

Natural Environment Update for Huron County



September, 2019

Table of Contents

Direction from Huron County Council	1
Introduction: A Sustainable Huron Approach to Planning for the Natural Environment.....	2
1 Sustainable Economic Development.....	4
1.1 Forest Cover and Agriculture.....	4
1.2 Forest Products Industry	4
1.3 Forest Cover and Recreation	5
2 Planning for Natural Environment	6
2.1 Provincial Policy Statement 2014	6
2.2 Huron County Official Plan	8
2.3 Local Official Plans	9
2.4 Municipal Zoning By-laws.....	12
2.5 Forest Conservation By-law.....	12
4 Supporting a Stewardship Ethic	12
4.1 Provincial Policy Statement direction for Stewardship Efforts	13
4.2 A Collaborative Approach to Stewardship	13
4.3 Stewardship Programs.....	13
4.4 Publicly Owned Forest Tracts as Demonstration Sites	14
4.5 Outreach and Education.....	15
4.6 References	16
Appendix 1: Natural Environment Policies for Local Official Plans.....	17

Direction from Huron County Council

Huron County Council approved the following motions on February 8, 2017:

That the Council of the County of Huron receives the report entitled 'Huron County Natural Heritage Plan' for information.

That the Council of the County of Huron maintain the current adjacent lands thresholds for the Natural Heritage Plan of 120 m for Provincially Significant Wetlands and 50 m for other natural areas.

Huron County Council approved the following motion on August 14, 2019:

That the Council of the County of Huron approve in principle the Natural Environment Update for Huron County;

And further that the document and mapping be sent to the local Municipalities to be used as background information when updating local Official Plans.

Introduction: What is the Natural Environment Update for Huron County and How is it Used

The Natural Environment Update for Huron County has 2 components:

1. The Technical Document is the science behind the mapping of existing natural environment features. It includes background information, the mapping methodology and scientific framework used to identify and evaluate the County's natural systems, analyses of water quality and watercourse sensitivity in Huron County, information about rare species in the County, and conclusions and technical recommendations.
2. The Natural Environment Update report is a summary of the current approach to Natural Environment planning and contains recommendations for future updates to planning documents. This document recognizes that there are a number of tools that can be used to enhance and protect natural features and recognizes the importance of stewardship and woodlot management.

The Technical Document was prepared by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority with technical assistance from the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority, and County staff. The Technical team was guided by an Advisory Committee that included representation from County Council, Conservation Authorities, Huron County Federation of Agriculture, Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, National Farmers Union, Ministry of Natural Resources, Huron Stewardship Council, Huron-Perth Woodlot Association, Lower Maitland Stewardship Group, and the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

The primary reason for developing the this Natural Environment Update for Huron County is to update the Natural Environment mapping across the County to more accurately reflect the natural features that exist on the ground. The local Official Plans currently contain Natural Environment mapping which is dated. The question of "What is the benefit to farmers and landowners across the County?" has been asked. In response, this update supports the protection of the natural environment; the benefits of a healthy natural environment include clean air and water, protection of the County's valuable agricultural soils from erosion, habitat for plants and wildlife, resiliency to extreme weather events (such as flooding), protection of groundwater (for people and livestock), opportunities for recreation and education, improved physical and mental health, a beautiful landscape, and sustainable economy (e.g. timber harvest, maple syrup production, etc.). The abundance, size, shape, and proximity to other natural areas all contribute to the resilience of the landscape to threats.

Nothing in this document is intended to limit the ability of agricultural uses to continue.

This document is not an Official Plan or by-law that is passed under the Planning Act and does not automatically change the designation or zoning of a property. It is a background research document

that staff and local Councils will use as a starting place for updates to local Official Plans. At that time, a more detailed review of the mapping on a property specific basis, site visits where necessary and further public consultation will occur. The technical mapping is accurate from a scientific perspective, but it cannot be applied to the landscape without further review, amendment and consultation with the landowners.

This document identifies a suite of tools to protect and enhance natural features in Huron County, including:

- Section 1 Supporting economic development related to forestry, forest products and recreation in natural areas
- Section 2 Recognizing and protecting Natural Environment within municipal Official Plans and the Forest Conservation By-law
- Section 3 Recognizing and supporting the efforts of private property owners, community organizations and agencies in sustainable forestry management and stewardship efforts

The Take Action for Sustainable Huron: Community Sustainability Plan (Huron County, 2011) advocates a balanced approach to developing local solutions while understanding connections to global trends. The Sustainable Huron Plan recognizes the connection of environmental, social and economic systems (see Figure 1) and promotes strategies to recognize and support all three. As informed by the Sustainable Huron Plan, this update employs economic development and stewardship tools as well as planning policies and regulation to protect and enhance Huron County's ecological resources.

The Natural Environment Update for Huron County recognizes that the vast majority of natural features in Huron County are on privately owned land. Success depends on the ability of landowners, municipalities and agencies to work together.



Figure 1: Three spheres of sustainability—Environment, Society & Culture, Economy.

1 Sustainable Economic Development

As informed by the Sustainable Huron Plan, this document recognizes that forests are a valuable natural resource that contribute to the livelihoods of Huron County residents. In 2014, the County of Huron adopted *Forests For Our Future: Management Plan for the County Forests Recommendations for Tree Cover Enhancement* (Huron County, 2014).

Forests For Our Future provides recommendations for management and utilization of the Huron County forest tracts for 2014 to 2033. Challenges and opportunities for both County forests and privately owned forests throughout Huron are outlined in this document. *Forests For Our Future* recognizes the integral role of forest cover to the Huron County economy.

1.1 Forest Cover and Agriculture

The agricultural industry in Huron County has gross sales of about one billion dollars per year. This amount exceeds the individual outputs of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. With the increasing intensity of adverse and extreme weather events (including flooding), the benefits provided by maintaining a balance of agricultural and forested land are becoming more evident. Woodlands and windbreaks reduce topsoil erosion caused by wind and water. Woodland soils and associated wetlands recharge groundwater aquifers and help to equalize increasingly volatile water flow patterns in streams and rivers. Studies in Ontario and around the world have also demonstrated crop yield increases by strategic placement of windbreaks and forest cover.

Recommendation:

- Continue outreach and education on the benefits of forest cover to agricultural production and provide incentives through the Huron Clean Water Project.

1.2 Forest Products Industry

Huron County is home to a thriving forest products industry. While woodland owners generate millions of dollars annually from timber and firewood sales, the County also supports over a dozen commercial sawmill operations. In addition, numerous local manufacturers, woodworkers and other artisans utilize forest products from both local sources and sources outside of the County.

