



INFO-22-119

Healthy watersheds for
today and tomorrow.

April 14, 2022

Via email and upload to the Environmental Registry of Ontario

Ms. Anna MacDonald, Director
Provincial Land Use Plans Branch
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
College Park 23rd Floor
777 Bay Street
Toronto ON M7A 2J3

Dear Ms. MacDonald:

**Subject: Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority Comments for
Consultation on Growing the Size of the Greenbelt
Environmental Registry of Ontario Notice Numbers 019-4803, 019-4483 and 019-4485
CLOCA File# PGDP22**

At their meeting of April 12, 2022, the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority (CLOCA) Board of Directors passed the following Resolution:

Res. #34 *Moved by R. Hooper
Seconded by C. Leahy*

THAT CLOCA Supports the Proposed Provincial Urban River Valley Additions to the Greenbelt Plan subject to revisions to ensure the Urban River Valley Additions are revised to reflect City of Oshawa Council-endorsed boundaries, as identified in City of Oshawa Agenda Item DS-21-72 with respect to the Oshawa Harbour and Marina Lands and East Wharf;

THAT the Province of Ontario Provide Land Acquisition Funding Targeted to Greenbelt Lands to reinforce the ecological and recreational value of lands designated as Urban River Valleys;

*THAT the Analysis Commentary in Staff Report #5783-22 be endorsed and submitted to the Province of Ontario and Conservation Ontario as CLOCA's comments regarding Environmental Registry Posting 019-4803, 019-4483 and 019-4485; and,
THAT Staff Report #5783-22 be circulated to Watershed Municipalities, Members of Provincial Parliament, Members of Parliament and adjacent Conservation Authorities for their information.*

CARRIED

Accordingly, please find the endorsed staff report and attachments enclosed with this letter for detailed commentary.

Further, CLOCA's comments arise from the analysis contained in CLOCA's *Wildlife Corridor Protection and Enhancement Plan, Second Edition (2022)*, which is also enclosed with this submission and may be viewed here: <https://www.cloca.com/action-plans>

Please contact me if you have any questions with respect to this submission.

Yours truly,



Chris Jones, MCIP, RPP

Director of Planning and Regulation

CJ/

Encl. CLOCA Staff Report 5733-21 and attachments
Wildlife Corridor Protection and Enhancement Plan, Second Edition (2022)

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REPORT

CENTRAL LAKE ONTARIO CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

DATE: April 12, 2022
FILE: PGDP22
S.R.: 5783-22
TO: Chair and Members, CLOCA Board of Directors
FROM: Chris Jones, Director, Planning and Regulation
SUBJECT: **Provincial Consultation on Greenbelt Expansion: Proposals in the CLOCA Watershed and Further Opportunities**

APPROVED BY C.A.O. 

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to review and provide commentary on proposed expansions to the Greenbelt Plan Area and further expansion opportunities within the CLOCA Watershed.

Background

On March 24, 2022, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) posted notices on the *Environmental Registry of Ontario* launching a consultation on several proposed Urban River Valley additions to the Greenbelt Plan Area and seeking ideas for adding more Urban River Valleys.

The Urban River Valley concept is intended to integrate the Greenbelt into urban areas that were not part of the Greenbelt's initial boundaries by promoting natural and open space lands and environmental features, which assist in ecologically connecting the rest of the Greenbelt Area to Lake Ontario. Urban River Valley policies in the Greenbelt Plan directly apply only to publicly owned lands. The Urban River Valley lands are often lands already designated in official plans as parks, open space, recreation, conservation and/or environmental protection.

As part of the previous Greenbelt consultation in 2021, CLOCA recommended:

1. that new Urban River Valley additions be added to the Greenbelt along the Lake Ontario Shoreline and former Lake Iroquois Beach Regional Wildlife Corridors within the CLOCA Watershed;
2. add the coastal wetland areas at the mouth of Montgomery Creek and the valleyland system north to Bloor Street in the City of Oshawa;
3. add a connection between Second Marsh and McLaughlin Bay to the east and incorporate Darlington Provincial Park in the City of Oshawa and Municipality of Clarington; and,
4. Add the CLOCA owned lands forming the Westside Marsh within the Bowmanville/Westside Marshes Conservation Area to the area currently designated at the Bowmanville Marsh in the Municipality of Clarington.

