



SOUTH NATION
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Forestry Committee

Meeting Agenda

Date: February 28, 2023

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Location: Watershed Room, SNC

Address: 38 Victoria Street, Finch, ON K0C 1K0



Forestry Committee

Meeting Agenda

February 28, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

1. Chair's Remarks
2. Approval of Forestry Committee Agenda (Supplemental Agenda)
3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest
4. SNC Forestry Project Update – PowerPoint Presentation: Staff
5. Community Engagement
6. Approval of the Forestry Committee meeting minutes of November 29th, 2022 3-7
7. Business Arising from Minutes (if any)
8. New Business:
 - a. Request for Approval: Election of Committee Chair: Ronda 8-11
 - b. Update: Forestry Committee Membership: Ronda 12-13
 - c. Request for Approval: Category 3 Program Business Case Development: Ronda 14-18
 - d. Update: 2023 Tree Planting and Free Tree Days: Cheyene 19-21
 - e. Update: Forest Certification: Pat 22-23
 - f. Update: Logging Operations and Hazard Tree Management: Caroline 24-25
 - g. Update: Ontario Land Trust Standards & Membership: Pat 26
 - h. Update: Land Securement Strategy: Pat 27-67
 - i. Update: Forest Steward Program: Cheyene 68
9. Supplemental Agenda (if any)
10. Correspondence (if any)
11. Date of Next Meeting:
 - Joint Standing Committee Meeting, March 23rd, 2023 at 1:00 p.m., SNC Office
 - Forestry Committee Meeting, June 6th, 2023 at 10:00 a.m., SNC Office
12. Adjournment

Ronda Boutz,
Secretary-Treasurer.



FORESTRY COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, November 29th, 2022, 10:00 a.m. – Meeting 04/22

SNC Watershed Room, SNC Office



Present: Glenn Mackey, Committee Chair
François Allard, Public Citizen (*electronic participation*)
Alain Bertrand, Public Citizen
Maurice Chabot, Public Citizen
Dorothy Hamilton, Stormont Dundas Glengarry Chapter – Ontario Woodlot Association
Murray Inch, Public Citizen (*electronic participation*)
Dave Robertson, Public Citizen (*electronic participation*)
Bill Smirle, SNC Board of Directors
François St. Amour, SNC Board of Directors
Doug Thompson, Public Citizen (*electronic participation*)

Regrets: George Darouze, SNC Board of Directors, Past Chair, ex-officio
Steve Densham, SNC Board of Directors, Vice Chair, ex-officio
Phil Duncan, United Counties of Stormont Dundas Glengarry
Elizabeth Holmes, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (*non-voting*)
Steve Hunter, United Counties of Prescott Russell
Pierre Leroux, SNC Board of Directors, Chair, ex-officio

Absent: Ron Toonders, Ag Soil and Crop

Staff: Carl Bickerdike, Chief Administrative Officer
Ronda Boutz, Secretary-Treasurer
Cheyene Brunet, Forestry Technician
Chris Craig, Senior Forestry Technician
Caroline Goulet, Forester
Tavish MacLeod, Forestry Assistant
Pat Piitz, Team Lead, Property



CHAIR'S REMARKS

Glenn Mackey, Committee Chair, called the Forestry Committee meeting of November 29th, 2022 to order at 10:00 a.m.

APPROVAL OF FORESTRY COMMITTEE AGENDA

RESOLUTION NO. FC-025/22

Moved by: Bill Smirle
Seconded by: François St. Amour

RESOLVED THAT:

The Members approve the Forestry
Committee agenda of November 29th, 2022.

CARRIED

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Conflict of Interest.

SNC FORESTRY PROJECT UPDATE – POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

Staff presented forestry program and project updates.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Bill Smirle – continues to provide regular updates to North Dundas Council on SNC programs and services
- Murray Inch – updated Committee on the fall clean-up day at Oak Valley Pioneer Park

APPROVAL OF: FORESTRY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 6TH, 2022

RESOLUTION NO. FC-026/22

Moved by: Maurice Chabot
Seconded by: Dave Robertson

RESOLVED THAT:

The Members approve the Forestry
Committee meeting minutes of September 6th,
2022 as submitted.

CARRIED



BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

None.

NEW BUSINESS

UPDATE: BILL 23, MORE HOMES BUILT FASTER ACT, 2022

RESOLUTION NO. FC-027/22

Moved by: François St. Amour
Seconded by: Doug Thompson

RESOLVED THAT:

The SNC Standing Committees receive and file the update on Bill 23, *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* and proposed amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act.

CARRIED

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES WORK PLAN FOR MUNICIPAL ENGAGEMENT

RESOLUTION NO. FC-028/22

Moved by: Doug Thompson
Seconded by: Dave Robertson

RESOLVED THAT:

The Standing Committees approve the Programs and Services Work Plan for Municipal Engagement.

CARRIED

UPDATE: 2022 YEAR END FORESTRY REPORT

RESOLUTION NO. FC-029/22

Moved by: Dorothy Hamilton
Seconded by: Alain Bertrand

RESOLVED THAT:

The Forestry Committee receive and file the 2022 Forestry Year End Report update.

CARRIED

Dorothy Hamilton noted that the Ontario Woodlot Association's YouTube channel has



LiDAR presentation available that may be of interest to Committee members.

UPDATE: 2023 FORESTRY WORK PLAN

RESOLUTION NO. FC-030/22

Moved by: Alain Bertrand
Seconded by: Murray Inch

RESOLVED THAT:

The Forestry Committee receive and file the 2023 Forestry Work Plan update.

CARRIED

UPDATE: SNC APPROVED GRANTS SUMMARY (2018-2022)

RESOLUTION NO. FC-031/22

Moved by: François Allard
Seconded by: Doug Thompson

RESOLVED THAT:

The Forestry Committee receive and file the SNC Approved Grants Summary (2018-2022) update.

CARRIED

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL: 2023 FORESTRY COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE

RESOLUTION NO. FC-032/22

Moved by: Doug Thompson
Seconded by: Dave Robertson

RESOLVED THAT:

The Forestry Committee approves the 2023 Committee meeting schedule as presented.

CARRIED

SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA

None.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.



DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- February 28th, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. at SNC Office, Finch.

ADJOURNMENT

RESOLUTION NO. FC-033/22

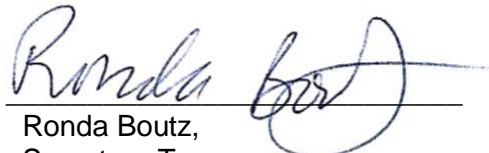
Moved by: Bill Smirle

RESOLVED THAT:

The Forestry Committee meeting of
November 29th, 2022 be adjourned at
11:41 a.m.

CARRIED

Glenn Mackey,
Committee Chair.



Ronda Boutz,
Secretary-Treasurer.

/rb



To: Forestry Committee
From: Ronda Boutz, Secretary-Treasurer
Date: February 21, 2023
Subject: Request for Approval: Election of Committee Chair

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee Members appoint Ronda Boutz, Secretary-Treasurer as the Acting Committee Chair; and

FURTHER THAT: SNC Administrative By-law 16.3: *'All elections shall be in accordance with the Procedures for Election of Officers'* be adhered to.

DISCUSSION:

As per the South Nation Conservation (SNC) Standing Committees Terms of Reference, each Standing Committee must appoint a Chair annually.

As Election Chair, I will solicit nominations from Committee Members for the Chair position. If only one nomination is made, there will be a motion to approve the nominated Chair. If multiple nominations are made for these positions, I will conduct a vote using the procedures outlined in Appendix A.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/ADHERENCE TO SNC POLICY:

Compliance with Budget:

No impact on the 2023 SNC Budget.

SNC Policy Adherence:

The Election of Committee Chair adheres to the SNC Standing Committees Terms of Reference and the SNC Administrative By-laws.

Ronda Boutz,
Secretary-Treasurer.



Election Procedures

1. Election Chair declares the position vacant, according to *SNC's Administrative Bylaws*
 2. Call for nominations 3 times for election of Chair (no seconder required)
 3. Approval of the following motion:
 - Moved by:
 - Seconded by:
 - That for the year 2023, and until the Joint Standing Committee Meeting of 2024,
 - That Mr./Ms. _____ be elected as Chair of the Forestry Committee
 4. Chair assumes their office
-

SNC Election Procedures if there is more than one candidate for Chair

1. Election Chair declares the position vacant, according to *SNC's Administrative By-laws*
2. Election procedures for Chair
 - Nominations require no seconder
 - Election chair calls for nominations from the floor
 - If a nominee does not wish to accept, they should decline immediately
 - If there are no further nominations from the floor, election chair asks if there are any further nominations
 - If none are forthcoming, the election chair declares nominations closed
 - Where a vote is required, ballots will be distributed and scrutineer(s) appointed
 - Announcement of results
3. Chair assumes their office



Appendix A

Procedures for Election of Officers

Voting

- B1.1 Voting shall be by secret ballot.
- B1.2 No Member may vote by proxy.
- B1.3 "Majority Vote" means half of the votes plus one.

Acting Chair

- B2.0 The Committee shall appoint a person, who is not a voting Member, as Acting Chair for the purpose of the election of Committee Chair.

Scrutineers

- B3.1 The Acting Chair shall call a motion for the appointment of one or more persons, who are not Committee Members or Staff of the Authority, to act as scrutineers.
- B3.2 A Committee Member, who will not stand for election, may be appointed as an additional scrutineer if requested.
- B3.3 All ballots shall be destroyed by the scrutineers after the vote.

Election Procedures

- B4.0 The Acting Chair shall advise the Members that the election will be conducted in accordance with the Act as follows:
 - a) the election shall be conducted in the following order:
 - i. Election of the Chair, who shall be a Member of the Committee;
 - b) the Acting Chair shall ask for nominations;
 - c) only current Members of the Committee who are present may vote;
 - d) nominations shall be called three (3) times and will only require a mover;
 - e) the closing of nominations shall require both a mover and a seconder;
 - f) each Member nominated shall be asked to accept the nomination. The Member must be present to accept the nomination unless the Member has advised in writing or by email in advance of the election of their willingness to accept the nomination;



- g) if there is only one nominee, the individual shall be declared into the position by acclamation;
- h) in the event of an election, each nominee shall be permitted not more than three (3) minutes to speak for the office, in the order of the alphabetical listing by surnames;
- i) upon the acceptance by nominees to stand for election to the position of office, ballots shall be distributed to the Members by the scrutineers for the purpose of election and the Acting Chair shall ask the Members to write the name of one individual only on the ballot;
- j) the scrutineers shall collect the ballots, leave the meeting to count the ballots, return and advise the Acting Chair who was elected by Majority Vote.

Majority Vote required

- B5.1 A Majority Vote shall be required for election.
- B5.2 If there are more than two nominees, and upon the first vote no nominee receives the majority required for election, the name of the person with the least number of votes shall be removed from further consideration for the office and new ballots shall be distributed.
- B5.3 In the case of a vote where no nominee receives the majority required for election and where two or more nominees are tied with the least number of votes, a special vote shall be taken to decide which one of such tied nominees' names shall be dropped from the list of names to be voted on in the next vote.

Tie vote

- B6.1 Should there be a tie vote between two remaining candidates, new ballots shall be distributed, and a second vote held.
- B6.2 Should there still be a tie after the second ballot a third vote shall be held.
- B6.3 Should there be a tie after the third vote, the election of the office shall be decided by lot drawn by the Acting Chair or designate.



To: Forestry Committee
From: Ronda Boutz, Secretary-Treasurer
Date: February 21, 2023
Subject: Update: Forestry Committee Membership

RECOMMENDATION:

The Forestry Committee receive and file the Clean Water Committee Membership update.

DISCUSSION:

In February 2022, the Board of Directors approved extending 2021 South Nation Conservation (SNC) Standing Committee membership for 2022, with the intention to undertake membership recruitment this fall for the 2023-2024 term (BD-026/22).

Most Committee members have participated on a Standing Committees for over ten years and are familiar with SNC and its programs and services. Committee member connections to various stakeholder groups is key in building support for ongoing delivery of programs and services (e.g., private landowner stewardship) as SNC transitions to new requirements under the amended *Conservation Authorities Act*.

As such, the SNC Board of Directors has approved maintaining current Standing Committee memberships into 2023 (BD-127/22). While a formal call for Committee membership would not occur until 2023, the Executive can address any individual requests that are submitted in the interim. A list of the current membership is attached for the Committee's information.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/ADHERENCE TO SNC POLICY:

Compliance with Budget: Standing Committees are included in the 2023 SNC Budget under Corporate and Community Services: Corporate Communications, pages 78-79.

SNC Policy Adherence: Standing Committees adhere to SNC Administrative By-laws, Part III, sections 22.1 to 22.7, page 10.

