

The Township of the Archipelago

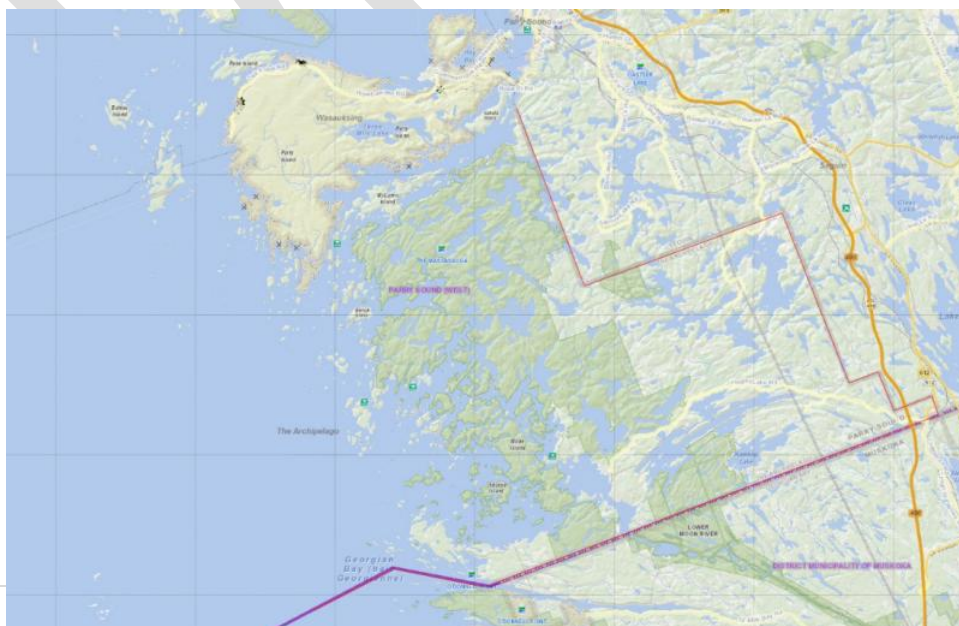
Delegation

to

Honourable Steven Clark MPP, Minister of Municipal Affairs

Tuesday August 20, 2019

Re: Township of the Archipelago



Request Statement

Council for the Township of The Archipelago respectfully requests the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to:

1. Recognize the unique environmental importance and environmental sensitivity of the eastern shore of Georgian Bay including the Township of the Archipelago as part of the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve
2. Acknowledge that the TOA's relationship with other municipalities in the West Parry Sound District is a best practice.
3. Don't consider bolt on municipal amalgamation until the Township can review the environmental and service compatibility.

The Township is willing to meet with all key agencies to further discuss the unique nature and the importance of the Township of the Archipelago.

Township of The Archipelago (TOA)

The Township was created almost forty years ago by the Bill Davis Government as an efficient and effective way to protect and manage the eastern shore of Georgian Bay. We have successfully implemented this mandate ever since. The Township of The Archipelago was created pursuant to The District of Parry Sound Local Government Act as a result of the Province's policy to extend, consolidate and strengthen local governments in the District of Parry Sound. The Municipality emerged from four previously unorganized townships on the east coast of Georgian Bay having a similar recreational land use character.

The Township consists of several thousand islands in Georgian Bay and a number of inland, freshwater lakes, all of which are used for recreational purposes; either cottages or year-round residences. The lands in The Archipelago may be described as remote and sparsely populated. The impetus for creating the Township of The Archipelago originated from a strong desire by its inhabitants and the Province to preserve its high-quality recreational character and the natural environment.

The Township of the Archipelago is a semi-wilderness region with a significant Crown land base, approximately 87% of the Township is comprised of Crown Land, Conservation Reserves and Provincial Parks. Further, there are a number of Provincial Highways in the Township, including the Highway 400/69 Corridor and secondary highways 529, 529A and 612.