At its meeting of March 16, 2021, the CLOCA Board, in considering these potential Urban River Valley additions to the Greenbelt, resolved as follows:

THAT the Analysis Commentary in Staff Report 5731-21 [regarding Provincial Consultation on Greenbelt Expansion: Opportunities in the CLOCA Watershed] be endorsed and submitted to the Province of Ontario and Conservation Ontario as CLOCA's comments regarding Environmental Registry Posting 019-3136;

THAT Staff Report 5731-21 be circulated to Watershed Municipalities, Members of Provincial Parliament, Members of Parliament and adjacent Conservation Authorities for their information; and, THAT the Province of Ontario be requested to provide implementing land acquisition funding to acquire new public Greenbelt Urban River Valley connection lands including Lake Ontario Waterfront lands.

Res. #25, CARRIED AS AMENDED

Cont'd

Following the circulation of CLOCA's comments and resolution, the Councils of the City of Oshawa and Municipality of Clarington adopted similar resolutions to CLOCA's. In the summer of 2021, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced that the proposals for new Urban River Valleylands in the CLOCA watershed, including the addition of Darlington Provincial Park, would be proposed for inclusion to the Greenbelt as part of a future consultation.

As part of the March 24, 2022 consultation announcement, MMAH confirmed that the areas identified in item nos. 2, 3 and 4 above (Montgomery Creek and coastal wetlands, Second Marsh, McLaughlin Bay, Darlington Provincial Park and Westside Marsh) were all proposed for addition to the Greenbelt Urban River Valleys. Detailed maps of these areas are included with this report as **Attachment 1**.

Further, as part of the March 24, 2022 consultation announcement, MMAH is seeking additional ideas for adding more Urban River Valleys to the Greenbelt.

Comments on the current consultation are required to be submitted by April 23, 2022.

Analysis and Recommendations

CLOCA's leadership during the previous consultation has resulted in the acknowledgement that additional environmentally significant areas within the CLOCA watershed are deserving of recognition and inclusion within the Greenbelt Plan Area. The proposed provincial mapping for these areas aligns directly with CLOCA's 2021 recommendations. As the province is now seeking more ideas for additional Urban River Valleys, there is an opportunity to build on CLOCA's previous successful comments.

Opportunities for Wildlife Corridor Protection and Enhancement along Regional Corridors

The current consultation provides another opportunity to again consider the Greenbelt Plan's application to CLOCA Watershed and the broader southern Durham Region/North Shore of Lake Ontario from a landscape ecology perspective. CLOCA's foundational watershed planning work has resulted in a key piece of analysis from this perspective: *Watershed Action Plan #5: Wildlife Corridor Protection & Enhancement Plan, March 2015*. This Action Plan, undertaken as part of CLOCA's watershed planning efforts, identified and evaluated wildlife corridors within the CLOCA Watershed, identified areas to improve connectivity for the movement of plants and animals across the landscape and made geographic-specific recommendations across the watershed. A specific Wildlife Habitat Network for the CLOCA Watershed was identified made up of Core Wildlife Habitat, Secondary Habitat and three scales of corridors connecting these wildlife habitats: Regional Corridors, Landscape Corridors and Local Corridors. The CLOCA Wildlife Habitat Network is shown in **Attachment 2** to this Report.

As illustrated on **Attachment 2**, the CLOCA Watershed contains three primary east-west Regional Wildlife Habitat Movement Corridors that connect critical core and secondary habitat patches on the landscape: (1) the Oak Ridges Moraine; (2) the Former Lake Iroquois Beach; and (3) the Lake Ontario Shoreline including a band of land 1 km inland. Of the three Regional Corridors, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and existing Greenbelt Plan Protected Countryside lands fully protect this corridor from a land use planning perspective.

The Former Lake Iroquois Beach is partially protected thanks to the Heber Down and Stephen's Gulch Conservation Areas and the Greenbelt in portions of Whitby and Clarington, however there are key gaps in eastern Whitby, Oshawa and north Courtice and Bowmanville. The current Greenbelt Plan boundaries were specifically drawn to protect portions of the Lake Iroquois Beach. However, there is a gap in the Greenbelt for which the Plan makes recommendations as part of the "External Connections" Policy at section 3.2.6.3:

“... portions of the former Lake Iroquois shoreline, particularly within Durham Region, traverse existing or approved urban areas [located outside of the Greenbelt Plan Area]. Municipalities should consider planning, design and construction practices that maintain or, where possible, enhance the size, diversity, connectivity and functions of key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features and key hydrologic areas of those portions of the Lake Iroquois shoreline within their approved urban boundaries.”