Ronda Boutz,
Secretary-Treasurer.

Attachment: 2022 Forestry Committee Membership



2022 Forestry Committee Membership

Member		Association
François	Allard	Public Citizen
Alain	Bertrand	Public Citizen
Maurice	Chabot	Public Citizen
Ben	de Haan	UCSDG
Dorothy	Hamilton	SDG OWA
Elizabeth	Holmes	MNRF
Steve	Hunter	UCPR
Murray	Inch	Public Citizen
Glenn	Mackey	Public Citizen, Committee Chair
Dave	Robertson	Public Citizen
Bill	Smirle	SNC Board Member
François	St. Amour	UCPR
Doug	Thompson	Public Citizen
Ron	Toonders	Ag Soil and Crop
Pierre	Leroux	SNC Chair, ex-officio
Steve	Densham	SNC Vice Chair, ex-officio
George	Darouze	SNC Past Chair, ex-officio



To: Standing Committees
From: Ronda Boutz, Secretary-Treasurer
John Mesman, Managing Director, Property, Conservation Lands,
and Community Outreach
Date: February 13, 2023
Subject: Request for Approval: Category 3 Program Business Case Development

RECOMMENDATION:

The Communications Committee approve the development of Business Cases for “Category 3: Other Programs and Services an authority determines are advisable”.

Further that the Communications Committee recommend that the Board of Directors support the development of Category 3 Programs and Service agreements for Private Land Stewardship and the Land Securement Program

Further that Committee members be directed to provide feedback on the Business Cases and provide stakeholder testimonials.

DISCUSSION:

The *Conservation Authorities Act* was updated through the *Protect, Support, and Recover from COVID-19 Act* on December 8, 2020 with the first phase of regulations [*Transition Plan and Agreements Regulation (O.Reg. 687/21)*] released on October 1, 2021 which required Conservation Authorities to have a transition plan in place by December 31st, 2021 and to create an inventory of programs and services by February 28th, 2022.



South Nation Conservation’s (SNC) Transition Plan (BD-197/21) and Programs and Services Inventory (BD-023/22) outlined current programs and services that SNC intends to deliver in the future, along with their approximate costs and sources of funding.

Environmental Stewardship and Outreach and Conservation Lands Securement Programs included in the inventory were created to help address environmental concerns within the watershed and are regularly reviewed by Standing Committees and approved by the Board of Directors annually. In addition to municipal levy, each program includes external funding.



Per the *Conservation Authorities Act*, programs are divided into the following categories:

- **Category 1: Mandatory programs and services** required by regulation. These programs are funded through municipal levy and include:
 - Programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards;
 - Programs and services related to the conservation and management of lands owned or controlled by the authority;
 - Programs and services related to the authority's duties, functions and responsibilities as a source protection authority under the *Clean Water Act, 2006*; and
 - Programs and services related to the authority's duties, functions and responsibilities under an Act prescribed by the regulations.
- **Category 2: Municipal programs and services** provided at the request of a municipality. These programs can be funded through government and other agency grants and/or municipal funding under a memorandum of understanding or agreement with the municipality.
- **Category 3: Other programs and services** the conservation authority determines are advisable. These programs can be funded through self-generated revenue, user fees, government and other agency grants, donations, etc. Any use of municipal levy requires an agreement and would be subject to cost apportionment.

SNC's Standing Committees support the administration and development of most of the SNC Programs and Services within Category 3, including the following:

- Forest Land Acquisition Program
- Tree Planting Program
- Clean Water Program
- Landowner Stewardship Projects
- Environmental Education and Outreach Programs

These programs are supported through a combination of municipal levy, grants, fundraising, and user fees. On average (1990 to 2022) SNC has secured \$2 for every \$1 of municipal levy used. Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) are now required with each participating municipality to use municipal levies to support these programs, as of January 1, 2024.

Standing Committees will provide stakeholder input and confirmation of public support for environmental stewardship by supporting the development of business cases and completing municipal outreach in 2023, ahead of negotiating municipal MOUs (BD-026/22, BD-127/22).

The Standing Committee Work Plan for Category 3 Programs and Services is attached.



Staff are developing a “Watershed Programs and Services: 2024 and Beyond” Business Case for programs that SNC plans to deliver into the future. The following consolidated information will be included:

- Organizational Summary
- Background Information
 - o South Nation River Watershed Characteristics and Conditions
 - o *Conservation Authorities Act* Requirements
 - o Standing Committee Overview
- Current Watershed Programs and Services
 - o Tree Planting Program
 - o Clean Water Program
 - o Habitat Restoration
 - o Education and Outreach
 - o Land Acquisition
- Watershed Programs and Services: 2024 and Beyond
 - o Private Land Stewardship
 - o Land Securement Program
- Watershed Program Budgets
 - o Summary Budget
 - o Proposed Municipal Apportionment

SNC Standing Committees are encouraged to provide feedback on:

- Current program delivery levels, community interest, and program subscription
- Changing environmental conditions, including water quality and forest conservation
- Program impacts on the community and the environment
- Program funding models and sources of funding

A draft business case will be circulated to committee members by email to provide feedback. Updates will be provided to the Board of Directors at the March 2023 Annual General Meeting.



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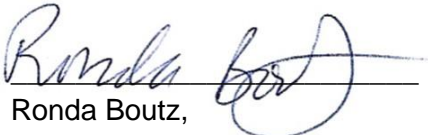
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/ADHERENCE TO SNC POLICY:

Compliance with Budget:

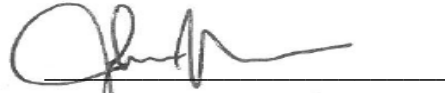
No impact on the 2022 Budget.

SNC Policy Adherence:

Subsection 21.1.2(2) of the *Conservation Authorities Act* enables SNC to provide other programs and services, under an agreement with municipalities within its area of jurisdiction, where the municipality has agreed to provide cost apportionment to support the identified programs and/or services.



Ronda Boutz,
Secretary-Treasurer.



John Mesman,
Managing Director, Property, Conservation
Lands, and Community Outreach.

Attachment: SNC Programs and Services Work Plan for Municipal Engagement



SNC Programs and Services Work Plan for Municipal Engagement

Engagement Activity	SNC Lead	Committee Engagement	Timeline
CATEGORY 1			
Prescribed under the Act, no engagement required for mandated programs and services.	Management Team	None required, direct any inquiries to the SNC Management Team	Ongoing
CATEGORY 2			
SNC's Management Team routinely meets with municipalities to discuss opportunities to support municipal programs and services. Agreements/Memorandums of Understanding are approved as program/service delivery is negotiated.	Management Team	None required, direct any inquiries to the SNC Management Team	Ongoing
CATEGORY 3			
Development of business cases for each type of program and service proposed as of January 2024.	Ronda Boutz and John Mesman	Provide testimonials and/or any local data. Committee review and approval of business cases.	February 2023
Meetings with key municipal staff to discuss business case and municipal apportionment required.	Management Team	Committee updates and discussion.	March – April 2023
Category 3 program and services package to Board of Directors for approval prior to engaging with municipal councils.	Ronda Boutz and John Mesman	Committee support at Board of Directors meeting.	March 2023
Presentations to Councils to request approval to enter into a Category 3 agreements.	Ronda Boutz and John Mesman	Attendance and co-presentation of programs and services package.	April – July 2023
Category 3 agreements prepared and signed.	Ronda Boutz, Eric McGill, and John Mesman	Updates provided to Committee, Terms of Reference Updates following approval.	August – November 2023



To: Forestry Committee
From: Cheyene Brunet, Forestry Technician
Date: February 9, 2023
Subject: Update: 2023 Tree Planting and Free Tree Days

RECOMMENDATION:

The Forestry Committee receive and file the 2023 Tree Planting and Free Tree Days update.

DISCUSSION:

1. Tree Planting Programs

South Nation Conservation (SNC) is anticipating another successful tree planting season in spring 2023. There are currently 86,050 tree seedlings reserved through the Forests Ontario: 50 Million Tree Program, 77,930 tree seedlings reserved for Larose Forest understory planting, and 34,440 seedlings sold through the Over-the-Counter program.

The 163,980 trees for the Forests Ontario program and at Larose will be planted by two contractors; both of which have worked with SNC in the past.

In total, 35 new landowners across SNC's jurisdiction are participating in the Forests Ontario program, which will attribute to an estimated 31 ha (77 acres) of increased forest cover in the future.

Due to stock availability, SNC staff are able to plant 8 projects (24,400 trees) that were planned for 2022 but pushed to 2023 due to stock availability in 2022.

Additionally, SNC currently has 28,000 seedlings reserved for spring 2024 by 8 landowners through the 50 Million Tree Program.

2. Municipal Free Trees Partnership

For the fifth year in a row, SNC is offering municipalities free seedlings as part of the 2023 Free Tree Days. Each member municipality is being supplied with 390 tree seedlings consisting of 6 native tree species and 2 native shrub species. SNC is planning 16 giveaways totalling approximately 6,240 seedlings. Additionally, three municipalities have offered to either match or surpass SNC's donation thus far. Seedlings will be ordered to fulfill these additional orders and potted stock to fulfill any gaps in seedling availability.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/ADHERENCE TO SNC POLICY:

Compliance with Budget: The tree planting program is included in the 2023 Budget under Resource Management, Partner Programs, Forests pages 16-17.



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SNC Policy Adherence: SNC Forest Policy 2 and 3: The South Nation Forest shall be managed to provide a range of products and services that will maintain or enhance the long-term economic viability and a range of environmental and social benefits; and South Nation Conservation will employ silvicultural practices that are ecologically appropriate for the vegetation, species, sites and management objectives that maintain and/or enhance long-term forest diversity, health and productivity of the South Nation Forest.

Programs and Services Category: Category 3 – Watershed (Other) Programs: Private Land Stewardship.

Cheyene Brunet,
Forestry Technician.

Attachment: 2023 Tree Planting Statistics by Municipality



2023 Tree Planting Statistics by Municipality		
Municipality	No. of Landowners	No. of Trees
Alfred and Plantagenet	12	14,650
Augusta	1	150
Champlain	3	800
East Hawkesbury	9	5,700
Edwardsburgh Cardinal	1	100
Nation	10	7,400
Russell	7	17,150
Clarence Rockland	6	6,080
Ottawa	12	22,100
North Grenville	5	1,700
North Dundas	13	8,400
South Dundas	10	13,670
North Stormont	18	14,380
South Stormont	5	3,500
North Glengarry	4	2,400
Larose Forest	1	77,930
Total	117	196,110

* Includes only plantings through Forest Ontario's: 50 Million Tree Program, at Larose Forest and Over the Counter.



To: Forestry Committee
From: Pat Piitz, Team Lead Property
Date: February 8, 2023
Subject: Update: Forest Certification

RECOMMENDATION:

The Forestry Committee receive and file the Forest Certification Update.

DISCUSSION:

FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL (FSC)

The annual FSC audit was completed from October 22, 2022 to October 31, 2022. The audit supported the five-year assessment for re-certification of the Eastern Ontario Forest Group. Four Community Forests, one private commercial forest owner and five private forest owners were included in the 2022 audit. Member-forests are randomly subject to audit following internal monitoring requirements as per the new Group Standard (FSC-STD-30-005V2-0 FM Groups Standard). The SNC forest was not selected for field audit during 2022. Non-conformities and observations apply to all group members where applicable.

Results:

1. Minor Non-Conformity Report (NCR) - Standard 4.2.1/23

Auditor observed first aid kits were missing from 2 forestry machines involved in active operations (processor-buncher & forwarder) involving one contractor at one site visited. EOFG policy and harvest contracts state workers need to abide by all occupational health and safety regulations and safe practices. This would include first aid kits being readily accessible.

2. Minor Non-Conformity Report (NCR) – Standard 2.1/23

Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) have been signed with all members however they do not fully encompass the requirements from subsections b and d, specifically there is no statement or consent declaring 'that the management units they are bringing into the group are not included in another FSC certificate' and though the MOUs refer to EOFG employees and contractors, explicit wording regarding the group member agreeing to allow 'the certification body, FSC and ASI to fulfil their responsibilities' is lacking. Forest owners/managers interviewed understood aspects a-d) and have given their consent.

3. Observation 4.2.1/21

The Auditor observed that group members were compliant with requirements for monitoring and reporting species at risk (SAR) and rare/uncommon species but noted that each member implements this slightly differently. This will be reviewed by the Group coordinator.



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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/ADHERENCE TO SNC POLICY:

Compliance with Budget:

Forest certification is included in the 2021 SNC Budget: Community Lands: Lands pgs. 34-35.

SNC Policy Adherence:

Adheres to SNC Forest Management Policy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pat Piitz', is written over a horizontal line.

Pat Piitz,
Team Lead Property.