Well managed woodlands in Huron County have the potential to produce more income per acre per year than conventional field crops (<https://www.ontariowoodlot.com>). The greatest challenge is the lack of previous forest management and lack of planning for marketing. Most property owners only market timber from a woodlot three or four times in their lifetime. In addition, the rapid specialization and expansion of farm operations often leaves woodlots as an afterthought to the overall management plan of a farm.

More than ever, support from knowledgeable professionals and peers is critical for long term success. To support good forest management, the County of Huron offers a “Forest Management Plan and Woodlot Enhancement” grant through the Huron Clean Water Project. Information about the Huron Clean Water Project is available on the Huron County website

<https://www.huroncounty.ca/plandev/county-wide-projects/water-protection/>

Other programs in Ontario promote collaboration within the forest products industry.

- “Ontario Wood” is a provincial program that supports the connections between local wood products, sustainable forest management and a strong economy. <http://www.ontario.ca/business-and-economy/ontario-wood>
- Ottawa Valley Wood is an award winning program in Renfrew County to promote local businesses in the forest product and wood industries. <http://www.ottawavalleywood.com/>

Recommendations:

- Using existing County economic development strategies, increase promotion of forest products and wood related manufacturers, artisans and retailers with targeted promotional programs similar to “Ottawa Valley Wood”.
- Promote the use of provincial awareness programs like “Ontario Wood” to local forest industry partners.
- Facilitate the development of value added markets for local forest products and to promote beneficial relationships between local wood producers and manufacturers.
- Continue the Forest Management Plans and Woodlot Enhancement Grant through the Huron Clean Water Project.

1.3 Forest Cover and Recreation

Nearly every resident in Huron County lives within a ten minute drive of an accessible woodland, whether it be a County forest tract, conservation area or community trail. Tourism is central to the County’s economy, and much of the attraction to “Ontario’s West Coast” is based on the natural environment. Many Huron County destinations are associated with forest cover, including the Lake Huron shoreline, the Maitland Trail, the Hullett Wildlife Management Area, Point Farms Provincial Park and the conservation areas managed by the Ausable-Bayfield and Maitland Valley Conservation Authorities. With increased management and oversight, the County forests have great potential to be an integral part of future tourism promotions as diverse destinations for various recreational activities.

Recommendation:

- Further enhance partnerships among County departments, the Huron County Health Unit, community organizations and conservation authorities to increase the accessibility and utilization of trails by the public in community owned forests and on nature trails throughout the County.
- Explore strategies for protecting the forest cover along the Lake Huron Shoreline. Possibilities include, but are not limited to: enhance collaboration between Conservation Authorities, Huron County Forestry, lakeshore municipalities and Huron County Planning and Development; and local Forest Conservation By-laws e.g. Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh.

2 Natural Environment Planning

Local Official Plans provide a vision for a community's future. Official Plans outline what is valued in the community, and how growth and development will balance environmental, social and economic factors. The Technical Document defines and identifies natural features and systems within Huron County. Section 2 provides recommendations for incorporating updates into the County and local Official Plans.

2.1 Provincial Policy Statement 2014

The 2014 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS; OMMAH 2014) is issued under the authority of Section 3 of the Planning Act and came into effect on April 30, 2014. Section 3 of the Planning Act requires that decisions affecting planning matters "shall be consistent with" policy statements issued under the Act. The PPS is to be read in its entirety. Relevant sections to the Huron Natural Heritage Plan include:

- Section 2.1 Natural Heritage
- Section 2.2 Water
- Section 2.3 Agriculture
- Section 2.5 Mineral Aggregates
- Section 4.0 Implementation

PPS **Section 2.1 Natural Heritage** is below.

2.1.1 Natural features and areas shall be protected for the long term.

2.1.2 The diversity and connectivity of natural features in an area, and the long-term ecological function and biodiversity of natural heritage systems, should be maintained, restored or, where possible, improved, recognizing linkages between and among natural heritage features and areas, surface water features and ground water features.

2.1.3 Natural heritage systems shall be identified in Ecoregions 6E & 7E, recognizing that natural heritage systems will vary in size and form in settlement areas, rural areas, and prime agricultural areas.

2.1.4 Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in:

- a) significant wetlands in Ecoregions 5E, 6E and 7E1; and*
- b) coastal wetlands.*

2.1.5 Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in:

- a) significant wetlands in the Canadian Shield north of Ecoregions 5E, 6E and 7E;*
- b) significant woodlands in Ecoregions 6E and 7E (excluding islands in Lake Huron and the St. Marys River);*
- c) significant valleylands in Ecoregions 6E and 7E (excluding islands in Lake Huron and the St. Marys River);*
- d) significant wildlife habitat;*
- e) areas of natural and scientific interest; and*
- f) coastal wetlands in Ecoregions 5E, 6E and 7E1 that are not subject to policy 2.1.4(b) unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or their ecological functions.*

2.1.6 Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in fish habitat except in accordance with provincial and federal requirements.

2.1.7 Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in habitat of endangered species and threatened species, except in accordance with provincial and federal requirements.

2.1.8 Development and site alteration shall not be permitted on adjacent lands to the natural heritage features and areas identified in policies 2.1.4, 2.1.5, and 2.1.6 unless the ecological function of the adjacent lands has been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or on their ecological functions.

2.1.9 Nothing in policy 2.1 is intended to limit the ability of agricultural uses to continue.

Regarding **water**, the PPS states (in part):

2.2.1 Planning authorities shall protect, improve or restore the quality and quantity of water by:

- a) using the watershed as the ecologically meaningful scale for integrated and long-term planning, which can be a foundation for considering cumulative impacts of development;*
- b) minimizing negative impacts, including cross-jurisdictional and cross-watershed impacts;*
- c) identifying water resource systems consisting of ground water features, hydrologic functions, natural heritage features and areas, and surface water features including shorelines, which are necessary for the ecological and hydrological integrity of the watershed;*
- d) maintaining linkages and related functions among surface water features, ground water features, hydrologic functions and natural heritage features and areas, and surface water features including shoreline areas; ...*

Definitions from the 2014 PPS:

Ecological function: means the natural processes, products or services that living and non-living environments provide or perform within or between species, ecosystems and landscapes. These may include biological, physical and socio-economic interactions.

Negative impacts: means...