The Township of The Archipelago is part of the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve (GBBR). The GBBR is a globally important region designated by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2004. Eastern Georgian Bay is the world's largest freshwater archipelago, or group of islands, that is rich with coastal areas and dynamic wetlands that provide a variety of significant and critical habitat for fish, turtles, birds and other aquatic organisms.

TOA Vision

The TOA will ensure the continued guardianship of the health and wellbeing of the Georgian Bay shoreline and its watershed areas.

TOA Mission

The mission of the municipality of the Township of the Archipelago is to preserve the unique and high quality of the natural environment which leads to a recreational experience that is both relaxing and aesthetically appealing to property owners and visitors who use the area, and is designed to make both property owners and visitors realize that they share equally in the responsibility of attaining this mission.

TOA Strategy

The strategy stated in The Township of The Archipelago (TOA), "A Strategy for Our Future" published in June 1996, still holds true in 2019 and beyond. Specifically, it states, "The strategy is not about takeovers, land grabs or building up municipal assessment bases. Rather it focuses on ensuring the continued health and wellbeing of the Georgian Bay shoreline and its watershed areas. The Archipelago strongly believes that this protection is only possible through the continuation of a strong, financially secure, independent municipality."

The strategic principles influence and shape all the decision making of the TOA Council and staff to fulfill our vision, mission, strategy and ensure the continued health and wellbeing of the Georgian Bay shoreline and its watershed areas.

Put in simple terms, the environment takes precedence over everything else. The semi-wilderness environment of the Township of the Archipelago is the economic engine of the West Parry Sound District bringing cottagers and visitors from all over the world to enjoy this piece of heaven.



Township of The Archipelago Principles



Protect & Preserve



Good Neighbours



Invasive Species



Responsible Waste
Disposal



Cost Effective
Service



Shared
Values

Protect and Preserve

Maintain the current fabric of the municipality in terms of land uses, development, the focus on the environment and responsible planning. The Archipelago collaborates with Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve, Georgian Bay Association, Georgian Bay Forever, and Georgian Bay Land Trust to achieve this objective. Build upon and expand the township's philosophy which is centred on the continued preservation and protection of the Georgian Bay shoreline and watershed areas.

Good Neighbors

Develop solutions in partnership with neighbouring municipalities that are mindful of the collective interests of these municipalities and the philosophy of The Archipelago whilst recognizing the symbiotic relationship the West Parry Sound District municipalities share.



Invasive Species

Work together with Georgian Bay Forever and Georgian Bay Biosphere reserve to prevent and remove non-native species and protect the natural flora and fauna.

Responsible Waste Removal

Provide municipal taxpayers with responsible and sustainable waste removal, reduce waste and increase diversion.

Cost Effective Service

Continue to remain economically viable and capable of providing services to meet the needs of the municipality's taxpayers in the most cost-effective manner through good stewardship and by collaborating with other West Parry Sound District municipalities.

Shared Values

Maintain the municipality's political independence and right to plan for the future based on its shared philosophy in collaboration with other municipalities.

The Issues

1. Recognize the unique environmental importance and environmental sensitivity of the eastern shore of Georgian Bay including the Township of the Archipelago as part of the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve as critical habitat to protect species at risk.

As articulated in the Environmental Sciences paper, “Accelerated modern human-induced species losses: Entering the sixth mass extinction” published in 2015, that many species are becoming extinct at a faster rate than ever as depicted in the graphs below. See Appendix 1 for the full article.