To: Forestry Committee
From: Caroline Goulet, Forester
Date: February 17, 2023
Subject: Update: Logging Operations and Hazard Tree Management

RECOMMENDATION:

The Forestry Committee receive and file the Logging Operations and Hazard Tree Management update report.

DISCUSSION:

Logging Operations

SNC has two active logging contracts with a recently extended end date of March 31st, 2024. The properties to be harvested through this contract are SNC 75 (located on Concession 14, East of Lemieux) and SNC 53 (located on Route 400 East, North of Casselman). Access to SNC 75 has already been established.

Staff is also working on finalizing the salvage contract for two of the properties that were affected by the May 21st, 2022, derecho storm, SNC 69 and 105. Access to the two properties has already been established and operations are to start by the end of the summer of 2023.

Furthermore, staff is contacting logging operators to invite them to SNC's Annual Contractors Meeting, being held on March 31st, 2023. The meeting will be held at SNC 40-41-64, located on County Road 16, East of Lemieux. The 5-year operation plan is to be update this year. More logging opportunities are to be presented to logging contractors at this meeting.

Hazard Tree Management

Staff has recently coordinated Tree Risk Assessments mitigation on 7 Conservation Areas (CAs). As of this year, tree removals have been completed at the following CAs:

- Robert Graham Forest (14 trees)
- Oschmann Forest (120 trees)
- Warwick Forest (18 trees)
- J. Henry Tweed (36 trees)
- W.E. Burton (47 trees)
- Findlay Creek (6 trees)
- Cass Bridge (42)

External contractors were hired to proceed with the removal of 120 ash trees at the Oschmann Forest along Ormond Road, and for the felling of 7 higher risk trees along J. Henry Tweed Park eastern boundary.



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Tree Risk Assessments mitigation on CAs are to continue during the next few months, primarily at Jessup's Falls, W.E. Burton, J. Henry Tweed, and Findlay Creek.

Tree Risk Assessments will be completed in June-July 2023.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/ADHERENCE TO SNC POLICY:

Compliance with Budget: Staff support for the implementation of Tree Risk Assessments and support tree management activities in Conservation Areas is included in 2023 SNC Budget, Conservation Areas, on pages 32-33.

SNC Policy Adherence: Complies with SNC Standard Operating Procedures: Facilities Management, and existing agreements with member municipalities.

Programs and Services Category: Category 1 – Mandatory: Conservation Lands

Caroline Goulet,
Forester.



To: Forestry Committee
From: Pat Piitz, Team Lead Property
Date: February 8, 2023
Subject: Update: Ontario Land Trust Standards & Membership

RECOMMENDATION:

The Forestry Committee receive and file the report on Ontario Land Trust Alliance standards and membership.

DISCUSSION:

In 2007, SNC became an associate member of the Ontario Land Trust Alliance (OLTA) and adopted the Canadian Land Trust Alliance (CLTA) Standards and Practices as guidelines for SNC's operations (BD-080/07). Since first published in 2005, the CLTA standards and practices underwent substantial revision in 2019. The Canadian Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices are similar to SNC's Administrative By-Laws and Land Securement Strategy.

SNC is still a member of the OLTA with condition of adoption of the 2019 standards. OLTA membership provides increased awareness and assurance to local residents within the SNC jurisdiction, that SNC is a trusted recipient of land donations.

The Canadian Land Trust Alliance requires that all land trust members accept the Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices as their guiding principles. Some funders also ask for such a statement. To further the adoption of the new CLTA standards, SNC staff will complete a review of SNC Administrative By-Laws, Land Securement Strategy and legislative requirements in comparison to the CLTA standards. A report will be brought to the Board of Directors for consideration in April 2023.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/ADHERENCE TO SNC POLICY:

Compliance with Budget:

Membership in the Ontario Land Trust Alliance is included in the 2023 SNC Budget

SNC Policy Adherence:

Adheres to SNC Land Securement Strategy.

Pat Piitz,
Team Lead Property.



To: Forestry Committee
From: Pat Piitz, Team Lead Property
Date: February 8, 2023
Subject: Update: Land Securement Strategy

RECOMMENDATION:

The Forestry Committee review the SNC Land Securement Strategy and provide any comment by March 23, 2023.

DISCUSSION:

South Nation Conservation (SNC) acquired its first property for conservation purposes in 1960, which is now home to the Robert Graham Forest Conservation Area, formerly the Glen Steward Conservation Area trail.

Since 1960, SNC has secured over 12,500 acres of conservation land that is managed for its economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefit, which is a mandatory program and service identified within the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

In 2013, the Board directed staff to create a strategy to guide the acquisition of conservation land (BD-257/13), which was adopted in 2014 (BD-014/14).

An update of SNC's Land Securement Strategy was included within the SNC 2022 Budget and staff have identified the following updates to include within the Strategy:

- Added recognition of the importance of municipal partners in land securement.
- Strengthened description of the land securement process to increase transparency for property owners considering a sale or donation to SNC.
- Added consideration of natural hazards, to protect people and property, as a core principle for land securement.
- Emphasizing the importance of land securement in a changing climate.
- Recognizing the role of SNC within a broader public land securement context with principles consistent with the Standards and Practices established by the Canadian Land Trust Alliance.
- Updating references, statistics, and regional information to help guide decision-making.

The final draft of the Land Securement Strategy 2022-2027 will be presented to the Board for approval in April 2023.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/ADHERENCE TO SNC POLICY:

Compliance with Budget: Updates to the SNC Land Securement Strategy is included in the 2022 SNC Budget under Property: Conservation Lands, page 34-35.



SOUTH NATION
CONSERVATION
DE LA NATION SUD

SNC Policy Adherence: Clauses 21 (1)(c) and (l) of the *Conservation Authorities Act* enables SNC to purchase land and to use land owned or controlled by the Authority for purposes, not inconsistent with its objects, as it considers proper.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pat Piitz', is written over a horizontal line.

Pat Piitz,
Team Lead Property.

Attachments: Draft Land Securement Strategy 2022-2027

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Land securement by public bodies is an effective way to preserve and enhance natural heritage for public benefit. South Nation Conservation (SNC) conserves approximately 13,000 acres of land throughout its jurisdiction and has a history of land securement going back more than 60 years. The forests and wetlands preserved in SNC land holdings ~~will~~ contribute to the sustainability of the jurisdiction and are a natural legacy for the future. SNC's Land Securement Strategy (the "Strategy") guides the decisions of the Board of Directors and Staff when making land securement decisions.

Specifically, the Strategy:

- Provides a framework for recommending land for securement to the Board;
- Serves as a point of reference for external funding partners;
- Provides potential sellers and donors with an understanding of SNC's land securement process and options; and
- Ensures the wise use of public funds.

Forest cover and wetlands in SNC's jurisdiction, a factor closely linked to ecological health and biodiversity, has fallen below minimum recommended levels. Population growth and rising agricultural land prices increase pressure to convert natural heritage land to housing and farmland. At the same time the demand for environmental, social, and economic functions provided by natural heritage lands is increasing.

The Strategy seeks to satisfy five core principles when identifying land suitable for securement:

1. environmental benefit;
2. social benefit;
3. economic benefit;
4. protection of people and property from natural hazards; and
5. geographic locations that ensure a distribution of holdings throughout the jurisdiction.

SNC works with willing property owners, partner municipalities, the province, the federal government, and funding partners to acquire the best possible land for conservation. A case-by-case assessment will be undertaken, based on the framework outlined in this strategy, to determine the quality and significance of all properties considered for securement. SNC will prioritize the protection of lands by holding title (fee simple) either through donation or purchase and may consider easements and covenants where they are desirable. Participants in land transactions will be willing buyers and willing sellers.

The greatest potential growth in land securement may occur in land donation. This method of land transfer should be viewed as both an opportunity and service to property owners interested in leaving a natural legacy. Such gifts often qualify as charitable donations under the *Federal Income Tax Act* as SNC is qualified to receive land donations through Canada's Ecological Gifts Program.

The Land Securement Strategy provides guidance for staff by outlining the land securement process and provides evaluation criteria, based on the five core principles, to be used by staff in evaluating potential land for securement.

Some recommendations for further actions to advance land securement within SNC jurisdiction are identified at the end of the strategy.

Commented [PP1]: Limits to Growth - finite amount of land; increased demand = increased land prices; the issue is we don't value all land uses equally.

Commented [PP2]: Should put some numbers here: EGP has been around 27 years; more than 1500 donors, 200,000 hectares valued at nearly \$1 billion

1 INTRODUCTION

Conservation professionals, members of the public and elected officials have all noted a decrease in forest cover within South Nation Conservation's (SNC) jurisdiction. This observation was supported by the 2014 Forest Cover and Trend Analysis, a research project undertaken by SNC and its partners, that demonstrated a reduction in forest cover since the late 1990's.

SNC's primary organizational goals include the protection of people and property and the preservation of natural heritage. The science and awareness of the importance of natural heritage protection in preserving ecosystem function and biodiversity, providing clean water, mitigating impacts associated with natural hazards and climate change, and contributing to healthier, more active communities has improved. Meanwhile the tools used to preserve these lands remain largely unchanged. In Eastern Ontario, most land is privately owned. Education, stewardship programs and land use planning are the primary methods used to protect natural heritage features. These tools require new approaches given growing pressure to develop potentially hazardous lands or convert forest and wetland to urban development and farming.

Land securement by public bodies is an effective way to protect natural heritage features and systems for public benefit, while increasing the adaptive capacity and resiliency of communities within the SNC jurisdiction by reducing the impacts and costs associated with natural hazards and climate change. Through the foresight of past Boards and Municipalities, SNC conserves approximately 13,000 acres of land and has a history of land securement going back more than 60 years (detailed in Section 4.4).

During the Authority's 75th anniversary celebration, the Board of Directors noted SNC land, in particular forests, provide a natural legacy for future generations. Building on this natural legacy ensures an even richer and healthier endowment for the future.

This Strategy provides direction for future land securement and:

- Provides staff with a framework for recommending land for securement to the Board;
- Serves as a point of reference for external funding partners;
- Provides sellers and potential donors with an understanding of SNC's land securement process and options; and
- Ensures the wise use of public funds.

In addition, the strategy provides regional context and background, an overview of existing SNC land holdings, and a solid framework for the selection, securement, and stewardship of new land. The strategy should be reviewed every five years.

1.1 South Nation Conservation Background

SNC has a strong history in watershed management and leadership applying best management practices. As an agency established under the *Conservation Authorities Act* in 1947, SNC has decades of practical experience protecting our environment and engaging communities.

Today, SNC owns nearly 13,000 acres of land in eastern Ontario and leads hundreds of stewardship projects to success. Conservation is our core competency. SNC offers knowledge and experience to help our partners contribute to a healthy and safe watershed and natural heritage system. This includes:

- The study of water quality and quantity, natural habitats, plants, and animals to help us identify environmental needs, set targets, and restore natural areas;
- Management of a community-based forest on an ecosystem basis;

1.3 The Need for Land Securement

Natural heritage lands are essential for maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem services, increasing the adaptive capacity and resiliency of communities by reducing impacts associated with natural hazards and climate change, and providing quality recreation opportunities for surrounding communities. The science and awareness of natural heritage protection has improved, however, the tools used to achieve these ends remain largely unchanged.

In Eastern Ontario, most land is privately owned and managed. Education, stewardship, and land use planning are the primary methods used to protect natural heritage features. Given projected population growth and growing pressure to convert land from forest, grassland wetland, and hazard lands for development and farming, land securement continues to be important in natural heritage protection and in protecting people and property from natural hazards, especially as the climate continues to change.

1.3.1 Increasing Population and Shifting Demographics

SNC's jurisdiction will continue to experience significant demographic changes. The jurisdiction is projected to share in Ontario's population growth through 2036. There is however a north-south split within the jurisdiction, with the census divisions closer to Ottawa experiencing the most growth.

Between 2020 and 2046, population is expected to grow by over 35% in Ottawa, 25-35% in Prescott & Russell, and up to 20% in Leeds & Grenville, and Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry.¹

All census divisions will experience an increase in both total number and percentage share of seniors. The total number of children 14 and under is expected to increase by over 35% in Ottawa and by up to 20% in Prescott & Russell; Leeds & Grenville; and Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry.³

1.3.2 Decreasing Forest Cover

The 2014 SNC Forest Cover and Trends Analysis, a collaborative study undertaken along with Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), UCPR, and SDG, found that forest cover in the South Nation jurisdiction decreased by 510.9 hectares per year between 2002 and 2008.² Much of the loss can be attributed to the increasing value of agricultural land resulting in the conversion of marginal land to farmland.³ Total forest cover in the South Nation watershed was found to be 28.1%, although there are significant differences by municipality and sub-watershed (see Appendix B).⁴

The 2014 Forest Cover and Trends Analysis also found the predominance of edge forest (the exterior periphery of forest parcels) throughout the watershed to be 47.6% of total forest cover, due to the fragmented nature of the forest. Large areas of core forest (defined as forest land more than 300 feet from any disturbance) represented just 9.6% of the total. Core forest area provides critical habitat for a variety of wildlife species.

