BELLEVILLE TO POINT ANNE
SIGNIFICANT AREAS

STRATEGIC PLAN

APRIL 1997
BELLEVILLE TO POINT ANNE

"WITHOUT HABITAT, THERE IS NO WILDLIFE. IT'S THAT SIMPLE"

WILDLIFE HABITAT CANADA
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Dawn Holcumbe
Gary Hunt
Greg Lloyd
Anne MacDonald
Kay Manderville

Caroline McBrien
Dan Meens
Katherine Mills
Hugh Minielly
Chris Morden
Terry Murphy
Todd Norris
Karen Poste
Graydon Pound
Olive Root

Chris Schaefer
Brian Smith
Paul Walsh
Robert Hayward
Bert Hielema

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Quinte Secondary School
Landowner's Group
Landowner's Group
Landowner's Group
Landowner's Group
Landowner's Group
Landowner’s Group
Landowner’s Group
Landowner’s Group
Lafarge Construction Materials
Quinte Field Naturalists
Property Manager, Lafarge Construction Materials
Economic Development, Hastings County
Board Member, Moira River Conservation Authority
BTL Specialty Resins
Landowner's Group
Councillor, City of Belleville
Board Member, Moira River Conservation Authority
Landowner's Group
Lafarge Construction Materials
Hastings Historical Society
Moira Secondary School
R. Morden Engineering and Construction Ltd.
General Manager, Quinte Conservation
Ecologist, Ministry of Natural Resources
Planner, Township of Thurlow
Board Member, Thurlow, Moira River Conservation Authority
Implementation Advisory Committee (Bay of Quinte RAP)
Quinte Field Naturalists
Planner, Ministry of Natural Resources
Chairman, City of Belleville Planning Committee
Planner, County of Hastings
Point Anne Resident
Hastings Appraisal Services

This Strategic Report has been prepared by:

Karen Hartley
Dan Korchuk
Andy Margetson
Stewart Murray
Mark Snider

Habitat Project Coordinator, Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan (QRAP)
Project Facilitator, Belleville to Pt. Anne Significant Areas Project
Landowner Contact, QRAP/Eastern Habitat Joint Venture
Director of Planning, City of Belleville
Municipal Planning Advisor, Quinte Conservation
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**Introduction**

Wetlands and shorelands in the Bay of Quinte region have been degraded by human activities. It is estimated that only 33% of original habitats are left. These areas provide habitats and maintain the health of our environment and quality of life. Protecting these areas is important because of historical losses and continuing development pressures. Some of these remnant habitats are located between Belleville and Point Anne and include Belleville Marsh, Bell Creek Swamp, Blessington Creek Marsh and the Point Anne Alvar. The area also has an interesting history associated with the early cement industry in Ontario.

In 1995 various groups with the common interest of protecting and restoring these features came together. It was recognized that local agencies and members of the community must be involved in a coordinated and cooperative effort. Accordingly, both the Working Group and Landowners Group were established to develop a strategic plan, develop action plans, and implement land securement and management.

This Strategic Plan completes the first phase of the project. It provides direction for future work. Specifically, it expresses the principles guiding this project, defines our vision for the area, lists attainable goals and identifies realistic objectives. The Strategic Plan will form the basis for developing action plans, the next phase of the project.

**Site Description**

The study area is bounded to the West by Herchimer Avenue in Belleville, County Road 17 (Point Anne Lane) in Thurlow Township to the East, Highway 2 and the Canadian Pacific Railway to the North, and the Bay of Quinte to the South. Approximately 100 ha. of wetland, five kilometres of shoreline and parts of a significant alvar are present (refer to Map 1).

**Belleville Marsh** is a provincially significant wetland within the City of Belleville. It consists primarily of marsh with some interspersion of swamp. A variety of animals use the area for nesting, spawning, nursery, feeding and cover habitat.

The area also includes a small portion of **Bell Creek Swamp**. This 88 ha. wetland extends as far north as Highway 401. It is provincially significant because of the wildlife habitats it provides, and recreational and hydrological values. The small wetland area at the mouth of the creek offers important opportunities for maintaining and restoring wildlife corridors both between Belleville Marsh and Blessington Creek Marsh and inland to the remainder of the Bell Creek Swamp.