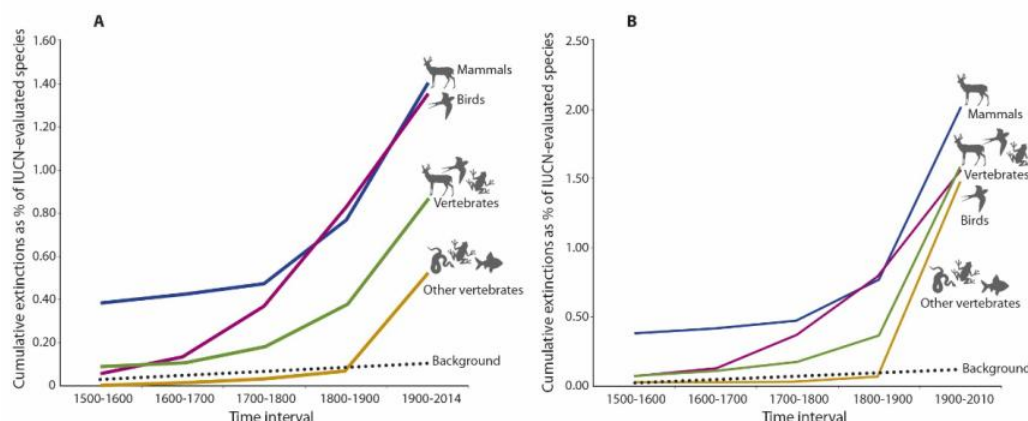
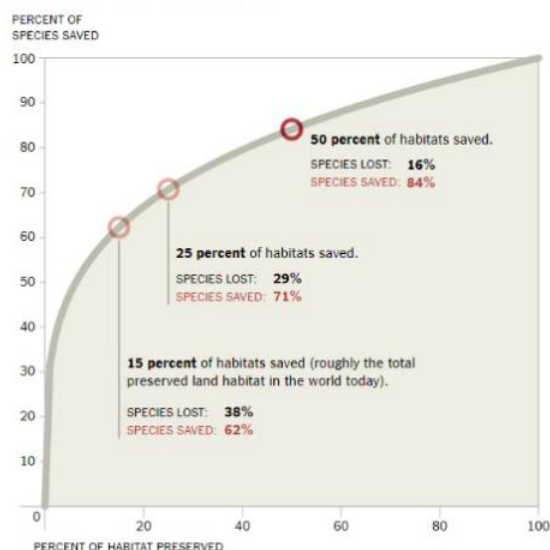


Fig. 1. Cumulative vertebrate species recorded as extinct or extinct in the wild by the IUCN (2012). Graphs show the percentage of the number of species evaluated among mammals (5513; 100% of those described), birds (10,425; 100%), reptiles (4414; 44%), amphibians (6414; 88%), fishes (12,457; 38%), and all vertebrates combined (39,223; 59%). Dashed black curve represents the number of extinctions expected under a constant standard background rate of 2 E/MSY. (A) Highly conservative estimate. (B) Conservative estimate.

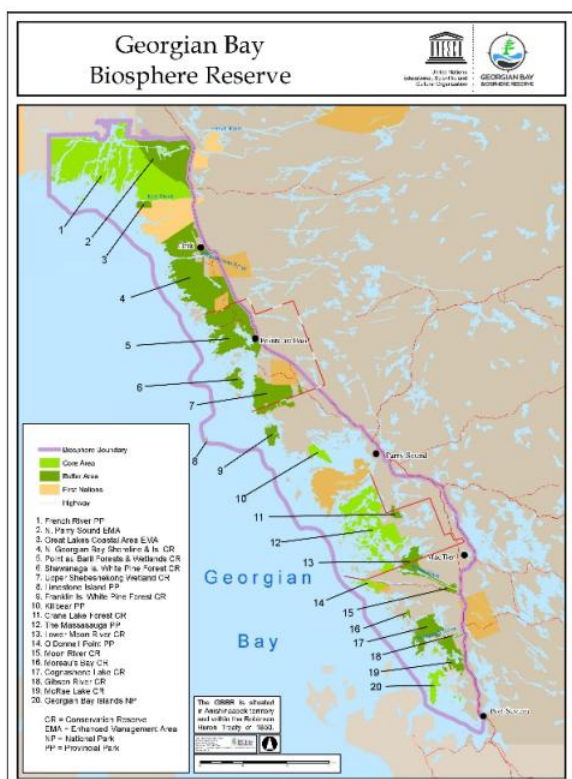
Saving Earth's Species: A Rough Guide

Using a rule-of-thumb for the relationship between a habitat area and its sustainable species, the biologist E.O. Wilson has proposed setting aside half of Earth's habitats to preserve about 84 percent of all species. Here are other scenarios.

