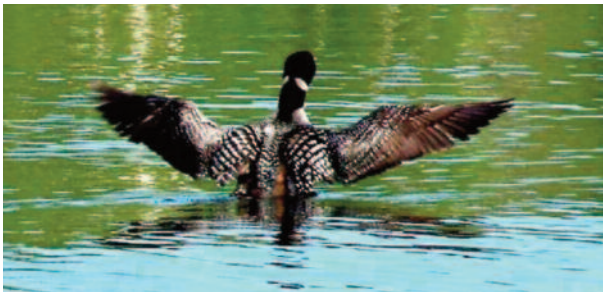
Baptiste Lake Plan

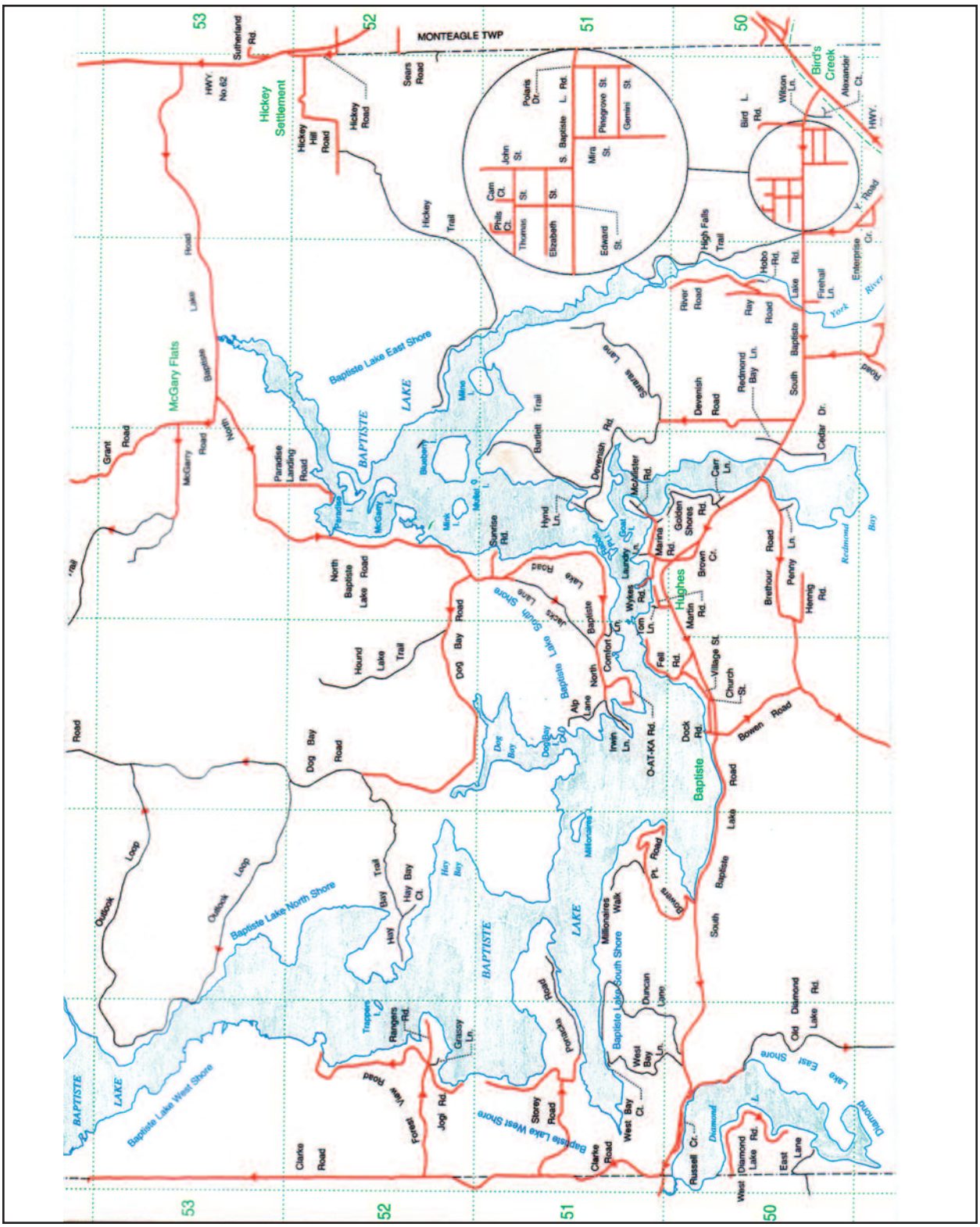


Prepared and published by the

Baptiste Lake Planning Committee

Fall 2009

Baptiste Lake



Contents

Acknowledgements

The development of a lake plan is a big job that could not have been done without a great deal of help.

The Baptiste Lake Association initiated this project in July 2005. The Municipality of Hastings Highlands supported the project from the beginning, and has provided valuable information and advice throughout.

The interest and support of the Baptiste Lake community was vital. Many individuals and businesses contributed time and money in support of the project (see Appendix A).

Birch Cliff Lodge was our "home away from home" throughout the process, and a welcoming location for committee and stakeholder meetings.

Michael Moxam, an architect and a Baptiste Lake cottage owner, prepared a comprehensive Architectural Survey of the lake.

The Ministry of Natural Resources opened up their files and provided vital data and advice, and the Ministry of Environment undertook a detailed study of the Baptiste Lake watershed in 2006 in support of this lake plan.

The County of Hastings allowed access to many files and planning documents, and provided useful advice.

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters monitored the lake for invasive species and provided annual reports.

Our consultants, French Planning Services Inc., were committed and enthusiastic partners throughout the entire process.

All Baptiste Lake Plan Committee members made huge commitments and contributions. Their names are listed in Appendix B.

Many hands make light work, and to all the lake plan contributors, thank you for your help and support.

Menna Weese
Chair, Baptiste Lake Plan Committee

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Baptiste Lake Association, it is my pleasure to congratulate Menna Weese and the Baptiste Lake Plan Committee on the completion of its work on the Lake Plan. Thanks to all those who have contributed in large or small ways to the process.

The undertaking to produce a Lake Plan was truly a work of great commitment by so many. Their energy and determination has produced an impressive document that truly reflects the aspirations of our community for the preservation and protection of our wonderful Baptiste Lake.

It took five years of hard work, but the pay-off is a Lake Plan that we can all be proud of, and that will set us on the right course as we work towards implementation of its many recommendations. We invite and encourage our Baptiste Lake community to get involved and be part of this great work.

Congratulations to all who contributed.

Diana Gurley
President, Baptiste Lake Association

Part 1: Our Lake, Our Future

MILL AT HUGHES SIDING
(WHERE MARINA IS NOW)

SAM BAPTISTE

1.1 Introduction

Why a Lake Plan?

The area surrounding Baptiste Lake has seen many changes over the years – among them easier highway access, greater property development, and increased demands for recreational opportunities. These changes – and more to come – pose challenges to the special character of the lake, and lake residents and visitors are rightly concerned about the future of the lake.

In 2005, the all-volunteer Baptiste Lake Association (BLA) initiated a planning process to address these challenges because its members care for Baptiste Lake and are concerned about its future. The Municipality of Hastings Highlands unanimously supported the idea of a Lake Plan for Baptiste Lake that year, as did the BLA at its annual general meeting. (A Lake Plan encourages community stakeholders to be responsible stewards of the lake, and to personally contribute to its well-being and preservation.)

A committee of lake residents and business owners was formed in 2005 to steer the development of the Lake Plan. Their work, which relied heavily on consultations with the community, began with members of the Baptiste Lake community identifying their shared values and qualities – their "vision" of the lake – that makes the lake special. The Lake Plan committee then identified the risks or threats to this vision of Baptiste Lake and crafted recommendations for actions that would mitigate these risks and protect and enhance the stakeholders' collective vision of the lake. Finally, we gave some consideration as to how the Lake Plan should be implemented. The results of these efforts are set out in the chapters that follow this introduction.

What is a Lake Plan?

A Lake Plan is an action plan to conserve, protect and enhance the features that make Baptiste Lake special. The purposes of a Lake Plan are to:

- Identify and protect lake values
- Promote community discussion and action
- Educate and communicate
- Establish environmental and social objectives
- Set measurable indicators of health
- Recommend land use policy
- Guide stewardship actions

These goals are achieved through a mix of community stewardship, government policy initiates and land use planning. This involves regulatory bodies – governments – clarifying, harmonizing and modifying existing policies and practices, as well as education and promotion of best practices for all stakeholders. The Baptiste Lake Plan is a long range, living document that will continue to evolve as circumstances and issues change.

The scope of the Baptiste Lake Plan is focused on the lake's watershed, which includes the lake proper from the York River inflow from Elephant Lake to High Falls Dam, and all the inflowing streams and rivers to the lake and their headwaters and groundwater sources.

How we created the Lake Plan

It was important to begin by gathering scientific information about the lake, in order to determine its health. In 2005, the Lake Plan committee commissioned a series of studies to accomplish this task.

- Natural Heritage Inventory (water quality, streams, wetlands, vegetation, fish and wildlife, invasive species and species at risk)
- Physical Elements Study (water regulation and use, soil and bedrock, floodplains, minerals and aggregates, narrow water bodies, natural vistas and forestry).
- Land Use Study (current land use, Crown land use regulations and municipal land use policy)
- Architectural Survey of Baptiste Lake (natural architecture, development density, impact on shoreline)

Input from the Baptiste Lake community – cottagers, permanent residents, businesses, anglers, governments, and others – was vital in building the Lake Plan, since a successful Lake Plan is a living document that reflects the vision of the community. To that end, the committee commissioned a survey of *all* Baptiste Lake residents – shoreline, village and rural – in May 2006, and posted the results on the Baptiste Lake Association website www.baptiste-lake.org. Of 670 surveys sent out, nearly 40 per cent were returned, an exceptionally high response rate by survey standards.

The committee also held two successful stakeholder workshops in the summer of 2006 – one in August for lake residents and one in September for commercial operators and governments.

