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Welcome to our new Board Members from the 2023 AGM elections:

- Mark Battson, Treasurer
- Leslie Bilcox, Director
- Lisa Crawford, Director
- Mike Ryan, Director

To learn more about all our directors visit our website to see our member biographies:
<https://baxtercreekwatershed.org/about-us>.

Environmental Professional Practice Networking Event at Trent University:

- BCWA attended the Environmental Professional Practice Networking Event at Trent University on November 23, 2023, to meet faculty and future students.

Announcement: BCWA is now an Ontario Nature, Nature Network partner! Visit our partners page to learn more: <https://baxtercreekwatershed.org/our-partners>.

CONSERVING 30% OF OUR LAND AND WATER BIODIVERSITY BY 2030

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), an international organization working in the field of nature conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, called for a global target to conserve 30% of the world's biodiversity by 2030. This target was proposed in 2019 and “30 by 30” became the third of 23 global biodiversity targets for 2030 in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted in December 2022 at the 2022 United Nations Biodiversity Conference of the Parties (COP15) at the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) conference held in Montreal, Canada.

What do these global targets look like at a local level? What can we do locally to conserve biodiversity? While Canada bid into this goal at the Global Biodiversity Conference in 2022, certainly protected areas in Canada are achieved through a variety of mechanisms implemented at the federal, provincial, and municipal level as well as through Indigenous conservation measures and by some private landowners.

With a “local lens” in mind, this fall BCWA initiated a “Credit for Product” project through the Ecosystem Management Technology Program at Fleming College to consider the following:

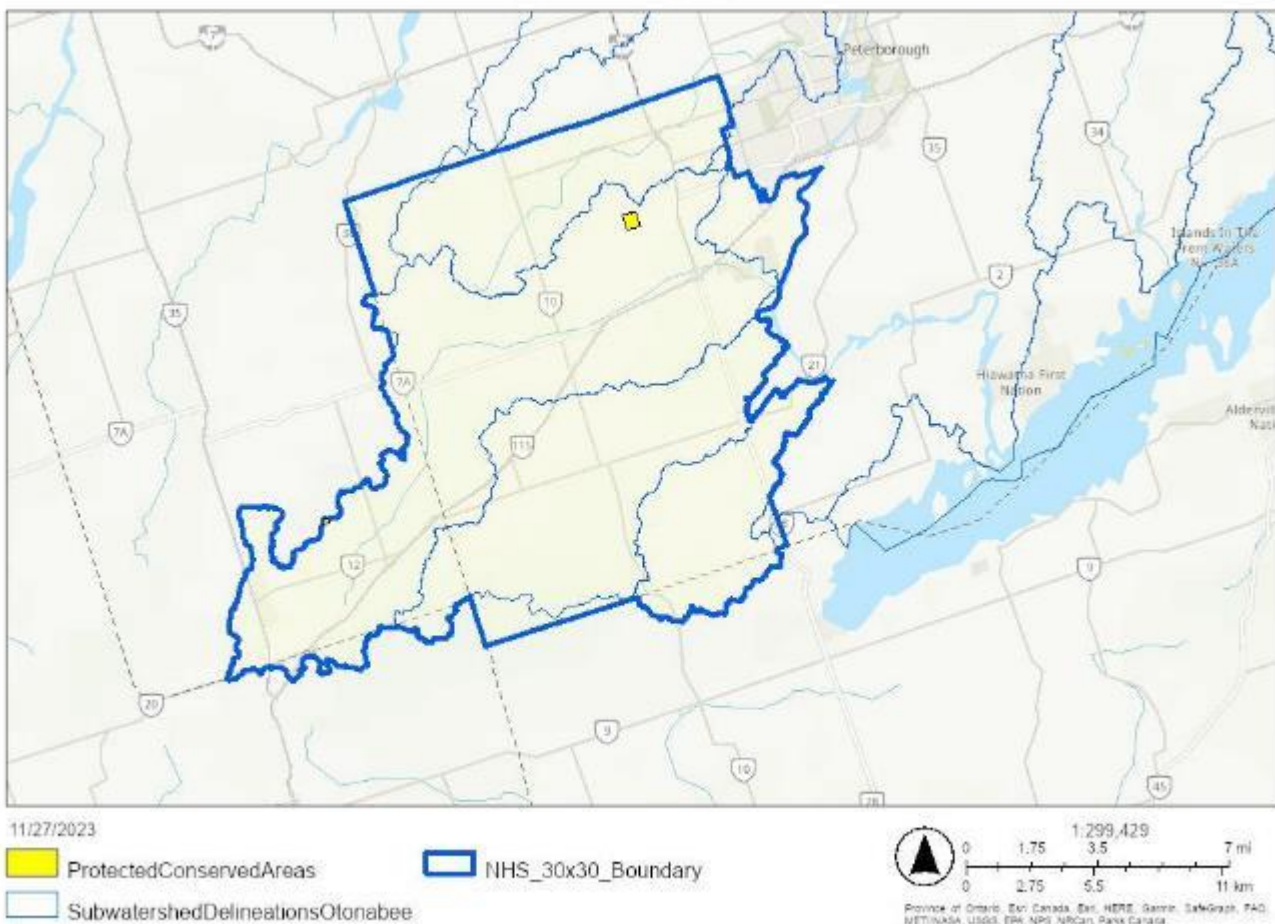
- How are we contributing locally to the 30 by 30 target?
- What approach could be used for assessing potential contributions?