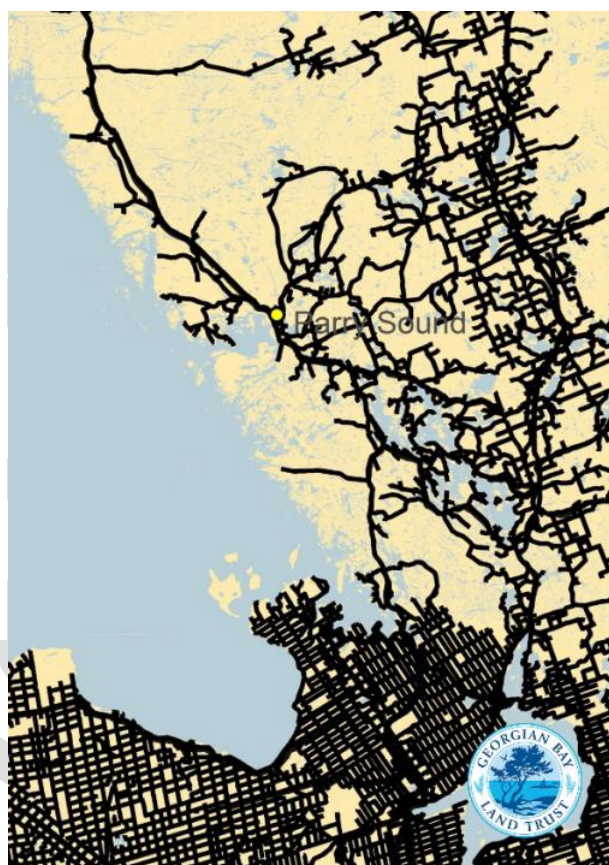


By The New York Times

According to an assessment of Species at Risk on the eastern shore of Georgian Bay performed by the Georgian Bay Land Trust and updated as of June 2019, the provincial status for ten species are endangered, twenty-two species are of special concern, and fourteen species are threatened. See Appendix 2 for the full list. The Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve “Eastern Georgian Bay Species at Risk” updated in April 2019 lists forty-seven species at risk. See Appendix 3 for the full list. “The Global Solution to Extinction” opinion article in the March 12, 2016 issue of the New York Times proposes that when more habitat is protected there is a correlation with the number of species protected as depicted in the graph to the left. See Appendix 4 for full article.



The Township of the Archipelago is situated in the middle of the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve: the areas surrounded by red in the map to the left.



As a water-based community the Township of the Archipelago has very few roads, as seen in map to the right. Minimal roads help protect reptiles and amphibians from death by vehicles.

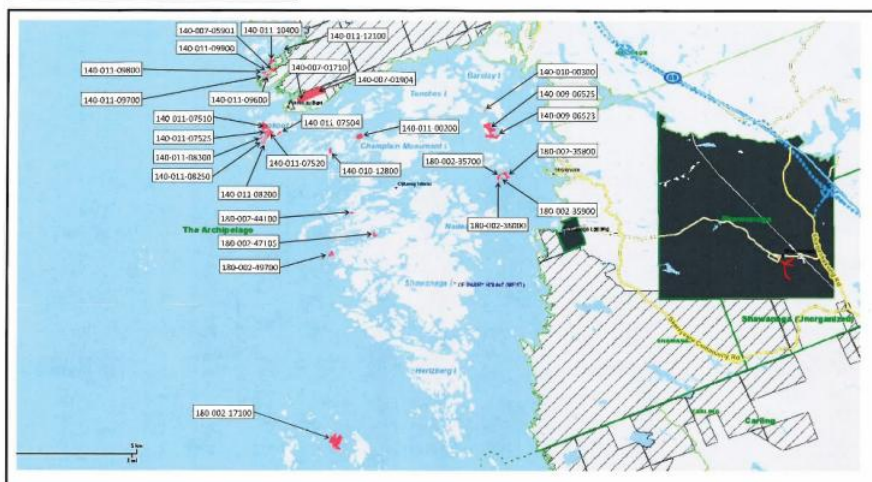
In addition to the 87% of the Township lands comprised of Crown Land, Conservation Reserves and Provincial Parks, individuals throughout the Township have placed over \$23.5 million of assessed lands into conservation status to further protect the natural environment.