Completing a lake planning process is both time-consuming and costly. Initial funding for the Baptiste Lake Plan was obtained through a highly successful Lake Plan fund-raising dinner and auction – the BLA GALA – held at Birch Cliff Lodge in August 2006. Additional funding was provided through the kind donations of cash and donations "in kind" from a broad array of people and businesses within the Baptiste Lake community.

In the summer of 2007, we held another stakeholder meeting to report on the results of these scientific studies, the community survey, and the stakeholder workshops. Over the subsequent fall and spring, this information was used to draft recommendations for the Lake Plan – an action plan – that we presented to yet another stakeholder meeting during the summer of 2008.

In the months that followed, the committee finished the report, including finalizing the history and community values sections and drafting additional recommendations. A final stakeholder meeting in August 2009 was held to review the additional recommendations. In the fall of 2009, this final report was published.

Now, the lake plan moves into the implementation phase, which will require significant participation and support from the municipal council and from all members of the lake community.

1.2

A Vision for Baptiste Lake

The collective vision for Baptiste Lake is to protect, preserve and enhance – for future generations – the qualities that make the lake special to us: the natural beauty, the tranquility, the pristine waters, the natural ecosystems, the recreational opportunities, and the vibrant community that surrounds it.

The vision can take many forms:

- Watching a loon hunting for fish on the dock in the early morning mist
- Sailing the main channel during a strong west wind
- Lying on the dock in the still of the night watching the Milky Way swim through the night sky
- Reading a good book during a rainy day in a warm cabin or sunroom
- Teaching your children or grandchildren how to swim, paddle a canoe, or identify animals and plants
- Catching a 40″ inch muskie where a shelf drops into the main basin
- Cross-country skiing on the forest access roads or across the lake during sunny winter days

These are the qualities that residents of Baptiste Lake identified in the survey that was conducted in the summer of 2006.

Threats to this vision were also identified at that time by lake residents. These threats can also take many forms:

- Water pollution from septic systems, garbage, and boats, and the removal of the vegetative shoreline buffer, which degrade the water quality of the lake
- Fluctuating water levels and the potential of hydroelectric development, which may increase shoreline erosion and ice damage, as well as damage the scenic beauty and fish habitat
- Nightime noise and light pollution, which deplete the peace and tranquility of the lake and the beauty of the night sky
- High-speed personal watercraft and increased boat traffic, which endanger safe swimming and boating, as well as increase daytime noise, water pollution and shoreline erosion
- Large-scale development, lot severances and back lot development, which diminish the natural beauty of the lake and further stress the carrying capacity of the lake

This is the collective vision for Baptiste Lake. Before moving to our Lake Plan to address these matters, it is useful to place this discussion in historical perspective.

1.3
The Historical Context

Baptiste Lake is located in the granite highlands south of Algonquin Provincial Park. The lake gets its name from Algonquin Chief Jean Baptiste, believed to be the first permanent resident.

Baptiste Lake and its surroundings are situated within the Grenville Province of the Canadian Shield, which is a northeasterly trending belt about 250 miles wide (from upper New York State to just south of Sudbury) and 1,200 miles long, extending from Lake Huron to the Labrador coast. A continental collision deformed the crust of the earth about a billion years ago, pushing up a mountain range along a line running roughly through Parry Sound, Haliburton, Bancroft, Pembroke and on to the Gatineau Hills of Quebec. This mountain chain, once as high as the Rocky Mountains, has been reduced by erosion to what are today the highlands around Baptiste Lake.

Aboriginal Peoples

It is documented that the Mississauga Nation of the area entered into a provisional treaty in 1819, in Kingston, with John Ferguson, on behalf of the Crown, through which they "freely and voluntarily surrendered" their lands to the Crown for an annual payment of 642 pounds and ten shillings, in perpetuity. A confirmatory treaty was signed in 1822. The Chippewa Nation entered a similar provisional treaty in 1818 for a yearly sum of 1,200 pounds, which was confirmed in 1832.

Presently, some land claims in the area remain outstanding, particularly those of the Golden Lake Algonquin. Some of the first known Aboriginal families to live on Baptiste Lake were the Bernards, LaVallees and Baptistes.

Exploration

Early European explorers of the area include Lieutenant Walpole, who in 1827 was sent to map a canoe route from Lake Simcoe through Baptiste Lake, the York and the Madawaska Rivers. The first survey of the region was completed in the summer of 1853, mainly for the construction of the Hastings Road. In August 1857, John Snow was instructed to survey a road from the Mississippi River in the Township of North Sherbrooke in Lanark County to the Hastings Road at what is now Bancroft. It is known in Bancroft as the Snow Road.

In 1864, land surveyor A.B. Perry was sent to scout the lake area for potential resources and habitation. He reported the land quite unsuitable for habitation, but noted the enormous stands of white and red pine. After traveling the 25-mile stretch of waterway, he named the current Baptiste Lake as "Long Lake". His report reached the Bronson and Weston Company, which led to industrial logging in the area.

Logging and Lumbering

The first logging camps of the 1800s had one large windowless building called a camboose that housed about 50 men. It was made of pine logs, with a floor of flattened poles and a chimney of black spruce poles. Over time, the camps grew larger, with more buildings able to house up to 125 men that were separate from the cookhouse and blacksmith shop with stable. A 40-foot pointer boat, designed by John Cockburn in the 1850s, could carry 8,500 pounds of groceries to feed 80 men. Larger camps had four cooks, labourers, teamsters to drive the horses,

timekeepers and a doctor, for which each man paid 50 cents a month.

Logging took place only during the winter. Logs were skidded by horse onto thousands of frozen lakes, including Baptiste Lake, and then piled to await spring. After the spring thaw, each lake harboured log booms ready for river driving. Dams were built by lumbermen to hold waters up to their highest levels, and once they were open, at the lake head, water flowed through the system to carry the timber to the mill.

Alligator boat, 1930

Later, Alligator boats (small side-wheelers) hauled booms of up to 60,000 logs, and could crawl across bogs from one lake to another. They were flat-bottomed scows, and they carried about a mile of cable on board, which they used to pull themselves over land by winding up a cable anchored to a point some distance away. A steam side-wheeler, the *Beaver*, was on Baptiste Lake since at least 1917, when Sam Baptiste was the captain. When Martin acquired the vessel in 1930, he replaced the steam engine with a more efficient diesel engine from a bulldozer and the vessel was renamed the *Alligator*, which continued to ply the waters of Baptiste Lake until the 1950s. It trailed a span of logs 15' wide by 1,000' long, and made its daylong trip from the upper region of the lake to the mill site, at what is now the Baptiste Lake Marina. High-speed boats and issues of liability with large log booms led to the retirement of the *Alligator* and the closing of the Martin Mill.

In 1864, the Bronson and Weston Company of Ottawa launched a major logging operation in the upper region of Baptiste Lake. A second Ottawa firm, Wm. Mason & Sons, began a lumbering operation in 1887. Many of the early settlers worked in logging camps during the winter, from the first snow to the spring thaw, to add to their meager income from questionable farmland.

When the Bronson & Weston Company first began logging at Baptiste Lake, it operated from the headwaters near the entrance to Algonquin Park. In order to be able to drive logs down the river, the company built the first dam at the lower end of the lake in 1866, approximately one kilometer above where High Falls dam is today. The rising water connected the upper and lower basins of the lake, creating islands where none before existed, and making the log drive easier. This also had the effect of increasing flooding in Bancroft, and in 1932 a second dam, built of cement by Ontario Hydro (and still visible near the current dam), replaced the old wooden structure. Flooding persisted, and in 1967 the current High Falls dam was built, which has solved the flooding problems, for the most part.

Old High Falls logging dam

When the Irondale, Bancroft and Ottawa Railway (IB&O) Railway reached Baptiste Station, sawmills opened on Baptiste Lake, such as the William Hughes Mill on the lower basin of the lake, which became the Jennings and King Mill in 1914. Ownership of the mill changed to Jennings & Bailey, and in 1921 Whitney Martin joined the firm. Bailey bought out Jennings, and when Bailey moved to start a mill in Haliburton, Martin and his brother Garfield

purchased the company, forming Martin Brothers Lumber Company. In 1930, they purchased the Hughes Mill and operated two mills on Baptiste Lake employing up to 200 people. One mill was on the site of the current Baptiste Lake Marina.

When his son Grenville bought the upper mill in 1957, Whitney dismantled the lower mill, and created major cottage developments on new roads named Marina Road, McAllister Island, and Golden Shores. Under the direction of Grenville Martin, the Harcourt operation expanded, and G.W. Martin Company grew to become the largest producer of hardwood in Canada. At its peak, with annual revenues of $100 million, the company employed 1,300 people. The company closed following the death of Grenville Martin, who perished in a private airplane accident in 1984.

Settlement

The earliest settlers to Hasting County were United Empire Loyalists who were allied with the British during the American Revolution, but few of them ventured as far north as Baptiste Lake. It was not until the 1840s and 1850s that waves of immigrants, many of them escaping the Irish potato famine, chose to live in the newly surveyed townships in northern Hastings County. Names such as Wicklow and McClure attest to the region's Irish heritage.

Prompted by government advertisements of prosperity and rural serenity, posted in Britain and Canadian cities, and offers of free land (100 acres, offered under the terms of *The Free Grant and Homestead Act, 1868*), settlers pushed their way north. Under the terms of the legislation, settlers had to be 18 years of age, build a log house of 20' by 18' within four years, and have at least 12 acres under cultivation within four years. Roofs were made of bark and log walls were filled in with clay and whitewashed. Colonization roads, such as the Peterson Road, were built and opened areas for settlement. On December 8, 1870, "more than 100 Freeholders and Resident Householders" petitioned the County of Hastings for the right to amalgamate, and five communities were consolidated into one Municipal Corporation.

The first permanent resident on Baptiste Lake is believed to be Chief John Baptiste, who moved from the Lake of Two Mountains near Montreal in the mid 1800s. He received the first land grant, believed to be in the area of Lavallee Bay, and as such the lake was renamed Baptiste Lake from Long Lake. His son, John Baptiste, also received a land grant and settled midway on the channel on the north shore of the main basin. One of John's daughters, Mary, married Frank Lavalley and then built a home in the area that was then known as Lavalley Bay.