It is recommended that the current gap in Greenbelt Protection along the Former Lake Iroquois Beach, a regionally significant corridor for wildlife habitat and movement, be partially addressed through an Urban River Valley addition to the Greenbelt Plan to reinforce the ecological importance of publicly owned lands on this landscape.

The third east-west Regional Wildlife Movement Corridor in the CLOCA Watershed and beyond is the north shoreline of Lake Ontario. Portions of this shoreline are protected thanks to the Lynde Shores and Bowmanville Westside Marshes Conservation Areas and corresponding Greenbelt boundary and the existing Urban River Valley designations at the mouth of certain creeks, as described above, however there are several critical core wildlife habitats along the Lake Ontario shoreline that would benefit from the additional profile accorded to Urban River Valley protections in the Greenbelt Plan. These include the provincially significant wetlands at Whitby Shores, Port Whitby, the Heydenshore Park lands, Thickson’s Woods, Oshawa’s Pump House wetlands and associated parklands, Oshawa Lakefront Park and connections across publicly owned waterfront land in Clarington extending along Lake Ontario eastward to the Greenbelt Countryside lands east of Newcastle Village. Further, recent development proposals along the shoreline in Oshawa have raised awareness of the Lake Ontario shoreline as a critical migratory pathway for Monarch Butterflies and endangered species including Bank Swallows.

It is recommended that the value of existing publicly owned lands and the regionally significant corridor for wildlife habitat and movement along with improved connectivity to the existing Greenbelt Plan Area in the CLOCA Watershed be enhanced through an Urban River Valley designation across the entirety of the Lake Ontario Waterfront connecting and linking the Lynde Shores Conservation Area, the existing coastal wetland areas containing Urban River Valley designations and Greenbelt Lands east of the CLOCA Watershed east of Newcastle Village.

Attachment 3 to this Report shows the potential locations of the two regional wildlife corridor Urban Valley Connections at the scale of Southern Durham Region and the opportunities to improve connectivity along the Former Lake Iroquois Beach shoreline in Whitby and Oshawa and the Lake Ontario Shoreline in the context of the existing Greenbelt Plan Area boundaries.

Attachment 4 to this Report shows the potential locations of the two regional wildlife corridor Urban Valley Connections at the scale of the CLOCA Watershed along with the detailed Wildlife Habitat Network habitat patches and corridors currently located outside of the Greenbelt Plan Area.

Revisions to Proposed Provincial Mapping to Oshawa Harbour Area

CLOCA staff understand that City of Oshawa staff have reviewed the draft provincial mapping and note that the proposed Urban River Valley extends beyond staff’s previously recommended extent to include the Oshawa Harbour and Marina lands, as well as a small strip of industrial lands on the East Wharf. Accordingly, City staff will be submitting comments to the Ministry recommending that the proposed Urban River Valley map be revised to reflect the Oshawa Council-endorsed mapping identified in their agenda item DS-21-72. CLOCA staff concur with this approach. The recommendations of this report have been drafted to align with the Oshawa staff position on this matter.

Conclusion

The current provincial consultation on growing the size of the Greenbelt responds positively to previous CLOCA comments. The request for ideas for adding more Urban River Valley areas provides an opportunity for key urban wildlife movement corridors and associated landscapes within the CLOCA Watershed to be added as Urban Connections to strengthen the quality of the Greenbelt as a provincial land use plan that recognizes the priceless value that natural heritage, water resources and agricultural systems play across the landscape in conserving our local and regional watershed environment. Beyond adding lands to the Greenbelt Plan, the province should back its planning efforts with specific land acquisition funding for municipalities and conservation authorities targeted to Greenbelt Lands to reinforce the ecological and recreational value of public lands designated as Urban River Valleys for permanent conservation purposes.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT CLOCA Supports the Proposed Provincial Urban River Valley Additions to the Greenbelt Plan subject to revisions to ensure the Urban River Valley Additions are revised to reflect City of Oshawa Council-endorsed boundaries, as identified in City of Oshawa Agenda Item DS-21-72 with respect to the Oshawa Harbour and Marina Lands and East Wharf;

THAT the Province of Ontario Provide Land Acquisition Funding Targeted to Greenbelt Lands to reinforce the ecological and recreational value of lands designated as Urban River Valleys;

THAT the Analysis Commentary in Staff Report #5783-22 be endorsed and submitted to the Province of Ontario and Conservation Ontario as CLOCA's comments regarding Environmental Registry Posting 019-4803, 019-4483 and 019-4485; and,

THAT Staff Report #5783-22 be circulated to Watershed Municipalities, Members of Provincial Parliament, Members of Parliament and adjacent Conservation Authorities for their information.