Georgian Bay Land Trust & TOA



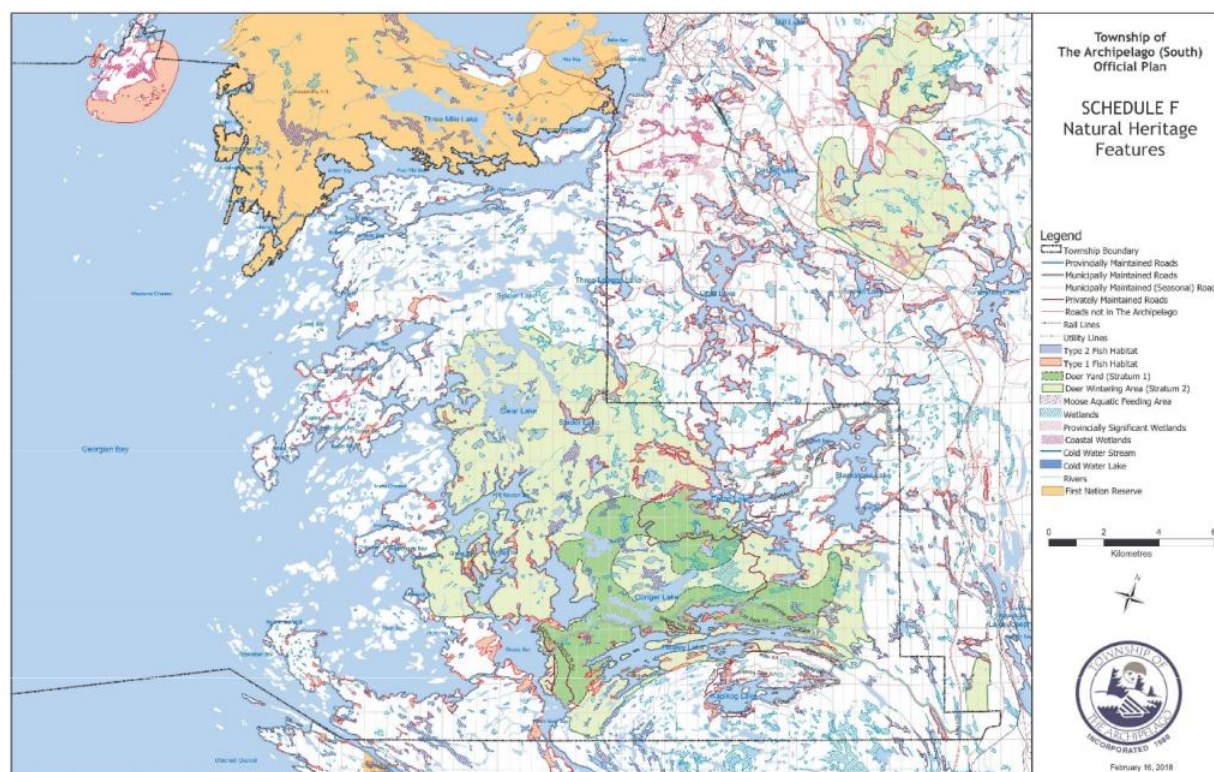