William Mulcahey, an Irishman, is believed to be the first non-Aboriginal resident on the lake. In the late 1800s, on the brow of a hill on the south shore of Baptiste Lake, he cleared land for farming. Further to the east, he built a large and elegant home, which now continues as the main lodge of Birch Cliff Lodge. The IB&O Railway reached the south shore of Baptiste Lake and his property in 1900, and by 1904 the first "tourists" were coming to Baptiste Lake. Five of those initial tourists banded together and purchased the first cottage lots. Mulcahey built a general store shortly thereafter on the hill overlooking Baptiste Station below. He provided a dining room for loggers, trainmen and travelers passing

Grant's Store, 1934

through, in addition to boarding rooms located above the store and boxcar cabins located nearby for overflow guests. Later, he sold the store to Hiram and Elizabeth Grant, who with their daughter Mabel ran the store and post office for many years before they sold it in turn to Bruce Montgomery in 1984. Under new ownership in 2001 by George and Susan Poulton, the old store was demolished and a new, railway-themed facility established (Country Fare Inn), with a general store, a restaurant, and guest rooms.

By 1911, with a store, a school at the top of Station Hill, a church on Bowen Road, and new settlers arriving, Mulcahey's vision of a village on Baptiste Lake was fulfilled (It should be noted that the church was moved, board by board, from its place on the hill and rebuilt on its present location on land donated by Mrs. Hiram

United Church in its original location

[Elizabeth] Grant). Mulcahey decided to open up cottage lots and extend the road to the east of his house. The new development became Fell Road. The first person to build a cottage was John Payne. He and his wife Gertrude established Edenswold, a business providing dining, boarding and cottaging. It later became Buckingham Lodge, Baptiste Chalet and Lydia's Bistro.

Railway

The Central Ontario Railway (COR) was built mainly to access mining resources in North Hastings in the 1880s. The railway, initially called the Prince Edward County Railway, began in Picton in 1879, following the Trent River. From the south, the COR threaded its way north from Prince Edward County to Bancroft and north to Maynooth, Lake St. Peter and Wallace. The line was approved for passenger use in 1884, but did not reach Bancroft until 1900.

The IB&O at the Baptiste Station

The Irondale, Bancroft and Ottawa Railway (IBO) started about 1880 near Kinmount. Owner W.S. Myles built 6.5 miles of track made of wood rather than steel to reach his mines. The railway soon went bankrupt, and was purchased by Charles Pusey and Henry Howland, who rebuilt it to serve their mine at Irondale. By 1896 the railway went as far as Mud Creek (the current causeway) on Baptiste Lake. Top speed on the rickety IB&O was 10 to 15 miles an hour, and travel on the COR wasn't much faster. The IB&O could never handle heavy loads: its grades were too steep, its rails too light, and its curves too tight. In places like Baptiste Lake, trains had to be hauled over hills in sections. The grade from Baptiste village to Highland Grove, along the shore of the lake, is the steepest and longest grade in Canada east of the Rockies. The railway carried the mail until the 1950s.

When highways 62 and 28 were built, the railways were doomed. The IB&O closed in 1960, and the COR in 1966. The IB&O railway bed can still be seen by driving along the south shore of Baptiste Lake. The COR right-of-way has become the Hastings Heritage Trail, which can be seen from Highway 62 in places.

Artists

At least three famous Canadian painters have produced works at Baptiste Lake, which is a testament to the enduring beauty of the landscape. In 1947, David Milne came to Baptiste Lake and painted many scenes, some of which hang in the National Gallery. His cabin, opposite Blueberry Island, has been preserved by his son, David Milne Jr. For three years in the 1950s, A.J. Casson, one of the Group of Seven artists, stayed at The Chateau, a resort next to Grant's Store, where he painted "The Blue Heron", "Backwater" and "Bay on Lake Baptiste". A drawing titled "Lake Baptiste" is also known. A.Y. Jackson, another member of the Group of Seven, also sketched on Baptiste Lake.

Tourism

Tourism on Baptiste Lake began in earnest in the 1930s, and many lodges and camps flourished on the lake for many years. Only a few examples are cited here.

In April 1931, Art Nicoll purchased the site of the current Birch Cliff Lodge from William Mulcahey for $2,000. He and his wife Edythe opened for the 1931 summer season, and by 1932 most of the present Birch Cliff cottages had been built. The

Birch Cliff Lodge

main lodge, the original Mulcahey home built around 1917, contained the dining room and kitchen, and later an office, store and lounge. Most early guests came from Ohio, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Birch Cliff Lodge was a full service American Plan fishing lodge, with cottage names such as Bide-a-Wee, Linger Long, Restin Up, and Dunworryn. A large fleet of flat-bottomed wooden boats, painted white with green trim and powered by five horsepower motors, took guests and their guides fishing. In the 1930s and 1940s, fishing lodges such as these provided employment for a large number of guides, supplying much-needed income for year-round residents. Chief Jean, son Sam and grandson Jack Baptiste were prominent fishing and hunting guides during this period. Since David Milne purchased the resort in 1983, it has been remodeled and upgraded to a four-star level, so that Birch Cliff Lodge

Sam Baptiste with fishermen

continues to be one of the most attractive and historically representative cottage resorts in Ontario.

Rangers Lodge also began in 1931. On July 15 of that year, the Wigwassin Post of the Rangers was founded by the first five boys who had been guests that summer. The Post Lodge, completed in June 1932, was constructed of white pine logs. It was 60' by 60', including a 20' verandah that ran the length of the building. Of the 15 rooms, 10 were allotted to the boys, sleeping four to a room with two double bunk beds, or "lumberjack style", as they called it. Applications were limited to 40 in order to ensure that each boy received sufficient attention and instruction.

The Post was organized on a quasi-military style, and was advertised as a "summer camp in the Canadian North for America's finest boys". It was operated under the Command and Direction of Glenn R. Snodgrass, who graduated from the University of Illinois in 1923 and was Director of Physical Training at a large high school in the Philadelphia suburbs. The Post Physician was Dr. W. Vance and the Quartermaster was C.C. Basnett, an expert camper, woodsman and sportsman, who also looked after supplies and accounting. Both were from West Virginia. Besides learning outdoor skills, the boys had access to a photo dark room, a laboratory, a taxidermy shop, and woodworking equipment. Boys were taught the proper use and handling of a rifle.

Parents could send their boys by train to Rochester, New York, where the Post Commander personally took charge of their trip. They boarded a steamer, the "Montreal", at Genesee, New York in the morning and arrived in Coburg, Ontario in the afternoon, and completed the trip by train to Baptiste Station. The Rangers were encouraged to purchase a uniform sold at a cost of $25, consisting of a powder-blue, double-breasted tunic, light buff riding breeches with scarlet braid on the outside seam, black leather puttees, white felt hat patterned after the Northwest Mounted Police, and a scarlet Sam Browne belt. Rangers also had to bring their own blankets, pillows, raincoat, towels, athletic equipment, a 22-calibre, single-shot rifle of good quality, any musical instrument, and a Testament or Bible.

Rangers Lodge was subsequently used as a wilderness "get away" for wealthy Americans, and the final owner was Ron Schnurpel, who operated the lodge from 1958 until 1996, when he closed the lodge after subdividing the property in 1979.

Herschel Island is a 14-acre island located in the main basin of Baptiste Lake, and is accessible by a 1.5 mile boat ride

Rangers Lodge, 1960s

from Birch Cliff Lodge. In the early 1930s, the island was purchased by Niagara Light and Power of Niagara Falls, New York for use by its executives as a private fishing club. Guests sometimes arrived by private railcar, and the island became known locally as 'Millionaires' Island.' The Herschel Island Fishing Club accommodated 18 guests. It had a main lounge room with stone fireplace, a dining room, a bar, a kitchen and dining room, and a sunroom. A passenger boat and a luggage scow would take guests to the island, and a tiny electric railroad would take them and their bags from the main dock to the main lodge (these are still visible today on the south shore of the island). The island currently belongs to Birch Cliff Lodge owner David Milne, who has refurbished the facilities to their previous glory.

Camp Ponacka was initially founded in 1932 by a Pennsylvania high-school teacher named Lester Bergey, who ran it as a boys camp until 1939, thereafter using it as cottage retreat for his family and friends. In the fall of 1946, Bruno Morawetz – a 29-year-old, second-year philosophy student at the University of Western Ontario in London – purchased the stretch of shoreline with three buildings for $4,500. In July 1947, the camp's first 12 boys (mostly from London) arrived in Baptiste Village by train and traveled over to the camp by boat. In the early days, the camp's facilities were rustic; milk and other perishables were kept in an icehouse (now the camp's Lapidary Hut). In 1958, a road was opened to the camp,

Camp Ponacka

and electricity arrived shortly after. After 35 years, Bruno and his wife Gwen finally relented and brought telephone service into the camp. Canoe trips into Algonquin Park began in 1949, while horseback riding was added to the program in 1960. The construction of a new dining hall in 1964 enabled Ponacka to significantly expand its enrollment. In 1985, Bruno and Gwen welcomed their daughter, Anne Morawetz and her husband Don Bocking, who assisted them in running Camp Ponacka, and eventually purchased the camp over time. New programs and activities were added. Ponacka's adventure programs enable boys to go hiking in the Adirondacks in upper New York State, enjoy biking trips to the Haliburton Forest Reserve, and white water paddling on the nearby Madawaska River. Today, Camp Ponacka is one of Ontario's most respected summer camps for boys, with an enrollment of 155 boys from the ages of eight to 15.

SOURCES

Published

A.F. Burns, *Bancroft and District: Old Home Week, 1961*. Reprint. Kingston: Lake Ontario Regional Library System, 1976.

Canada, *Indian Treaties and Surrenders* (Volume I, Treaties 1 – 138) (originally published in 1891). Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1992.

