



Submission to ERO for Proposal #019-5908

August 12, 2023

We are writing to request the inclusion of the Kawarthas Naturally Connected (KNC) and related Baseline Connectivity mapping, a critical section in the new Peterborough County Official Plan. This desired change is explained by Peterborough County in its report on the Natural Heritage section of the draft *Provincial Planning Statement*:

“A Natural Heritage System is still required to be implemented, but there is no longer a requirement to utilize a provincially mapped system as is required by the Growth Plan. Council has previously supported the Kawartha’s Naturally Connected (KNC) natural heritage system mapping and this could now be utilized by the County.” (Peterborough County, *Report PPW 2023-16*, August 2, 2023, p.3)

Background

Our organization, the **Environment Council for Clear, Stoney and White Lakes**, is a volunteer, not-for-profit multi-stakeholder organization dedicated to protecting the health of our lakes and surrounding natural environment. We have been supported in this work by seven local lake associations and several partner organizations, including the Kawartha Land Trust, Kawartha Lakes Stewards Association, Stony Lake Heritage Foundation, Trent University, Fleming College, Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Provincial Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Provincial Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and several funding sources over the years. Our membership includes representatives from seven lake associations and liaison representatives from the four municipalities having jurisdiction on Clear, Stoney and White Lakes in the Kawarthas.

*www.environmentcouncil.ca.

The Shoreline Conservation Initiative (SCI) for Peterborough County is a volunteer non-profit founded in 2021 by the Environment Council to promote natural shoreline preservation and restoration across the lakes and rivers of Peterborough County. SCI supports KNC and Baseline Connectivity mapping in Peterborough County’s OP for the greater detail and information it provides on Kawartha’s natural heritage.

“The Kawarthas Naturally Connected: A Natural Heritage System” for the Kawartha Lakes Region is the product of a regional multi-stakeholder committee established by the Provincial MNR in 2011. The KNC NHS is focused on the identification and digital mapping of significant natural areas and linkages important to maintain the health of the landscape. This mapping can be used to support land use planning, stewardship, conservation and restoration of natural heritage.

The process of mapping development, production and the initial implementation phase took place from 2011-2018, with the understanding that implementation could continue for up to 20 years. During the initial phase of development and early implementation, at least twenty-eight multistakeholder community, organization and government representatives volunteered **at least 100 dedicated hours each** over several years. The Environment Council was represented on both the KNC Planning and Implementation Committees beginning in 2011.

Several MNRF GIS, biology/ecology and communications staff provided expert technical guidance, data and support - integral in the development and implementation processes, including publication of the **KNC NHS final report and letter of endorsement from KNC stakeholders in 2012 ***

Baseline Connectivity mapping was also developed in coordination with the KNC initiative by MNR in 2013.

The objective of the Connectivity mapping is to delineate areas that connect or, through restoration, have the potential to connect existing areas of natural cover by fine tuning the previously existing, generalized corridors into seven core areas, corridors, linkages and adjacent areas of natural cover that more closely capture the existing distribution of natural cover. This mapping serves to defragment and re-connect the remaining patches of natural cover across the settled landscapes of southern Ontario.

Implementation Values for KNC and Connectivity Mapping

Combined, these maps (KNC NHS and Baseline Connectivity) serve to fine tune the generalized Provincial NHS mapping by more closely capturing the existing distribution of natural cover with far less inclusion of agricultural and other developed areas compared to previous mapping.

Examples: Identification of Natural Heritage System core areas and corridors
Identification of areas for restoration
Identification of priorities for inventory and research projects
Provision of a resource for assessing impacts of development
Provision of a resource for land use planning and policy decisions

To summarize, using KNC and Connectivity data and mapping is therefore promoted in support of a more informed and functional approach to natural heritage preservation,

including residents' voluntary, educated stewardship efforts and more effective municipal land management of the remaining natural heritage. KNC and Connectivity mapping has been implemented and utilized by several environmental organizations, and university and government colleagues over the years.

We are hopefully anticipating that this productive activity will again be supported by the Provincial government.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this document to support utilization of KNC and Connectivity mapping by the County of Peterborough.

Respectfully yours,

Roslyn Moore, Chair, Environment Council for Clear, Stoney and White Lakes
www.environmentcouncil.ca Email : "roslyn.moore@rogers.com"

Mary E. Webb, Shoreline Conservation Initiative for Peterborough County

*Ministry of Natural Resources, "Kawarthas Naturally Connected Natural Heritage System" report, January 2013.