- b) in regard to policy 2.2, degradation to the quality and quantity of water, sensitive surface water features and sensitive ground water features, and their related hydrologic functions, due to single, multiple or successive development or site alteration activities;*
- c) in regard to fish habitat, any permanent alteration to, or destruction of fish habitat, except where, in conjunction with the appropriate authorities, it has been authorized under the Fisheries Act; and*
- d) in regard to other natural heritage features and areas, degradation that threatens the health and integrity of the natural features or ecological functions for which an area is identified due to single, multiple or successive development or site alteration activities.*

Regarding **mineral aggregates** the PPS states (in part):

- 2.5.1 *Mineral aggregate resources shall be protected for long-term use and, where provincial information is available, deposits of mineral aggregate resources shall be identified.*
- 2.5.2.2 *Extraction shall be undertaken in a manner which minimizes social, economic and environmental impacts.*

Regarding **agriculture** the PPS states (in part):

- 2.1.9. *Nothing in policy 2.1 is intended to limit the ability of agricultural uses to continue.*
- 2.3.1 *Prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture.*

Section 4.0 **Implementation and Interpretation** provides direction for implementing the Natural Environment Update for Huron County. The PPS states (in part):

4.4 *This Provincial Policy Statement shall be read in its entirety and all relevant policies are to be applied to each situation.*

4.7 *The official plan is the most important vehicle for implementation of this Provincial Policy Statement. Comprehensive, integrated and long-term planning is best achieved through official plans.*

Official plans shall identify provincial interests and set out appropriate land use designations and policies. To determine the significance of some natural heritage features and other resources, evaluation may be required.

4.9 *The policies of this Provincial Policy Statement represent minimum standards. This Provincial Policy Statement does not prevent planning authorities and decision-makers from going beyond the minimum standards established in specific policies, unless doing so would conflict with any policy of this Provincial Policy Statement.*

2.2 Huron County Official Plan

The following amendments are recommended to the County of Huron Official Plan. In the County and local Official Plans.

2.2.1 Recommended Policy Amendments

Amendments to the County of Huron Official Plan are proposed for the Natural Environment policies (Section 6) and Extractive Resources policies (Section 5). Policies to be added are shown in **bold and underline**. Policies to be removed are shown with a ~~strike through~~.

Section 6. Natural Environment, paragraph 4 refers to the natural heritage features and areas in the County.

Recommendation: *Section 6 paragraph 4 be amended to refer to natural systems, features, and linkages defined in the Technical Document.*

Proposed amendment for Section 6 paragraph 4:

The County **natural environment system** contains a diversity of natural features, ~~and~~ areas **and linkages** including: wetlands, shoreline areas, woodlands, valley lands, **surface and ground water features, life science and earth science areas of natural and scientific interest (ANSIs)** and wildlife habitat. These features, where mapping is available, are shown on the Natural Environment Resources Map.

The County Official Plan Section 6.3.2 refers to the Natural Environment Update for Huron County.

Recommendation: *Section 6.3.2 of the County of Huron Official Plan be amended to recognize the completed Natural Environment Update:*

Proposed amendment for 6.3.2:

The County, in consultation with stakeholders, the public and the Province, ~~will~~ **has developed** a Natural Environment Update for Huron County. The Update ~~will~~ **builds** on existing information relating to the identification and evaluation of natural features, areas of local, and provincial significance, and ~~hazard lands and~~ will identify opportunities for linkages, restoration and enhancement as part of a natural system. ~~The~~ **Updated** Natural Environment **policies and mapping from the Technical Document** ~~Plan may result in amendments to the County and/or~~ **will be incorporated into the** Local Official Plans, ~~in order to reflect the recommendations~~ with consideration of local factors.

2.2.2 Recommended Mapping Revisions

The Huron County Official Plan Natural Environment Resource Map is a reference map and is not an interpretation of the Natural Environment policies, nor does it represent land use designations (Huron County Official Plan Section 1.2).

It is recommended that the Natural Environment Resource Map be updated with the Natural Environment information from the 'Land Use Plan Schedule' of each Local Official Plan.

2.3 Local Official Plans

The following policy changes are recommended for the local Official Plans. Draft local Official Plan policies are included in Appendix 1.

2.3.1 Natural Environment Policies

Add policies that:

- Define the following natural heritage features and functions: adjacent lands, areas of natural and scientific interest (ANSI), coastal wetlands, fish habitat, habitat of endangered and threatened species, natural heritage system, negative impacts, significant, significant woodlands, valleylands, watershed, wetlands, wildlife habitat, woodlands with definitions from the 2014 Provincial Policy Statement and
- Refers to the Natural Environment Update for Huron County and the Technical Document.
- Refer to the Background Natural Environment Maps identifying natural features: wetlands (provincially significant, provincially significant coastal, locally significant, coastal wetlands), woodlands, life science and earth science areas of natural and scientific interest (ANSIs), wildlife habitat.
- Clarify that nothing in this section of the Plan is intended to limit the ability of agricultural uses to continue.
- Remove policy reference to woodlot size in the local Official Plans.

- Describe the natural environment systems approach which supports connectivity and linkages between natural environment features. Refer to Background Natural Environment Maps. Note that features such as windbreaks and hedgerows are not proposed to be designated Natural Environment.
- Development in the area of significant habitat for threatened and endangered species cannot proceed unless in conformity with the Federal and the Provincial Species at Risk legislation.
- Revise the adjacent lands policies in the local Official Plan to define adjacent lands as 120 metres from all natural environment features. An Environmental Impact Study may be required for development within the adjacent lands.

The above bullet has been modified by Huron County Council on February 8, 2017 as below:

- The adjacent lands policies in the local Official Plans will maintain the current adjacent lands thresholds for the Natural Heritage Plan of 120 metres for Provincially Significant Wetlands and 50 m for other natural areas.

- Add a reference to the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority, Maitland Valley Conservation Authority, Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority and Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Watershed Report Cards where applicable
- Recognize that stewardship programs will work to increase natural cover and improve linkages and connectivity between natural features
- Add a policy to encourage development to give consideration to increasing natural cover and improving linkages

2.3.2 Urban Settlement, Village and Hamlet, Lakeshore Residential, Recreational and Residential Park policies

- Clarify that an Environmental Impact Study may be required for development within or adjacent to natural environment features in Urban Settlement, Village and Hamlet, Lakeshore Residential, Recreational and Residential Park designations
- Clarify that development will be in accordance with the Huron County Forest Conservation By-law in Urban Settlement, Village and Hamlet, Lakeshore Residential, Recreational and Residential Park designations
- Add protection of natural heritage features, functions and linkages to the Site Plan Control policies.

2.3.3 Mineral Aggregate policies

The PPS establishes a provincial interest for both protecting mineral aggregate resources and natural heritage resources. In the Huron County landscape, natural environment and mineral aggregate resources commonly overlap.