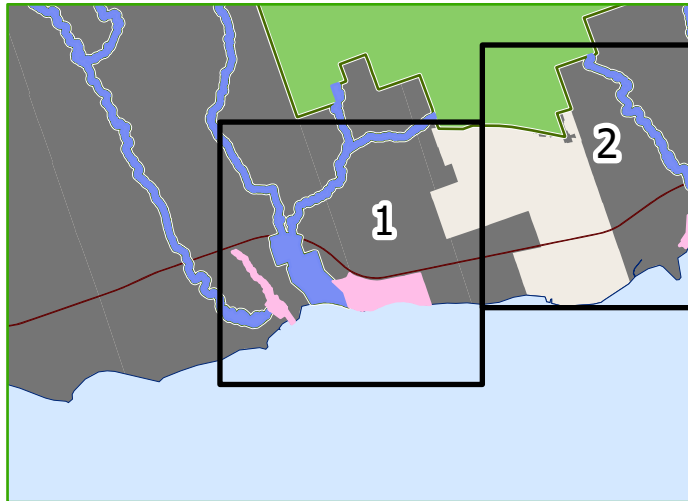
Attachment 1- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Proposed Additions to Urban River Valley Areas

Attachment 2- Natural Heritage System and Wildlife Habitat Network in the CLOCA Jurisdiction

Attachment 3- Potential Urban Greenbelt Connections in Durham

Attachment 4- Potential Greenbelt Urban Wildlife Corridor Connections

greenbelt



LEGEND

- Greenbelt Area*
- Protected Countryside
- Natural Heritage System
- Towns/Villages
- Urban River Valleys
- Proposed Urban River Valleys
- Niagara Escarpment Plan Area
- Oak Ridges Moraine Area
- Settlement Areas Outside the Greenbelt
- Municipal Boundary
- Road or Highway

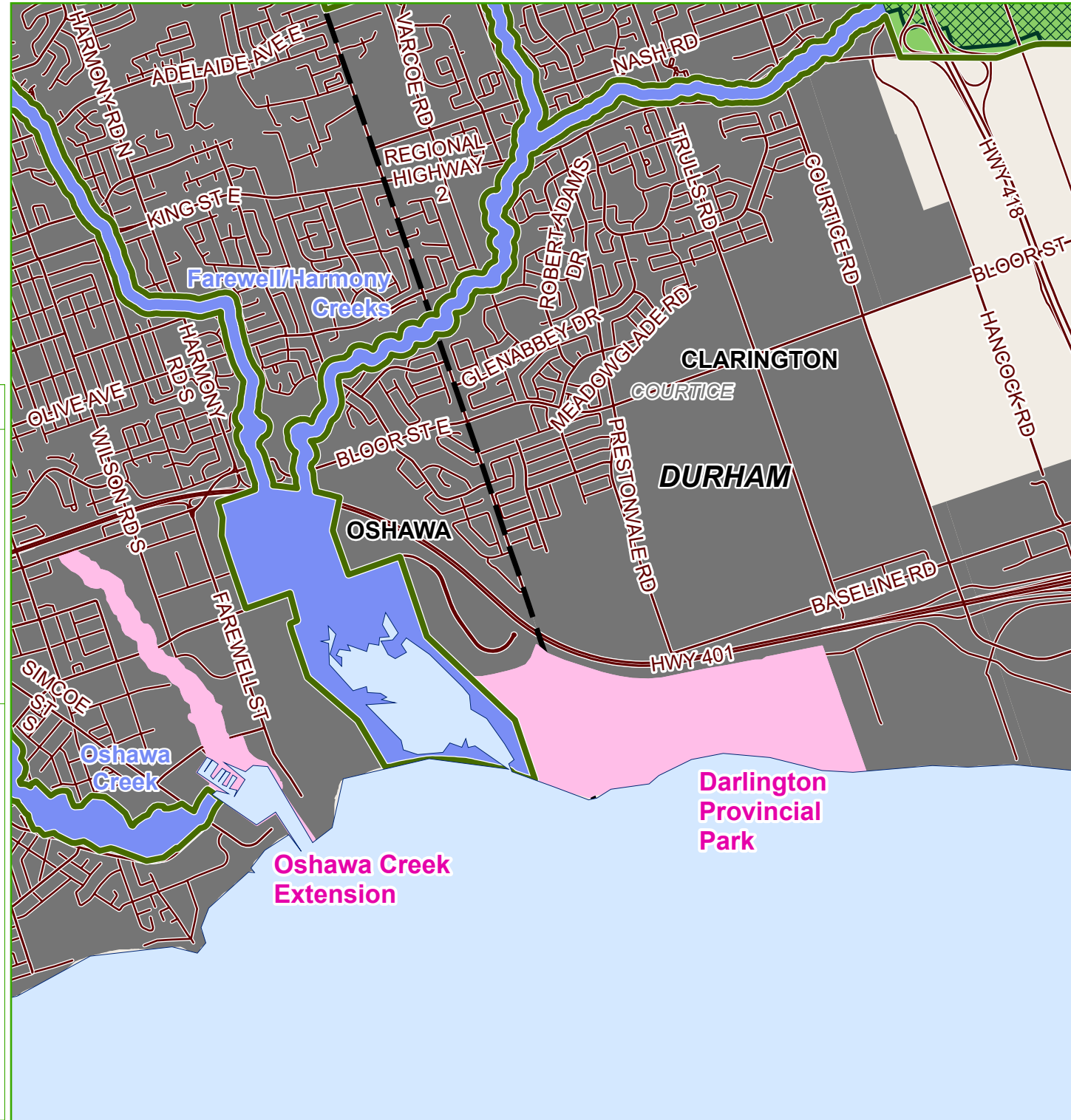
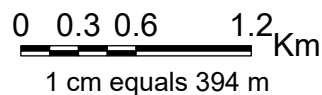
Maps are for Consultation Purposes Only

Note: While every effort has been made to accurately depict the information, this map should not be relied on as being a precise indicator of locations of features or roads. For precise boundaries and locations of Settlement Areas, including Towns/Villages and Hamlets, the appropriate municipalities should be consulted.

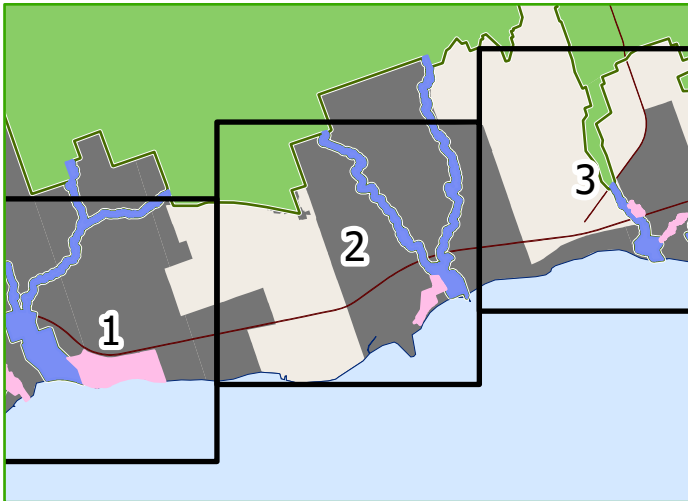
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*Ontario Regulation 59/05, as amended.



greenbelt



LEGEND

- Greenbelt Area*
- Protected Countryside
- Natural Heritage System
- Towns/Villages
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- Proposed Urban River Valleys
- Niagara Escarpment Plan Area
- Oak Ridges Moraine Area
- Settlement Areas Outside the Greenbelt
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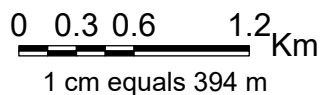
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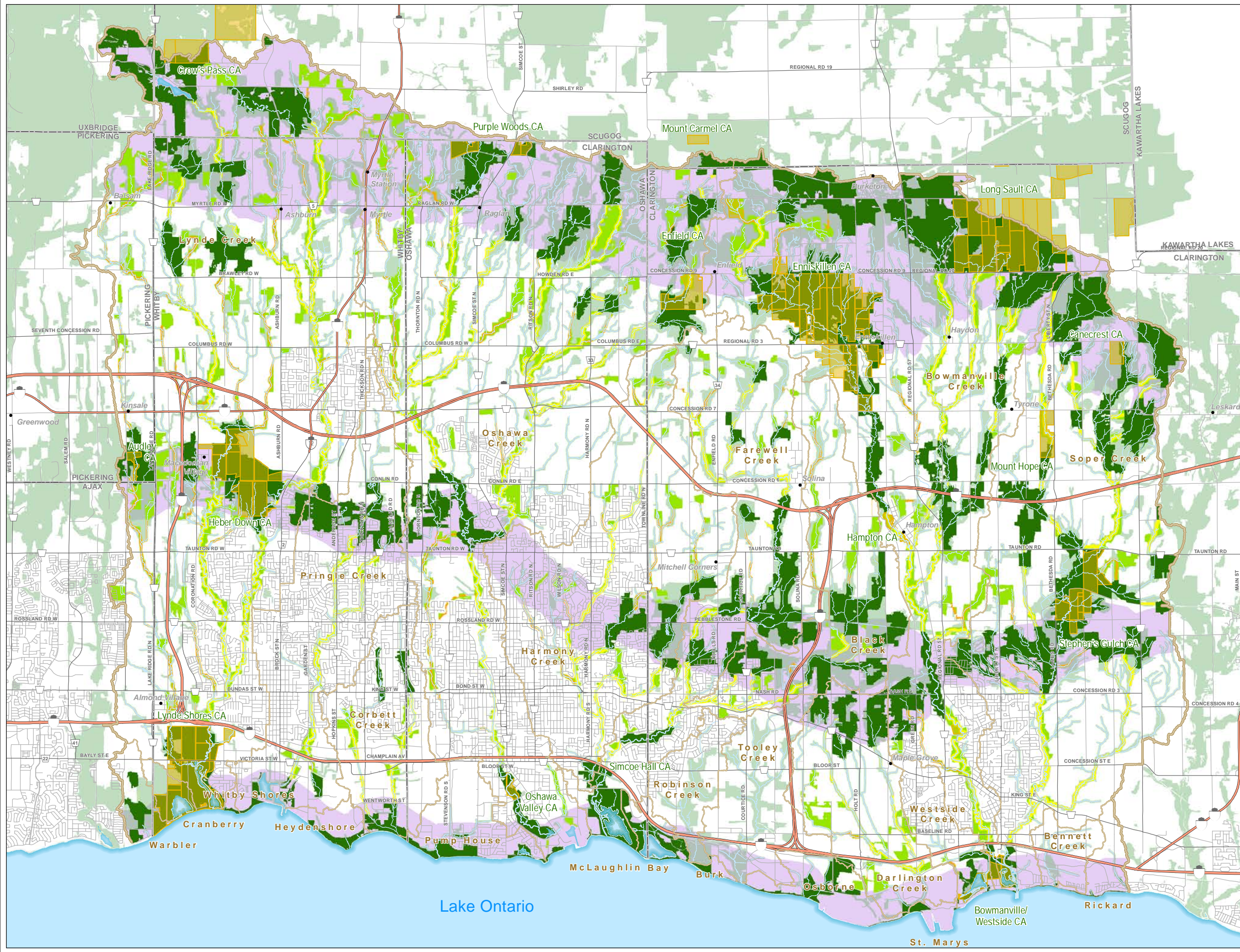
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*Ontario Regulation 59/05, as amended.



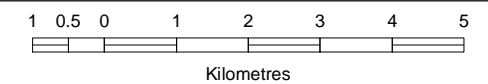
The Central Lake Ontario

Natural Heritage System and Wildlife Habitat Network in the CLOCA Jurisdiction



Legend

- Natural Heritage System
- Wildlife Habitat Network**
- Core Habitat
- Secondary Habitat
- Regional Corridor
- Landscape Corridor
- Local Corridor
- Basedata**
- CLOCA Property
- CLOCA Scientific Boundary
- Watershed Boundary
- Lake
- Drainage
- Transportation Network**
- Provincial Highway
- Major Road
- Minor Road



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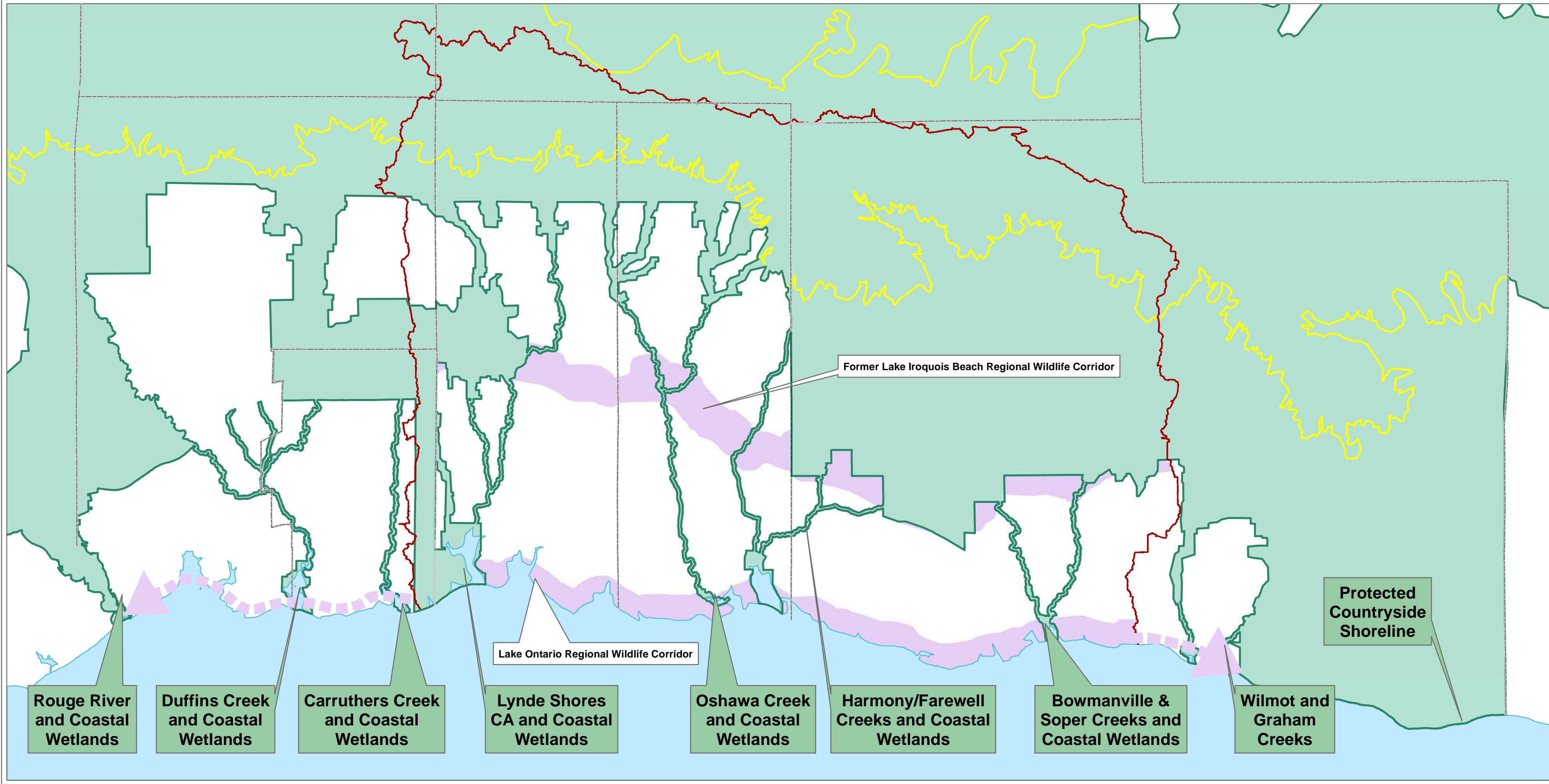
Projection: NORTH AMERICAN DATUM 1983 UNIVERSAL TRANSVERSE MERCATOR (6 DEGREES) PROJECTION, ZONE 17, CENTRAL MERIDIAN (81 DEGREES WEST)

Date Printed: March 3, 2021



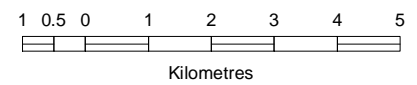
The Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority

Potential Urban Greenbelt Connections in Durham



Legend

- Oak Ridges Moraine
- Greenbelt Protected Area
- Recommended Urban Greenbelt Connection
- CLOCA Scientific Boundary