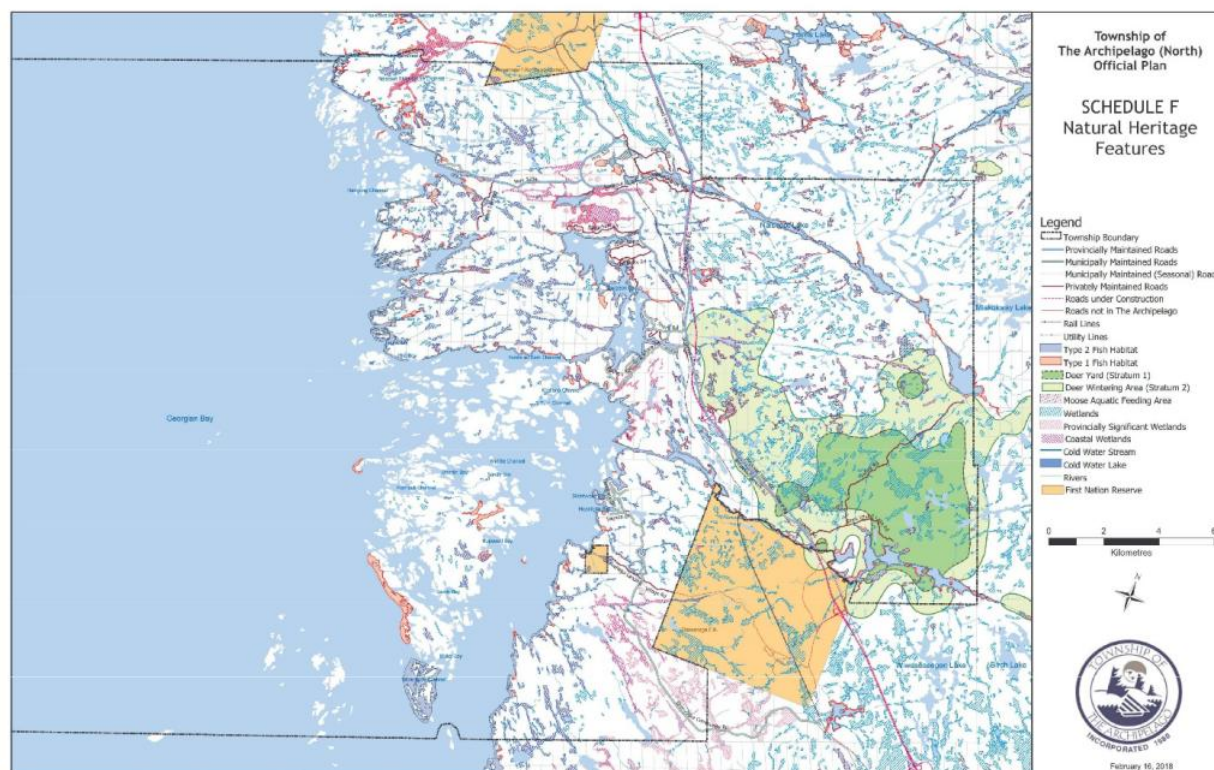
KEY MAP - HARRISON & SHAWANAGA PROPERTIES