The Huron County Aggregate Strategy (2005) recommended that local Official Plans designate primary and secondary aggregate deposits where there are zero constraints or one constraint. Natural environment constraints are defined by the 2005 Aggregate Strategy as: locally significant wetlands, locally significant life science ANSIs, significant woodlands, sinkholes, significant valleylands and floodplains. The Huron County Aggregate Strategy has been implemented with consideration of the local

context; for example, due to the vast amount of aggregate in the Township of Howick, only deposits with zero constraints were designated Mineral Aggregate.

Recommendations:

- Assess the policy implications of the Natural Environment Update for Huron County on the Mineral Aggregate Strategy

Further, it is recommended that the following policies be added to local Official Plans that have implemented the Mineral Aggregate Strategy.

- For Mineral Aggregate deposits that are designated Mineral Aggregate: Local Official Plans require an Environmental Impact Study prior to rezoning. EIS policies to include requirements for considering the impact of development on natural environment systems (landforms and waterways) as identified in the Technical document 'Appendix B: Natural Heritage System in Huron County'. Policy to require that development and site alteration shall not be permitted in:
 - provincially significant wetlands
 - Significant woodlands, significant valleylands, significant wildlife habitat and significant areas of natural and scientific interest, or on lands adjacent to the foregoing features, unless the ecological functions of the feature and of the adjacent lands have been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural environment feature or area, or on their ecological functions
 - Fish habitat and habitat of endangered species and threatened species, except in accordance with provincial and federal requirements
- For Mineral Aggregate deposits that are not designated Mineral Aggregate: Add a policy stating an Environmental Impact Study may be required for proposed mineral aggregate operations. EIS policies to include requirements for considering the impact of development on natural heritage features and natural heritage systems (landforms and waterways) as identified in the Technical document 'Appendix B: Natural Heritage System in Huron County'. Policy to require that development and site alteration shall not be permitted in:
 - Provincially significant wetlands
 - Significant woodlands, significant valleylands, significant wildlife habitat and significant areas of natural and scientific interest, or on lands adjacent to the foregoing features, unless the ecological functions of the feature and of the adjacent lands have been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural environment feature or area, or on their ecological functions
 - Fish habitat and habitat of endangered species and threatened species, except in accordance with provincial and federal requirements

2.3.4 Mapping Recommendations

Official Plan Schedules

The Technical Document mapping considers natural heritage features only. On the landscape, natural heritage features interact with natural hazards, agriculture, aggregate deposits, recreation areas and other land uses; the implementation of the Technical Document mapping into Official Plan Schedules must be completed with full consideration of these interactions.

Background Natural Environment Maps

It is recommended that more detailed mapping from the Technical Document be incorporated into local Official Plans as Background Natural Environment Maps which are an appendix to the Official Plan.

- The Technical Document 'Appendix B: Natural Heritage System in Huron County' identifies the components of the natural heritage system including natural heritage features, and linkages (waterways and landforms.) Local Official Plans to include mapping illustrating the linkage components of the natural heritage system: landforms and waterways. This mapping will be incorporated into a set of maps referred to as 'Natural Environment Background Maps'. The Natural Environment Background Maps are not designations and will be updated at the time of a Five Year Review.

2.4 Municipal Zoning By-laws

As required by the Planning Act Section 26(9), the municipal Zoning By-laws will be updated following five year Official Plan reviews to be consistent with the Official Plan.

Recommendation: Update local Zoning By-laws to recognize natural environment features following the direction of the local Official Plan, with Natural Environment zones. Within Urban Settlement, Village and Hamlet, Lakeshore Residential, Recreational and Residential Park areas, Holding (-h) zones or an overlay may be used to indicate where consideration of natural environment features is required.

Other Tools for Natural Environment Planning

2.5 Forest Conservation By-law

The Huron County Forest Conservation By-law 38-2013 regulates all woodlots greater than 0.2 hectares (0.5 acres) and woodlands greater than 1 hectare (2.47 acres). The size of a woodlot/woodland is not determined by property boundaries but by the number of trees per hectare of a certain size. The larger the trees, the fewer that are required per area for the by-law to apply.

3 Supporting a Stewardship Ethic

Stewardship is defined as voluntary personal actions to care for, protect, conserve, enhance and improve a resource. The natural environment features in Huron County have benefitted from a long history of stewardship completed both independently and with the assistance of agencies and government.

Stewardship can take several forms: projects, management decisions and most importantly, a conservation ethic. The majority of land in Huron County is privately owned and landowner stewardship is critical to not only protecting but improving natural environment. Even agricultural lands that have no or limited natural cover can still perform natural functions such as infiltration, groundwater recharge, and provision of habitat for species movement, feeding, or migration. Voluntary stewardship based on a conservation ethic has the potential to have the greatest positive, long-term effect on natural environment.

3.1 Provincial Policy Statement direction for Stewardship Efforts

Stewardship projects, management and ethics are consistent with Section 2.1 of the PPS (OMMAH 2014).

Landowner knowledge and a stewardship ethic will protect natural features and areas for the long term. (Section 2.1.1)

Native plant species are used in restoration projects. Although many tree planting projects use conifers, these are the best species for establishing forests and many native species fill in around the conifers to provide biodiversity. New plantations are colonized by vegetation that provide habitat for pollinators and birds. Over several decades, conifer plantations are naturally converted to a mix of deciduous species. (Section 2.1.2)

Natural areas are part of effective agricultural systems as less productive, erosion-prone land is retired from agriculture, allowing fuel and crop inputs to be used effectively and cost-efficiently on the best farmland. (Section 2.1.9)

A combination of a stewardship ethic and programs will reduce the planning and regulation applications to develop and alter habitat, wetlands, woodlands, valleylands and other areas of natural and scientific interest. (Section 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 2.1.6, 2.1.7, 2.1.8)

3.2 A Collaborative Approach to Stewardship

Government, agencies and community groups play an important role in enabling and assisting private land stewardship. Assistance comes in the forms of education, technical assistance and financial incentives. Examples of these programs and initiatives will be discussed further in the document. As landowners, conservation authorities, municipalities, the county, the province and Nature Conservancy of Canada and Huron Tract Land Trust Conservancy have an impact on natural environment in the way their properties are managed.

Since 2004, the County of Huron has supported a multi-stakeholder 'Water Protection Steering Committee' (WPSC) to foster a collaborative approach to land stewardship. Members of the WPSC include Council representatives, provincial ministries, agricultural and lakeshore representatives, industry organizations and conservation authorities. Many innovative approaches to stewardship have been launched as a result of bringing diverse perspectives to a regular forum.