- How can 30 by 30 protection benefit the township and community?

At a local level there are various existing conservation lands that have the potential to qualify for the “30 by 30” target. It’s important to recognize that the target does not imply conservation of 30% of *all* lands and *all* waters. It’s really about looking at areas of the landscape that have the most value to contribute to species biodiversity; so areas such as mature woodlands, wetlands, stream valleys, and other significant ecological areas. The next step can then be prioritizing which areas should be protected...forever.

In consideration of the stringent selection criteria laid out by the IUCN, our initial assessment is that within the Township of Cavan-Monaghan and our connecting subwatersheds of Cavan Creek, Baxter Creek, and Squirrel Creek, 0.11% of the total area qualifies for the 30 by 30 target. This includes the Cavan Swamp Wildlife Area and a very small portion of Fleetwood Creek Natural Area (yellow areas in the 30 by 30 Qualifying Areas map below).

30 by 30 Qualifying Areas

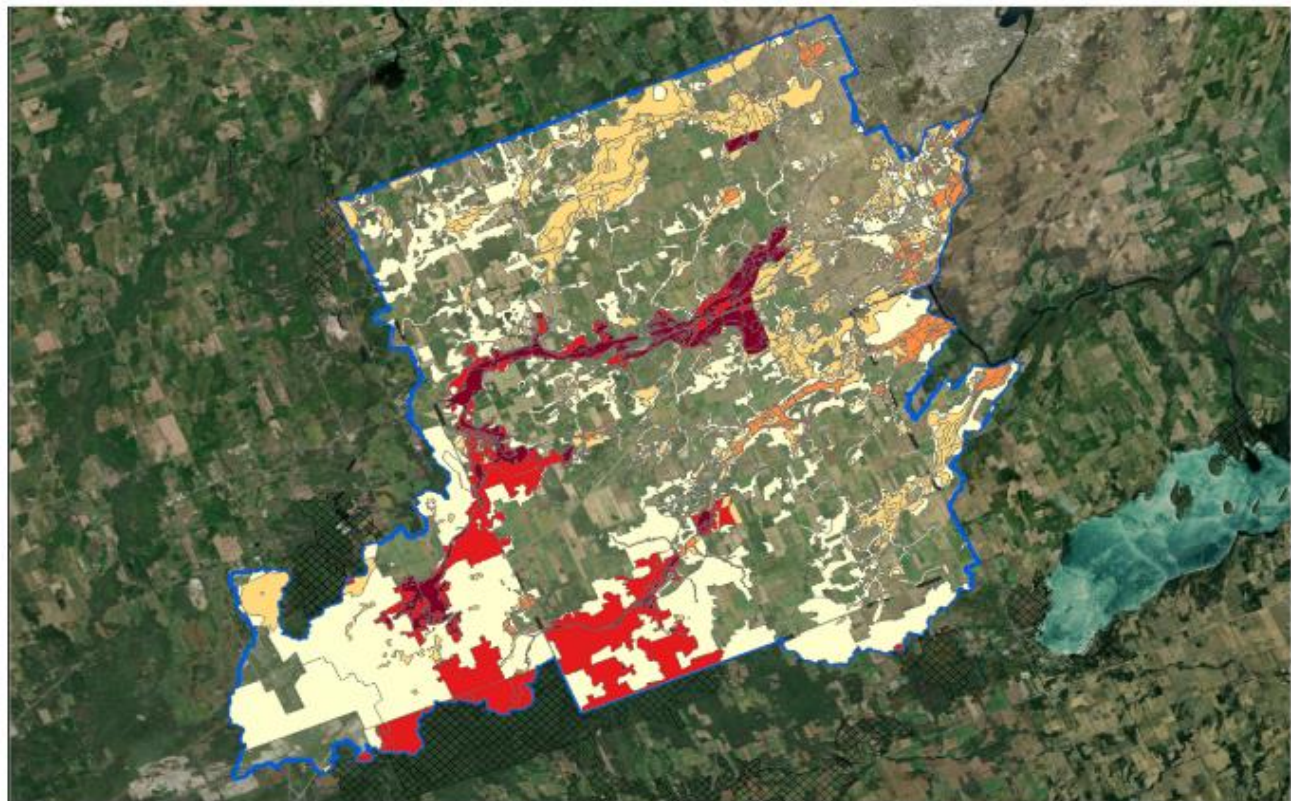


While this number is low, our assessment was likely the first time this area of interest was considered against the 30 by 30 target and the criteria set by IUCN as to what can qualify. To qualify, protected areas need to have clearly defined boundaries, effective means to control activities that could degrade biodiversity on the site, long-

term year-round protection (preferably on the title of the property), and a management plan so that conservation targets can be achieved.

Working with our three students, BCWA developed and tested a weighted algorithm to overlay various layers of natural heritage land use policies (e.g., Official Plan Natural Heritage Areas land use, Provincially Significant Wetlands, Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest, Regulated Areas such as Floodplains) to produce a rank of which areas of land have the most potential to contribute to the global target under existing land use policies (see the Rank of Potentially Qualifying Areas below).

Rank of Potentially Qualifying Areas



11/27/2023

NHS_30x30_Final_Ranked

0.000000 - 3.250000

3.250001 - 9.500000



9.500001 - 15.750000

15.750001 - 24.000000

24.000001 - 47.500000



24.000001 - 47.500000

World Hillshade



0 2.25 4.5 9 mi

0 3.5 7 14 km