¹ Ontario Ministry of Finance. 2021. Ontario Population Projections. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-population-projections>

² SNC. 2014. Forest Cover and Trends Analysis.

³ Statistics Canada. 2011. Value of Farm Capital --- Agriculture Economic Statistics. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/21-013--x/2011002/t002--eng.htm>

⁴ Environment Canada. 2013. How Much Habitat is Enough? Third Edition. http://www.ec.gc.ca/nature/E33B007C-5C69--4980--8F7B--3AD02B030D8C/894_How_much_habitat_is_enough_E_WEB_05.pdf

Forest cover is an important threshold for environmental health as measured by factors including flood attenuation, soil conservation, air quality, water quality, diversity of wildlife habitat, ecological function and protection of species at risk.⁵

Commented [PP3]: When you don't have enough land for ecological function intervention is required through stewardship program to maintain function. Land securement and stewardship is the strategy

1.3.3 Planning for Present and Future Needs

Population growth and associated development increases pressures on natural heritage lands. At the same time, increases in population, particularly in urban areas and surrounding suburbs, increases the need for recreational opportunities and ecosystem services provided by natural heritage lands. In addition, an aging population will require a new approach to providing outdoor recreation opportunities. Ensuring the protection and health of natural heritage lands requires a proactive and strategic approach. Securing natural heritage ensures the area is a great place to live, work, play, and visit; drawing people from surrounding urban areas such as Ottawa and Montreal and creating jobs to cater to both residents and visitors.

1.3.4 Protecting People and Property

Securing natural heritage lands can aid in disaster risk reduction and increasing the resiliency of communities by reducing impacts associated with natural hazards and climate change.

South Nation Conservation (SNC) is mandated by the Province of Ontario to regulate hazard lands within the jurisdiction, including:

- floodplains resulting from a storm that has a 1% chance of being exceeded;
- areas with riverine erosion, unstable slopes, unstable soils, and unstable bedrock; and
- wetlands.

Natural hazards are defined as land which could be unsafe for development due to naturally occurring processes. Natural hazard lands include floodplain areas, areas of riverine erosion, unstable slope, unstable soils, and unstable bedrock. Sometimes these natural hazards can be mitigated to allow development or use of the property, however, in other cases such as in the Lemieux Landslide area, mitigation is not possible.

Where natural hazards are significant and could pose a serious threat to people and property land securement by public bodies, such as South Nation Conservation, is an effective way to protect people and property. Land securement of natural hazard lands by public bodies also reduce disaster risk and increase resiliency, especially when considering the impacts of a changing climate.

The frequency and magnitude of extreme weather will continue to increase throughout the 21st century due to human-induced climate change (IPCC, 2021).⁶ The changing climate will impact both the built and natural environment and will exacerbate water resource issues arising from an urbanizing landscape, impacting many people and systems within SNC's jurisdiction.

⁵ Environment Canada. 2013. How Much Habitat is Enough? Third Edition. http://www.ec.gc.ca/nature/E33B007C-5C69-4980-8F7B-3AD02B030D8C/894_How_much_habitat_is_enough_E_WEB_05.pdf

⁶ IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), 2021. Climate change 201: The physical science basis. Working Group I Contribution to the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Extreme weather (i.e., extreme precipitation, flooding, etc.) leads to emergency situations, and the incidence and related costs of emergencies will increase over time (UNDRR, 2020).⁷ Land securement is an effective means for building adaptive capacity, so that communities can reduce risk, reduce associated impacts, and increase their ability to cope or adapt when needed.

2 REGIONAL CONTEXT

2.1 Provincial and Municipal Plans and Legislation

Policies and legislation at the provincial level are designed to protect natural heritage and trickle down to plans, zoning, and by-laws at the municipal level.

The *Conservation Authorities Act* describes the responsibilities of Conservation Authorities for regulating natural hazards for protection of people and property, and conservation, restoration, development, and management of natural resources including the development and implementation of programs that achieve these goals.

Provincial direction on the protection of natural heritage systems and public health and safety related to natural hazards is also provided by the *Planning Act* and the 2020 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS).⁸ The PPS states;

*"The Province's natural heritage resources, water resources, including the Great Lakes, agricultural resources, mineral resources, and cultural heritage and archaeological resources provide important environmental, economic and social benefits. The wise use and management of these resources over the long term is a key provincial interest. The Province must ensure that its resources are managed in a sustainable way to conserve biodiversity, protect essential ecological processes and public health and safety, provide for the production of food and fibre, minimize environmental and social impacts, provide for recreational opportunities (e.g., fishing, hunting and hiking) and meet its long-term needs."*⁹

The PPS Section 2.1.2. goes on to mandate that;

*"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."*¹⁰

The PPS also states:

*"It is equally important to protect the overall health and safety of the population, including preparing for the impacts of a changing climate. The Provincial Policy Statement directs development away from areas of natural and human-made hazards. This preventative approach supports provincial and municipal financial well-being over the long term, protects public health and safety, and minimizes cost, risk and social disruption."*¹¹

⁷ UNDRR (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction), 2020. The human cost of disasters: an overview of the last 20 years (2000-2019). <https://www.undrr.org/publication/human-cost-disasters-overview-last-20-years-2000-2019>

⁸ Government of Ontario, 2020. Provincial Policy Statement. <https://files.ontario.ca/mmah-provincial-policy-statement-2020-accessible-final-en-2020-02-14.pdf>

⁹ Government of Ontario, 2020. Provincial Policy Statement. <https://files.ontario.ca/mmah-provincial-policy-statement-2020-accessible-final-en-2020-02-14.pdf>, page 6.

¹⁰ Government of Ontario, 2020. Provincial Policy Statement. <https://files.ontario.ca/mmah-provincial-policy-statement-2020-accessible-final-en-2020-02-14.pdf>, page 24.

¹¹ Government of Ontario, 2020. Provincial Policy Statement. <https://files.ontario.ca/mmah-provincial-policy-statement-2020-accessible-final-en-2020-02-14.pdf>, page 6.

The PPS goes on to state that:

"3.1.1 Development shall generally be directed, in accordance with guidance developed by the Province (as amended from time to time), to areas outside of: a) hazardous lands adjacent to the shorelines of the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River System ... which are impacted by flooding hazards, erosion hazards and/or dynamic beach hazards; b) hazardous lands adjacent to river, stream and small inland lake systems which are impacted by flooding hazards and/or erosion hazards; and c) hazardous sites.

3.1.2 Development and site alteration shall not be permitted within: a) the dynamic beach hazard; b) defined portions of the flooding hazard along connecting channels (... and St. Lawrence Rivers); c) areas that would be rendered inaccessible to people and vehicles during times of flooding hazards, erosion hazards and/or dynamic beach hazards, unless it has been demonstrated that the site has safe access appropriate for the nature of the development and the natural hazard; and d) a floodway regardless of whether the area of inundation contains high points of land not subject to flooding."¹²

MNRF's Natural Heritage Reference Manual "represents the Province's recommended approach to implementing natural heritage policies under policy 2.1 of the PPS".¹³ The manual defines and validates various natural heritage features before outlining the process by which they are identified and established (see Table 1). The manual also mandates the level of protection which should be afforded by the municipality.

Because the MNRF delegates the responsibility for delineating some natural heritage features and leaves their definitions open to interpretation, there are invariably differing results in protecting them at the municipal level.

Table 1. Natural Heritage Features Establishment and Definitions.¹⁴

Feature	Who Establishes and How
Significant habitat of endangered species and threatened species	MNRF identifies such habitat by delineating, describing, reviewing and approving the work of others or establishing methods such as training and standards that ensure the work of others will be acceptable
Significant wetlands and significant coastal wetlands	MNRF identifies such wetlands by delineating them or reviewing the work of others in accordance with the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System (OWES)
Significant woodlands	Planning Authorities identify such woodlands or approve the work of others using criteria recommended in the manual or municipal approaches that achieve or exceed the same objective as the provincial criteria.
Significant valleylands	Planning Authorities identify such valley lands or approve the work of others using criteria recommended in the manual or municipal approaches that achieve or exceed the same objective as the provincial criteria.
Significant wildlife habitat	Planning Authorities identify such habitat or approve the work of others using criteria and processes recommended in the Significant Wildlife Habitat Technical Guide and the

¹² Government of Ontario, 2020. Provincial Policy Statement. <https://files.ontario.ca/mmah-provincial-policy-statement-2020-accessible-final-en-2020-02-14.pdf>, page 32.

¹³ OMNR. 2005. Natural Heritage Reference Manual, Second Edition, pg. 6.

¹⁴ OMNR. 2005. Natural Heritage Reference Manual, Second Edition, pg. 39-40.

	manual, or municipal approaches that achieve or exceed the same objective as the provincial process and criteria.
Areas of natural and scientific interest (ANSI)	MNDMNRF identifies such areas in accordance with ANSI confirmation process.

See appendix C for definitions of the various natural heritage features.

Official Plans (OP), zoning, and heritage bylaws developed by municipalities must be consistent with the *Planning Act* and PPS. Within SNC's jurisdiction, OPs are in effect in all municipalities and afford some protection to Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSWs) located within their jurisdiction, as mandated by the *Planning Act* and PPS. The extent of the delineation and protection of other natural heritage features varies between the plans.

2.2 Regional Natural Heritage Plans

Environment Canada recommends a minimum 30% forest cover at the watershed scale to support a marginally healthy aquatic system and one half of potential species (compared to a similar, intact ecosystem). Upwards of 50% forest cover is suggested as an optimal figure.¹⁵

Several government agencies and NGOs publish reports on the regional state of natural heritage systems in all or a portion of SNC's jurisdiction, including plans to increase the amount of land protected. Some of these reports are discussed below.

In 2021, The United Counties of Prescott and Russell (UCPR) and the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry (SDG) partnered with South Nation Conservation (SNC) to complete the province's first two-county Natural Heritage Systems Study. The report defines natural linkages based on a regional landscape analysis. The report also includes Official Plan policy amendments to streamline development where minimal environmental impact is expected and to protect large core natural areas.¹⁶ Another significant guiding document for regional conservation is the Great Lakes Conservation Blueprint for Biodiversity, published jointly by the Nature Conservancy of Canada and MNRF.

Owner organization	Area in hectares owned and in a natural state
City of Ottawa	628.5
Ducks Unlimited Canada	31.1
Management Board of Cabinet	2,398.2
Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF)	4,945.2
Ministry of Transportation	18.8
National Capital Commission	2,996.7
Nature Conservancy of Canada	1721.8
Raisin Region Conservation	2.2
United Counties of Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry	1,546.6

¹⁵ Environment Canada. 2013. How Much Habitat is Enough?, Third Edition. https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2013/ec/CW66-164-2013-eng.pdf, pg. 61.

¹⁶ South Nation Conservation. 2021. Natural Heritage System Study Final Report.

Table

South Nation Conservation	4,780.0	2.
St. Lawrence Parks Commission	836.7	
Township of Russell	13.3	
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville	1,339.4	
United Counties of Prescott & Russell	11,317.7	
TOTAL	32,576.3	
% Public land area within SNC Jurisdiction publicly	7.3	

Summary of Public Lands in a Natural State Within SNC's Jurisdiction.

The report identifies only 2% of land in the South Nation River's watershed as being publicly held, with only 5%, or 25,729 hectares, of the total area conserved or protected in some way. GIS analysis by SNC suggests that the total proportion of SNC's jurisdiction in public ownership and in a natural state is approximately 7.3% (see table 2). The Nature Conservancy of Canada/MNRF report recommends the protection of large sections of the watershed.¹⁷

Figure 5 maps the location of publicly owned lands within SNC's jurisdiction that are in a natural state.

¹⁷ Phair, C., B.L. Henson and K.E. Brodbribb. 2005. The Great Lakes Conservation Blueprint for Aquatic Biodiversity: Volume 2 Tertiary Watershed Summaries. Nature Conservancy of Canada and Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. p430-435.

The National Capital Commission outlines areas of land it proposes bringing into public ownership and adding to the Greenbelt around Ottawa in their master plan. These parcels include several within SNC's jurisdiction including areas around Leitrim Wetland, Lester Wetland, and Mer Bleue Bog. The National Capital Commission maintains a strategy to work with partners including SNC, to secure and safeguard natural heritage areas and linkages beyond their jurisdiction.¹⁸

A plan from the Nature Conservancy of Canada, the Ottawa Valley Natural Area Conservation Plan, outlines a thorough inventory of natural heritage features and a plan for their conservation, for a large region including the northern half of SNC's jurisdiction. The plan also outlines the ecological significance of some of the features found in our region including:

- The Forest Matrix - providing essential linkages between the Laurentians and the St. Lawrence
- Wetland Complexes - hotspots for biodiversity they support globally rare species and provide ecological functions such as flood attenuation and water purification
- Alvars – a globally rare limestone-based ecosystem
- Dunes and Sand Barrens – support SAR and rare vegetation
- Grassland Birds – experiencing continent wide population decrease due to habitat loss¹⁹

The report was also used by this strategy to compile the list of significant natural heritage areas in Appendix 1.

