

An aerial photograph of Georgian Bay, showing a complex network of islands and peninsulas. The water is a deep blue, and the land is covered in dense green forest. The coastline is rugged and rocky. The text "Protecting Georgian Bay's Future" is overlaid in the center in a white serif font.

# Protecting Georgian Bay's Future

Bringing communities and stakeholders together  
to develop a vision for protecting the Georgian Bay coast  
and natural environment into the future.

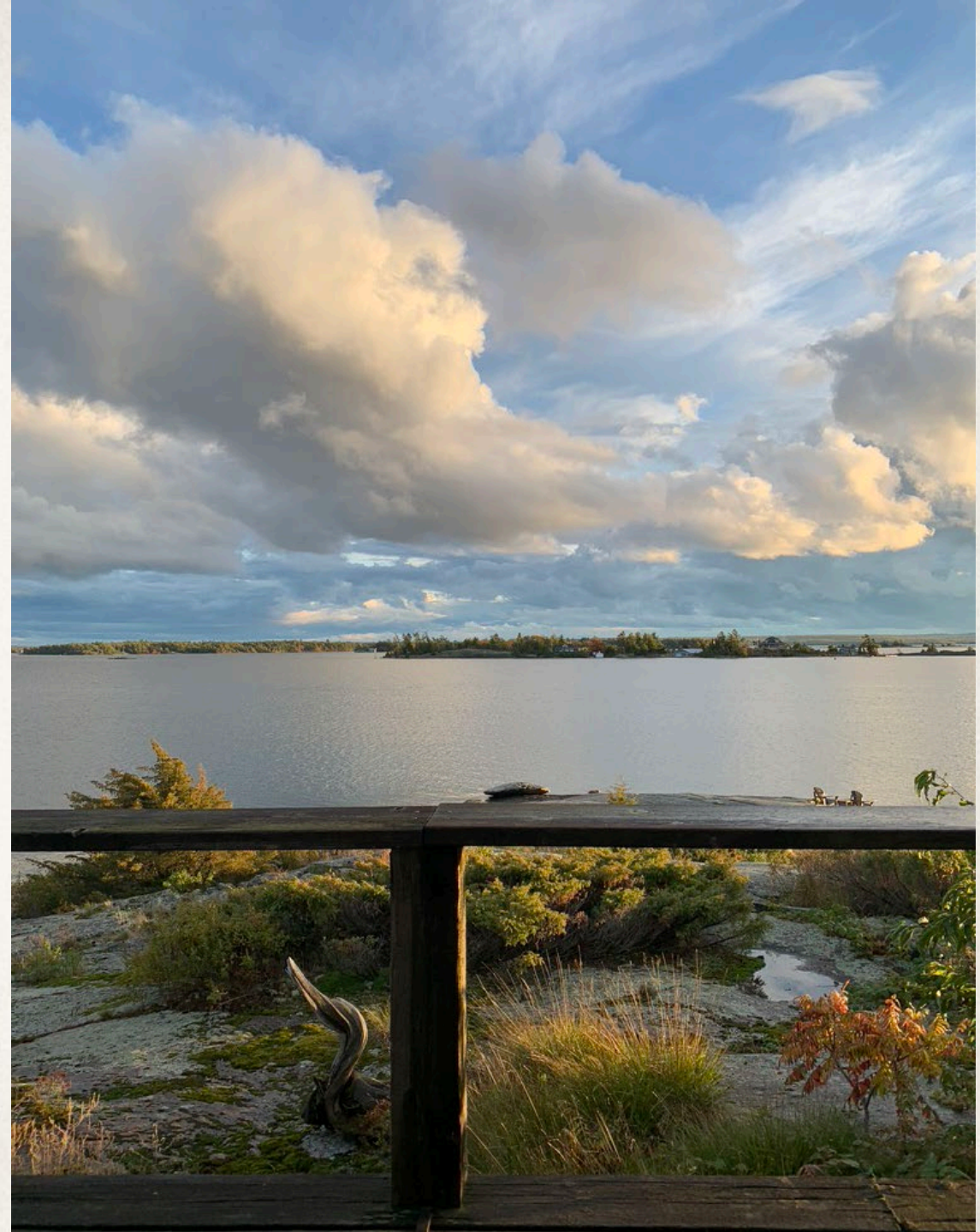
# Georgian Bay Means the World to Us

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“Georgian Bay is a unique, largely pristine waterbody and region featuring a UNESCO world biosphere, a proposed UNESCO Geopark, the world’s largest freshwater archipelago, many significant national and provincial parks, nature reserves and conserved lands, and numerous First Nations.