3.3 Stewardship Programs

The majority of stewardship projects in Huron County occur on agricultural land to control soil erosion, control barnyard runoff, and manage nutrients. These conservation farming techniques can improve and protect water quality and quantity. Farm and non-farm rural landowners increase natural environment features by planting trees on erosion-prone land, around existing forests and in floodplains along watercourses. These projects also reduce the amount of sediment that enters watercourses.

Local Funding: Many programs are focusing on increasing and improving natural environment features. The Huron Clean Water Project (HCWP) began providing technical assistance and financial incentives to

county residents in 2005 to undertake stewardship projects to improve and protect water quality. This program has important secondary benefits to natural environment and the local economy. The project is funded by the County of Huron and delivered by the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) and Maitland Valley Conservation Authority (MVCA). More than 2,800 projects have been completed between 2005 and 2018 including planting more than 340 hectares of trees, establishing 186 kilometers of windbreaks and fencing cattle out of approximately 40 kilometers of streams. The HCWP is a good example of a program that improves natural environment.

Provincial and Federal Grant Programs: Several government ministries and organizations provide funding for implementing stewardship projects such as tree planting and stream restoration. Conservation Authority and Huron Stewardship Council staff work with the landowners and funders to coordinate projects and optimize the use of funds.

Watershed Planning: Community-based stewardship plans protect and improve natural environment. The Provincial Healthy Lake Huron program has targeted stewardship efforts along the Lake Huron shoreline, including three watersheds in Huron County. Watershed plans have been developed for the Main Bayfield, Bayfield North and Glenn Garvey watersheds to protect and improve forest conditions, wetlands, and water quality. Recommendations from watershed plans include establishing buffers and rain gardens, creating wetlands or berms, maintaining crop residue, following nutrient management plans, and planting windbreaks and trees on marginal land. Individual landowners and farmers complete stewardship projects each year. For example, 20 projects were completed in 2014 in the three Healthy Lake Huron watersheds within Huron.

Tax Incentive Programs: Terrestrial natural environment resources are protected and conserved through tax incentive programs including the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP) and Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program (CLTIP). However, non-farm rural landowners may need to pay the full residential tax rate on their natural areas if they do not qualify for the MFTIP or CLTIP programs. This can be a disincentive to retire agricultural land which is producing revenue. Forests on land owned by registered farmers are taxed at the same rate as agricultural land unless the land is taxed at a lower rate because it is designated as an Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI).

Performance Incentives: The Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) program began in Norfolk County and provides annual payments to landowners for providing ecological goods and services on their land. This may include natural environment features but also includes pollinator habitat, wildlife habitat and carbon sequestration. Grants are available to help establish the projects. There is potential for a similar project in Huron County.

3.4 Publicly Owned Forest Tracts as Demonstration Sites

Woodlands in Huron County have diverse ownership. Approximately 87% of the woodlands in the County are privately owned with the remaining 13% ownership combined between provincial and municipal governments and the Ausable-Bayfield and Maitland Valley Conservation Authorities.

County Forests: The County forest tracts total approximately 1600 acres (647 ha) and make up 1.2% of the total forest cover in the County. An additional 512 acres (207 ha) of environmentally significant

woodlands are owned by the Nature Conservancy of Canada, including the Morris Tract provincial nature reserve.

The fourteen Huron County forest tracts are a legacy of the massive reforestation effort across southern Ontario that was undertaken by municipalities in partnership with the province, starting in the early 1900's. The County forests are symbolic of a province-wide effort to reverse serious problems including soil erosion, flooding and water pollution, resulting from non-strategic clearing and lack of forest management by the early settlers of Ontario. With proper management and community partnerships, these forest tracts can serve as valuable sources of environmental protection, education and recreation for current and future generations in Huron County.

3.5 Outreach and Education

Natural environment features can be degraded or threatened from a lack of understanding of the environmental benefits, goods and services provided. Outreach and education programs increase awareness of the ecosystem services and the benefits of natural features in the lives of the landowner families. The programs also provide practical information to protect and improve natural environment features.

Environmental Farm Plan: Since 1991, the agricultural community has used the Environmental Farm Plan Program to learn about the best management practices to reduce the environmental impact of agriculture while improving profits and protecting natural environment features. The EFP is delivered by Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association and is a voluntary, confidential program. The plans can be used to strategically address environmental issues.

The Rural Landowner Stewardship Guide: Developed for rural residents who do not farm, The Rural Landowner Stewardship Guide helps rural landowners who wish to protect and enhance natural features and environmental quality on their properties. This will add value to landowners' enjoyment of their lands as well as contribute to the long-term protection of our natural environment and clean water for future generations of Ontarians.

Environmental Education: Conservation Authorities and the Huron Stewardship Council deliver environmental education programs to school classes and youth that prepare young people to be good stewards now and when they become landowners. The programs connect school curriculum to local environmental issues.

Many local organizations and agencies hold workshops and outreach events. Topics are specific to the interests of the community and can include information that benefits natural environment.

The Huron-Perth Chapter of the Ontario Woodlot Association is the largest organization dedicated to managing woodlots in a sustainable manner. Activities include information meetings and tours about restoration, biodiversity and caring for woodlots. These events foster relationships between like-minded people who can serve the role of community champions and mentors.

Education increases the conservation ethic and appreciation of nature. A conservation ethic is an ethic of resource use, allocation, exploitation, and protection. Its primary focus is upon maintaining the health of the natural world: its forests, fisheries, habitats, and biological diversity. Secondary focus is on materials conservation and energy conservation, which are seen as important to protect the natural world.

3.6 References

Huron County. 2014. Forests for our Future: Management Plan for County Forests Recommendations for Tree Cover Enhancement. County of Huron. 40 pp. Available on-line at <http://www.huroncounty.ca/plandev/forestry-services.php>

Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (OMMAH). 2014. Provincial Policy Statement, 2014. 50pp.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR). 2010. Natural Heritage Reference Manual for Policy 2.3 of the Provincial Policy Statement. 2nd edition. 233 pp.

Appendix 1: Natural Heritage Policies for Local Official Plans

The following policy amendments are provided as suggestions for consideration when updating local Official Plans. Policy wording may be revised to accommodate the local context and format of local Official Plans. Bold underline refers to **wording to be added**; Strikethrough refers to ~~wording to be deleted~~.

