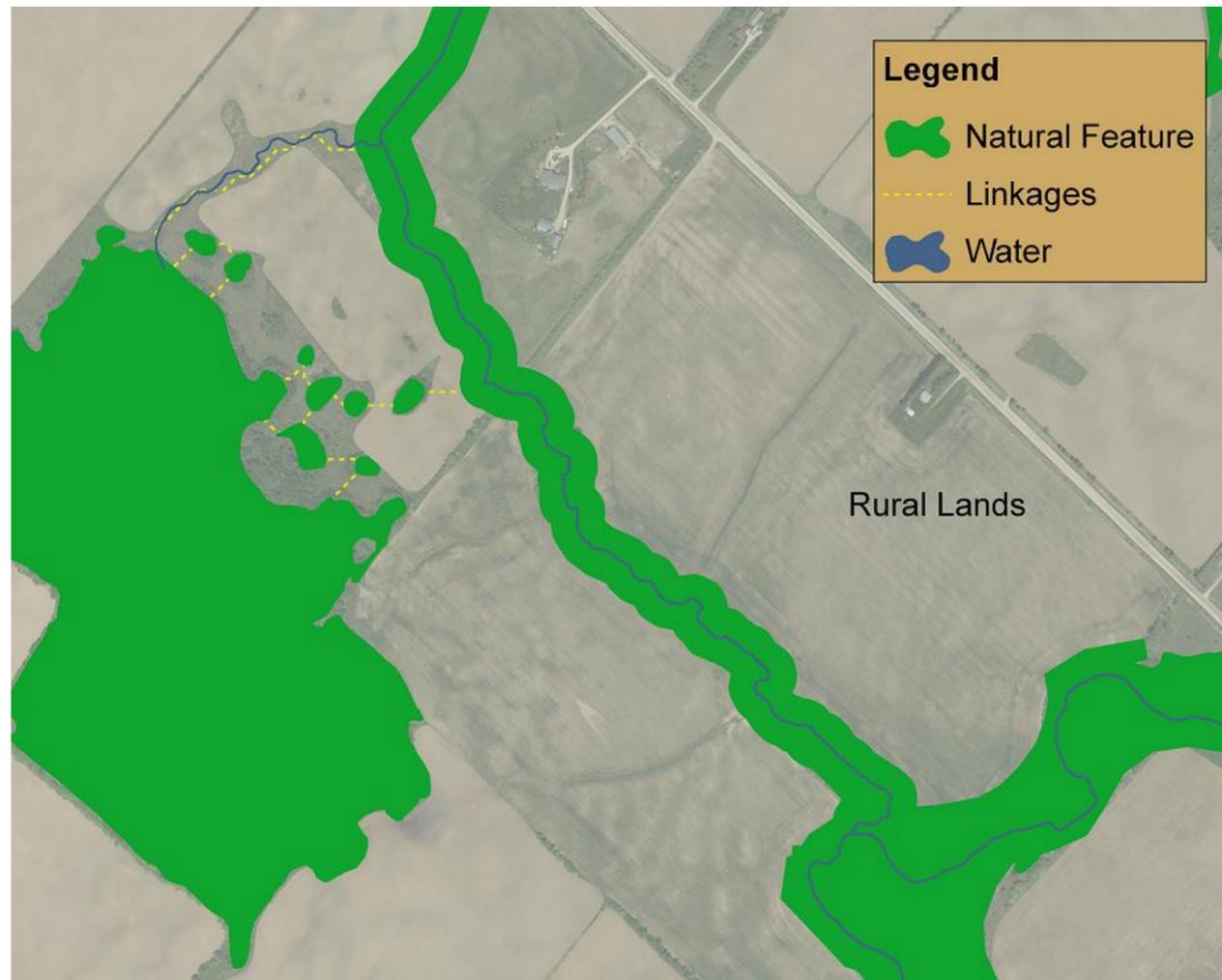


Wellington County Natural Heritage System



What is a Natural Heritage System?

A natural heritage system is a network of interconnected natural features and areas such as wetlands, woodlands, valleylands, lakes and rivers.



Natural Heritage Systems are identified to help conserve biological diversity, maintain ecological functions (e.g. movement corridors for wildlife, endangered species habitat) and sustain ecosystem services that we all depend on (e.g. pollination, clean water, flood damage reduction).



Henslow's Sparrow



Spotted Turtle

Biological Diversity

The Henslow's Sparrow and the Spotted Turtle are two species at risk found in Wellington County



Ecological Functions

An aerial photograph showing the importance of corridors within a rural landscape



Ecosystem Services

Bees and other pollinators are crucial for the pollination of fruit, vegetable, oil, seed, and nut crops

Wellington County Natural Heritage System



What is the goal of this project?