Collectively we must all do more to nurture, protect, and preserve it.”

*Liz Phillips / President, GBA*



# Georgian Bay is Under Threat

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- ❖ Georgian Bay's natural environment, waters, wildlife habitat and wetlands are threatened by rapid growth and development, expanding recreational use, climate change, invasive species, water and microplastic pollution.
- ❖ The eastern and northern coastal region of the Bay is one of the last largely pristine natural areas in southern Ontario.
- ❖ Georgian Bay is home to over 3,700 wetlands and *marshes* and provides vital habitat for a wide range of flora and fauna and has by far the largest number of natural wetlands in the Great Lakes. 80% of species in the Great Lakes rely on the Bay's coastal wetlands. *[source: GBF]*



# Growth Brings Change

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- ❖ Rapid growth and development threatens to significantly impact landscapes and communities in the region in ways already seen in other “cottage country” areas of Ontario.
- ❖ GTA region population projected to increase by 50% by 2050.
- ❖ The District of Muskoka by 30% to 40% and Simcoe County by 50%.
- ❖ Development pressures are increasing all around the Bay.
- ❖ Rapid residential, commercial and tourism development around the Bay also threaten nature, natural landscapes, and water quality, stressing infrastructure and leading to loss of habitat for flora and fauna.



# Building A Plan

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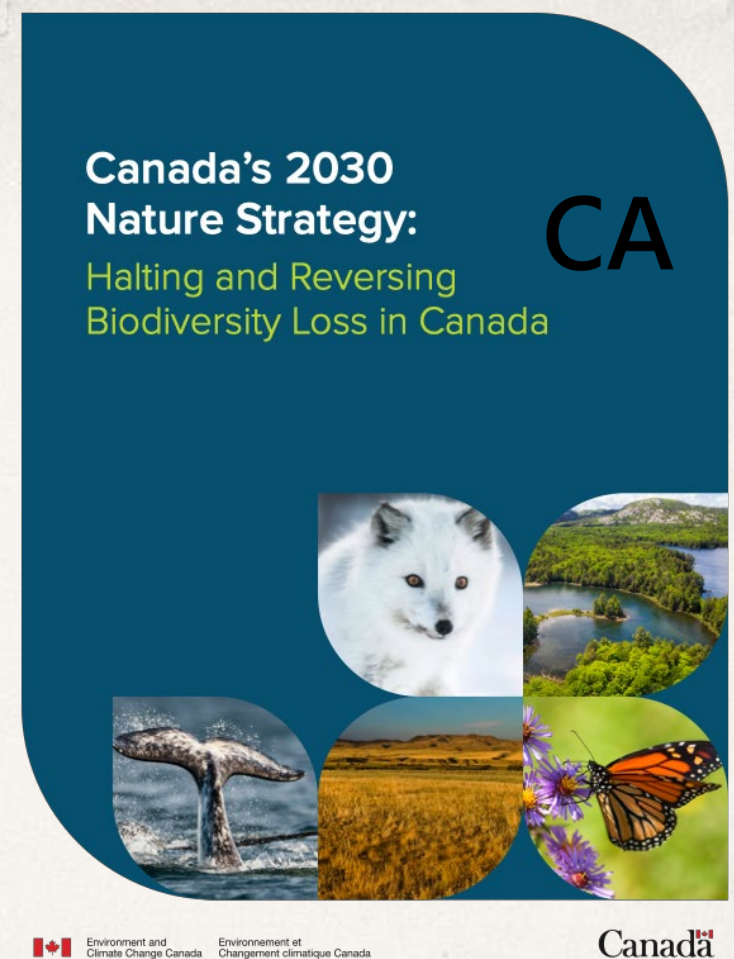
- ❖ We need to identify the main threats facing the Bay and bring key stakeholders together to respond with impactful policies and solutions.
- ❖ The time to act is now – before threats increase and more natural areas and habitat are lost.
- ❖ It is vital for all levels of government, communities and stakeholders to come together to develop a comprehensive regional vision to protect the region and create a roadmap for conservation and responsible land use.