**Blessington Creek Marsh**, a Class three wetland, is located at the mouth of Blessington Creek, just north and west of Point Anne. It is one of only five wetlands around the Bay of Quinte that support significant stands of wild rice. Osprey have nested here for at least the last three years.

**Point Anne Alvar** has been identified as one of few remaining moderate to high quality alvars in Ontario. Alvars are areas of thin soil over limestone bedrock that support characteristically sparse vegetation, often consisting of rare plants and communities. The
Point Anne Alvar contains several rare species such as Dwarf Hackberry and remnant prairie species. It is part of the Napanee Plain alvar region, which is considered one of the most threatened in Ontario. Although the status of this alvar has not yet been determined, it is being considered for designation as a provincially significant Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI).

The area also has an impressive history. The community of Point Anne grew-up an industry town, centred on cement production. Cement Plant # 4, formerly known as the Belleville plant, was a bustling business and provided jobs for many residents of the village of Point Anne. The oldest records suggest that operations began around 1905, although there is evidence of industrial activity before this time. Today, the Cement Plant is closed and fallen into ruins, but the village survives and many of its historic features still stand. These features have great educational potential.

**Principles**

Principles, the foundation for this strategic planning exercise, are accepted truths that are used to guide decision making.

- *The natural areas between Belleville and Point Anne should be protected and, where they have been degraded, rehabilitated.*
- *Linkages between isolated natural areas should be protected and restored, where possible, to permit movement of wildlife between habitats.*
- *Future recreational uses must be appropriately balanced, recognizing past and present uses and environmental sensitivities.*
- *The protection, rehabilitation and management of land must respect the rights of existing and adjacent landowners.*
- *Negotiations for land securement with landowners must be at their discretion.*
- *Conflicting land uses should be separated.*
- *Environmental awareness and understanding in the community are necessary to ensure that individuals become personally involved in and support conservation efforts.*
- *Land use planning decisions must respect all parts of the ecosystem, since changes to any one part will affect the whole system.*
- *Built heritage represents our past and collective experiences from which we develop a sense of identity. Therefore we must conserve and appreciate our heritage.*
Vision

Our Vision defines what we desire for the future. It provides a sense of purpose to guide our daily activities and acts as a focal point against which all plans or directions are checked.

| Our vision for the area between Belleville and Point Anne is one of healthy and protected natural areas, and conserved historic features, with limited public access for education and recreation. |

Goals and Objectives

Goals are general statements that, if achieved, move us closer to realizing our Vision. Objectives define specific actions to achieve a particular Goal. The following Goals and Objectives have been organized into seven general categories based on issues that were identified. These categories are: land securement, land use and municipal planning, outdoor education and recreation, public awareness, land stewardship, rehabilitation, and public land management. The order of the objectives does not suggest a ranking.

1. Land Securement

The securement of high priority properties is fundamental to achieving key components of our Vision. The Quinte Bayfront Plan and long-term planning strategies of the City of Belleville advocate land securement along the Belleville waterfront east to Point Anne. Currently, the large majority of the significant natural and historic areas are privately owned. An opportunity exists in the Belleville Marsh since back taxes are owing on the Bakelite property and the City can move to take ownership. Some uses of these important properties may not be consistent with our Vision. Therefore, the most appropriate land securement option, anything from "handshake agreements" to public ownership, should be determined.

Goals #1

To protect significant natural areas through the most appropriate and effective means of land securement.

Objectives

1. gather and build upon the scientific information necessary for informed securement decision making, including a determination of the alvar boundaries and its significant features through bioinventories.

2. develop a list of potential funding partners for land acquisition and initiate contacts.

3. research, document and analyze the various means of securing environmentally significant areas.
4. determine ways to maintain habitat linkages between natural areas through easements and the promotion of land stewardship.

5. prioritize properties for acquisition and develop a land acquisition program.

6. determine who will hold title to public lands.

Goals #2

To recognize and conserve significant historical features.

Objectives

1. determine the most appropriate means of recognizing and conserving these features, in consultation with Canada Lafarge Limited.

2. investigate potential partners to assist in the development of a plan for recognizing and promoting the historic features without compromising public safety or the integrity of the structures.