SECTION 2.3.1	NATURAL ENVIRONMENT POLICIES
	<p>Natural Environment areas consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetlands; • Woodlands; • Rivers, streams and fish habitat; • Valleys; • Groundwater; • Life science areas of natural and scientific interest; • Earth science areas of natural and scientific interest; • Wildlife habitat; • The lakeshore and lake bank; • Habitat for threatened and endangered species. <p>Since settlement in the 1800s, extensive areas of natural environment have been diminished through clearing, drainage and development. The remaining natural environment areas take on a greater significance for the health and integrity of the ecosystem. The intent of this Plan is to protect these areas to ensure healthy ecosystems.</p> <p>Forests cover about XX% of (name of municipality) land base and provide many benefits for the natural and human environment. A forest cover target of XX% has been established for all (name of municipality) sub-watersheds. This amount of forest cover is achievable without removing any land from agricultural production. A map of sub-watersheds and forest cover targets is included in the background maps.</p> <p>These natural features are part of a larger system, and should be protected with a view to enhancing the entire ecosystem. Watershed planning is supported as a comprehensive and integrated approach for conservation. <u>The Ausable Bayfield /Maitland Valley/Saugeen Valley/Upper Thames River Watershed report card(s) are/is a valuable tool for measuring change in natural environment coverage.</u></p>

SECTION 2.3.1	NATURAL ENVIRONMENT POLICIES
<p>Include 2014 PPS definitions for natural environment features and refer to the Natural Heritage</p>	<p>Natural Environment Definitions</p> <p><u>Adjacent Lands means lands contiguous to a specific natural heritage feature or area where it is likely that development or site alteration would have a negative impact on the feature or area.</u></p>

SECTION 2.3.1	NATURAL ENVIRONMENT POLICIES
Plan Technical Document	<p><u>Areas of natural and scientific interest (ANSI) means areas of land and water containing natural landscapes or features that have been identified as having life science or earth science values related to protection, scientific study or education.</u></p> <p><u>Coastal wetland means</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>a) any wetland that is located on Lake Huron; or</u> <u>b) any other wetland that is on a tributary to Lake Huron, and lies, either wholly or in part, downstream of a line located 2 kilometres upstream of the 1:100 year floodline (plus wave run-up) of the large water body to which the tributary is connected.</u> <p><u>Fish habitat as defined in the Fisheries Act, means spawning ground and any other areas, including nursery, rearing, food supply and migration areas on which fish depend directly or indirectly in order to carry out their life processes.</u></p> <p><u>Habitat of endangered and threatened species means</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>a) with respect to a species listed on the Species at Risk in Ontario List as an endangered or threatened species for which a regulation made under clause 55(1)(a) of the Endangered Species Act, 2007 is in force, the area prescribed by that regulation as the habitat of the species; or</u> <u>b) with respect to any other species listed on the Species at Risk in Ontario List as an endangered or threatened species, an area on which the species depends, directly or indirectly, to carry on its life processes, including life processes such as reproduction, rearing, hibernation, migration or feeding, as approved by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources; and</u> <p><u>places in the areas described in clause (a) or (b), whichever is applicable, that are used by members of the species as dens, nests, hibernacula or other residences.</u></p> <p><u>Natural heritage system means a system made up of natural heritage features or areas and linkages intended to provide connectivity (at the regional or site level) and support natural processes which are necessary to maintain biological and geological diversity, natural functions, viable populations of indigenous species.</u></p> <p><u>Negative impacts means</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>a) in regard to the quality and quantity of water, degradation to the quality and quantity of water, sensitive surface water features and sensitive ground water features, and their related hydrologic functions, due to single, multiple or successive development or site alteration activities;</u> <u>b) in regard to fish habitat, any permanent alteration to, or destruction of fish habitat, except where, in conjunction with the appropriate authorities, it has been authorized under the Fisheries Act; and</u> <u>c) in regard to other natural heritage features and areas, degradation that threatens the health and integrity of the natural features or ecological functions for which an area is identified due to single, multiple or successive development or site alteration activities.</u>

SECTION 2.3.1	NATURAL ENVIRONMENT POLICIES
	<p><u>Significant means it is ecologically important in terms of features, functions, representation or amount and contribution to the quality and diversity of an identifiable geographic area or natural heritage system. The Huron Natural Heritage Plan Technical document defines significance criteria for natural heritage features and linkages within Huron County, and provides the scientific justification for these features.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Significant, with regards to wetlands, coastal wetlands and areas of natural and scientific interest, means an area identified as provincially significant by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources using evaluation procedures established by the Province, as amended from time to time.</u> • <u>Significant woodlands are areas which are ecologically important in terms of features such as species composition, age of trees and stand history; functionally important due to its contribution to the broader landscape because of its location, size or due to the amount of forest cover in the planning area; or economically important due to site quality, species composition or past management history. The Huron Natural Heritage Plan Technical Document defines significance criteria for woodlands.</u> <p><u>Valleylands means a natural area that occurs in a valley or other landform depression that has water flowing through or standing for some period of the year.</u></p> <p><u>Watershed means an area that is drained by a river and its tributaries.</u></p> <p><u>Wetlands means lands that are seasonally or permanently covered by shallow water, as well as lands 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 plants or water tolerant plants. The four major types of wetlands are swamps, marshes, bogs and fens. Periodically soaked or wet lands being used for agricultural purposes which no longer exhibit wetland characteristics are not considered to be wetlands for the purposes of this definition.</u></p> <p><u>Wildlife habitat means areas where plants, animals and other organisms live, and find adequate amounts of food, water, shelter and space needed to sustain their populations. Specific wildlife habitats of concern may include areas where species concentrate at a vulnerable point in their annual or life cycle; and areas which are important or non-migratory species.</u></p> <p><u>Woodlands means treed areas that provide environmental and economic benefits to both the private landowner and the general public, such as erosion prevention, hydrological and nutrient cycling, provision of clean air and the long-term storage of carbon, provision of wildlife habitat, outdoor recreational opportunities, and the sustainable harvest of a wide range of woodland products. Woodlands include treed areas, woodlots or forested areas and vary in their level of significance at the local, regional and provincial levels.</u></p>
Add reference to Background	<u>Background Natural Environment Maps</u>