KEY MAP - CONGER & COWPER PROPERTIES



The Township of the Archipelago is rich in Natural Heritage Features.





In addition to the Georgian Bay Land Trust and Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve, the Township provides support to Georgian Bay Forever. Georgian Bay Forever is a charity dedicated to scientific research and public education on Georgian Bay's aquatic ecosystem. Their mission is to protect, enhance, and restore the aquatic ecosystem of Georgian Bay by funding accredited research on water levels, water quality, and ecosystems; by educating the public and governments on issues regarding the environmental protection, conservation, safety and preservation of the water and the natural features of the Georgian Bay area of Ontario; and by enhancing the public's appreciation for their environment.

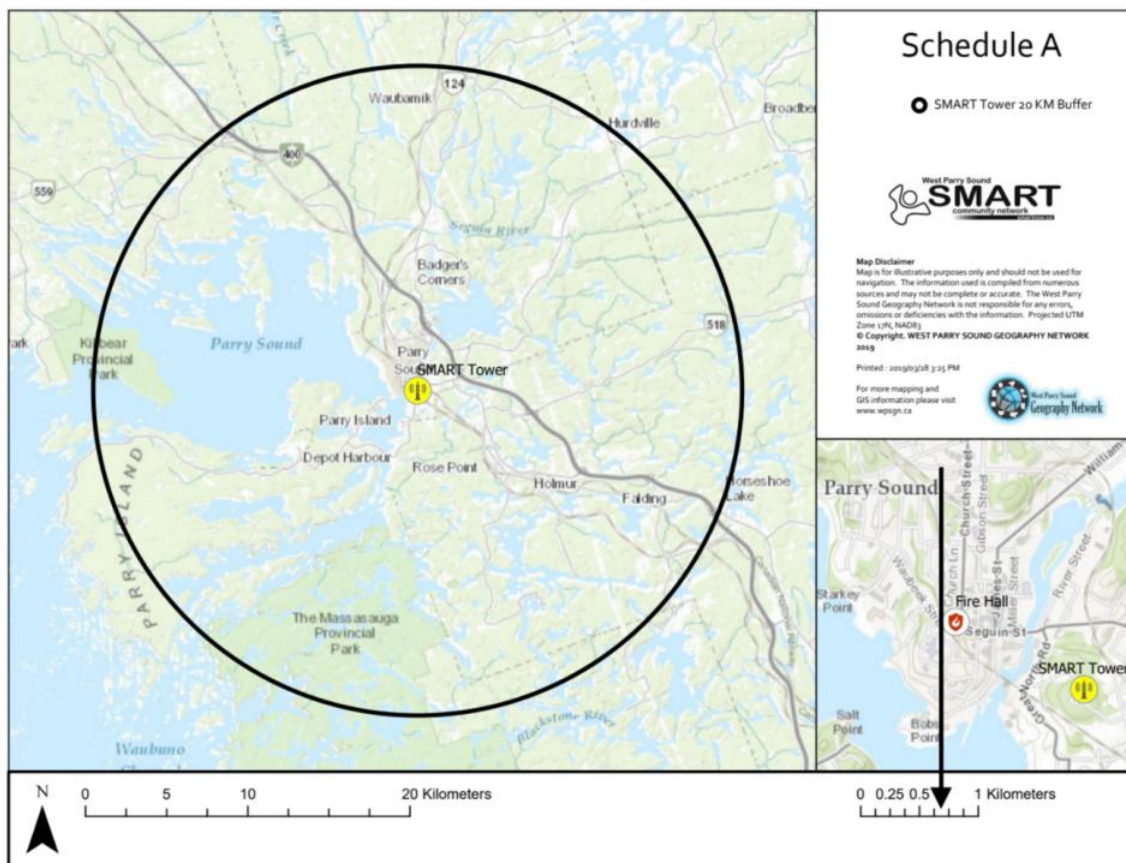
The Township of the Archipelago collaborates with all the organisations that aid us in achieving our vision. The TOA will ensure the continued guardianship of the health and wellbeing of the Georgian Bay shoreline and its watershed areas.

All the Township of Archipelago's efforts are consistent with the proposed agreement between Canada and Ontario to restore, protect and conserve Great Lakes water quality and ecosystem health and specifically support Annex 8: Habitat and Species. Specifically, *Result 4 - An informed and engaged Great Lakes community involved in the restoration, protection and conservation of the resilience of native species and habitats and their sustainable use.* See Appendix 5 for full Draft proposal.

2. Acknowledge that the TOA's relationship with other municipalities in the West Parry Sound District is a best practice.

As a small single tier government, the Township of the Archipelago staff collaborate across a wide range of services with other municipalities in the West Parry Sound District to optimize costs to ratepayers and avoid duplication of services. Appendix 6 shows a list of over a dozen items that the Township collaborates on with other municipalities.

The Township of the Archipelago economically supports joint West Parry Sound District initiatives. A great example of the support the Township provides to the West Parry Sound District is the West Parry Sound Community Network Inc. (WPS SMART). In March 2019, the council of the Township of the Archipelago approved the purchase of surplus MNR tower lands for \$140,000 to serve as the hub of the WPS SMART network. See Appendix 7 for the staff recommendation to council.



This tower will support all the West Parry Sound District Municipalities and provide affordable internet to rural areas. The WPS SMART pilot was approved and will serve as proof of concept for a solution for other communities in northern Ontario.

