parcels.
  - The strategy will include a process for the periodic review and updating to ensure stakeholders and the public are consulted during the review process.6. A process for the periodic review and updating of the conservation area strategy by the Conservation Authority, including procedures to ensure stakeholders and the public are consulted during the review and update process.

- 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.
- 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 and inform NBMCA's overall Strategic Plan.

## 4.2 Objectives

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.

The goal statement is reinforced by five supporting objectives for the management of the land we own and or manage. Our Conservation Areas protect natural heritage features on the landscape, allow for education and appreciation of features on the landscape and nature, and provide for recreational and tourism opportunities.

**4.2.1 Protection:** The Strategy will strive to protect significant and representative natural heritage features through selective acquisition and resource management and to protect provincially significant elements of the natural and cultural landscapes of NBMCA properties. The strategy 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; To protect and enhance the ecological integrity of the lands within the Conservation Authority watershed(s), maintain and enhance a connected natural heritage system, and protect cultural heritage assets within conservation areas.

Additionally, NBMCA owned and managed lands play a role in protecting air and water quality in the watershed. Publicly accessible natural areas also provide places for mental and physical health and wellbeing.

**4.2.2 Awareness and Education:** The Strategy will aim to provide the public with knowledge and understanding of the conservation areas lands and waters. This includes cultural and natural heritage features sites, their significance, sensitivities, and their ecological functions. Through NBMCA Stewardship programs NBMCA will provide protection of lands, opportunities for education and awareness, promoting better understanding, and appreciation of NBMCA lands.

- 4.2.2 **Recreation:** This Strategy will guide opportunities for outdoor recreation, amenities, trails and accessibility improvements within sustainable natural environments. This can be accomplished through asset management and user surveys, NBMCA will ensure assets are managed for sustainable use while considering added opportunities.
- 4.2.3 **Tourism:** This Strategy will leverage NBMCA natural assets to support & provide opportunities which promote sustainable ecotourism within the province. The NBMCA will work with community partners, to market conservation lands, and to cross promote lands that are identified as opportunities for tourism.
- 4.2.4 **Water Management:** To help fulfill NBMCA goals and objectives for effective watershed management. The Conservation Authority lands will help to implement recommendations of strategic plans (Conservation Strategy, Watershed Strategy). The NBMCA will utilize Conservation Authority Lands for programs and services including education and outreach, flood control structures, stream gauges, demonstration sites, monitoring and research.

The conservation Lands will contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation threats.

NBMCA will protect priority areas including Areas that include valley lands, wellheads, groundwater recharge, sub-watersheds with cold water streams, and species at risk habitat.

All five objectives are important and are considered to be the major if not only reason for the Conservation Authority to own and manage public open space. The order of priority recognizes that without protection, there will be diminishing quantities and qualities of natural heritage features to appreciate. It further recognizes that without public awareness of environmental processes and stewardship, it will be difficult for the Conservation Authority to maintain conservation areas and permit use on a sustainable basis. Finally, it recognizes that conservation areas provide unique settings for outdoor recreation activities and tourism possibilities for the region.

In some conservation areas, all five objectives above will be met. In others, only one or two of the objectives will be sustained. The priority ranking of objectives recognizes that there will be circumstances where the Conservation Authority must decide on one objective that will preclude efforts to meet additional objectives. These decisions will be governed by the above ranking and assist the Conservation Authority in explaining its actions to the public.