3 EXISTING SNC LAND HOLDINGS

3.1 Existing SNC Land Holdings Benefits

SNC currently owns approximately 12,000 acres of land throughout its jurisdiction. The properties provide a range of environmental, economic, and social benefits such as:

- Flood attenuation and control;
- Clean air and water;
- Soil conservation and erosion control;
- Wildlife and Species at Risk habitat conservation;
- Preservation of biodiversity and ecological function;
- Climate change mitigation;
- Passive and active recreational opportunities;
- Spiritual and cultural opportunities;
- Local economic diversification; and
- Protect people and property

3.2 SNC Land Holdings by Property Classification

See Table 3 for a breakdown of SNC property area by property classification.

Table 3. SNC Property Area by Property Classification.

Property Classification	Area
-------------------------	------

¹⁸ National Capital Commission. 2013. Canada's Capital Greenbelt Master Plan. p109-119

¹⁹ Nature Conservancy of Canada. 2013. Ottawa Valley Natural Area Conservation Plan.

	Acres	Hectares
Administration	2.69	1.1
Infrastructure		
Channelization Lands	601.10	243.3
Natural Hazard Lands	201.91	81.7
Water Control Infrastructure	8.78	3.6
Environmental		
Forest Management	7,796.11	3,155.0
Natural Heritage	1,926.51	779.6
Protection Forest	1,584.12	641.1
Conservation Areas	192.71	78.0
Total	12,313.93	4,983.4

Many of SNC's holdings also feature public day-use facilities, including:

- Cass Bridge Conservation Area, Township of North Dundas
- Findlay Creek Boardwalk, City of Ottawa
- High Falls Conservation Area, Municipality of Casselman
- J. Henry Tweed Conservation Area, Township of Russell
- Jessup's Falls Conservation Area, Township of Alfred-Plantagenet
- McIntosh Park Conservation Area, Township of North Stormont
- Oak Valley Pioneer Park, Township of North Dundas
- Oschmann Forest Conservation Area, Township of North Dundas
- Reveler Conservation Area, Township of North Stormont
- Robert Graham Conservation Area, Township of South Dundas
- St-Albert Conservation Area, The Nation Municipality
- Two Creeks Forest Conservation Area, Township of South Dundas
- W.E. Burton Conservation Area, Township of Russell
- Warwick Forest Conservation Area, Township of North Stormont
- Mill Run Conservation Area, Augusta Township

3.3 SNC Land Holdings Distribution

SNC maintains land holdings across its jurisdiction with properties in 14 partner municipalities (see figure 2 and table 4).

Table 4. SNC land holdings by municipality.

Municipality	Area	
	(acres)	(hectares)
Alfred-Plantagenet	912.87	369.4
Augusta	8.50	3.4
Casselman	6.04	2.4
Clarence-Rockland	467.09	189.0
Edwardsburgh-Cardinal	662.25	268.0
Nation	3,113.71	1,260.1

North Dundas	1,263.87	511.5
North Glengarry	615.56	249.1
North Grenville	99.22	40.1
North Stormont	2,198.48	889.7
Ottawa	543.89	220.1
Russell	76.02	30.8
South Dundas	2,053.67	831.1
South Stormont	292.76	118.5
Total	12,313.93	4,983.2

Several clusters of SNC land holdings exist in the following locations:

1. North Dundas around Winchester Swamp/Bog
2. North Dundas, south of Mountain (Many acquired during channelization of the South Nation River)
3. North Stormont, east of Berwick (Warwick Forest)
4. The Nation, north of Casselman (Larose Forest)
5. The Nation, south of Pendleton Swamp (Many parcels acquired around Lemieux Landslide Area)
6. Alfred Plantagenet around Dickenson Creek Swamp

Commented [PP4]: The clusters combine with other publicly held lands to create some of the largest contiguous blocks of forest: Larose Forest, Warwick Forest, Winchester Bog, Morewood Bog, ELA

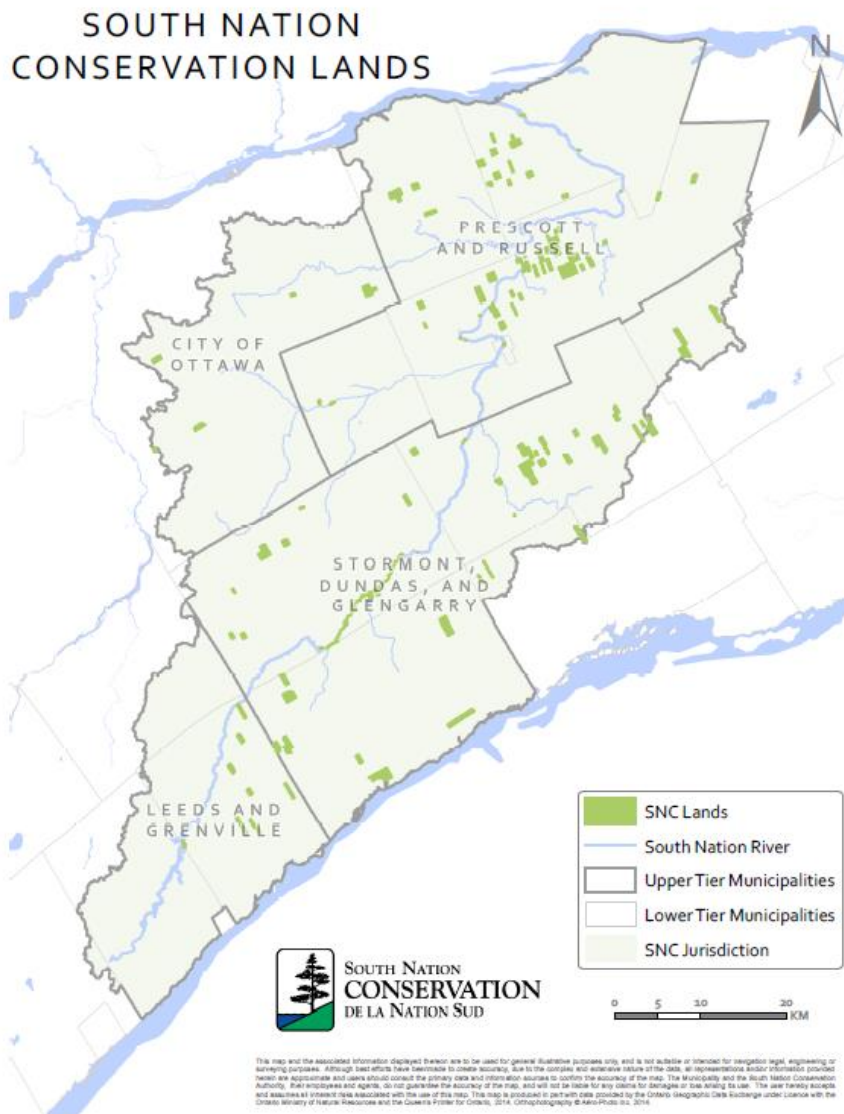


Figure 2. Map of Existing SNC Land Holdings.

3.4 History of Land Securement

Figure 3 shows SNC land securement in acres from 1960 to 2021. SNC secured its first land in 1960 with the majority secured during the 1960's and 1970's, partially financed under the Provincial Agreement Forest Program. The program operated until the Agreement Forest Program was terminated in the 1990s. Properties secured between 1960 and 1980 included non-forested area, which was subsequently afforested. SNC land, along with County and other Conservation Authority land, contributed significantly to the magnitude and success of regional afforestation through the 20th century.

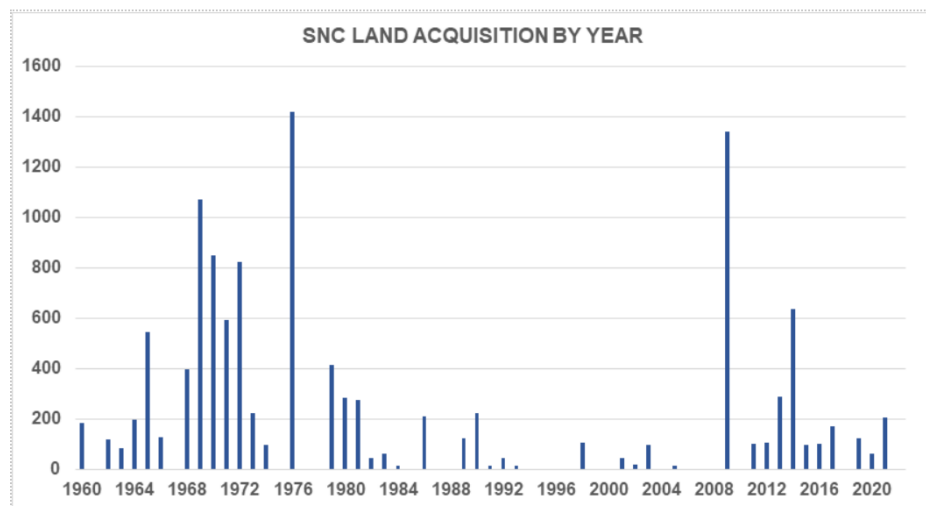


Figure 3. SNC Land Securement by Year.

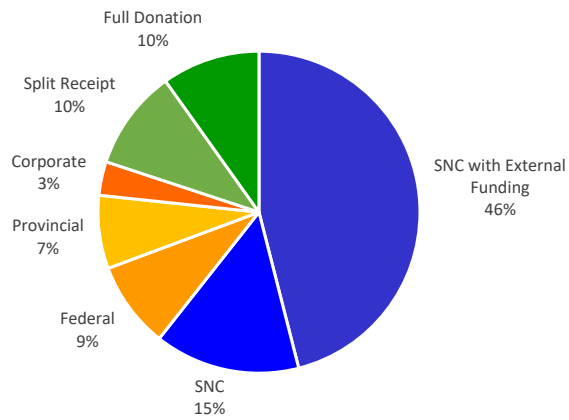
In 2009, SNC resumed an active land securement program relying on natural heritage conservation programs such as the Ecological Gifts Program (Environment Canada), Natural Spaces Land Acquisition & Stewardship Program (Ontario Heritage Trust) and the Lafleche Wetland Trust Fund.

Gifts and donations have also been an important source of new securements, with the Reveler Conservation Area being an example. Between 2009 and 2014, SNC secured approximately 500 acres (202.3 hectares) annually. From 2014 to 2021, following approval of the 2014 Land Securement Strategy SNC has secured approximately 200 acres (80 hectares) annually. Land securement since 2009 has been primarily to conserve natural heritage features including wetlands, significant forests, and SAR habitat.

Figure 4 summarizes acquisitions by funding source for the past 10-year period. The principal support for the SNC Land Securement program is through a special levy supported by its member municipalities. Only 15% of SNC land acquisitions are independent of any additional external funding. Subject to availability, SNC relies on Federal/Provincial government programs, corporate

trust funds, or private donations, either partial or full, to extend its ability to secure land for conservation purposes.

Figure 4. SNC Land Securement by funding source between 2011 and 2021.



3.5 SNC Land Securement in the Broader Public Lands Context

SNC is one of many public agencies or government departments which own land within the SNC jurisdiction. Though other public agencies or departments own land for a variety of purposes the location of publicly owned lands in a natural state can provide additional information in determining the benefits of a potential property for securement.

Location of a potential parcel for securement adjacent to a property owned by another public agency or government department may offer similar ecological benefits to lands for potential securement adjacent to SNC lands.

Figure 5 shows the location of publicly owned lands in a natural state within the SNC jurisdiction.

There are several clusters of publicly owned land in a natural state across the SNC jurisdiction. These clusters are often reflective of significant natural heritage features.



Figure 5. Map of Publicly Owned Lands in a Natural State within SNC's Jurisdiction.

4 LAND SECUREMENT METHODS

There are five (5) methods to protect lands as outlined in Appendix D. An overview of all available methods of land securement is contained in Appendix D. These can be broken down into two categories holding title (fee simple, partial takings/direct conveyance, agreements on owned land, and donation) and conservation easements or covenants.

4.1 Holding Title

SNC prefers to protect lands by holding title (fee simple) either through donation or purchase. Fee simple offers more certain natural heritage protection than easements and covenants, and owned property does not require ongoing engagement with a property owner to ensure fulfillment of the easement or covenant.