1:365,453

Esri, NASA, NOAA, USGS, Province of Ontario, Esri Canada, Esri HERE, Garmin, Swisstopo, FAO, NEIT/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, INRCA, Parks

BCWA is now refining this process and looking to present the outcomes to the community through our website's watershed hub page, in person meetings, and at local events. While the approach benefits species biodiversity, contributing to the global target benefits everyone. While the mental and physical health benefits of outdoor recreational natural areas are well known, there are other important but less appreciated benefits. For example, natural areas in proximity to residential homes increase real estate market values. In turn, higher property assessment values increase property tax revenues for municipalities. At the same time, some conservation easements and certain environmental policies may qualify landowners for tax incentives. Additionally, some ecological features provide tangible benefits to local properties, such as how some types of

headwater wetlands provide flood attenuation capacity during heavy rain events, which can protect downstream built-up areas from flooding. To understand the complexity of these “ecosystem service values”, the next stage of this project will involve assessing the economic benefits of natural heritage features and attributing those economic service values to the 30 by 30 features in our mapping and updating the assessment algorithm to factor in these benefits.

While this is a complex undertaking, what we want people to know is that it’s important to understand that contributing to this target can be achieved through protected areas on both public *and* private lands, without having to transfer title ownership to a regulatory agency. Private lands with other effective area-based conservation measures to protect biodiversity can contribute to these global targets *without a transfer of title deed*. This is an important fact and sometimes a common misunderstanding: land title and ownership of protected lands can be held privately while contributing to the target while existing public lands may qualify without any changes to existing policy. It’s just a matter of people committing to the conservation of significant ecological areas of the watershed for future generations of humans and wildlife. It really is that simple.