SECTION 2.3.1	NATURAL ENVIRONMENT POLICIES
Natural Environment Maps	<u>Background Natural Environment Maps are included for guidance in interpreting the Natural Environment policies and do not contain designations. Background Maps include wetlands (provincially significant, provincially significant coastal, locally significant, coastal wetlands), significant woodlands and woodlands, wildlife habitat, significant valleylands, significant earth science ANSIs and life science ANSIs, as identified in the Natural Environment Update for Huron County Technical Document. Updates to the Background Maps will be made at the time of a Five Year Review.</u>
Add reference to the Natural Environment Update for Huron County	<u>Natural Environment Update for Huron County</u> <u>The Natural Environment Update for Huron County has been prepared for the County of Huron.</u> <u>For the purposes of this Plan, the term ‘natural environment’ includes both natural heritage features (such as woodlots) and natural hazard features (such as the lake bank). The Natural Environment Update for Huron County focuses on natural heritage features and summarizes the planning approach for natural areas in the County. The related Technical Document defines significance criteria for natural heritage features within the County of Huron, and the Municipality of _____ . It also defines the natural heritage system within the County of Huron and the Municipality of _____ .</u>
Revise reference to watershed planning	Watershed Planning The integrity and function of the ecosystem will be protected, restored and enhanced. Watershed or sub-watershed planning integrates water management, environmental management and land use planning on an ecosystem basis. The Municipality of _____ consists of X sub-watersheds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ sub-watershed • _____ sub-watershed • Etc <p>The boundaries of watersheds and sub-watersheds provide natural limits for managing the relationships between human activities and the environment. Sub-watersheds within the Municipality of _____ are shown in Appendix #. The Municipality will participate in watershed and sub-watershed studies in cooperation with the Conservation Authority, adjacent municipalities, community groups and other agencies. Relevant findings of watershed planning may be implemented through amendment to this Plan and/or the Zoning By-law.</p>
Remove habitat for threatened and endangered species from “Natural Environment— Full Protection” to “Natural Environment—” Add policy to permit Site Plan	Areas of Natural Environment—Full Protection: Provincially Significant Wetlands, Significant Habitat for Threatened and Endangered Species and Fish Habitat Natural Environment areas identified as provincially significant wetlands, significant habitat for threatened or endangered species and fish habitat are considered no development zones and are designated as Natural Environment— Full Protection. Areas of Limited Protection Use of Existing Natural Environment Lots – Locally Significant Wetlands, Coastal Wetlands, Significant ANSIs, Significant Wildlife Habitat, Significant Valleylands, Significant Woodlands, Adjacent Lands, Habitat for Threatened and Endangered Species Development shall be directed away from forested and other natural areas where an alternative location exists on the property. However in some cases, Natural Environment

SECTION 2.3.1	NATURAL ENVIRONMENT POLICIES
Control to protect natural environment features	<p>areas identified as locally significant wetlands, significant ANSIs, significant wildlife habitat, significant valleylands, significant woodlands, may contain a residence and/or accessory buildings without detrimentally affecting the natural environment goals of this Plan. These properties may be rezoned to a special natural environment zone provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no alternative location exists on the property that is outside the Natural Environment designation; • the affected area is not a wetland, floodplain, a hazard area (unstable slopes, soils or sinkholes) or an area of natural or scientific interest; • on valleyland properties, no alternative building site exists outside of the valley land; • the development results in minimal effects no negative effects on the ecological features and functions of the area; • groundwater will be protected, particularly in vulnerable areas; • the local Conservation Authority or other appropriate agencies shall be consulted; • the residence may not be severed from the holding on which it is located; • the proposed dwelling complies with the MDS I formula, using Type B land use; • the site is suitable for construction, the soil is suitable for sewage disposal and an adequate supply of potable water is available; • development is in accordance with the County Forest Conservation By-law; • the site is serviced by a fully maintained municipal road (alternative standards may apply to existing developed areas); • development is in compliance with applicable Conservation Authority regulations; and • development may be conditional on natural environment enhancements, such as forest improvements, linkages, stewardship agreements and conservation easements; • <u>Site Plan Control (Section XX) may be used to protect natural features and functions.</u>
Add policy referencing Fish Habitat and SAR legislative requirements	<p><u>Fish Habitat and Habitat for Threatened and Endangered Species</u> <u>Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in fish habitat and/or habitat of threatened and endangered species except in accordance with provincial and federal requirements.</u></p>
Add a policy defining the natural heritage system	<p><u>Natural Heritage Systems</u> <u>The natural heritage system includes both natural heritage features such as: woodlands and wetlands; and linkages, such as valleylands, watercourses and hedgerows. Linkages provide connectivity between natural heritage features. The linkage components are mapped in the on Background Natural Environment Maps which are an appendix to this Plan. While the linkage components are not designated Natural Environment in the Official Plan, their importance to the natural heritage system is recognized.</u> <u>Development is encouraged to protect and improve connectivity between natural features. An Environmental Impact Study may include a requirement to evaluate the impact of development on the natural heritage system as shown on Background Natural Environment Map #.</u></p>
Adjacent lands are defined as	<p>Lands Adjacent to Natural Features</p>

SECTION 2.3.1	NATURAL ENVIRONMENT POLICIES
120 metres from all natural heritage features	<p>Provincial Policies require that lands adjacent to significant natural features be protected from incompatible development within 120 metres of Provincially Significant Wetlands and within 50 metres of all other significant natural features wetlands.</p> <p>50 metres of significant woodlands, significant wildlife habitat, significant valleylands, locally significant wetlands, earth and life science ANSIs.</p>
<p>Add reference to Watershed Report Cards</p> <p>Add a policy to encourage improving linkages with stewardship projects</p>	<p>Community Stewardship</p> <p>To become environmental leaders and to create a healthy ecosystem, the efforts and stewardship of the whole community are essential. Numerous individual and community initiatives are necessary for a healthy environment. Initiatives include awareness, water management, septic system maintenance, sustainable agricultural practices and forestry management. The Municipality will work with the Conservation Authorities, the Stewardship Council, the Planning Department County of Huron, the Huron County Health Unit and other community groups to promote a healthy environment. <u>The Maitland Valley/Ausable Bayfield/Upper Thames River/Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority’s Watershed Report Card is updated every five years and County ‘State of the Environment Report’ will monitor and evaluate the natural environment coverage at a subwatershed level. and the Municipality will provide information to the County when available. The Municipality of _____ will rely on the Watershed Report Card to monitor the changing health of the natural environment.</u></p> <p><u>Stewardship programs will work to increase natural cover and improve linkages and connectivity between natural features, as identified in Appendix #, to enhance the natural environment.</u></p>
Remove policy referring to size of woodlot	<p>Forested areas greater than 1 hectare and less than 4 hectares are of local importance. Forested areas 4 hectares or larger are of Provincial significance. All of these areas shall be protected.</p>
Revise EIS Terms of Reference to consider development location(s) outside natural heritage areas	<p>APPENDIX: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDY (EIS) TERMS OF REFERENCE</p> <p>Environmental Impact Studies should be conducted in two phases with Phase I identifying the suitability of the site for the proposed land use and/or development including an inventory of the natural features and functions present on the site. Phase II should identify conditions for development and any potential mitigation measures. The Phase I report must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate agencies before Phase II is initiated.</p> <p>A pre-consultation will establish the scope of the development proposal, identify the natural heritage/hazard issues to be addressed, detail the accepted methods of evaluation potential impacts, and specify the qualifications of personnel required to carry out these evaluations. The Terms of Reference for any Environmental Impact Study must have regard for the Natural Heritage Systems Study in the Huron Natural Heritage Plan Technical document. The Municipality may develop more specific guidelines; however the EIS will address the following issues at a minimum.</p> <p>Phase I: Site Suitability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An identification and description of the purpose of the proposed land use change and proposed development