Participants in land transactions will be willing buyers and willing sellers. Land value will be determined by a property appraisal or negotiated directly with the seller.

The greatest growth potential in future land securement may occur in land donation, given the aging demographics of rural property owners. This method of land ownership can be viewed as both an opportunity for SNC and a service to property owners. SNC actively encourages land donations, with such gifts often qualifying as charitable donations under the Federal Income Tax Act. SNC, as a charitable organization, can accept land donations and issue a charitable tax receipt for the appraised value of the property. SNC has been designated by the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change Canada to accept donations through the Ecological Gifts Program. More information on the Ecological Gifts Program is contained in Appendix D.

Providing the opportunity to donate land will be actively promoted through existing SNC private property owner programs, such as the Woodlot Advisory Service, Private Tree Planting, Clean Water and Permitting Programs. SNC's network of resource partners, including member municipalities, will receive promotional material to share with their constituents.

SNC will work with municipalities, environmental organizations, and other potential funding partners when pursuing land donations and property purchases,

4.2 Conservation Easements and Covenants

When property owners prefer to place an easement or covenant on their land, SNC will consider if the facts support this approach.

SNC may consider use of conservation easement and covenants to secure land under special circumstance which may include:

- Only a small portion of the lands are of interest for land securement by SNC (e.g., the natural areas along a watercourse within a natural heritage system linkage area)
- A severance to allow holding title of the lands of interest would create a new lot with no road access
- The lands of interest for securement cannot be severed from a larger parcel due to their location in certain land use designations, such as prime agricultural areas where new lot creation is extremely limited

5 LAND SECUREMENT PROCESS

Securing the recommended minimum of 30% forest cover in the SNC jurisdiction would require an exponential increase in the present rate of land conservation by SNC and partner organizations. Thirty percent of SNC's jurisdiction is 1,260 km², or more than 300,000 acres. At a current rate of around 200 acres per year, SNC must be strategic in prioritizing lands for securement to achieve maximum benefit with a limited budget.

The Strategy seeks to satisfy five core principles when identifying land suitable for securement:

- environmental benefit;
- social benefit;
- economic benefit;
- protection of people and property from natural hazards; and
- geographic locations that ensure a distribution of holdings throughout the jurisdiction.

SNC will work with willing property owners, municipalities, and partners to acquire the best possible land for conservation. A case-by-case assessment will be undertaken by SNC to determine the quality and significance of all properties considered for securement. Based on the individual property assessment, SNC will determine whether securement will be pursued. Figure 6 outlines the land securement process.

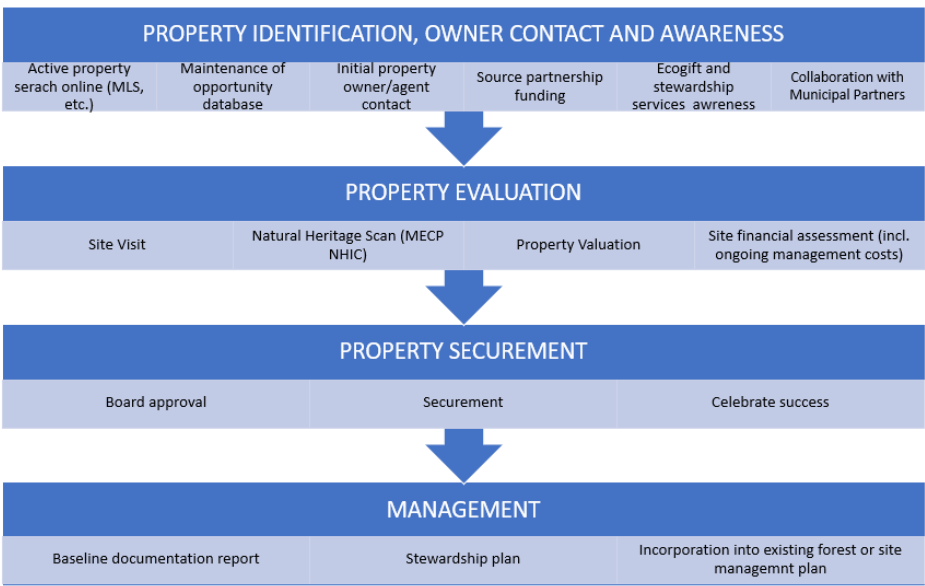


Figure 6. Outline of South Nation Conservation's Land Securement Process.

5.1 Property Identification, Owner Contact and Awareness

SNC maintains a flexible approach to property securement. This includes operating on the open real estate market, being open to approaches from property owners, and seeking out properties of interest through research and maintenance of an opportunities database, including an inventory of property abutting existing SNC land holdings.

The various steps of this initial phase may occur simultaneously or in a variety of different orders depending on whether the land is being purchased on the open market, purchased through a private sale after the seller approached SNC, donated, or transferred or purchased from a municipality.

5.1.1 Initial Property Owner and/or Agent Contact

In all methods of land securement, contact with the property owner and/or agent and ongoing communication is important. Initial contact usually involves communicating with the property owner or agent on their goals for the property (e.g., conservation, natural heritage legacy, sale price); what SNC can offer such as protection and conservation of the property, Eco Gifts Program, fee simple purchase; and what to expect from the process of securing land with SNC, including timelines.

5.1.2 Active Property Searches

Properties of potential interest for land securement are often not offered for sale or donation directly to SNC. SNC staff regularly search property listings. This is an important component of the land securement program as it can allow for identification of properties that meet SNC's core principles for land securement and that have interested sellers. Often potential sellers may not be aware of services and potential interest for land securement from SNC. Once a property of interest is identified initial contact with the property owner or agent would be undertaken.

5.1.3 Maintenance of an Opportunity Database

Though SNC is open to purchasing a variety of properties there are certain properties that may be of particular interest for land securement by SNC. Keeping a database of opportunities allows SNC to proactively reach out to property owners of these properties when funding is available to purchase properties.

The opportunity database can also include properties where the property owner was interested in selling the lands to SNC that were of interest for land securement, but funding was not available. This may allow for future securement of these properties if funding becomes available.

5.1.4 Source Partnership Funding

The costs associated with the land securement program include: land costs, legal, appraisal, survey, environmental audits, demolition, and property clean up, land transfer tax, interest charges, fencing, site securement, signage, access, administration, Baseline Documentation Report, stewardship plans, and applicable taxes. These expenditures are supported by funding opportunities available through various programs and partnerships outlined below. Funding may be secured for the purchase of a specific property or funding may be secured prior to selecting a property for securement depending on the funding source.

5.1.4.1 Municipal Funding

The conservation of lands benefits all municipalities within the SNC jurisdiction helping ensure that basic elements of the natural heritage system continue to function effectively. While maintaining a robust natural heritage system is important from an ecological point of view, recent analyses in Ontario suggest that the ecological services provided by natural heritage systems save governments millions of dollars annually. Natural heritage lands increase the adaptive capacity and resiliency of local communities by mitigating impacts from extreme weather. Conservation lands also provide natural space opportunities that contribute to the enjoyment, health, and wellbeing of all residents. The conservation of natural heritage systems, including issues related to the quantity and quality of water, benefits the people of the entire region, and will contribute positively to the quality of life for future generations.

In recent years, most Municipalities within SNC's jurisdiction have recognized these benefits and financed land securement. SNC continues to use these funds to leverage partnership support for increased purchasing power.

5.1.4.2 Provincial Funding and Incentives

SNC continues to pursue funding under the Ontario Heritage Trust Natural Spaces Land Acquisition and Stewardship Program. The program provides funding for fee simple and conservation easement transactions for provincially significant natural heritage systems.

The Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP) and Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program (CLTIP) are also used to reduce the ongoing management costs of SNC land. MFTIP provides 75% tax relief on the municipal rate for property owners following a Managed Forest Plan, while CLTIP gives 100% tax relief on municipal taxes for land deemed eligible by the province.

5.1.4.3 Federal Funding and Incentives

The main source of federal incentive for donations is, and will continue to be, the Ecological Gifts Program administered by Environment Canada. Under this program, gifts of qualifying land can receive a tax receipt for 100% of the appraised value. Since 2006, all successful donations made through the Ecological Gifts Program are also exempt from capital gains tax.

Other funding opportunities may arise in specific parts of the watershed due to federal funds administered by Ducks Unlimited Canada, Conservation Ontario, and the Nature Conservancy of Canada, for the securement of ecologically significant lands.

5.1.4.4 Partner Funding Support

SNC seeks funding opportunities from partners in conservation, industry, and interested individuals. Potential partners include the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ontario Nature, Ontario Heritage Trust, Lafleche Wetland Trust Fund, residential developers, aggregate operators, and wood product industries.

In parts of SNC's jurisdiction, agricultural land is at risk of development for residential and commercial uses. Maintaining farmland close to urban areas is the mission of the Ontario Farmland Trust (OFT). There is a potential for collaboration between SNC and OFT, for example in securing properties with farmland and woodlots (the back forty), where each organization has an interest in protecting a different section of land.

5.1.5 Ecological Gifts Program and Stewardship Services Awareness

Raising awareness of the programs offered by SNC that may lead to land securement is an excellent tool to effectively protect natural heritage for public benefit.

The Canadian Ecological Gifts program is a way for Canadians to protect ecologically sensitive land by donating land to recipients such as South Nation Conservation. The program offers significant tax benefits to property owners who donate land or a partial interest in land.²⁰

SNC offers a valuable service to property owners and an opportunity to create a legacy by preserving their property from development. SNC stewardship services, such as tree planting program, woodlot advisory services, and the clean water program, help create a network of property owners who foster environmental stewardship of their land. At the end of their tenure (ownership) they may be interested in offering this legacy of stewardship, through sale or donation, to SNC.

Although dated, a 2001 Environics survey of rural property owners in Ontario found the top two reasons for owning land to be space/privacy and preserving natural beauty. At the same time these property owners perceived themselves to be struggling financially.²¹ A land securement strategy that can maintain the space/privacy and natural beauty around a property owner's home, whilst offering economic benefit such as reduced tax burden, tax credit or payment has a good chance of success. This is particularly true for lands which are marginal for agricultural purposes.¹⁶

5.1.6 Collaboration with Municipal Partners

SNC can offer a valuable service to municipalities within our jurisdiction by sharing SNC's expertise in conservation for appropriate properties that meet the core principles of the land securement strategy. This could include partnerships with municipalities to acquire appropriate lands from municipalities. SNC will maintain a flexible approach to property securement with municipalities. This includes approaches from municipalities and initiating discussions with municipalities regarding potential securement strategies for municipal lands.

Municipalities are in a unique position to secure land as the *Planning Act* allows municipalities to require conveyance of park land to the municipality as part of subdivision, consent, or site plan approval. Within this context, SNC can work with municipalities to identify lands within developments that may be of conservation interest based on the core principles of SNC land securement and the criteria set out in Figure 7.

Securement of properties from municipalities would follow a similar process for review as privately owned lands though some factors in the valuation and site assessment may be different where the municipality is offering land at no cost, or where the municipality is applying for the severance, etc.

In securing lands from municipalities, and while completing site assessment including ongoing maintenance costs, SNC will explore creative options with municipalities for sharing transfer costs such as cost sharing agreements or tax reimbursement (where not covered by CLTIP).

²⁰ Government of Canada. 2021. <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-funding/ecological-gifts-program/overview.html>

²¹ Environics. 2001. Survey of Rural Landowners in Ontario Phase 2 – Attitudes and Behaviour Regarding Land Stewardship.

Conservation easements or covenants with municipalities may be of more interest than with private individual owners since there is more likely to be compliance and continuity of ownership

Municipalities secure and dispose of lands in a variety of ways including parkland conveyance, disposal of municipal property and municipal tax sales. SNC will work to collaborate with municipalities to identify opportunities for conservation within these processes. Section 8.1 Recommendations and Action Items identifies some future areas for collaboration with municipal partners to support potential land securement.

5.2 Property Evaluation

Property evaluation has four main components: site visit, valuation (property appraisal and/or negotiations), Natural Heritage Scan and Site Assessment (environmental, social, and economic benefits and future management requirements), see Figure 6. In addition, the property will be evaluated on contributions to regional natural heritage values and property management history.

5.2.1 Site Visit

The first step in the evaluation of a property is to conduct an initial site visit. This visit provides the first opportunity to see the site and the natural heritage and natural hazard features it may include. This is usually an informal visit to the site where the owner or agent can provide a tour of the site and share background information and history of the site. The site visit will inform what additional expertise may be required for the Site Assessment.

5.2.2 Natural Heritage Scan (MECP NHIC)

A Natural Heritage Scan screens for the presence of provincially, regionally, and locally rare species, plant communities and, wildlife concentrations areas through consultation with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks Natural Heritage Information Center database.

5.2.3 Property Valuation

Property valuation may include having the property value established by a certified appraiser if this has not already been done.