The goals of this project are to identify, through the engagement of stakeholders, a Natural Heritage System that will:

- ✓ Maintain and/or improve local and regional biodiversity
- ✓ Recognize local-scale linkage between and among natural heritage features and areas
- ✓ Provide a scientific basis for land and water stewardship activities, conservation land acquisition, priorities for Inventory Programs, and possible future amendments to the County Official Plan
- ✓ Inform resource-management decision-making
- ✓ Support sustainable economic opportunities
- ✓ Support sustainable recreational use



Wellington County Natural Heritage System

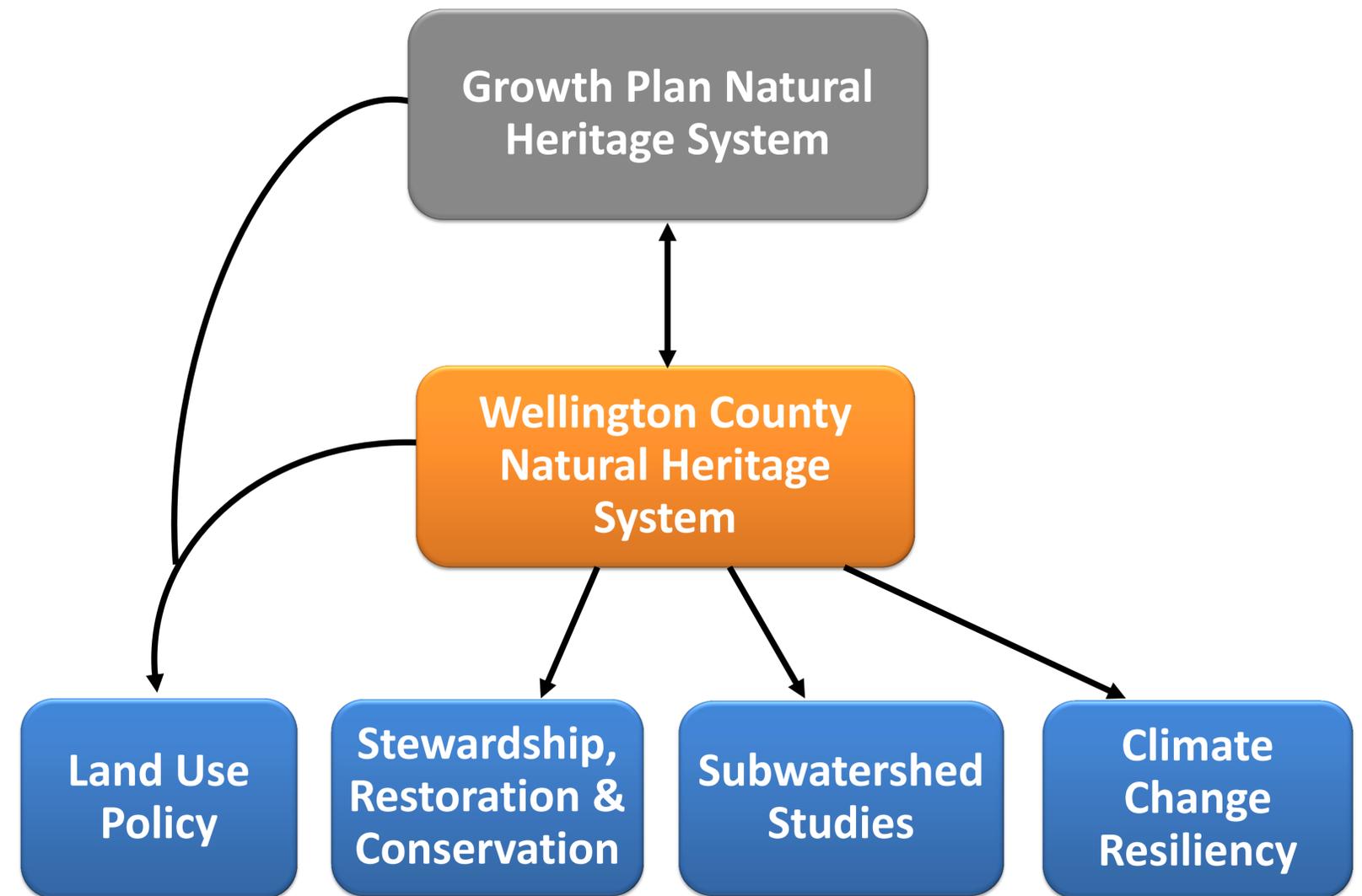


The relationship to the Growth Plan Natural Heritage System

The County recognizes that the regional scale Natural Heritage System in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan NHS) was recently issued and that decisions on planning matters must conform with the policies related to that system.