2. Land Use and Municipal Planning

Current and future land use issues that could negatively impact the health of natural areas or the conservation of historic features must be addressed. The alvar is a good example. This type of habitat is so fragile and rare that any type of land use could have negative effects. Official plan designations and zoning regulations greatly influence what results in built form. Hastings County and the City of Belleville are in the process of updating their Official Plans. Other relevant issues include snow dumps, trespassing, and garbage dumping. A common concern among residents, particularly in Point Anne, is that of allowing future uses that would adversely affect their private property (e.g. garbage, and trespassers) and jeopardize their sense of community (e.g. traffic, and noise). Accordingly, we must avoid incompatible and conflicting land uses.

Goal #1

To reduce or eliminate incompatible land uses and promote uses consistent with our Vision.

Objectives

1. record all perceived incompatible land uses and list possible ways to address conflicts, including land stewardship and property management.

Goals #2

To promote municipal official plan policies and zoning by-law provisions consistent with our Vision.

Objectives

1. draft O.P. policies and designate appropriate land uses based upon the strategic plan, and make recommendations to municipalities.

2. planning approval authorities will be encouraged to have regard to the strategic plan when reviewing zoning by-law amendments and development proposals.
3. Outdoor Education and Recreation

The area holds great potential for outdoor recreation and education because of the significance of the natural and historic features and their proximity to the City of Belleville. The City is currently implementing the East Bayshore Waterfront Development immediately west of Belleville Marsh which will improve access and recreational use of the Belleville waterfront from George Street to Herchimer Avenue. However, access to the area must be extremely sensitive to ecological functions and possible adversities to the community. Also, most agree that public access to sensitive areas should be more for educational purposes than for recreation.

Goals #1
To provide limited access to significant natural areas for recreation and education.

Objectives
1. develop Belleville Marsh as a focal point for education and passive recreation.
2. develop access to Blessington Creek Wetland and the alvar for limited, low impact recreation and education.
3. determine what natural features are important for education and how these areas will be accessed without causing any detrimental impact.
4. determine what types of recreational activities are consistent with our principles and where these recreational opportunities will be made available.
5. decide how the educational access (trails, points, lookouts, area, etc.) will be managed within the overall management plan for the area.

Goals #2
To educate the community about the significant historic areas.

Objectives
1. explore opportunities to educate the community about the historic areas, in consultation with interested historical agencies and organizations.
2. consider limited access to the historic features within the overall management plan for the area.

4. Public Awareness
Public involvement and support is critical to the success of the Belleville to Point Anne Project. The completion of this Strategic Plan is only the beginning. Full implementation will take several years and land management will be ongoing.

Goal #1
To inform and educate residents and other stakeholders about the project and the attributes of the area.
Objectives

1. develop a communications strategy to promote the project and highlight the attributes of the area to residents in the Quinte Region.

5. Land Stewardship

Policies and regulations are only as effective as an agency’s ability to implement or enforce them. Also, public ownership is not a guarantee of protection or conservation. On both private and public land, users need to appreciate the value and fragility of natural areas and historic features.

Goals #1

To heighten the community’s environmental awareness and foster an environmental land ethic among property owners.

Objectives

1. develop and implement a stewardship campaign targeted at property owners.

2. develop and implement an awareness campaign targeting residents outside of the project area who often use it for recreation.

6. Rehabilitation

Some areas bear the scars from individuals and industry. Bakelite Thermosets and Union Carbide have begun a contaminant cleanup of their property, where past practices have left a severe contamination problem in Belleville Marsh. Also, the City of Belleville and the Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan (QRAP) have initiated the Belleville Marsh Restoration Project to protect and restore wetland habitats, and enhance recreational and educational opportunities. QRAP’s Stage 2 Report provides recommendations to prevent further loss of habitats, restore degraded areas, and create wildlife corridors. Other examples of areas in need of rehabilitation include altered waterways that have changed wetland functions, filled ecologically sensitive areas, garbage, and vegetation damaged by off-road vehicles. Rehabilitating degraded areas will be an important way to achieve our Vision of healthy natural areas.

Goal #1

To rehabilitate degraded natural areas.

Objectives

1. identify degraded areas and their causes, whether inside or outside the study area.