Once a property valuation has been established negotiations with the property owner regarding the price SNC could offer can be undertaken.

If the property is being donated the property valuation will be used to determine the amount for the charitable donations receipt under the *Federal Income Tax Act*. Property appraisal reports must meet the requirements for appraisals set out by Environment Canada when dealing with donations.²²

²² Environment and Climate Change Canada. 2019. Ecological Gifts Program Guidelines for Appraisals. https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2019/eccc/CW66-392-2019-eng.pdf

5.2.4 Site Assessment

A Site Assessment will consider the criteria for land securement, based on the five-core principle of the Land Securement Strategy, as well as the costs of the property and future management requirements.

Figure 7 identifies Site Assessment criteria, categorized by the five core principles of the Land Securement Strategy, as well as potential sources of information. The criteria are intended to help identify the lands which best meet the totality of the criteria; not all properties will meet all criteria. The criteria are intended to guide consideration of potential land for securement; the number of criteria that are met is not intended to be used as a quantitative measure of the relative merit of one property versus another.

Screening for these criteria will be done based on a desktop assessment and observations from the site visit(s). Some criteria are based on multiple core principles and as such appear under multiple categories of the assessment checklist which follows.

Sources of information for evaluating specific criteria are not prescriptive and are provided for guidance. Additional sources of information will be used as needed where available to evaluate a property against the following criteria.

Figure 7. Property Evaluation Criteria for Potential Land Securement

Desirable Property Characteristics

LANDS PROVIDING ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFIT	
Desirable Characteristic	Source(s) of information
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presence of species at risk and/or species at risk habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natural Heritage Information Center (NHIC)• Species at Risk Recovery Strategies• Existing EIS, if any• Observations, surveys, and assessments of the property
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unique, rare, or significant ecosystem or habitat of flora and/or fauna and preservation of biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natural Heritage Information Center (NHIC)• Species at Risk Recovery Strategies• Existing Environmental Impact Studies or Assessments if any• Observations, surveys, and assessments of the property• Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) Ecodistrict Landscape Analysis• The Great Lakes Conservation Blueprints for Biodiversity (Aquatic and Terrestrial)• Wildlife population survey• Areas of Natural or Scientific Interest (ANSI) Checksheets

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincially Significant Wetland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry's (MNRF) Ontario Wetland Evaluation System (OWES)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locally significant wetland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry's (MNRF) Ontario Wetland Evaluation System (OWES)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unevaluated Wetlands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNC Mapping • Official Plans • County Mapping • Soil Surveys
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant hydrological feature runs through the property (e.g., cold water streams, ground water recharge areas, South Nation River) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Impact Studies • MNRF Flowing Water Information System (FWIS) • Ground Water Studies • SNC Mapping Portal • Floodplain Mapping
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to implementation of SNC's Forest Management Plan and/or the Protecting and Increasing Forest Cover in the South Nation Conservation Jurisdiction report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest cover analysis • SNC's Forest Management Plan • SNC's Protecting and Increasing Forest Cover in the South Nation Conservation Jurisdiction report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High risk for future habitat destruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning by-laws • Official Plans • Nearby development applications (SNC application files, Municipal websites)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adds value to existing SNC Project(s) (e.g., lands adjacent to habitat restoration) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adds to holdings of conservation partners or offers opportunities for partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with partners • SNC mapping of publicly owned lands in a natural state (see figure 7)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique, rare or significant biological specimens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observational data • Research papers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lands within an area of natural heritage significance, such as those identified in Appendix 1 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within an identified Natural Heritage regional core, linkage, or corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Heritage Strategy (UCPR & SDG) • Natural Heritage system as shown in the City of Ottawa Official Plan • Natural heritage system as shown in the Leeds and Grenville Official Plan, or subsequent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for restoration projects • Other criteria identified by the board 	

LANDS PROVIDING SOCIAL BENEFIT	
Desirable Characteristic	Source(s) of information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant cultural heritage values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries - contact for screening • First Nations Communities • Observational data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adds benefit to existing SNC Project(s) (e.g., property allows linking two existing SNC trails) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased opportunities for community recreation and/or tourism potential 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other criteria identified by the board 	

LANDS PROVIDING PROTECTION OF LIFE OR PROPERTY BENEFIT	
Desirable Characteristic	Source(s) of information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lands with significant floodplain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floodplain hazard mapping
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lands with higher flood risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flood Risk Assessment maps
5.2.5 Land with unstable soils (e.g., Karst, organic soils, etc.) 5.2.6	5.2.7 Geology Maps 5.2.8 Lidar 5.2.9 Geotechnical reports or studies 5.2.10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land with unstable slope or in within the Casselman to Lemieux Landslide risk area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erosion Hazard Mapping • Landslide Risk Mapping • Geotechnical reports or studies

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lands with greater potential for significant threats to source water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source Water Protection Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other natural hazard lands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) mapping • Official Plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincially Significant Wetlands or other wetlands which provide flood and drought mitigation benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with Engineering staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant hydrological feature runs through the property (e.g., cold water streams, ground water recharge areas) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Impact Studies • MNRF Flowing Water Information System (FWIS) • Ground Water Studies • SNC Mapping Portal • Floodplain Mapping
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other criteria identified by the board 	

LANDS PROVIDING ECONOMIC BENEFIT	
Desirable Characteristic	Source(s) of information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adds value to existing SNC Project(s) and/or holdings of conservation partners or offers opportunities for partnership 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adds value to the community (e.g., Tourism potential) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adds to productive forest or agriculture 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other criteria identified by the board 	

LANDS WITH BENEFICIAL LOCATION	
Desirable Characteristic	Source(s) of information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lands within SNC jurisdiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jurisdiction boundaries map
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adds to holdings of conservation partners or offers opportunities for partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNC mapping of publicly owned lands in a natural state (see figure 7)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjacent to existing SNC holdings 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to a fair distribution of secured land throughout SNCs jurisdiction, including land secured by conservation partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNC mapping of publicly owned lands in a natural state (see figure 7)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the area/jurisdiction where funding is available or must be used 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other criteria identified by the board 	

Property Characteristics Requiring Consideration

PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS REQUIRING FURTHER CONSIDERATION	
Characteristics of concern	Source(s) of information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Contamination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Site Assessment • File records • Environmental Occurrences and Spills dataset based on the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Spills Action Centre • Observation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-sustainable land-use (e.g., aggregate site, peat extraction, etc.) unless funding is available for rehabilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation • File records
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of invasive plants or species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation • Environmental Studies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other rights to property (e.g., mining, aggregates, hydro, etc.) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degraded natural environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property is small and isolated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parcel maps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of problem neighbours (e.g., trespass, wood theft, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property boundaries are poorly defined (survey required) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning applications required (Severance, Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning review

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with the municipality and/or County
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor access (e.g., land-locked, major upgrades required – water crossing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation • Parcel maps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demolition or repairs to existing structures are required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation • Building inspection report

When assessing the suitability of land for securement, consideration will also be given to the financial impacts of securing the land including the purchase price, annual property taxes, potential improvements or site remediation requirements long-term maintenance requirements, and potential revenue streams offered by the property.

5.3 Property Securement

5.3.1 Board Approval

Properties recommended for securement will have funding identified and will then be forwarded to the General Manager for review and recommendation for approval to the Board.

5.3.2 Securement

Once approval is received from the Board, and funding is either confirmed and/or funding applications submitted, the responsible staff will undertake the final steps in securement, these may include commissioning a survey, applying for a severance, securing additional funding, conducting a detailed environmental assessment, and property transfer.

5.3.3 Celebrate Success

Celebrating a successful land securement is important for SNC, property sellers/donors, and the public. It is an opportunity to celebrate the creation of a natural legacy and the satisfaction of knowing that a valuable piece of natural heritage is safeguarded for future generations.

The celebration itself is a valuable opportunity to share the story with the public and other property owners and to build and enhance the land securement program. Successful land securement will be celebrated with:

- Ribbon cuttings and ceremonial openings
- Media (e.g., press releases, SNC website etc.)
- Testimonials from property owners

5.4 Management

The cost of a Baseline Documentation Report and Stewardship Plan will be considered in the planning stage of the property purchase. This approach will ensure an efficient transition from private property to SNC land management.

5.4.1 Baseline Documentation Report

A Baseline Documentation Report will provide the following:

- Description of natural features, for example forest resource inventory, wetland evaluation, SAR screening etc.
- Description of human-made structures
- Document current use activities
Document property issues, both human-made and natural, such as abandoned wells, open pits, foundations, and rights of way (trails, pipelines, hydro etc.)

5.4.2 Stewardship Plan

A Stewardship Plan will provide the following:

- Identify property goals and objectives (environmental, social, and economic)
- Natural heritage inventory
- Identify best management practices to achieve property objectives
- Summarize management issues and threats
- Develop strategy to address issues and threats
- Outline other actions that the property owner (SNC) wishes to undertake, such as signage, trail establishment, parking lots etc.

6 LAND DISPOSITION POLICY

SNC does not normally endorse selling off conservation lands and does not have plans to do so. Where revenues are realized through the sale of any surplus lands or land required by municipal or other government agency for infrastructure or other public projects, these monies will be applied to properties identified as suitable for securement. In the case of trade lands, these transactions are used to secure lands of greater environmental, economic, or social benefit. Any land disposition must follow SNC Policy, applicable legislative requirements and legal commitments, including requirements under the Conservation Authorities Act.

The SNC Administrative By-laws (April 15, 2021) Part II Section 8(o) requires approval by the Board of Directors for any proposed acquisition or disposition of land, subject to the requirements of the Conservation Authorities Act.

6.1 Conservation Authorities Act

The Conservation Authorities Act Part V Chapter 21 empowers the Board of Directors to acquire by purchase, lease or otherwise any land that it may require, and, to sell, lease or otherwise dispose of land so acquired. The Conservation Authorities Act further stipulates the following (Note: Approval is now delegated to MNRF District Manager):

“If the Minister has made a grant to an authority under section 39 in respect of land, the authority shall not sell, lease or otherwise dispose of the land under clause (1) without the approval of the Minister except if, the disposition is for provincial or municipal infrastructure and utility purposes; the province, the provincial agency, board or commission affected by the disposition or the municipal government, agency, board or

commission affected by the disposition has approved it; and the authority informs the Minister of the disposition. 2010, c. 16, Sched. 10, s. 1 (1).

Terms and conditions

The Minister may impose terms and conditions on an approval given under subsection (2), including a condition that the authority pay a specified share of the proceeds of the disposition to the Minister. 1996, c. 1, Sched. M, s. 44 (3).²³

6.2 Forestry Act

Disposition of land, except for disposition for use of the Province of Ontario, by South Nation Conservation, as a former Agreement Forest partner, is subject to the Forestry Act. The forestry Act section 2(5) to 2(6) state:

"Land in respect of which grants have been made [, by the Minister under the Forestry Act,] shall not, without the approval of the Minister, be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of during or after the term of the agreement. 1998, c. 18, Sched. I, s. 20."²⁴ (Note: Approval is now delegated to MNRF District Manager)

"The proceeds from any sale, lease or other disposition of land in respect of which grants have been made under subsection (2) or a predecessor provision shall be divided as the Minister directs between the conservation authority ... and the Province of Ontario, with the conservation authority ... receiving not less than 50 per cent of the proceeds. 2000, c. 26, Sched. L, s. 4 (2).²⁵

6.3 Ecological Gifts Program

South Nation Conservation is an eligible recipient of lands donated under the Canada Ecological Gifts Program. Under the Ecological Gifts Program environmentally sensitive lands are protected against changes in land use or through disposition. These lands are monitored by Environment & Climate Change Canada. Under the *Income Tax Act*, section 207.31 unauthorized change in use or disposition subjects the recipient (South Nation Conservation) to a tax equal to 50% of the fair market value on the land at the time of the unauthorized change in use or disposition.²⁶

²³ Government of Ontario, Conservation Authorities Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. C23.

²⁴ Government of Ontario, Forestry Act, R.S.O. 1990, F. 26.

²⁵ Government of Ontario, Forestry Act, R.S.O. 1990, F. 26.

²⁶ Government of Canada. *Income Tax Act*. (R.S.C., 1985, c.1- (5th Supp.))

7 CONCLUSION

SNC's primary organizational goals include the protection of people and property and the preservation of natural heritage. Natural heritage is essential to preserving ecosystem function and biodiversity, providing clean water, mitigating impacts associated with natural hazards and climate change, and contributing to healthier, more active communities.

Land securement, by public bodies, is an effective way to protect natural heritage for public benefit and to protect people and property from significant natural hazards. Through the foresight of Board members, Municipalities, and property owners South Nation Conservation (SNC) has conserved approximately 12,000 acres of land. SNC land holdings will contribute to the sustainability of the jurisdiction and provide a natural legacy for the future.