Dan Currie (ed.), *Ponacka: The First Fifty Years*. Peterborough: Camp Ponacka Inc., 1996.

Lorraine Fell, "The Legend of Sam Baptiste", *The Bancroft Times*, August 13, 1996.

Orland and Sylvia French (eds.), *Bancroft – North of 7 … and Proud of It*. Bancroft: The Bancroft Heritage Book Committee, 2003.

Unpublished

"Artists of Baptiste Lake", typescript, no author, no date.

Peter Brown, "Finding Patty Cox", *Baptiste Lake Association Newsletter*, July 2000.

Chris Chhatwal (nee Irwin), "The Irwin Family … Baptiste Lake", typescript, no date.

Lorraine Fell, "History of Baptiste Lake", typescript, 2008.

"Herschel Island", typescript, no author, no date.

Joseph Kryanowski, "Rangers Lodge", typescript, no date.

David Milne, "A Short History of Birch Cliff Lodge", *Baptiste Lake Association Newsletter*, 2003

Part 2:
Lake Plan Content

2.1 Lake Ecosystem

2.1.1. Watershed

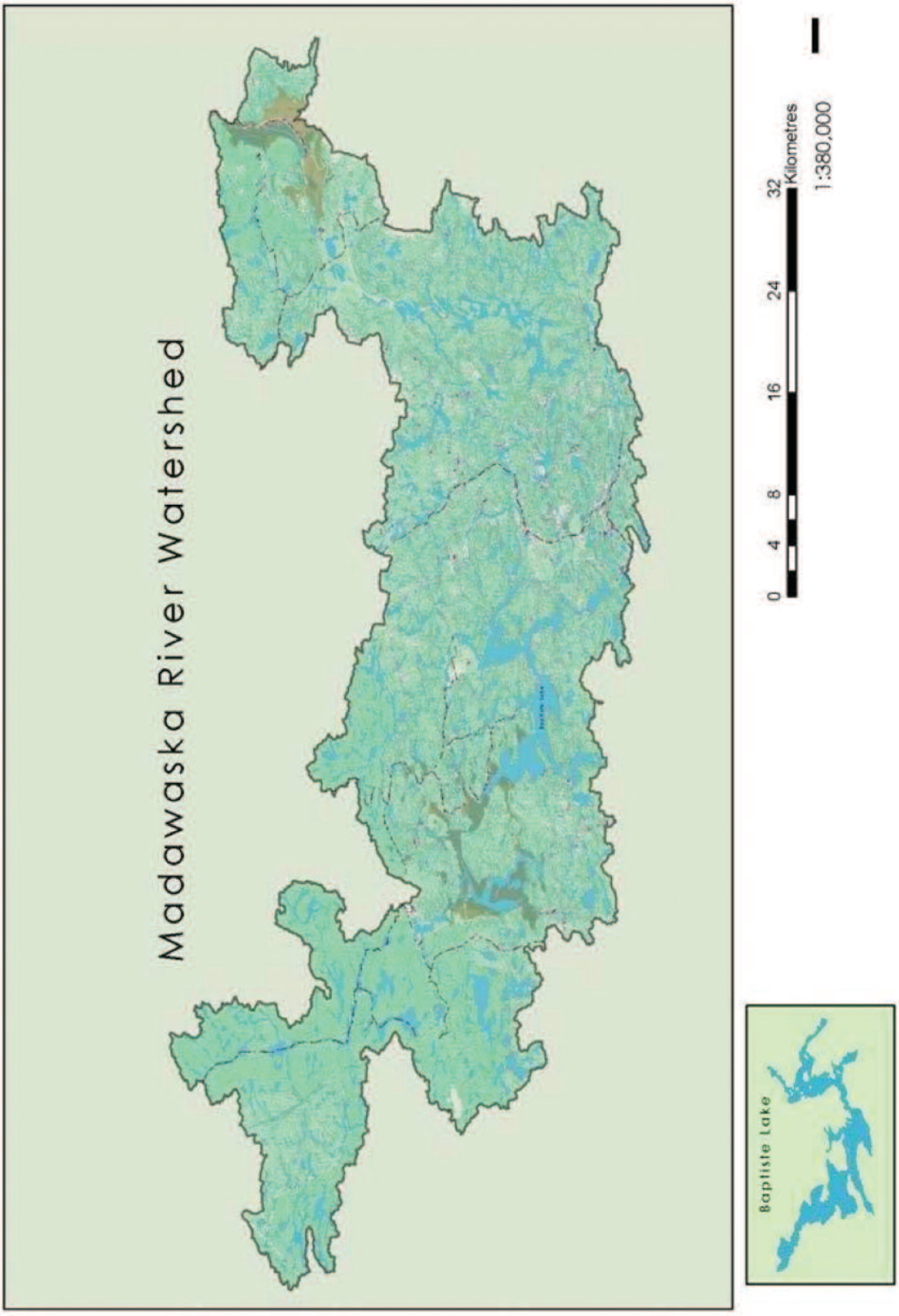
Baptiste Lake is a headwater reservoir lake in a chain of lakes connecting the York River, which originates in Algonquin Park, to the Madawaska River downstream. Baptiste Lake is a sub-watershed of the Madawaska River Drainage System *(see Figure 1)* and lies within the ecological site-district 5E-9 – a physiographic region of the Algonquin Dome (Highlands) characterized by a rolling topography.

The lake's watershed is characterized by protruding Precambrian bedrock, shallow glacial till cover, bare rocky outcrops and ridges of varying elevations, and the riverine influences of the York River. Many of the lowland areas (wetlands, ponds and streams) are floored with outwash sand flats and gravel hills, and the soils are generally stony, sandy, acidic and shallow.

The watershed has extensive forest cover dominated by tolerant hardwood shorelines and mixed upland tree communities containing a number of boreal influences; permanent and intermittent wetlands and streams; and other large and small neighbouring freshwater lakes and ponds.

There are also a few islands on Baptiste Lake, such as Blueberry and Herschel islands, with relatively undisturbed and distinctly unique woodland habitats.

Figure 1: Madawaska River Watershed



2.1.2. Natural Heritage

Lake Character

Baptiste Lake *(see Figure 2)* has an irregular shaped basin, including several distinctly different sections or bays. Many of the bays, which appear extensive on maps or aerial photographs, are merely drowned land with less than 3 feet of water depth (MNR Lake Files, 2007). In 1932, a Public Works dam was built at the effluence of the York River from Baptiste Lake that flooded surrounding land on Baptiste and Elephant lakes.

Baptiste Lake Physical Characteristics

- Surface Area = 2,125 ha
- Mean Depth in Shallow Bays = 5.3 m
- Maximum Depth in Main Basin = 31.4 m
- Shoreline Length = 62 km
- York River from Benoir Lake to Baptiste Dam = 29 km

Several bays are speckled with drowned and partly eroded trees and other vegetation that were not cutover prior to the elevation of the water. These flooded lands have created areas of shallow water thick with aquatic vegetative growth and organic sediments. The flooded land created important warm-water fish habitat but has negatively impacted cold-water fish habitat (MNR Lake Files, 2007). In 1988, revised dam operating plans were initiated to reduce levels in the fall, before lake trout spawning to protect eggs, and indirectly protect hibernating reptiles.

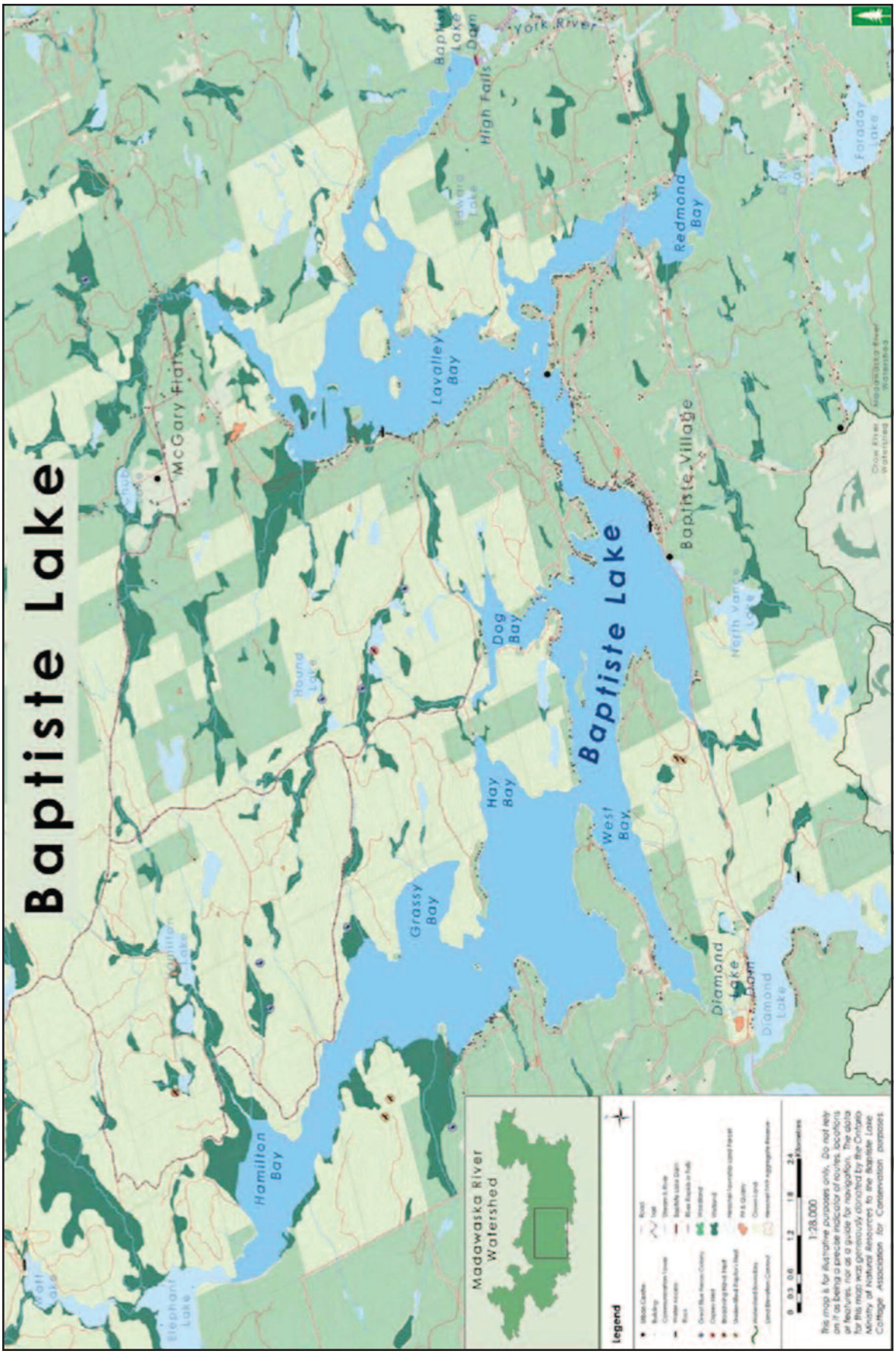
A large proportion of the shoreline and upland areas is designated Crown land, including areas around Hamilton, Grassy, Dog and Lavalley Bays, and remains undisturbed and naturally vegetated. These shoreline areas incorporate a mix of rocky and sandy-soiled shores and beaches, wetland vegetation, permanent and intermittent stream corridors, steep rock ridges, and forested landscapes. The remaining shoreline areas are privately owned, many of which have been largely cleared of natural vegetation and/or altered with grassy lawns and hardened shorelines.