2. prioritize areas requiring remedial actions, based on environmental considerations, such as severity of degradation, and additional variables such as property ownership, cost, technological requirements, and financial support.

3. develop and implement a rehabilitation plan.
7. Public Land Management

Many issues raised during the early planning stages focused on the various aspects of having natural and historic areas secured for the future. Some asked who will pay the taxes and manage the properties. These issues need to be resolved before we approach most funding partners. They are issues that are becoming increasingly hard to deal with, considering the present fiscal realities of many municipalities and conservation related agencies.

Goal #1

To manage the use and development of public land in keeping with our Vision and Principles.

Objectives

1. determine who will be responsible for property management.
2. develop a management plan for all public land, consistent with our Principles and Vision.

Action Plans

Action Plans are precise documents, based upon this Strategic Plan, that list roles and responsibilities and offer a timeline for work to be completed. They are an important project management tools that will assist us in setting budget and time priorities.

A five year Action Plan will be prepared to guide the development of annual Action Plans and include all of the general categories listed above. Annual Action Plans will be developed for each category. Members of the Working Group and Landowners Group with relevant skills and interests related to each Action Plan will participate in their development and implementation.
**Glossary**

**Action Plan** - Precise documents, based upon Strategic Plans, that list roles and responsibilities and offers a timeline for work to be completed.

**Alvar** - Areas of thin soil over limestone bedrock that support characteristically sparse vegetation, often consisting of rare plants and communities.

**Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI)** - Land and waters containing important natural landscapes or features that are important for natural heritage protection, appreciation, scientific study or education. Earth Science ANSIs include the finest examples of rock and fossil locations, and landforms. Life Science ANSIs contain representative and unique landscape segments that support natural communities and their native plants and animals.

**Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan (RAP)** - A plan developed to restore and protect water quality in the Bay of Quinte through an ecosystem approach. The International Joint Commission identified the Bay as one of 43 areas of concern in the Great Lakes Basin.

**Belleville Marsh Restoration Project** - A cooperative plan between the City of Belleville and the Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan to enhance and restore the wetland habitats in this marsh. Belleville Marsh has been identified as one of the most severely degraded wetlands in the Bay of Quinte.

**Built Heritage** - Human-made features which have historic importance.

**East Bayshore Enhancement Project** - An initiative by the City of Belleville and Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan to create wetlands and naturalize shorelines at East Bayshore Park. This project is intended to restore habitats lost historically in the Bay of Quinte Region.

**Ecological Functions** - The natural processes, products or services that species and non-living environments provide or perform within or between ecosystems and landscapes.

**Ecosystem** - A network of living things (e.g. plants, animals, and bacteria) and the non-living components of their environment (e.g. air, soil, and water), interacting with each other and with their ecosystems. Ecosystems exist at many scales (e.g. a rotting log, a forest, and an ocean), and change over time. Directly and indirectly, each part of the ecosystem depends on and affects the others.

**Environmental Land Ethic** - The use of land with a concern for the impacts on the environment.

**Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)** - ESAs have important features, such as unusual landforms, rare wildlife species or communities, large size, unusually diverse biological communities, high aesthetic value, or particular suitability for research or education. These features may be important locally, regionally, provincially, or nationally. ESAs include class I-IV wetlands (based on MNR wetland evaluation system for southern Ontario).

**Habitat** - The place or type of site where an organism or population lives.

**Handshake Agreement** - An agreement that is made in good faith that is not legally binding.

**Land Stewardship** - The wise management of land, with an informed concern for future human generations, and for the natural environment.

**Marsh** - A type of wetland which is dominated by emergent vegetation, such as cattails.
Official Plan - A policy document of local, county or regional council, that sets out the municipality’s view on how land should be used in your community. It provides direction for future planning activities, and for public and private initiatives aimed at improving the existing physical environment. It is tailored to the size and complexity of each municipality and is based largely on input made by citizens through the public participation process.

Passive Recreation - A type of recreation which does not need or create modifications to the environment.

Provincially Significant ANSI - Land and waters which contain Provincially important natural landscapes or features that are important for natural heritage protection, appreciation, scientific study or education. For example, an area which contains a habitat that is rare or that doesn’t exist else where in the Province.

Provincially Significant Wetland - Wetlands which are of Provincial importance because of size, economical values, ecological aspects, and hydrological functions.

