

The Big Picture for Your Property

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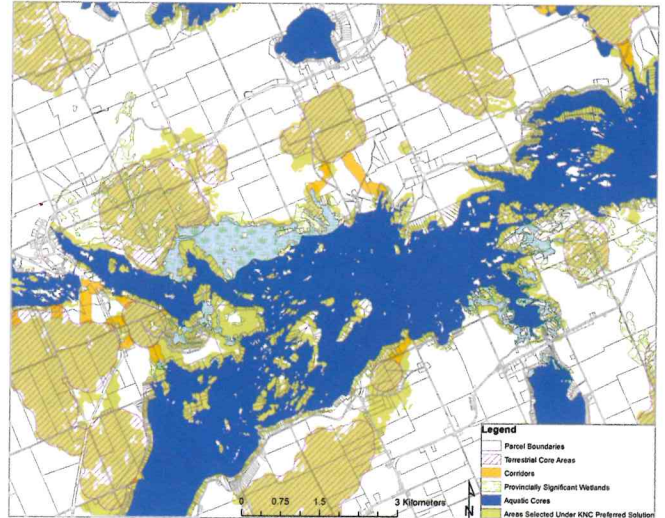
You know and love the trees along your waterfront, but the forest does not end at a property line! The land you steward as a waterfront property owner is part of a much larger picture: an extended natural heritage system. FOCA encourages you to take an eagle's-eye view of the big picture, and your place in it.

Kawarthas, Naturally Connected Project

In the Kawarthas region, there is now a great way to do this, utilizing natural heritage system mapping that has been undertaken by the Kawarthas, Naturally Connected (KNC) Collaborative. Since 2009, the KNC Collaborative has brought together community groups and agencies to create and implement a Natural Heritage System made up of core areas and significant linkages that, if protecting, will maintain biological diversity and a healthy natural environment.

FOCA is a member of the KNC Collaborative, and is helping to communicate about this project, to share and encourage use of the mapping tools in support of conservation-minded decision-making by individuals and organizations across the landscape. The KNC tools can support sustainable land use planning and resource management decision-making, as well as strategic priorities for stewardship and restoration projects, and conservation land acquisitions.

FOCA encourages all property owners in the Kawarthas region to check out the map, and see how your property fits into the larger picture! Visit <http://arcg.is/2e3IE00>, zoom in, and see if your property might provide a critical natural link between existing core areas. Alternate map formats, including Google Earth files or a PDF download can be accessed from this webpage: <http://www.kawarthasnaturally.ca/resources/>.



KNC cores and corridors map – Stoney Lake detail

These maps compile information and spatial data layers available under Open Data license from Land Information Ontario (LIO). The KNC mapping is more detailed and nuanced than the existing Provincial Natural Heritage Mapping, as computer modelling software was used to calculate and map ecological targets developed collaboratively by the project stakeholders. The intent was to identify existing core areas and priorities for natural heritage conservation, as well as potential linkages between these zones.

Supported by a guidance document from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), other Natural Heritage System projects have been undertaken in Prince Edward County, the City of Kingston and the ecological district of Picton, as well as the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville and the ecological districts of Charleston Lake and Smith Falls, and elsewhere.

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Additionally, anyone in Ontario can make a map of their own natural heritage area, using the online tool from the MNRF, available here: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/make-natural-heritage-area-map>.

QUESTION: *What does it mean if my property is in a “core” area or an identified linkage on the KNC map? Does it have to remain “natural”?*

ANSWER: No, the map does not have policy or legal implications. The “preferred scenario” suggested on the map is based on natural heritage best practices, but does not account for existing zoning. The map depicts how environmental features (like wetlands, meadows, woodlands, habitat for plants and animals) can be connected to support life in the region. A healthy natural heritage system provides benefits such as good air and water quality, erosion prevention and much more. Your efforts to steward your land and its resources will play an important part in protecting biodiversity in the region, and the overall health of the environment.

For more about what you can do on your own property, consult FOCA’s “Shoreline Owners’ Guides” on healthy waterfronts, climate change, and invasive species: <https://foca.on.ca/news/publications/>.

Land Trusts & Long Term Planning

Once you see where your property fits in to the larger picture, you may be interested in discussing its long-term conservation. If so, you will want to connect with your local land trust. Land trusts are charitable organizations focused on stewarding, protecting and restoring significant natural landscapes.

Land trusts take direct action to preserve natural spaces by entering into conservation easement agreements with private landowners or by acquiring properties and protecting them for present and future generations. The Ontario Land Trust Alliance (OLTA) represents and serves over 40 land trust and conservation organization across Ontario. Their message is: “you can help save the land you love!” Through the help of generous donors and land owners, land trusts have been able to protect over 80,000 acres of ecologically significant lands in Ontario so far. To find one near you, visit: <https://ontariolandtrusts.ca/find-a-land-trust/>.

Partner Profile: Kawartha Land Trust

The Kawartha Land Trust (KLT) was formed in 2001, and has protected over 3,300 acres of land in the Kawarthas. KLT has been using the mapping features underlying the KNC Collaborative project to help supporters and donors visualize how their properties can fit into the conservation picture. KLT recently received Trillium Foundation seed grant funding for targeted stewardship planting and invasive species management on private lands in the Kawarthas identified by the KNC.

For those that want to ensure the protection of their land in perpetuity, KLT works with individuals and families to find flexible solutions leading to gifts of conservation easements or gifts of outright land that can include “retained interest” or “life estate” arrangements. Many of these options provide income or property tax benefits. Find out more, here: <http://kawarthalandtrust.org/protecting-our-land/land-protection-options/>.

For Our American Friends

American Friends of Canadian Land Trusts (AF) is a US charity that partners with Canadian conservation organizations such as OLTA, to preserve Canada’s natural areas, and the places that hold generations of family memories. Over the past ten years, AF and its Canadian conservation partners in five provinces have protected nearly 3,000 acres of irreplaceable land acquired from American owners. Find out more: www.afoclt.org