Water quality, scenery, natural shorelines, wildlife, fish and recreational activities were identified by residents in the 2006 survey as very important to the quality of life on Baptiste Lake. It is evident that human activities and their associated impacts are altering natural habitats and the ecological integrity of the landscape. Many residents stated that waterfront property should retain natural vegetation along the shoreline and that Crown land should remain in public ownership to conserve the natural character and beauty of the area.

Understanding our Natural Heritage

Our watershed is very rich in natural heritage. Large, intact, forested habitats and natural area corridors exist within the Bancroft District area, particularly within the townships abutting the Algonquin Provincial

Figure 2: Baptiste Lake Physical Environment



Park boundary. Many provincially or locally rare mammals inhabit these areas (see details later in this chapter).

Baptiste Lake's sub-watershed is composed of a matrix of mixed and coniferous forests, deciduous forests, open woodlands, grassland, rock land, rock cliffs, treed and aquatic wetlands, beaches and lawns, and hardened shorelines. The lake is predominantly shallow and defined by a riverine system, except for deeper water in the Main Basin and West, Dog and Lavalley Bays.

Historically, the watershed was covered with old-growth eastern white pine, eastern hemlock and yellow birch tree species. Intensive logging in the late 1800s and early 1900s removed these stands, replacing them with younger, mixed forests, dominated by white pine, yellow birch, red and sugar maple, oak, poplar and balsam fir tree species. All of the varied species of plants and animals and their habitats are considered to be part of the natural heritage. This biodiversity of plants and animals and their habitat is a valuable resource and a legacy left for future generations. Biodiversity provides land and water protection, recreational opportunities, and sustains our quality of life.

Natural Heritage Protection Policies of the Province, County, and Municipality

In the current County of Hastings Official Plan, dated 2002, the Environmental Protection designation includes lands that play an important role in the preservation of the County's natural heritage systems and that may be sensitive to proposed development. There is a requirement for a Lake Capacity Study and/or an Environmental Impact Assessment to be completed for all development or site alterations on lands within 300 metres of Baptiste Lake, which is a designated coldwater fishery.

Environmental Protection (EP) designation applies to sensitive water bodies and permanent watercourses including floodplains, erosion hazards, poor drainage, organic soils and other wetlands of regional or local significance. Provincial policy designates selected environmentally protected wetland areas as "Provincially Significant Wetlands" (PSW). A PSW designation prohibits the construction of buildings and structures on or adjacent to the PSW area, except for those used for conservation, flood or erosion control. The county official plan also requires that any development within 30 metres of critical fish habitat, as identified on the land use schedules, will require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to demonstrate no negative impacts.

There was no optimal lake trout habitat available at the time of the July 2006 sampling period, and there was no lake trout habitat (optimal or usable) available during the critical late summer period in Lavalley Bay. As a result, Baptiste Lake west of the former Herschel Township lots 16 and 17 (West Basin) is considered, according to a recent MOE Water Quality Report (2006), to be "at capacity." The official plan for the county states that "no new development shall be permitted within 300 meters of 'at capacity' lakes, except for the development of lots of record and in accordance with existing zoning".

In addition to the Provincial Policy Statement (2005) and the Official Plan and Zoning By-laws, there are other regula-

tions under provincial and federal legislation for the management and conservation of natural heritage.

These include:

- The Federal Fisheries Act and Species at Risk Act
- Ontario's Endangered Species Act
- Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act
- Crown Forest Sustainability Act
- Planning Act
- Public Lands Act
- Aggregate Act
- Environmental Protection Act

Recommendations – Natural Heritage

- The BLA should encourage lakefront owners to restore the shoreline areas back to a natural state wherever possible, and to protect and retain native vegetation, in order to reconstitute lost shoreline landscape. Municipal planning documents should continue to require the mandatory protection of shoreline buffer areas (15 meters depth for existing lots).
- Programs such as The Shoreline Advisor Program, Dock Talk and the Stewardship Council (which provide free advice, shrubs and trees) should be supported to educate, assist and encourage landowner stewardship, and to encourage the "naturalization" of degraded shorelines.
- The BLA should encourage the Municipality to develop a tree cutting or tree preservation forestry by-law to ensure that lots retain a percentage of their natural vegetation, and thereby reduce storm water runoff.

2.1.3. Soils and Bedrock

The Baptiste Lake Watershed is primarily composed of bedrock. There are a few areas with well-drained and infertile soils, which were the glacial meltwater spillways. The presence of crystalline limestone in the rock provides natural buffering from the effects of acid rain. Some of the soil types in this area may contain higher concentrations of iron, which is known to bind phosphorous and limit its migration to the lake.

While there are no active mining claims on Crown Lands within the sub-watershed of Baptiste Lake, there continue to be hundreds of active land dispositions for surface and mining rights on private lands.

Recommendations – Soils and Bedrock

- The BLA should encourage the County, Municipality, and Ministry of Natural Resources to amend their official plans and policies in order to prohibit the creation of new pits, quarries, or mining sites within the "viewscape" (site horizon) of Baptiste Lake, which would harm tourism and the quality of life of lake residents and visitors.

2.1.4. Water Quality and Quantity

Water Quality

Baptiste Lake was historically a small coldwater lake, most likely oligotrophic in nature. However, flooding by a series of dams modified the lake's basin by increasing its surface area, which created large basins with shallow water, drowned vegetation, warmer surface water, as well as land-use changes. These conditions have artificially aged and modified the lake towards the mesotrophic and eutrophic conditions that are observed today. The main body continues to be relatively deep and only moderately productive, as demonstrated by moderate concentrations of phosphorus and nitrogen. These concentrations elevate during late summer and may subject the shallow easterly and westerly bays to eutrophic conditions leading to algal blooms in late summer (MNR, 2004 and MNR Lake Files, 2007).

A water-quality report was provided by the Ministry of the Environment (*Water Quality Report*: Mark Phillips, February 2006) that concentrated on results from recent water-quality data collections conducted in 2000 and 2006. Sampling was conducted to monitor general water-quality parameters pertaining to nutrient enrichment and turbidity, as well as to specifically monitor the status of oxygen levels as it relates to lake trout population health.

All parameters, except for dissolved oxygen, met or were better than the Provincial Water Quality Objectives' standards, and were concurrent with results for lakes in the Algonquin-Haliburton region. The lake's water quality did not change substantially between 1997 and 2006, or from historical measurements dating back to the 1960s. Baptiste Lake appears to be generally quite clear except for a slight decrease in water clarity (as measured by Secchi depth) over the period of record (MOE, 2006).

Phosphorus and nitrogen levels in Baptiste Lake are at moderate concentrations that could allow for the formation of some nuisance algal populations mostly limited to the shallow bays. There is a significant increase in phosphorus concentrations for the August and September sampling period.

Based on the 2000 dissolved oxygen profiles, which show sharply reduced oxygen levels in late summer, **Baptiste Lake is considered to be highly sensitive to the loss of lake trout habitat and is therefore considered to be 'at capacity,' particularly surrounding the main basin and upstream, with regard to shoreline development. As a result, it was concluded that new or additional development would result in a net increase in phosphorus loading and should not be permitted.**

Data collection over time will provide the necessary information to identify trends in water quality and to identify which water quality parameters need to be addressed. The BLA has been collecting this type of information for over 30 years. Continued and expanded monitoring programs and activities aimed at assessing water quality, aquatic habitat and sensitive aquatic species are important so that we can continue to analyze the data and postulate trends with a view to water quality lake protection and enhancement.

Water Quantity

Water levels on Baptiste Lake have been altered by humans for the past 100 years for forestry and hydroelectricity generation purposes. In 1931–1933, a dam was built at the east end of the lake along the York River by the Ontario Department of Public Works and the Ontario Hydro Electric Power Commission. The purpose of the dam was to regulate flows at hydroelectric generating facilities on the Madawaska River system. The present dam is owned and operated by the MNR, which balances the needs of the Bancroft Public Utilities Commission, the Municipality of Hastings Highlands, the Town of Bancroft, the property owners of Baptiste, Elephant and Benoir Lakes and other stakeholders upstream and downstream, and is governed by a jointly developed 1988 operating manual managed by the MNR.

The current dam was constructed in 1967 in "order to provide a more stable structure which would be better at con-

trolling the release of water." The new dam increased the water level by one foot and increased the storage capacity to reduce the severity of the summer draw-down. There have been some proposals over the years to turn the existing dam into a hydroelectric generating facility. The provincial government has increased interest in this area through its "Standard Offer Program" and proposed "Green Energy Act" of 2009 for green energy development in Ontario.