At the same time, the County feels that it needs a more detailed and locally developed Natural Heritage System as a scientific basis for:

- ✓ Refinements to the Growth Plan NHS when we amend the County Official Plan to conform with the Growth Plan and consider possible future policy amendments
- ✓ Stewardship programs and strategies
- ✓ Watershed and subwatershed planning
- ✓ Developing climate change strategies



Wellington County Natural Heritage System



Methods used to map Wellington County's draft Natural Heritage System

Step 1: Identification of Existing Natural Heritage Components

- The best available data from Conservation Authorities and the Province were used to map natural features.
- Existing Natural Heritage Components of the draft Natural Heritage System were selected using science-based criteria.
- Ecologically important components that could not be mapped due to insufficient data were included in the draft Natural Heritage System as text.

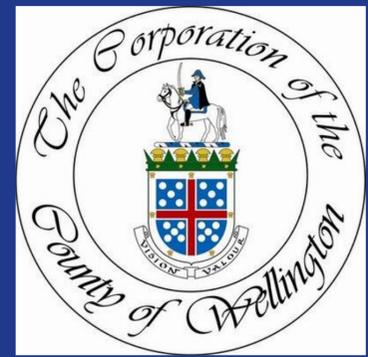
Step 2: Identification of Stewardship Components

- Enhancement Linkages were mapped using an objective, automated software tool (Linkage Mapper*) in a Geographic Information Systems (GIS).
- Enhancement Woodlands were selected using science-based criteria. If enhanced through voluntary stewardship action these woodlands could increase the overall woodland cover in Wellington County.

We want to hear from YOU!
Please leave your comments and suggestions on a comment form!

* McRae, B.H., and D.M. Kavanagh. 2014. Linkage Mapper connectivity analysis software. The Nature Conservancy, Seattle, WA. [Available at: <http://www.circuitscape.org/linkagemapper>].

Wellington County Natural Heritage System



What is included in Wellington's Natural Heritage System Mapping?

Existing Natural Heritage Components

Components	Criteria
Wetlands	✓ Any evaluated non-Provincially Significant wetlands and Provincially Significant wetlands
	✓ Any unevaluated wetlands mapped by the MNRF or Conservation Authorities
Woodlands	✓ Woodlands in Urban Centers: ≥ 1 ha and ≥ 30 m wide
	✓ Woodlands in Rural Areas: ≥ 4 ha and ≥ 30 m wide
	✓ Woodlands of any size that is contained by or is within 30m of an existing natural heritage component meeting a criteria threshold
	✓ Woodlands containing a vegetation community with a provincial ranking of S1, S2 or S3 (as ranked by the NHIC) or a global ranking of G1, G2 or G3 (as ranked by the NatureServe Network) (text criterion)
	✓ Woodlands containing 10 or more trees/ha greater than 100 years old (text criterion)
	✓ Woodlands containing 10 or more trees/ha that are ≥ 50 cm in diameter (text criterion)
Valleylands	✓ Valleylands associated with watercourses, waterbodies and wetlands
	✓ Valleylands representing distinctive landforms such as oxbows, bottomlands, terraces, deltas, etc. (text criterion)
Aquatic Habitat	✓ All watercourses
	✓ Waterbodies connected to a watercourse
	✓ All headwaters (text criterion)
	✓ Waterbodies within 30 m of an existing natural heritage component meeting a criteria threshold
Significant Wildlife Habitat (SWH)	✓ All identified SWH (text criterion)
Habitat of Endangered and Threatened Species	✓ All identified habitat of Endangered and Threatened Species (text criterion)
Areas of Natural and Scientific Importance(ANSI)	✓ All Life Science ANSIs
Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA)	✓ All ESAs

Stewardship Components

Components	Criteria
Enhancement Woodlands	In lower-tier municipalities with $\leq 30\%$ woodland cover: ✓ Woodlands in Rural Areas: 1-4 ha in size and ≥ 30 m wide
Enhancement Linkages	✓ Flexible connections between Existing Natural Heritage Components