3. Don't consider bolt on municipal amalgamation until we can determine service and environmental compatibility.

It has been suggested by several individuals that the Township of the Archipelago consider amalgamation with/annexation of a portion of the Township of Georgian Bay west of Highway 400. Before entering any discussions, Council would need to be informed on a large number of matters with respect to the Township of Georgian Bay. It would not be a simple matter of just adjusting borders. Council would need to understand the differences between the Archipelago (ToA) and Georgian Bay (GB) with respect to matters that would include:

- Differences in Official Plans, including both the District of Muskoka and GB Official Plans
- Zoning by-law differences
- Special Policy Areas designated, if any
- Planning Committee/Board/Committee of Adjustment practice difference
- Building Inspection responsibility
- Septic Inspection and reinspection responsibility
- Other regulatory By-laws applying to GB such as Property Standards, both upper and lower tier
- Cemetery issues
- Garbage collection practices
- Recycling practices
- Garbage disposal locations and C of A's if any
- Marina regulation and or ownership
- Municipal drinking water systems in GB
- Park ownership, use and maintenance
- Heritage assets that exist
- Local roads inventory and condition assessment
- Upper tier roads inventory and condition assessment
- Roads structures with conditions and inspection records
- Local roads maintenance standards
- All District roads and structures in the portion of GB under consideration
- Practices and policies with respect to unassumed municipal road allowances
- Practices and policies re "driveways/private roads
- Balances belonging to GB in upper tier and lower tier fund balances and their relative state
- Shares of discretionary and obligatory reserve funds
- Georgian Bay Township share of any District of local debt
- Any remaining adjustment likely regarding assets and liabilities
- Tangible asset inventory data applicable to the territory under consideration
- Recreation facilities
- Impact of boundary adjustment on long term care, public health, DSSAB versus District service delivery, Land Ambulance service, and social housing ownership and services
- Participation of GB "ward" in West Parry Sound discretionary programs and services



- State of GPS data for GB
- OPP service and costing
- Parking bylaws, Traffic bylaws, Noise bylaws, Burning bylaws
- Tax Policies with respect to business properties
- Election practices
- Website
- Procurement, hiring, and other policies
- Development charges
- Emergency planning
- Fire services
- Animal control
- Sanitary Services commitments
- Library and other recreation and cultural participation
- Records management harmonization
- Additional staffing that would be required, short and long term
- Employment practices of GB and the District for part time employees
- Plus, more that would come to light during a review of the above

Municipal governments are complex entities. When all is going well, their services and plans are almost invisible to residents and visitors. But when something out of the ordinary arises they need to be able to move quickly and predictably towards a resolution.

Conclusion

1. The province of Ontario and the Township of the Archipelago have created a unique township with the primary focus of protecting the natural environment. The semi-wilderness natural environment is the economic engine of the West Parry Sound District. Respectfully request the province recognize the unique environmental importance and environmental sensitivity of the Township of the Archipelago as critical habitat to protect Species at Risk. We request that the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve (GBBR) be formally recognized by the Canada-Ontario Agreement (COA) as strategic importance in Protecting Habitat and Species at Risk.
2. Acknowledge that the TOA's leadership and relationship with other municipalities in the West Parry Sound District is a best practice.
3. Don't consider bolt on municipal amalgamation until the Township can review the environmental and service compatibility. Respectfully request that the Township of the Archipelago be given the time to assess the all the implications of any amalgamation proposal.

Appendices

Documents/Reports

- 1) Accelerated modern human–induced species losses: Entering the sixth mass extinction
- 2) “Species at Risk”, Georgian Bay Land Trust, June 2019
- 3) “Eastern Georgian Bay Species at Risk”, Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve, April 2019
- 4) “The Global Solution to Extinction”, The New York Times, March 12, 2016
- 5) “Canada-Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health, 2020” – DRAFT – July 5, 2019
- 6) TOA Collaboration within the West Parry Sound District
- 7) Expression of Interest by: West Parry Sound Community Network Inc. (WPS SMART)
- 8) Proposed Purchase of Tower and Lands (Tower Hill, Parry Sound)