Fluctuating water levels in Baptiste Lake may cause property damage and shoreline erosion during high water floods or diminish water quality due to stagnant water. These fluctuations can impact fall and spring fish spawning and egg incubation, as well as wildlife habitat during low water, while creating strong currents during high flows.

Recommendations – Water Quality and Quantity

- The BLA should encourage more volunteers to continue to collect water quality information through annual spot-checking, as well as initiate, with Ministry of Natural Resources staff, the monitoring of tributary streams, and continue to inform residents of the results (including trends over time) in an easily readable manner.
- The BLA should work to educate residents about shoreline preservation and stewardship, and about the shoreline threats to water quality, such as manicured lawns and paved driveways, which threaten water quality by increasing erosion and runoff, and the use of pesticides and herbicides, which degrade water quality.
- The BLA should continue to take an active and ongoing role in land-use policies at the municipal and county levels, from the waterfront to the watershed that feeds Baptiste Lake.
- The BLA should be involved in any proposal for a hydroelectric generating facility affecting Baptiste Lake, and ensure that the proponent conducts assessments and develops proactive strategies to demonstrate there will be no negative impact on lake levels and surrounding environments, including lake trout and their spawning activity.

2.1.5. Wetlands

Swamps, marshes, fens or bogs may occur along waterbodies or in lowland areas that have shallow ground water tables and are subjected to periodic flooding during spring (*see Figure 3.*)

Wetland ecosystems contribute considerable ecological, social and economical value to any watershed because of water-filtering and holding capabilities, including pollution control and detention of rain and runoff to prevent flooding and erosion. A variety of plants and animals as well as many rare and unique species reside in wetlands. When wetlands are drained or cleared for development, the habitats, the ecosystem functionality, and local biodiversity are altered or eliminated forever. Invasive species, climate change, air and water pollution, and water level manipulations will also impact wetlands.

There are many wetlands in Baptiste Lake, and their role in purifying water, sustaining fish and wildlife production, and providing protection against shoreline erosion is important, especially in shallow riverine systems. Therefore, the protection and conservation of these wetland and lowland areas is considered to be a priority.

Provincially Significant Wetlands

Baptiste Lake's watershed has one large identified 'Provincially Significant Wetland' (PSW): the Baptiste-Elephant Wetland Complex located at the inflow from Elephant Lake. It is designated as 'provincially significant' because of several significant natural

heritage features, including a large number of vegetative community types and habitats, valuable wood products, fish production, the presence of migratory bird breeding sites and species at risk, and its role in recreational activities such as nature appreciation, fishing and hunting.

This PSW is comprised of 59 individual wetlands, which range in size from 0.5 to 362.0 hectares. Sixty-six percent of the wetland complex area is classified as swamp and 29 per cent as marsh, three per cent as fen, and two percent as bog (oldest wetland type), which makes this complex quite biologically diverse (Biota Environmental Contractors, 1994). The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS – 2005) stipulates that development is not permitted in Provincially Significant Wetlands.

Unevaluated Wetlands

There are several smaller patches of wetlands distributed throughout Baptiste Lake's shorelines, including a large wetland in Lavalley Bay and several smaller ones in McGarry Creek and Redmond Bay (MNR wetland digital data, 2006 and Boat Survey, 2006).

The Provincially Significant Wetland evaluation system recognizes the critical role of wetlands in maintaining healthy ecosystems (MNR, 1994).

These wetlands and others adjacent to the lake's shorelines have not yet been evaluated for provincial significance, but are regarded as locally significant natural heritage features because of their contribution to water quality and biodiversity.

The main threat to the viability of these wetlands may be from increased shoreline development, water level fluctuations, or impending impacts from unprecedented climate changes. Conservation of these wetlands is important to the water quality and health of the Madawaska River watershed, including Baptiste Lake.

Recommendations – Wetlands

- A wetland evaluation should be initiated to inventory the wetlands around Baptiste Lake and to determine if these qualify as Provincially Significant Wetlands. Funding from government agencies should be sought for this purpose.
- Official plans and zoning by-laws should continue to identify the location and size of wetlands, and to provide appropriate policy to ensure their protection.

2.1.6. Streams

Streams are important features of any landscape and define the boundary of all watersheds by transporting water from atmospheric, surface and ground sources towards lowland areas, filling in lakes and wetlands. Streams interact with the valley in which they flow, connecting riparian areas, flood plains and other lakes, providing important water storage and release functions, and nutrient and sediment transport.

Baptiste Lake has an identified total of 43 streams – 27 permanent and 16 intermittent streams – and two river corridors that include one inflow and one outflow via the York River. There are 13 inflowing tributary streams in Lavalley Bay, including the larger McGarry Creek and along the outflow; six in Redmond Bay; three in Dog Bay; eight in the main basin, including West Bay

Figure 3: Wetland Types Common to the Baptiste Lake Sub-watershed

Wetland Type	Habitat Characteristics
Marsh	• Wet areas of standing or flowing water • Along shores or rivers, and bordered by peripheral band of trees and shrubs (swamps) • Common species – emergents (grasses, sedges, rushes, cattails and reeds), low shrubs (sweetgale, red osier, leatherleaf, winterberry), submergents (water milfoil, waterweed, pondweeds), or floating plants (water lilies, water plantain, pickerel weed and arrowhead) • Nesting and foraging habitat for colonial birds, waterfowl, turtles and amphibians
Swamp	• Treed wetlands (25% tree cover) formed during snowmelt or flooding • Isolated or found along rivers, streams and lakes, or areas with saturated soil Common species – black spruce, tamarack, black ash, silver maple, and speckled alder • Swamps may dry up completely during summer months
Fen	• Located in low-lying areas and develop at ground water seepage areas (cold water areas) • Develop in areas of restricted drainage, with peat deposits • Receive nutrients from ground water • Fens may dry up completely (like swamps) during summer months • Common species – sedges, grasses, reeds, buckbean (indicator species), bog rosemary, bog willow, shrubs and stunted trees (cedar, black spruce and tamarack)
Bog	• Hummocky (hills and depressions) wetlands with peat-filled depressions and a high water table • Isolated from mineral soil and relies solely on atmospheric deposition for nutrients and water • Bogs isolation creates low biodiversity (<12 different plant species) Commonly found in northern parts of the province • Common species – sphagnum moss, shrubs (bog laurel, swamp blueberry), cotton grasses and sedges, and treed (<25% cover) or treeless (black spruce or tamarack dominate) • Extremely rare in southern Ontario

Source: MNR, 1994

and the creek connecting Baptiste Lake to Diamond Lake; two in Hay and Rangers Bays; and 11 throughout Grassy and Hamilton Bays, which include the York River passage through a Provincially Significant Wetland. The streams occur both on patented/private and Crown land.

These streams have not been researched, identified by name or inventoried extensively. Often, new intermittent streams are created during spring runoff from shoreline floodplains, wetlands or rock crevices that have accumulated snow and rain. Therefore, there may be more streams unidentifiable from maps or aerial photography that flow into Baptiste Lake. There is a

need for data, including fish inventories and environmental parameters, and a need for site-specific information to be able to properly classify the streams that flow into Baptiste Lake. Currently, the classification of these streams is unknown, but is assumed to be a mix of warm, cool or coldwater types as evidenced by the lake's fish community (lake trout, walleye, muskellunge, bass) and thermal regime (mixture of warm, cool and cold water fish habitat).

The connectivity of lakes via rivers and their tributaries contributes to the importance and benefits of protecting Baptiste Lake's ecological health. Disturbances that remove vegetation and increase the number of impermeable surfaces in the watershed contribute to nutrient and pollutant runoff, erosion, sedimentation, infilling and changes to water flow in streams, which negatively impact water quality and fish habitat.

Recommendations – Streams

- Streams flowing into Baptiste Lake should be inventoried and water tested.

  The BLA should design a "name that stream" program to name all unnamed streams flowing into Baptiste Lake.
- Official plans and zoning by-laws should continue to recognize the location of all permanent and intermittent streams, and include a policy to protect these against development impacts, especially cold water streams that protect water quality and fish habitat.

2.1.7. Fish and Fish Habitat

Fish Community

Baptiste Lake has a complex fish community that is comprised of cold, cool and warm water fish species. Prior to natural resource extraction, logging dams and settlement of the lake area, Baptiste Lake was a smaller, cold-water basin with resident populations of lake trout and other native cold-water species. Due to the continued presence of deep-water habitats, Baptiste Lake continues to maintain a cold-water fishery of wild, self-sustaining lake trout as well as other cold-water fish including lake whitefish, lake herring and burbot populations. The lake is managed as a cold-water lake, which includes development restrictions on portions of the lake (MNR Lake Files, 2007 and MNR, 2004).

Baptiste Lake Fish Community

- Lake Trout
- Lake Whitefish
- Lake Herring
- Burbot
- Walleye
- Northern Pike
- Smallmouth Bass
- Largemouth Bass
- Rock Bass
- Pumpkinseed
- Black Crappie
- Yellow Perch
- White Sucker
- Brown Bullhead
- Minnows
- Darters

Source: MNR Lake Files, 2007 and ROM, 2007

Baptiste Lake has been periodically stocked with native and introduced fish species including lake trout, walleye, muskellunge, smallmouth and largemouth bass in order to supplement existing populations and to enhance sport angling opportunities on the lake. Fish introductions have created more complex interactions such as increased competition for resources and predation at various life stages among the existing native fish community. Rock bass and northern pike have also appeared among the aquatic fauna, and it is suspected that the rock bass was introduced inadvertently during smallmouth bass plantings (MNR Lake Files,

2007). Provincial supplemental stocking no longer occurs in Baptiste Lake since lake trout and walleye are supported via natural reproduction.

Fishing pressure has increased substantially over the past decades because of increased access to Baptiste Lake, which means that the average angler is catching fewer and smaller fish. Over-harvest problems cannot be addressed by simply stocking more fish. Stocking cannot increase the natural carrying capacity of a water body. Overexploitation is best controlled by limiting fishing opportunities, limiting harvest, or by restricting access to the resource. Fishing regulations on lake trout and walleye lakes now limit anglers to seasonal and slot size limits to protect spawning stock and promote variable year classes.