# Conservation is a Public Interest Priority

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- ❖ Conservation of the natural environment is in everyone's interest.
- ❖ Canada's Nature Plan 2030 recognizes that conserving nature, protecting biodiversity and ecosystems are vital to our quality of life and economic prosperity.
- ❖ Protecting and conserving lands and waters is a central goal of Canada's Nature Strategy.
- ❖ Eastern Georgian Bay retains large areas of mostly intact wilderness -- 80% of forests and 90% of wetlands remain. It is unique in southern Ontario.
- ❖ Naturally beautiful and environmentally significant regions like Georgian Bay merit and need special protections.



## Target 3: Protected and conserved areas (30x30)

Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 percent of terrestrial and inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved...

# Objectives

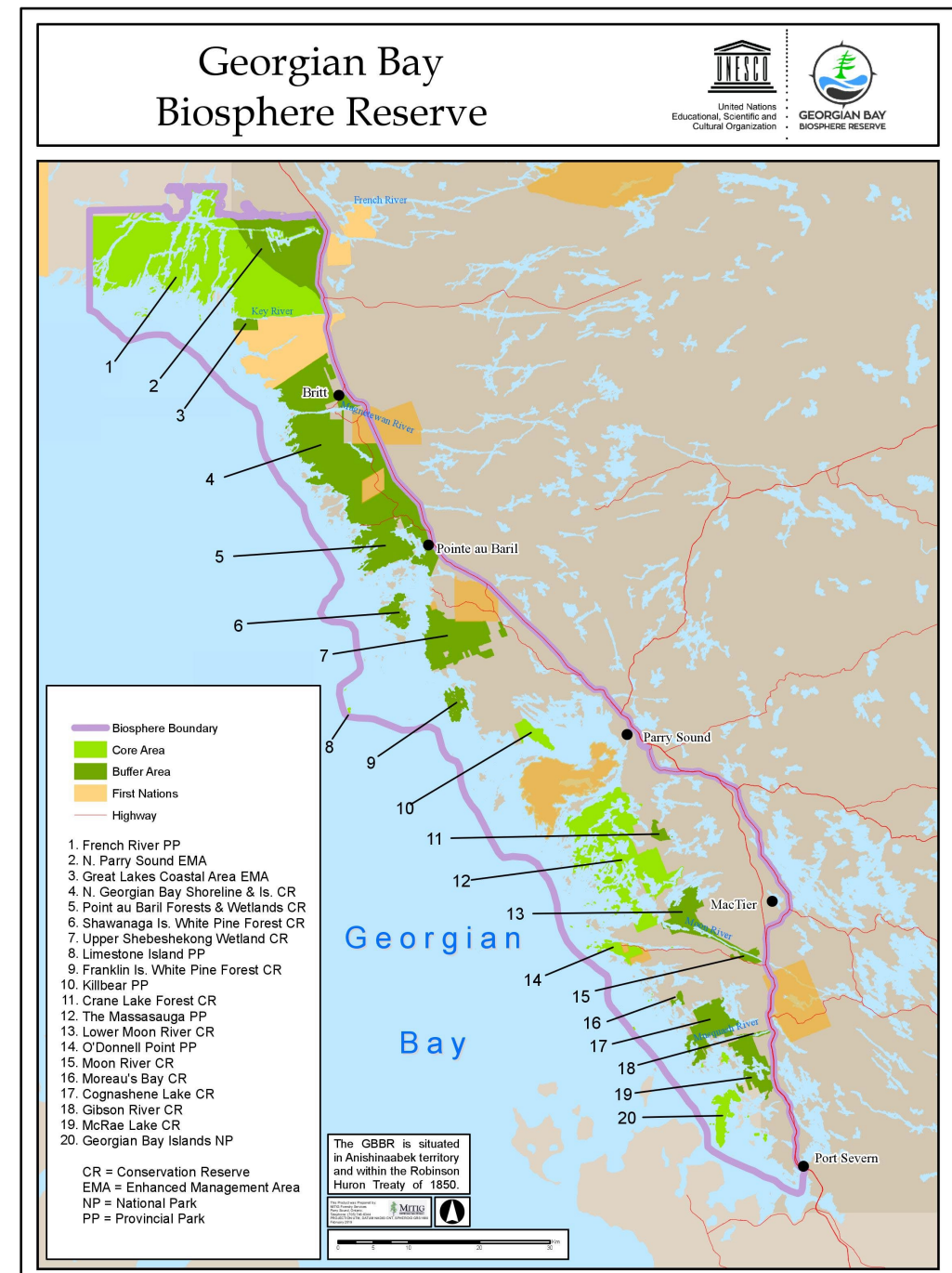
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- ❖ Foster a coalition of stakeholders to collaborate with and support the initiative.
- ❖ Design a vision and plan for conservation and development policies for the eastern & northern coastal region – the Biosphere and beyond.
- ❖ Expand conservation of natural and environmentally valuable areas and ecological corridors, tied to stronger and more consistent policies.
- ❖ Support Canada's Nature Plan 2030 and our commitments to the Global Biodiversity Framework.
- ❖ Support First Nation Indigenous Protected & Conserved Areas.



