

Species at Risk Habitat Availability Project

Guiding Principles

Whereas the bounty and beauty of the Thousand Islands and Frontenac Arch region have nurtured the body and spirit for over 8000 years and have been a legacy from our ancestors, it is our obligation to our descendants and to the land to be respectful and responsible stewards.

The landscape supports numerous communities of interests and the challenge is to provide for people's needs and demands while at the same time ensuring the core ecological values that support a high quality of life are sustained. This project will focus on the identification of critical habitat and connecting corridors for species under stress from human activity. It will become a foundation for:

- Cooperation between governments and communities.
- Supporting informed land use decisions.
- Research to further our understanding of on the ecosystem.
- Programs to inform and involve people in stewardship programs.
- A basis for promoting the recovery and protection of species

There is a direct association with the broader objective to sustain the regions bio-diversity and healthy ecosystems.

The design and management of the project must therefore reflect awareness of the potential interests and concerns of regional citizens as well as the ecological challenges. The project will be conducted with the best scientific methodologies at hand and the potential social and economic implications will be integrated into a project communications strategy. The following guiding and operating principles reflect the values, beliefs and commitments of the people and participating organizations involved or supporting this project.

Guiding Principles

- **"Integration** - Individual landowners, federal, provincial and local governments together have the capacity and need to manage for stable and healthy ecosystems. The integration of capabilities, resources, expertise and commitments of governments, First Nations, research institutions and individuals to common objectives is necessary. Inter-jurisdictional cooperation and support are pre-requisites to a sustainable future
- **Knowledge** - The project is about understanding the ecosystem. Knowledge acquired and shared are cornerstones to cooperation, understanding, effective planning and decision making. Partners, government agencies, non-government agencies and individuals will have input to the development of the project and access to the results of the project for development of their own programs, services and actions which will generate further research, public awareness, cooperation and stewardship development of their own programs.

- **Collaboration** - Support and involvement of the community and the development of partnerships give value to the project and are therefore essential if the project is to contribute to the longer - term well-being of the region. The development of the project and delivery of results will be conducted in an inclusive and transparent fashion.
- **Linkages** - The quality of life of regional residents and the prosperity of the economy are directly linked to the sustained health of the ecosystems in which we as a species live. The ecological conditions that support the region's bio-diversity also support clean water, clean air, fertile soils, recreational activities, agriculture as well as spiritual and cultural values and pursuits. The project will link our quality of life and economic implications to the conservation and protection of species, habitats and the conditions promoting ecosystem health.
- **Respect** - Everyone has an interest in healthy ecosystems. In this region, the vast majority of lands are under private ownership and the rights of landholders will be respected. Many landowners and most particularly, members of the farming community, well appreciate the benefits to managing land and resources in sustainable ways. This project will be conducted with an awareness and respect for the rights of private landowners and opportunities for involvement will be maximized.

Conclusion: This project presents a significant commitment for investments in time, expertise and money. The knowledge gained, the partnerships created and public awareness and involvement generated will overcome many difficulties and misunderstandings. This project should be regarded as a start to a sustained collaborative commitment to working together for healthier ecosystems, economic prosperity and mutual understanding.