“But no weather interfered fatally with my walks, or rather my going abroad, for I frequently tramped eight or ten miles through the deepest snow to keep an appointment with a beech tree, or a yellow birch, or an old acquaintance amongst the pines.”

- Henry David Thoreau, from Walden, 1854

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

The past year was one of momentum punctuated with periods of change for Baxter Creek Watershed Alliance. Here are some highlights, events, and changes we experienced in 2023:

- Brooke Ceci, our student placement from January to March through Trent University School of the Environment, completed perhaps the first comprehensive review of the completed water quality period of record for Baxter Creek using over 50 years of data collected through the Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network of the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.
- Our 2023 Fleming College GeoCommunity students, Jordan Tishler, Sam Pethick, and Kris Lebert launched a new map series online, which includes a watershed characterization dashboard and new custom maps and mobile data collection apps to support community citizen science environmental monitoring.
- In March 2023, we met with the Honorable Minister David Piccini, former Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, to address his question to us if anyone had considered regulating the lands of the former Millbrook Correctional Centre as a Conservation Reserve. We presented the Minister with a 60-page conservation assessment report on the value of protecting the ecological areas of the property.
- We completed the first draft for review of our three-year 2023-26 Strategic Plan.
- We engaged staff from Kawartha Land Trust and local farmers to affirm the important role agricultural stewardship already plays in our community when considering managed lands as conservation lands.

- In April 2023, we were awarded \$3,000 through the inaugural Peterborough Rotary Environmental Innovators Fund to help support our operations.
- Over the summer, in response to our letters of engagement, we had the opportunity to visit Alderville First Nation and meet with Chief Taynar Simpson who then accepted our invitation as our keynote speaker to speak on the theme of “resiliency” at our 2nd annual watershed forum held in September.
- While we had some changes to our board of directors, we initiated a recruitment campaign and welcomed four local residents as new members to our board including Mark Battson, Leslie Bilcox, Lisa Crawford, and Mike Ryan.
- We onboarded six new students from Trent University and Fleming College to work on priority environmental projects with members of our board who act as mentors and supervisors to these up-and-coming environmental professionals.
- We engaged with Connie Danielsen from GoFigure Business Services to file our 2023 annual return to the Canada Revenue Agency.

COMMENTS ON THE MASTER SERVICING STUDY

An update on BCWA comments on the Master Servicing Study (MSS).

Over the last year, the Township has been undertaking a Master Servicing Study (MSS) under the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) framework, as approved under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act. The MSS is a high-level study under the master planning framework of the Municipal Class EA process. Certain projects may require additional study in the future to comply with environmental assessment requirements.

The MSS focuses on municipal services in the Millbrook Urban Area (or Settlement Area), in line with the Township’s Growth Management Strategy (GMS). The objectives of the MSS are to:

- Determine the water and wastewater infrastructure needs.
- Develop immediate and long-term servicing strategies to meet those needs.

The Township of Cavan Monaghan completed a Growth Management Strategy (GMS) for the Millbrook Urban Area, identifying population and employment growth to 2051. The GMS also identified the Future Settlement Area Boundary, which is the Study Area Boundary for the MSS. The MSS analyzes existing infrastructure in terms of the total water supply and storage system as well as the wastewater system and treatment. As one can imagine, this is a complex end-to-end assessment as it considers the human use of water, from source, to tap, to drain, to treatment, and finally the release of treated effluent out to the natural environment. Even the management and impacts of stormwater is considered under this framework.

Members of the board of directors of BCWA followed this study closely and participated throughout all public checkpoints including providing commentary to the draft MSS study. This involved meeting with representatives from the external consultant on the study to ensure members understood the process and could provide effective comments. The draft Township of Cavan Monaghan Water and Wastewater Master Servicing Study, Class Environmental Assessment Report, dated November 20, 2023 is now online:

https://www.cavanmonaghan.net/en/live-here/resources/Class-EA-Report-DRAFT_AODA-RVA-signed-with-Appendices.pdf. We encourage everyone to review the draft Class EA report. This study will contribute to the sustainability of our water resources for future generations and to ensure water resources are managed in a way to lessen the impact of our activities on the surrounding environment and habitats.