Wellington County Natural Heritage System



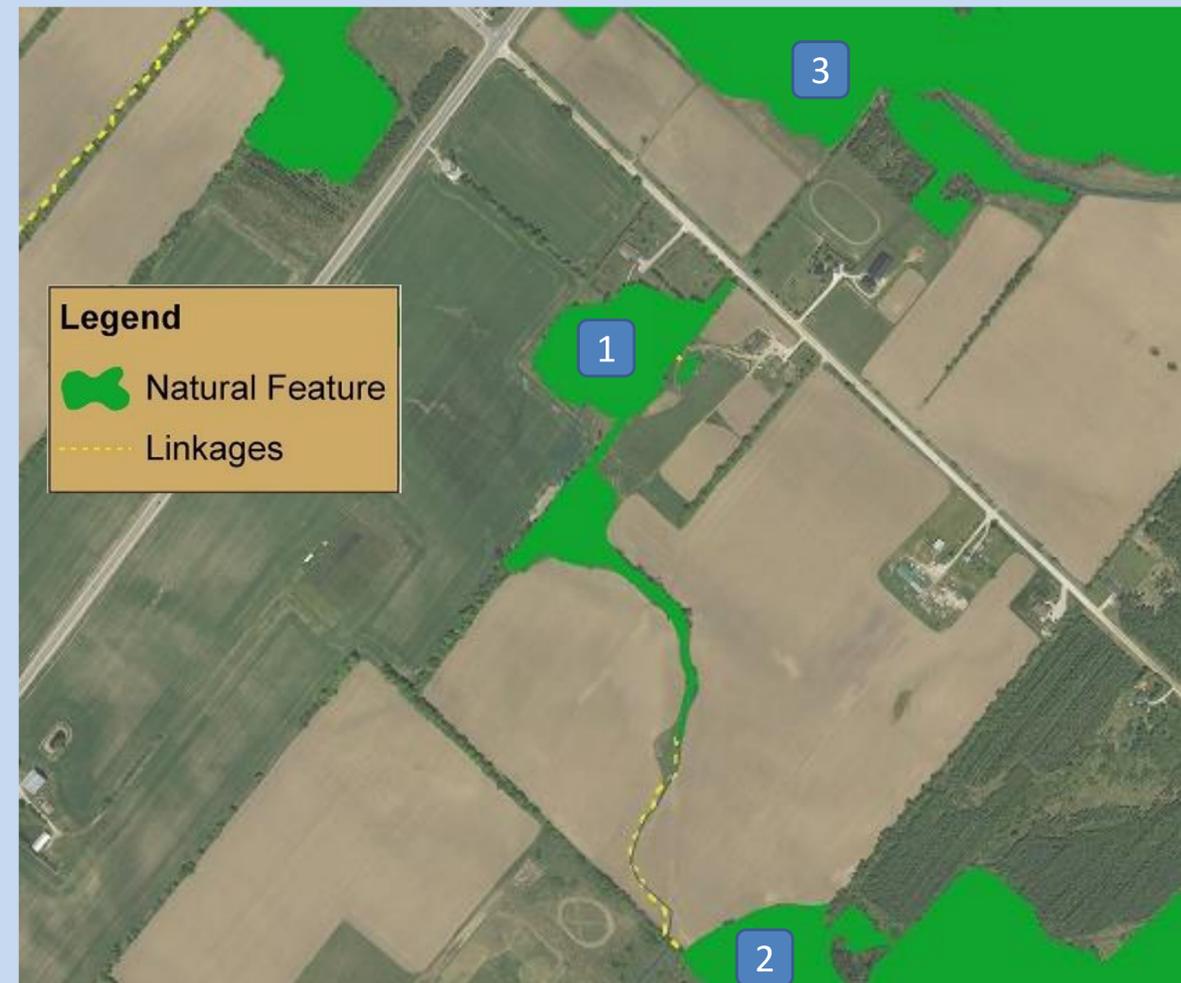
What are Enhancement Linkages?

Enhancement Linkages aim to improve or create connections between Existing Natural Enhancement Components in the Natural Heritage System.

Enhancement linkages were mapped by identifying the “path of least resistance” between Existing Natural Heritage Components.

Enhancement Linkages should be thought of as *approximate* and *flexible* locations.

An example of the “Path of Least Resistance”



Feature 1 is isolated from the other natural features on the landscape. The “path of least resistance” occurs between feature 1 and feature 2, rather than feature 3, because this linkage follows a watercourse and does not require a road crossing.

Wellington County Natural Heritage System



What programs and funding are available to landowners?

Wellington County and its Stewardship Partners have a long history of working with residents to protect and improve natural heritage in the County through voluntary stewardship programs such as:

- ✓ The Green Legacy Programme
- ✓ Trees for Mapleton
- ✓ Trees for Minto
- ✓ Wellington Rural Water Quality Program
- ✓ CVC Landowner Action Fund
- ✓ Halton Watershed Stewardship program
- ✓ Reforestation and Tree Planting Programs offered by your local Conservation Authority
- ✓ ...and more!