Provincially Significant Historical Sites - Historic areas or features which are of Provincial importance. The cement plant ruins at Point Anne are Provincially Significant because this plant was the first of its type in the area.

Strategic Plan - Defines a vision for an area of concern, lists attainable goals, and identifies realistic objectives for realizing the vision. It also suggests a general time schedule for implementation and outlines the process for developing Action Plans. This document is based upon knowledge and information that is widely known and shared, rather than conducting expensive and time consuming new studies.

Swamp - A type of wetland which is dominated by standing trees which are adapted to wet conditions.

Vision - A vision outlines a preferred future state or position. It provides a focus for future planning, reflects a communities values, and acts as a focal point against which all plans or directions are checked.

Wetlands- “Lands that are seasonally or permanently covered by shallow water as well as land where the water table is close to or at the surface; in either case the presence of abundant water has caused the formation of hydric soils and has favoured the dominance of either hydrophytic or water tolerant plants. The four major types of wetlands are swamps, marshes, bogs, and fens.” (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Ministry of Natural Resources, Wetlands: a statement of Ontario Government policy issued under the authority of Section 3 of the Planning Act, May, 1992).

Wildlife Corridors - Natural areas which provide pathways for wildlife to move from one habitat to another.

Zoning By-laws - A precise document used by a municipality to regulate the use of land. It states exactly what land uses are currently permitted in a community. Zoning by-laws put official plans into effect and provide for their day-to-day administration.
Appendix A

The following digitized maps were created as visual aids. They depict physical and conceptual information relevant to the Strategic Plan. The information used to create these maps was gathered from the most direct sources, such as Ministry of Natural Resource Wetland Evaluations and Municipal Zoning maps. The location of the information used is included on each map.

The Concept Plan was developed as a broad interpretation of the vision created for the Belleville to Point Anne area. This map was produced as a visual aid. It will help create discussion concerning the types of land use in the study area. The Concept Plan has four different categories: resource conservation, industrial/commercial, residential, and rural. Resource Conservation includes all areas that are wetland, floodplain, ANSI, shorelands, Bakelite property, and existing public lands. The rural areas discourage intense development. Certain types of development in areas designated rural will require Official Plan and zoning amendments. Both the residential and commercial/industrial designations basically reflect existing uses.

With the exception of city owned property, all other properties are privately owned. The rights of landowners should be respected and there should be no trespassing.
Concept Plan
BELLEVILLE TO POINT ANNE SIGNIFICANT AREAS PROJECT

Concept Plan created from input by the Landowners and Working Groups
BELLEVILLE TO POINT ANNE SIGNIFICANT AREAS PROJECT

WETLANDS AND AREAS OF NATURAL AND SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

Information gathered from:

BELLEVILLE TO POINT ANNE SIGNIFICANT AREAS PROJECT

POINT ANNE AREA OF NATURAL AND SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

Information gathered from:
BELLEVILLE TO POINT ANNE SIGNIFICANT AREAS PROJECT

BELLEVILLE MARSH WETLAND EVALUATION

Information gathered from 1993 MNR Wetland Evaluation of Belleville Marsh.
Information gathered from 1992 MNR Wetland Evaluation of Bell Creek Swamp.
Information gathered from 1993 MNR Wetland Evaluation of Blessington Creek Wetland.
BELLEVILLE TO POINT ANNE SIGNIFICANT AREAS PROJECT

OWNERSHIP

Information available at:
Township of Thurlow Municipal Office
The City of Belleville - Land Assessment
BELLEVILLE TO POINT ANNE SIGNIFICANT AREAS PROJECT

BELLEVILLE / THURLOW ZONING BY-LAW

Information gathered from:
The Corporation of the Township of Thurlow Comprehensive Zoning By-Law No. 3014, Schedule "A3" Zone Map.
The City of Belleville Zoning By-Law No. 10245, Maps 5 & 7.
BELLEVILLE TO POINT ANNE SIGNIFICANT AREAS PROJECT

PIT AND QUARRY LICENSES

Information gathered from MNR Aggregate Resource Act - Class “A” License # 64.0575, Standard Aggregates Inc.
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EXISTING AND HISTORIC RAILWAY LINES

Information gathered from: