



Discussion Paper

Environment and Natural Heritage

Natural heritage planning involves a system-based approach to the identification, protection, and wise use of resources. Natural heritage systems planning establishes an interconnected web of core natural areas, buffers, and corridors which support vital ecosystem services, such as flooding and erosion control, wildlife habitat, and improved air quality.

Provincial Policy

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario provide direction on specific issues. The Township Official Plan must conform to the PPS which sets out the following policies:



Long Term Protection

Natural heritage features and areas shall be protected for the long-term and shall be identified. Important links between and among natural heritage features, surface water features and ground water features should be recognized. The diversity and connectivity of natural features and their ecological/hydrological function should be maintained, restored, and, where possible, improved.

Development Restrictions

Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in significant wetlands; and development and site alteration shall not be permitted in significant woodlands, significant valleylands, significant wildlife habitat, and significant areas of natural and scientific interest, unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or their ecological functions.

Development and site alteration in fish habitat, or the habitat of endangered species, is not permitted except in accordance with provincial or federal requirements.

Adjacent Lands

Development and site alteration is not permitted on lands adjacent to key natural heritage features or key hydrologic features, unless the ecological and /or hydrological function of the adjacent lands has been evaluated and it is demonstrated that there is no negative impact.

Current Township Policies

Seguin Township contains significant natural heritage features and land forms composed of its lakes, Georgian Bay shoreline, rivers and streams, wetlands, large forested areas, and significant habitats for a range of threatened and endangered species, other significant wildlife habitat and fish habitat.

The Township's Strategic Plan, which is designed to align with Community Development Plans and the advancement of Seguin Township. The first, out of three strategic directions is Environment which states the following:

"Establish policies which protect the 3E's of the Environment, the Natural Environment, the Visual Environment and the Social Environment"

Section A of the Official Plan sets out the goals of the Natural Environment (A.2.1.) in Seguin Township: *"It is the goal of this Plan to protect and enhance natural heritage features and ecological functions in the Township through the adoption of an "Environment-First" principle."*

Section B of the Official Plan states the general policies of the Natural Heritage System:

"The Township of Seguin supports a diverse Natural Heritage System that is composed of its lakes, Georgian Bay shoreline, rivers and streams, wetlands, large forested areas, and significant habitats for a range of threatened and endangered species, other significant wildlife habitat and fish habitat. These features are the core areas of the Natural Heritage System and the remaining rural area provides the linkages between the core areas."

While the Township has identified and designated most wetlands as "Environmental Protection Area" and has identified in a schematic way many of the natural heritage features in the Township, not all elements of the system have been designated or to a great extent been inventoried and identified. In support of the "Environment-First" principle of this Plan, all applications for new development in the Township will generally be required to assess the potential impacts on the Natural Heritage values on and adjacent to the site and assess the potential impacts on the Natural Heritage System to determine if the proposal is acceptable or if redesign or mitigation measures are required or appropriate."

In addition, as new inventories or evaluations of components of the Natural Heritage System are completed, the Township will endeavour to update this Plan to ensure that the significant features and functions as well as important linkages within the Natural Heritage System are identified, protected and preserved. (Section B.2.)"

More information related to Natural Heritage System and Natural Heritage Features can be found in Section C.1. Natural System and Section D.4. Natural Heritage Features, which describe in more detail the land uses of the following:

- Environmental Protection Area
- Crown Land
- Rural and Resource Area
- Aggregate Extraction Area
- Moose Aquatic Feeding Areas Overlay
- Natural Heritage Features Overlay
- Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI)
- Stratum 1 Deer Wintering Area Overlay
- Stratum 2 Deer Wintering Area Overlay
- Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSW)
- Wetlands
- Aggregate Resources Potential Overlay
- Mineral Resource Potential Overlay
- MNDM Abandoned Mine Sites
- Waste Disposal Assessment Area Overlay

For mapping of the following land uses, see Schedule A and Schedule C in the Official Plan.

What changes would you like to see?

Your opinion matters! Visit the Official Plan Website to give your input on what changes you would like to see by answering the questions below on the [forum](#) or [private comment](#).

1. Do you think that the existing policies for the Township's Natural Heritage System are sufficient to identify and protect key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features?
2. What features should be protected from impacts of development? Are there any particular features or areas in the Township that require special attention?
3. Biodiversity offsetting can be used as a strategy to compensate for the loss of a natural feature, through the creation of a new natural feature at another location. Should the Township utilize this strategy?
4. Please provide any other comments you may have for consideration in the development of new policies.