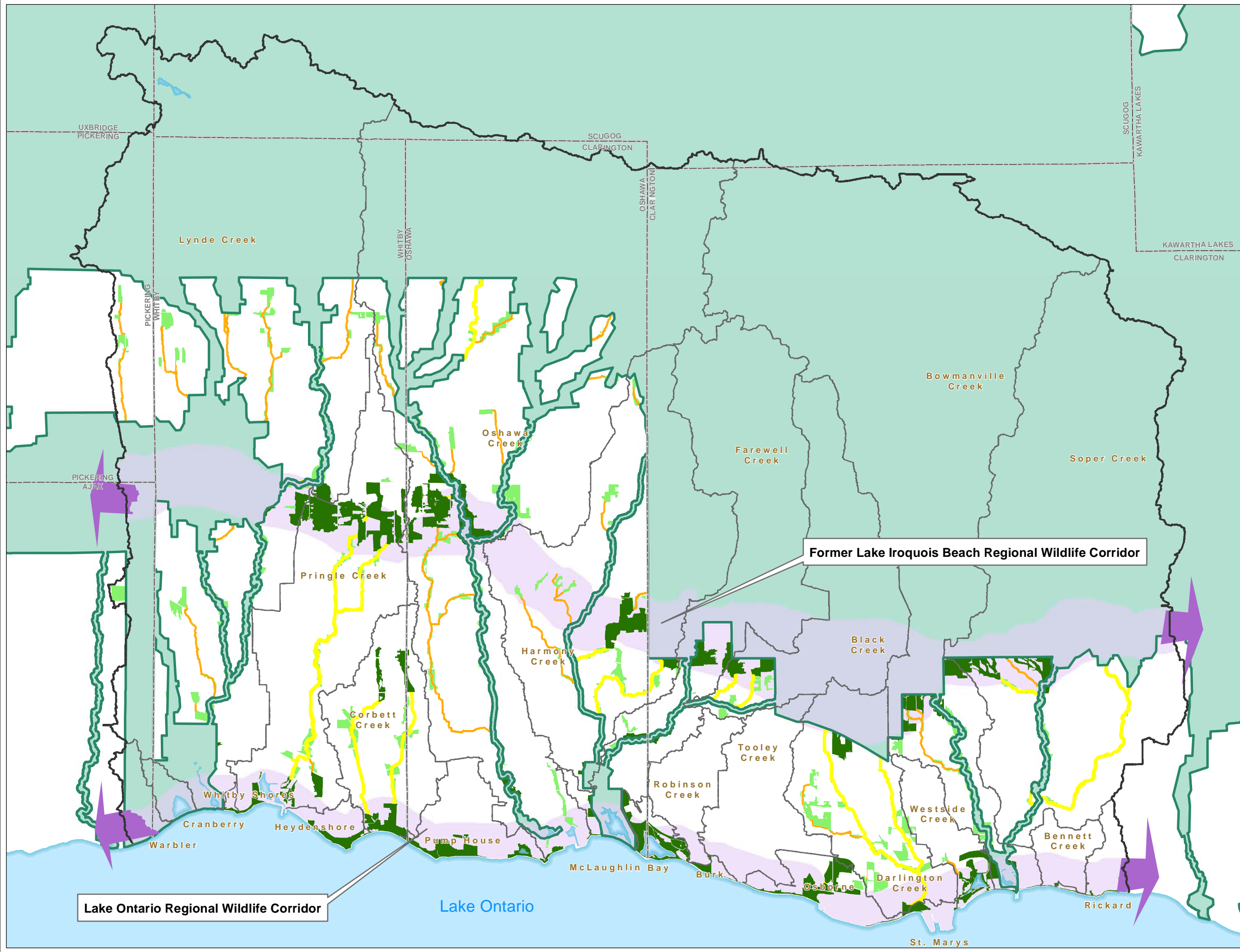


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 Date Printed: April 1, 2022



The Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority

Potential Greenbelt Urban Wildlife Corridor Connections



Legend

- Greenbelt Protected Area
- Wildlife Habitat Network**
- Outside Greenbelt**
- Core Habitat
- Secondary Habitat
- Landscape Corridor
- Local Corridor
- Regional Wildlife Corridor and Potential Urban Greenbelt Connection
- CLOCA Scientific Boundary
- Watershed Boundary



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Date Printed: March 3, 2021



Lake Ontario Regional Wildlife Corridor

Lake Ontario

St. Marys