Fish Habitat

Loss of fish habitat has occurred in Baptiste Lake due to heavy occupied shoreline use, and low water levels that occur during hot/dry summers, causing oxygen depletion in the deep basins (MNR Lake Files, 2007). These changes to the lake's fish habitat and fish population began when the existing dam at the outlet on the York River was upgraded and rebuilt by the Ontario government in the 1930s. The

dam flooded the uncleared land causing a significant increase in lake levels, increasing the lake's basin by nearly twice its original size. When flooded, two-thirds of the land around the original basin of Baptiste Lake and the York River created a large volume of shallow, weedy bays and shorelines with lots of submerged terrestrial plants, trees and logs. These changes created optimum habitat for warm-water fishes but negatively impacted the cold-water fishes.

Rotting and decomposing plant and woody debris creates a rapid influx of nutrients into the water column that negatively impacts deep, cold-water fish habitat through the reduction of dissolved oxygen concentrations. Large shallow and weedy areas (<10 m depth) trap more sunlight, which increases water temperatures and metabolic rates of aquatic organisms and other biogeochemical processes that also consume dissolved oxygen. The dissolved oxygen and temperature levels in Baptiste Lake are extremely restrictive for lake trout (MNR 1987, 1991 and 2004, MOE 2006).

Post-stocking surveys of lake trout populations have determined that the ecological change brought about by raising the Baptiste Lake water level, the successful introduction of competitive and predatory fish (e.g., walleye and rock bass), land use changes, and climate change have had some bearing on the reduced population and poor recruitment success of lake trout in Baptiste Lake and changes in the overall quality of the fishery. Degradation of spawning habitat through siltation or 'burying' of spawning shoals, fluctuating water levels, pollution, increased angling pressure, and stresses associated with a complex fish community (e.g., egg and fry predation) have negatively impacted both lake trout and the other fish populations (walleye, muskellunge and smallmouth bass).

Despite concentrated habitat-protection efforts, habitat rehabilitation, and extensive fish-stocking efforts, there are still con-

Figure 4: Fish Species in Baptiste Lake

Common Name	Scientific Name	Fish Family
Lake Whitefish	*Coregonus clupeaformis*	Trouts, Salmons, Char and Whitefishes
Lake Herring (Cisco)	*Coregonus artedi*	Trouts, Salmons, Char and Whitefishes
Lake Trout	*Salvelinus namaycush*	Trouts, Salmons, Char and Whitefishes
Brook Trout*	*Salvelinus fontinalis*	Trouts, Salmons, Char and Whitefishes
Northern Pike	*Esox lucius*	Pikes
Muskellunge	*Esox masquinongy*	Pikes
White Sucker	*Catostomus commersoni*	Suckers
Golden Shiner	*Notemigonus crysoleucas*	Minnows
Blacknose Shiner	*Notropis heterolepis*	Minnows
Brown Bullhead	*Ameiurus nebulosus*	Bullhead Catfishes
Burbot	*Lota lota (cod)*	Cod
Rock Bass	*Ambloplites rupestris*	Sunfishes and Bass
Black Crappie**	*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*	Sunfishes and Bass
Largemouth Bass	*Micropterus salmoides*	Sunfishes and Bass
Smallmouth Bass	*Micropterus dolomieu*	Sunfishes and Bass
Pumpkinseed	*Lepomis gibbosus*	Sunfishes and Bass
Walleye	*Sander vitreus*	Darters, Perches, Walleye and Sauger
Yellow Perch	*Perca flavescens*	Darters, Perches, Walleye and Sauger

Source: Rivers and Streams Source: MNR Lake Files, 2007 and BLA, 2007

cerns regarding the health of complex fisheries, especially lake trout populations in the Minden-Haliburton area. Creel survey results indicate poor angler success, as anglers continue to report poor catches, and a preponderance of small fish. Requests for increases in stocking rates persist despite evidence that stocking of hatchery fish over native populations can have serious negative consequences on the community. Furthermore, a reluctance to accept harvest controls leaves few options (MNR, 1995).

No rehabilitation has been implemented for lake trout in Baptiste Lake to date.

Recommendations– Fish and Fish Habitat

- Until an analysis is completed on the impacts of fish derbies on tourism and the local economy, the BLA would not oppose a maximum of two fishing derbies per year – one in July and one in August – outside of fish spawning seasons.
- The BLA should work with the Ministry of Natural Resources on rehabilitation of the fishery.
- Since the presence of lake trout is the sign of a healthy cold-water lake, BLA should encourage the provincial government to ensure that measures are taken to sustain and enhance the Baptiste Lake trout fishery.

2.1.8. Wildlife Habitat

The Baptiste Lake sub-watershed is home to a diverse community of mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird and insect species. In many cases, the life cycle of these species is directly related to the lake, river, streams, and the land-water shoreline interface. Riparian vegetation along the shoreline and abutting upland areas is important to all wildlife in the watershed.

AREA MAMMALS

- White-tailed Deer
- Moose
- Lynx*
- Bobcat*
- Striped Skunk
- American Marten*
- Fisher
- Weasel species*
- Mink

Figure 5: Examples of Baptiste Lake Wildlife

Black Bear

Moose

- Northern River Otter*
- Raccoon
- Black Bear
- Coyote
- Grey and Eastern* Wolf
- Red Fox
- Porcupine
- Mice
- Voles*
- Muskrat
- Lemming
- Beaver
- Eastern Chipmunk
- Red and Grey Squirrels

Deer

- Northern and Southern* Flying Squirrels
- Snowshoe Hare
- Eastern Cottontail
- Bats*
- Moles*
- Shrews

** denotes species are rare or at risk*

The Terrestrial Conservation Blueprint, a province-wide conservation initiative, identified several large patches of critical core wildlife habitat and important natural cover (woodlands, grasslands, fields) and corridors in the watershed. These areas

have been identified as significant and suitable wetland, upland and shoreline habitat for migratory stopover, feeding, breeding, staging and moulting areas for waterfowl, colonial water birds, songbirds, shorebirds and raptors.

Particular species of interest are the Great Blue Heron, American Black Duck, Common Loon, the Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Osprey and Red-shouldered Hawk. The upland and shoreline mixed and coniferous forests also provide significant preferred and optimal wintering habitat for the white-tailed deer, moose, black bear, fisher, northern river otter and other mammals.

There are several pockets of deer wintering areas in the watershed. One very large deeryard along the northern shoreline and uplands of Baptiste Lake forms a contiguous corridor with Algonquin Provincial Park's protected wildlife habitat, and the eastern and southern upland and shoreline areas of Baptiste and Diamond lakes. These deeryards overlap with moose wintering and summer habitat and black bear potential habitat sites and regulated hunting areas.

Great Blue Heron colonies and several raptors' nests are present in Baptiste Lake's sub-watershed. The raptors' nests were inventoried in 2006 to prevent encroachment during forest extraction, but heronry colony locations have not been recently mapped or verified by the MNR. Common Loon adult pairs, young and nest sights have also been observed in many quieter bays and islands of Baptiste Lake, but current nest location verification and digital mapping has not occurred.

The sidebar on mammals identifies some of the animals found in our area that have suitable and preferred breeding and wintering habitats within the watershed boundary of Baptiste Lake and Madawaska River watersheds.

The MNR Bancroft District has a black bear population index program, which is conducted each year, and a public advisory program about nuisance bears.

Recommendations – Wildlife Habitat

- The BLA should continue to promote Loon Watch, and to encourage lake users to respect loon habitat when boating, in order to prevent excessive wake damage or harm to young loons.
- Residents should be encouraged to identify and protect important wildlife habitat areas, to create and protect sites for turtle nesting, and to inform the BLA of their efforts.

2.1.9. Species at Risk

Species at Risk (SAR) include animals and plants that are rare, threatened or endangered. Their existence depends on the protection and maintenance of their breeding habitats, including foraging and migration corridors.

There are currently three reptile and three bird species listed at risk in the Baptiste Lake watershed, and several other rare species communities as identified by MNR's Natural Heritage Information Centre that may be found in the Baptiste Lake-Madawaska River watershed. Locating

and identifying rare species helps to protect their habitat, local biodiversity, and the lake's natural heritage.

Individuals can be involved in recovery efforts including identifying and reporting species observed on their property, restoring degraded habitats, or being stewards of small or large portions of their land.

Ontario's Land Stewardship program provides opportunities for landowners to help wildlife by providing financial incentives to enhance or maintain critical habitat, protect nesting sites, conduct surveys of species on their property, and provide special population data to the Natural Heritage Information Centre (Federation of Ontario Naturalists, 2005).

For more information concerning species at risk, including protection policy, designation status (i.e., threatened, endangered, etc.), or distribution in your area, please consult the following websites:

- Species at Risk Act Registry (SARA) at www.sararegistry.gc.ca/
- Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada at www.cosewic.gc.ca/
- MNR's Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario (COSSARO) at www.mnr.gov.on.ca/mnr/speciesatrisk/status.html
- Natural Heritage Information Centre at http://nhic.mnr.gov.on.ca/nhic_.cfm.

Rare species can be among the most sensitive species in a region, acting as an early warning or indicator of changing environmental conditions such as disease outbreak, pollution, species competition (invasive species), or climate change.

Rare Species Inhabitants for the Baptiste- Madawaska Watershed

- Eastern Pipistrelle Bat
- Small-footed Bat
- Northern Long-eared Bat
- Red-shouldered Hawk
- Horned Clubtail
- Elfin Skipper
- Boreal Snaketail
- Ebony Boghunter
- Auricled Twayblade
- Northern Woodsia
- Water Awlwort

Other Species at Risk for the Baptiste-Madawaska Watershed

- Wood Turtle
- Least Bittern
- Great Gray Owl
- Eastern Milksnake
- Black Tern
- Cerulean Warbler
- Red-headed Woodpecker
- Eastern Ribbon Snake
- Monarch Butterfly
- West Virginia White
- Eastern Cougar
- Southern Flying Squirrel
- Eastern Wolf

Source: Bancroft MNR and NHIC, 2007

Recommendations – Species at Risk

- The BLA should inform lake residents of provincial and federal legislation regarding rare species and species at risk, including the incentives that are available for private stewardship initiatives. An inventory of such species in and around Baptiste Lake should be conducted.