# Objectives 2

- ❖ Official recognition of the Georgian Bay Biosphere and the aspiring Georgian Bay Geopark.
- ❖ Strengthen planning standards in Official Plans and Zoning By-Laws.
- ❖ Recognize zones for development and business service areas.
- ❖ Support Georgian Bay NGOs' conservation projects.
  - ❖ GB Land Trust Corridor Project
  - ❖ GB Biosphere Natural Asset Management Program
  - ❖ GBF's Conservation, Education & Research Programs





# Projected Outcomes

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- ❖ Position Paper completed and results shared.
- ❖ Better understanding of the threats/opportunities Georgian Bay faces.
- ❖ Develop a comprehensive vision to protect the Bay.
- ❖ Greater alignment among GBA, GBB, GBF, GBLT, GBGLF, the proposed GB Geopark, SSEA, NCC municipalities, park authorities, other NGOs, and Georgian Bay residents on what needs to be done to protect the Bay.
- ❖ Foster closer working relationships with Indigenous communities.
- ❖ Develop a road map and policy framework to better protect Georgian Bay while accommodating stakeholders' needs.



# Why GBA?

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- ❖ GBA is the primary advocacy organization on the Bay and, unlike charities, can take political action.
- ❖ GBA has a long history of developing policies on, and advocating for, sound stewardship of the coastal region
- ❖ GBA created the Coastal Protection Committee to share ideas on protecting the environment, lands, and waters on the eastern/northern coasts.
- ❖ The CPC team created the *Planning Regulations Guide*; the *Municipal Planning Comparison Report* and a *Septic System Guide*.
- ❖ Strong record of collaboration with Georgian Bay NGOs, governments and communities.



# Making it Happen

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- ❖ GBA's Vision 2050 position paper will recognize Georgian Bay's unique world class environment and propose how best to realize the vision for protection based on recognized principles for conserving significant natural areas.
- ❖ We will share our vision with the Ontario and federal governments, Indigenous communities, municipalities, park authorities, GBA members, NGOs, and Georgian Bay residents.
- ❖ The position paper will form the foundation for advocating for the need for a regional vision and plan – a discussion that will be led by an internationally recognized environmental and planning consultancy.



# Outreach to Date

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- ❖ We need to build a coalition and speak with a unified voice to gain traction with governments and authorities.
- ❖ Presentations to: GBB, GBLT, GBF, the aspiring GB Geopark, & Professor Pat-Chow Fraser.
- ❖ Outreach to Georgian Bay Great Lakes Foundation, the Severn Sound Environmental Association, Eastern Georgian Bay Preservation Society.
- ❖ Feedback to date has been positive; discussing collaboration and participation.
- ❖ Initiating meetings with municipal representatives and other governments.



# Commemorating a Great Friend of Georgian Bay

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- ❖ GBA launched the Vision 2050 Fund in memory of Wally King to fund our work program.
- ❖ Wally King inspired countless people to take action and support efforts to protect the Bay.
  - He was a driving force behind making GBA a strong and influential voice
  - Played a key role in creation of the Township of the Archipelago
  - Founding Chair of Georgian Bay Land Trust
  - Past president of Sans Souci & Copperhead Association



A serene sunset scene over a body of water. The sun is a bright, glowing orb in the upper center, casting a long, shimmering reflection on the water's surface. In the middle ground, a person and a dog are silhouetted against the sun, sitting on a rocky shore. The background features a line of trees and a misty horizon. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Questions?

Don't let the sun set on your dreams for  
protecting the Bay for future generations.