*“The fire is dying
Now my lamp is growing dim
The shades of night are lifting
The morning light steals across my window pane
Where webs of snow are drifting
If I could only have you near
To breathe a sigh or two
I would be happy just to hold the hands I love
On this winter night with you
And to be once again with you.”*

- Gordon Lightfoot, from “Song for a Winter's Night”,

In memory of BCWA director, David Nathaniel Webster, who passed away on March 25, 2023

STATUS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CAVAN MONAGHAN PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

In March 2022, the Township of Cavan Monaghan embarked on a process to update the 2011 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. In addition to a comprehensive review of and recommendations for delivery of services, culture and recreation facilities, and parks and open space, the planning process will identify and review options for the future of the Millbrook Arena and property, as well as the remaining lands at the new Cavan Monaghan Community Centre.

The goal of this process is to produce a working draft of the plan called “Vision 2035 – Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation”. The township has sought feedback from the Community throughout this process. Similar to BCWA’s involvement in the Master Servicing Study, director members of BCWA participated and provided input through the Vision 2035 community engagement process. BCWA supports the value of open public spaces, including green open recreational spaces with accessible trails, as vital components to the health and wellness of our community. The working draft of Vision 2035 is now online:

<https://www.cavanmonaghan.net/en/things-to-do/resources/Working-Draft-Vision-2035-Report.pdf>.

UPDATE: BAXTER CREEK WATERSHED ALLIANCE 2023-26 STRATEGIC PLAN

Over the past year, a subcommittee of directors of BCWA embarked on a three-year strategic planning process to document our values and strategic goals and objectives. To support this strategy the board is also producing an action plan. This is an evolving process as members of BCWA are actively working on community-based partnerships and projects. So, the strategic planning process has become an iterative process, as our current actions continually inform the planning process. If you visit our website, you will see that “Our Initiatives” web page has been redesigned into “Our Strategy” page listing our goals and objectives with our supporting values or pillars. Visit our website to learn more at: <https://baxtercreekwatershed.org/our-strategy>.

The strategic plan considers the role of BCWA as a volunteer community group and how the organization engages with the community, stakeholders, and broader right holders. This is a holistic assessment as BCWA engages a wide range of people, including members of the community, citizens who are working lands across our watersheds, as well as stakeholders at the Township staff and council level. At an education level, we are meeting with local teachers as we help support biodiversity curriculum development at the grade six level in Millbrook, as well as educators and researchers at higher levels in both Fleming College and Trent University where our community-based research projects have become well established. For instance, did you know BCWA has supported or is in the process of supporting the graduation of 12 students in regional post-secondary programs? Under the supervision of their faculty advisers, these students contribute their skills and expertise to the work of BCWA here in our community.

Beyond education, BCWA has been engaging with representatives of the provincial government including the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. While a new minister has recently replaced the Honorable David Piccini, into 2024 BCWA will consider how to engage with the new minister to shed light on the significant environmental values as well as the pressures we have locally.

BCWA has also begun engaging with regional right holders, the First Nation communities within the Treaty 20 area. Our initial engagement with Alderville First Nation has been through Chief Taynar Simpson who was the keynote speaker at our fall 2023 watershed forum. We are looking to broaden this engagement over the next few years with other Treaty 20 First Nations concerned with natural heritage conservation and cultural preservation.

Ultimately, the strategy will be implemented through an action plan with measurable outcomes on the landscape to help BCWA achieve our vision of people living and working in Cavan-Monaghan and the Baxter Creek area, caring for a clean and healthy watershed while strengthening our mission dedicated to conserving and enhancing the local watershed environment for future generations of humans and wildlife.

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Baxter Creek Watershed Alliance (Corporation# 1348381-9) and Old Millbrook Jail Lands Association (Corporation# 1348608-7) are Canadian federal nonprofit corporation entities registered with Corporations Canada, located in the Village of Millbrook, Township of Cavan-Monaghan, County of Peterborough, Ontario, Canada.

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