The Strategy seeks to satisfy five core principles when identifying land suitable for securement:

- environmental benefit;
- social benefit;
- economic benefit;
- protection of people and property from natural hazards; and
- geographic locations that ensure a distribution of holdings throughout the jurisdiction.

7.1 Recommendations and Action Items

To support ongoing land securement efforts some additional areas of focus may include:

- The Land Securement Strategy should be reviewed and updated on a 5-year cycle.
- Collaborating with municipalities to discuss the potential for revisions to parkland conveyance by-laws to secure lands of conservation interest, such as along watercourses, where appropriate
- Collaborating with municipalities to review and revise disposal of land policies to ensure SNC is notified and given an opportunity to secure these lands, where appropriate
- Collaborating with municipalities to revise municipal property tax lien sale policies to include notice to SNC, where appropriate
- Collaborating with municipalities to add municipally owned land in a natural state to mapping and analysis of publicly owned lands in a natural state. This would allow assessment of lands for securement to include these lands in considerations of the potential benefits of securing abutting properties as per the criteria in Figure 7.
- Notifying property owners in the new UCPR & SDG Natural Heritage System designation, once approved, of their potentially eligibility for MFTIP and CLTIP, as appropriate, focusing on areas that best meet core principles based on desktop assessment.
- Promoting available tax incentives for maintaining natural heritage lands and exploring options for conservation easements and covenants with conservation partners for these lands where appropriate.
- As per the recommendations of the Protecting and Increasing Forest Cover in the South Nation Conservation District Report (August 2018), "there are several tax incentives

available to landowners that have forested property or ecologically significant features (i.e., wetlands), these opportunities are not well-known to property owners. Programs include the Management Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP) and Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program (CLTIP), both are offered Province-wide and are administered by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.”²⁷

- As per the recommendations of the Protecting and Increasing Forest Cover in the South Nation Conservation District Report (August 2018), “Engage with the Province to develop a process for disposing of public land which would consider first right of refusal to a municipality or local land trust (including Conservation Authorities)... Developing a process for cross-communication between holders of public lands (e.g. Province, municipalities, land trusts, and Conservation Authorities), when one is considering disposal of land, could provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive land to remain protected and available to the public for recreational activities.”²⁸
- As per the recommendations of the Protecting and Increasing Forest Cover in the South Nation Conservation District Report (August 2018), “lobbying the Provincial and Federal government for more funding to support forest conservation programs and land acquisition of sensitive forests in low forest cover regions.”²⁹

²⁷ South Nation Conservation. 2018. Protecting and Increasing Forest Cover in the South Nation Conservation District Report. Pages 9-11.

²⁸ South Nation Conservation. 2018. Protecting and Increasing Forest Cover in the South Nation Conservation District Report. Pages 9-11.

²⁹ South Nation Conservation. 2018. Protecting and Increasing Forest Cover in the South Nation Conservation District Report. Pages 9-11.

Appendix A – Areas of Natural Heritage Significance

SNC recognizes the need for some focus on certain types of natural heritage features that offer significant environmental benefits. These features are often overlapping, and include the following (list is by no means exhaustive):

- Provincially significant wetlands or Areas of Natural or Scientific Interest (ANSIs):
 - Alfred Bog
 - Mer Bleue
 - Froatburn Swamp
 - Glen Becker Swamp
 - Hoasic Creek Wetland
 - Newington Bog
 - Johnstown Creek Marsh
 - Winchester Swamp (Bog)
 - Long Swamp Bog
 - Buell's Creek Reservoir
 - South Augusta Wetland Complex
 - Edwardsburgh Wetland
 - Limoges Wetland
 - Charleville Creek Wetland
 - Limerick Creek Wetland
 - Oxford Mills Wetland
 - South Gower Wetland
 - Findlay Creek and Leitrim Wetland
 - Osgoode Wetland Complex
 - Jessup's Falls
- Areas of local significance
 - Dickenson Creek Swamp
 - Indian Creek Wetland
 - Bradley's Creek
 - Maxville Swamp
 - Morewood Bog
 - Pendleton Swamp
 - Hammond Swamp
 - Black Creek Wetland
 - Moose Creek Wetland
- Significant interior forest, including:
 - Warwick Forest
 - Two Creeks
 - Larose Forest
 - Cumberland Forest
- Wetland and forest in the headwaters of the South Nation River and its tributaries, including:
 - Limerick Forest
 - Spencerville Wetlands
 - Wetlands around Monkland
 - Rigaud River Headwaters
- Other land identified through scientific study for conservation:
 - Charbonneau Swamp, Triple Swamp and Senecal Swamp

Appendix B – Forest Cover Analysis Tables

Table 5. Forest Cover by Municipality 2008.³⁰

Municipality	Forest Type %			Total
	Natural	Plantation	Hedgerow	
Alfred-Plantagenet	30.7	3.2	0.6	34.4
Augusta	45.6	1.3	0.9	47.8
Casselman				4.0
Clarence-Rockland	24.1	15.1	0.5	39.8
Edwardsburgh-Cardinal	48.6	1.6	0.8	51.0
Elizabethtown-Kitley	53.5	0.3	0.2	54.0
Nation	14.5	11.1	0.3	25.9
North Dundas	11.2	0.9	1.2	13.3
North Glengarry	40.9	0.7	0.9	42.5
North Grenville	42.8	1.1	1.3	45.3
North Stormont	19.5	1.6	1.0	22.1
Ottawa	23.9	2.6	0.9	27.4
Russell	11.7	1.9	1.0	14.5
South Dundas	20.3	1.9	1.0	23.3
South Stormont	38.5	2.0	1.5	41.9

Table 6. Forest Cover by Subwatershed 2014.³¹

Subwatershed	Percent of forest cover
Bear Brook	37.6%
Castor	19.9%
Upper South Nation	28.3%
Lower South Nation	28.8%
South Nation Watershed Total	28.1%

³⁰ South Nation Conservation. 2014. Forest Cover and Trend Analysis.

³¹ South Nation Conservation. 2014. Forest Cover and Trend Analysis.

Appendix C – Natural Heritage Definitions

Natural Heritage System³²

A natural heritage system is an ecologically based delineation of nature and natural function – a system of connected or to be connected green and natural areas that provide ecological functions over a longer period and enable movement of species. Natural heritage systems encompass or incorporate natural features, functions, and linkages (also referred to as “corridors”) as component parts within them and across the landscape. They also enable the linking of different landscapes.

Significant Natural Heritage Features³³

Significant as defined by the MNRF Natural Heritage Reference Manual:

1. a) in regard to *wetlands, coastal wetlands and areas of natural and scientific interest*, an area identified as provincially significant by the Ontario Ministry using evaluation procedures established by the Province, as amended from time to time;
2. b) in regard to the habitat of *endangered species and threatened species*, the habitat, as approved by the Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry that is necessary for the maintenance, survival, and/or the recovery of naturally occurring or reintroduced populations of *endangered species or threatened species*, and where those areas of occurrence are occupied or habitually occupied by the species during all or any part(s) of its life cycle;
3. c) in regard to *woodlands*, an area which is 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 the amount of forest cover in the planning area; or
4. economically important due to site quality, species composition, or past management history;
5. d) in regard to other features and areas in policy 2.1, ecologically important in terms of features, functions, representation, or amount, and contributing to the quality and diversity of an identifiable geographic area or *natural heritage system*; ...

Criteria for determining significance for the resources identified in sections (c)–(d) are recommended by the Province, but municipal approaches that achieve or exceed the same objective may also be used.

While some significant resources may already be identified and inventoried by official sources, the significance of others can only be determined after evaluation.

³² OMNR. 2005. Natural Heritage Reference Manual 2nd Edition. P15.

³³ OMNR. 2005. Natural Heritage Reference Manual 2nd Edition. p39-40.

Appendix D – Methods of Land Securement

There are many ways to secure land to protect natural features; however, there are benefits and limitations with each form of land securement. SNC determines the most appropriate form of securement for each property to ensure protection of the features and functions of the land.

Fee Simple

The purchase or donation of the total interest in a property with a willing buyer and willing seller. Full ownership is the most effective way to protect greenspace as the owner has full property rights over the land. This is the preferred method that SNC has used and will continue to use in future land acquisitions.

An Option to Purchase is a contract that allows SNC to buy a property at a set price for a stipulated period. It is a written contract by the property owner to sell the property and not to withdraw this offer during the period. This mechanism is often used by conservation groups to “buy time” to acquire a specific piece of land and is the perfect time to fundraise for the purchase costs. Right to First Refusal is an agreement between a property owner and SNC, or other prospective buyer, which gives SNC an option to match any third party offer to buy a specific piece of property before it is sold. It sets out the conditions of sale and is registered on title to the property. There is a fee associated with the Right of First Refusal.

Donation

SNC encourages land donation. These gifts, at appraised value, may qualify as charitable donations under the Federal Income Tax Act. SNC, as a charitable organization, can accept land donations and issue a charitable tax receipt for the appraised value of the property. SNC also accepts donations through the Ecological Gifts Program which is administered by Environment and Climate Change Canada. SNC, in pursuing land donations or property rights, will work with municipalities, environmental organizations and other potential funding partners to secure environmentally significant/sensitive lands.

Several changes by the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) have provided more tax incentives to property owners willing to donate ecologically sensitive lands. The 1995 federal budget provided for amendments to the Income Tax Act to increase the 20% limitation in respect of charitable donations to 100% for certified donations made after February 27, 1995, to Canadian Municipalities and registered charities designated by the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. In May 2006, further changes were announced by the CRA that made all donations of ecologically sensitive lands through the federal Ecological Gifts Program exempt from capital gains tax. All lands donated outside of this program are still subject to capital gains. In addition, as part of the Ecological Gifts Program, all appraisals are reviewed by Environment and Climate Change Canada’s expert panel of appraisers, therefore, property owners and SNC can be assured that the appraisal is accurate and legitimate. SNC has been designated by the Minister of the Environment to accept donations through the Ecological Gifts Program.

Partial Takings / Direct Conveyance

This is an acquisition of part of a property in either a fee simple purchase or donation scenario. For example, if a property owner has a residence, he/she may be willing to dispose of most of the property containing significant ecological features while retaining the residence and amenity area (i.e., property owner retains 5 acres, SNC receives 95 acres through purchase or donation).

Agreements

SNC can enter into agreements/leases for the use of Authority owned lands. The Authority will determine the most appropriate agreement or lease arrangement for a specific property where applicable. This can extend to providing a Life Interest to a vendor/donor, entering into agreements for co-managing a property, offering agricultural leases on lands prior to restoration/rehabilitation, and leases or agreements for the construction/maintenance and management of public trails.

Conservation Easements and Covenants

Easements and covenants are similar and are often difficult to distinguish. For the purposes of SNC's land securement program they are entered into voluntarily and are typically used to restrict an owner from undertaking specific activities on all or a portion of their property. Typically, they would not permit the alteration or destruction of a resource, placing fill, or the building of structures.

Amendments to the Conservation Lands Act in 1994 permit a property owner to grant or sell a positive covenant to 'conservation bodies' (such as the Crown, conservation authorities, municipal councils, bands, or registered charities) for the protection and conservation of land.



To: Forestry Committee
From: Cheyene Brunet, Forestry Technician
Date: February 21, 2023
Subject: Update: Forest Steward Program

RECOMMENDATION:

The Forestry Committee receive and file the Forest Steward Program update.

DISCUSSION:

Forest Stewards assist in the management and monitoring of SNC's forested properties. The program currently engages with 14 stewards to cover 29 of SNC's 177 properties. In return for their service, forest stewards receive training and support from SNC staff and the chance to learn more and play an active role in managing their local environment.

Engaging with volunteers through the pandemic the last few years has been challenging, with engagement mainly through email and phone calls. The focus for the program in 2023 will be to develop stronger relations with the program stewards. Program goals in 2023 are:

- Reformatting and updating the property inspection form to include new fields and data not currently captured.
- Updates to the digital survey in Survey123 to reflect changes and updates to the property inspection form.
- A series of short lunch and learn webinars focusing on invasive species identification and management, tree ID and tree management and Apps and technological support as requested by the stewards.
- An on-site field property visit and meeting to develop relations with the Stewards

SNC has 3 new participants interested in becoming Forest Stewards and will be trained in the coming months. The forest stewards annual meeting is scheduled for Saturday, March 4th from 10am-12pm.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/ADHERENCE TO SNC POLICY:

Compliance with Budget: Forest Steward expenses are included in the approved 2023 SNC Budget, under SNC Forests 38-39.

SNC Policy Adherence: All project expenditures will adhere to SNC's Purchasing Policy.

Programs and Services Category: Category 1: Mandatory – Conservation Lands.

Cheyene Brunet,
Forestry Technician.