SECTION 2.3.1	NATURAL ENVIRONMENT POLICIES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of possible development locations outside natural areas • The natural heritage features and functions, and/or hazard features present • The components of a natural heritage system, including linkages existing interconnections or corridors with adjacent natural features • The nature and duration of potential impacts to the site, adjacent lands and ecological processes/functions; and the potential cumulative effects of the proposed development • In the case of natural hazards, information relevant to the slope stability, flooding potential, and existing natural hazard processes will be addressed • The specific location of boundaries or edges of such features and functions, and the location of proposed development or site alteration with respect to these delineated boundaries • A description of the environment, including ecological processes/functions that will be affected by the development, as well as a description of the effects that will be or might reasonably be expected to be caused to the environment. <p>The data will be reviewed and recommendations will be made to the Municipality on the suitability of the proposal from an environmental perspective. If the proposal is deemed suitable, actions will be identified that are necessary to mitigate the effect(s) on the environment.</p> <p>Phase II may or may not be required as a result of Phase I.</p> <p>Phase II: Development/ Maintenance/ Management Requirements.</p> <p>An assessment of the proposal giving particular attention to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential or expected impacts on the features or functions or natural hazard conditions, • Opportunities for enhancing the conservation and management of the features or functions, • Expected or proposed mitigation measures, • The applicant is required to complete an appropriate development plan for the proposal, including maintenance and management plans to protect the environment. The plan is to be approved by the Municipality based upon the recommendation of the technical review committee.

SECTION 1.1.1	AGRICULTURAL POLICIES
No amendment to Agricultural Policies proposed.	To encourage the retention and reestablishment of woodlots, wetlands, and other natural areas recognizing their benefits for agriculture and the natural environment

SECTION 2.3.2	URBAN SETTLEMENT, VILLAGE AND HAMLET, LAKESHORE RESIDENTIAL, RECREATIONAL and RESIDENTIAL PARK POLICIES

Local approach is most appropriate for Urban Natural Environment.	
EIS required in Urban areas	<p>Environmental Impact Study</p> <p>Natural features and functions designated on Schedule B and/or shown on the Natural Heritage Schedules will be protected <u>in accordance with the policies in Section # (Natural Environment Section) of this Plan. An Environmental Impact Study may be required for development within or adjacent to natural heritage features. Where an Environmental Impact Study is required, it will be conducted according to Section # and Appendix # of this Plan.</u></p>
Development to proceed in accordance with the Huron County Forest Conservation By-law	<p>Forest Conservation By-law</p> <p><u>Development shall proceed according to the requirements of the Huron County Forest Conservation By-law and the Municipality of _____ Forest Conservation By-law.</u></p>
Natural Heritage Features on Background Natural Environment Maps may be zoned Natural Environment, Holding or employ an overlay approach.	<p><u>Where natural features are identified on Background Natural Environment Maps, they may be zoned Natural Environment in the Municipality's Zoning By-law or an overlay or Holding Zone approach may be used to indicate that an Environmental Impact Study may be required.</u></p>

SECTION 2.3.3	MINERAL AGGREGATE POLICIES
For local Official Plans that have implemented the Aggregate Plan, add a requirement that EIS demonstrate of 'no negative impacts'	<p>Proposed Operations in Designated Mineral Aggregate Deposits</p> <p>A number of studies shall be completed to the satisfaction of the Municipality, the Ministry of Natural Resources, and other applicable ministries or agencies before approvals are obtained under the Planning Act (re-zoning) or the Aggregate Resources Act (aggregate license). The required studies are outlined in Appendix #.</p> <p><u>An Environmental Impact Study may be required. Where an Environmental Impact Study is required, development and site alteration shall not be permitted in:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Provincially significant wetlands</u> • <u>Significant woodlands, significant valleylands, significant wildlife habitat and significant areas of natural and scientific interest, or on lands adjacent to the foregoing features, unless the ecological functions of the feature and of the adjacent lands have been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that there will</u>

SECTION 2.3.3	MINERAL AGGREGATE POLICIES
	<p><u>be no negative impacts on the natural heritage feature or area, or on their ecological functions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Fish habitat and habitat of endangered species and threatened species, except in accordance with provincial and federal requirements</u>
<p>Where an OPA is required to change the designation to Mineral Aggregates add a policy that EIS demonstrate 'no negative impacts'</p>	<p><u>Proposed Operations Outside Designated Mineral Aggregate Deposits An Environmental Impact Study may be required for proposed mineral aggregate operations.</u></p> <p><u>Where an Environmental Impact Study is required, development and site alteration shall not be permitted in:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Provincially significant wetlands</u> • <u>Significant woodlands, significant valleylands, significant wildlife habitat and significant areas of natural and scientific interest, or on lands adjacent to the foregoing features, unless the ecological functions of the feature and of the adjacent lands have been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural heritage feature or area, or on their ecological functions</u> • <u>Fish habitat and habitat of endangered species and threatened species, except in accordance with provincial and federal requirements</u>

SECTION 2.3.5	IMPLEMENTATION
<p>Site Plan Control can protect natural environment features</p>	<p>Site Plan Control</p> <p>The site plan control provisions of section 41 of the Planning Act will be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - maximize compatibility between new and existing development and between different land uses; - improve the efficiency, safety and appearance of land uses; - ensure the provision of service and facilities; - widen County highways for a 30 metre wide road allowance; - <u>protect natural environment features, functions and linkages;</u> and - implement development agreements. <p>All land use designations are proposed site plan control areas, except for lands used primarily for one- and two- unit dwellings. Within proposed site plan control areas, Council may pass by-laws designating all or part of the areas as site plan control areas.</p>