2.1.10. Invasive Species

Invasive species are one of the greatest threats to the biodiversity of the natural environment. At present, the only documented 'invasive' species in Baptiste Lake's watershed are the historical introductions by humans of non-resident fish species, including rock bass and northern pike. However, more than 160 known non-native species of

fish, invertebrates, plants, parasites, algae and pathogens are found within the Great Lakes drainage basin, and many other introduced species may have likely gone unnoticed. These invasive species may pose a threat to Baptiste Lake, in particular the wetland areas, because of its close proximity and connectivity to other recreational lakes via the York, Madawaska and Ottawa Rivers and the Rideau Canal.

For further information regarding invasive species or to download the new aquatic invasive species identification guide, visit the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters' Invasive Species Program at www.invadingspecies.com.

As of 2008, Baptiste Lake is free of zebra mussels and Spiney Water-fleas. Zebra mussels are the most well-known of all invasive species. Their filter-feeding behaviour increases water clarity and their excrement increases the level of phosphorus (P) in lakes, rivers and streams, which encourages algal and other plant growth. Zebra mussels especially encourage the growth of nuisance algae, including Cladophora. Cladophora looks like long green hair and it attaches itself to rocks and sediments along the shoreline.

Zebra Mussels

Purple Loosestrife

Purple Loosestrife is a probable resident of wetlands and shoreline areas in Baptiste Lake watershed, but verified observations are necessary (OFAH Invasive Species Program data).

Further investigation of aquatic plant species and other invasive species is necessary for Baptiste Lake due to a suspicious water-milfoil species observed in Dog Bay during the 2006 survey.

Invasive species pose a serious threat to the lake's health, as well as the ecological, social and economic stability of the community; they out-compete local, native species and threaten already stressed rare and species at risk, which can ultimately reduce local biodiversity.

Recommendations – Invasive Species

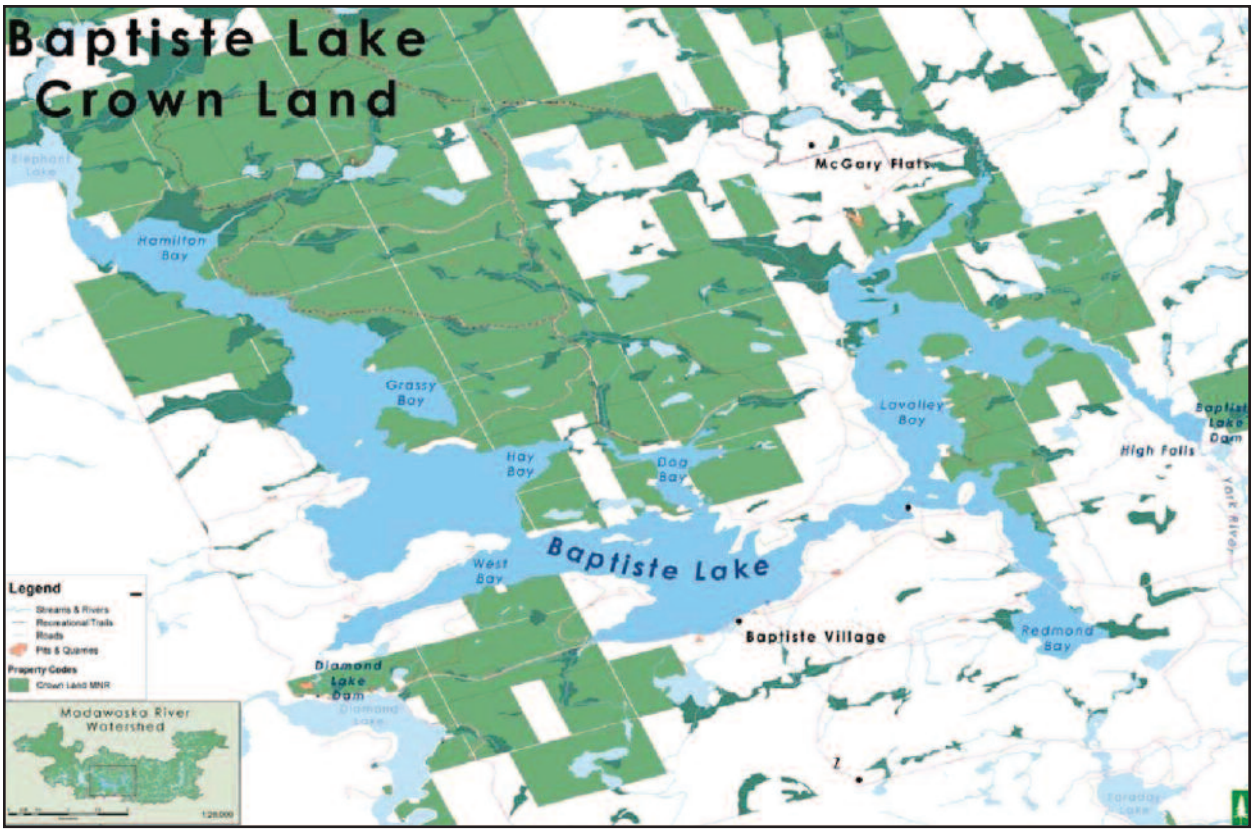
- The BLA should focus activities primarily on education and awareness for lake residents and visitors, to prevent the introduction of new invasive species into Baptiste Lake and its watershed.
- A washout station should be established on the lake (site to be determined), and the municipality should establish a bylaw making washouts mandatory for incoming boats. In addition, signage regarding the washout station and invasive species should be mandatory at all boat launch locations for incoming boats to Baptiste Lake and its watershed.
- Residents should be encouraged to identify invasive species, including purple loosestrife, and to report their location to the local MNR and the BLA.

2.2 The Built Environment

2.2.1. Current Land Use

The watershed of Baptiste Lake encompasses both private and public lands. However, about 50 per cent of the shoreline of Baptiste Lake is comprised of Crown land (MOE 2006). Provincial regulations and guidelines will, therefore, play a significant role in the management and future development of the lands surrounding Baptiste Lake.

There are 13 known active commercial operations on the lake. Ten provide accommodation to the traveling public, one is the local store with associated tourist accommodation, one is a private camp, and one provides the only marina service on the



Presently, the Province's Policy Report G340 prohibits the sale of Crown lands for new cottage lots, or for new seasonal or recreational camps on designated lakes with a "cold water fishery" (lake trout lake).

lake. There are several properties that continue to be zoned commercial but are no longer used commercially.

Tourist resorts and rural commercial operations have a major financial investment in the sustained health of Baptiste Lake, simply by the fact that they earn their living from occupations in and around the lake. The tourism industry makes a substantial contribution to the Baptiste Lake community, and its sustainable growth should be encouraged.

Lake residents, according to the Baptiste Lake Summer Survey (2006), would prefer to see new regulations pertaining to new development and redevelopment on the lake, including limits on the number of new lots created, boathouse size, and shoreline alterations.

Most of the lake's residences are traditional-style cottages, being relatively small in nature, comprised of one or two levels. However, newer development contrasts with earlier styles, being larger in floor area, often with more than two levels, and constructed of brick and siding. According to the Ministry of Environment (MOE), there

are 15 commercial properties, 114 permanent residences, 640 seasonal residences and 164 vacant lots on the Baptiste Lake shoreline. General land use in 2007 was much the same as it was described in the "Position Paper" by Ainley and Associates in 1990; the only notable change is an

increase in permanent shoreline residents from 10 per cent to 15 per cent.

A considerable amount of undeveloped property exists on the lake and contributes greatly to the natural beauty of the lake. Some of these properties have the potential to be sub-divided into a large number of residential lots.

Recommendations – Land Use

- Buildings on the lake should be built on a scale that allows the landscape to remain dominant. Developments that substantially change geographic or landscape profiles – the language of the lake – should be discouraged.
- The BLA should work with the Federation of Ontario Cottage Associations (FOCA) and MNR to continue lobbying the provincial government to continue with the "no development" policy on Crown Land.
- The BLA should support the Municipality of Hastings Highlands and Hastings County in the practice of discouraging the development of back lots – that is, lots behind lakefront lots – that would place further stress on Baptiste Lake.
- The BLA should work with the Municipality of Hastings Highlands to update the official plan and zoning bylaws, and to prepare a communications and regulatory program regarding the rehabilitation and protection of shoreline areas. It is recognized that the maintenance of natural shoreline buffers is an ecologically sound practice that prevents erosion, maintains water quality, protects wildlife and the fishery, and enhances the viewscape.

2.2.2. County Official Plan

The current official plan providing direction for Baptiste Lake is the "Official Plan of the County of Hastings" dated January 12, 2002, prepared by the Ainley Group in Belleville.

The Official Plan (OP) provides guidance for the physical development and planning decisions of the municipality while having regard for social, economic and environmental matters to ensure that the specific needs of the community are met. The County is currently undertaking a review of the Official Plan, which provides a good opportunity to update current policy.

The "rural" designation covers about 90 percent of Baptiste Lake's watershed, including about 95 percent of the shoreline. The rural designation permits a number of land uses that may not be compatible with the residential and commercial character of the lake. For example, it provides very little policy direction on the maintenance of natural buffers.

Many other rural/lake municipalities have created a separate waterfront designation that separates the rural policies from those that apply to the waterfront. The Hastings County OP policies that permit development in Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSW) are outdated, and must now be revised to be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (2005), which prohibits new development on PSW located on the Canadian Shield.

No maps are provided in the OP to identify development constraints, such as steep slopes, narrow water-bodies or critical fish habitat. This information should be in the Official Plan so that people will understand the development restrictions.

2.2.3. Municipal Zoning By-laws

The Municipality of Hastings Highlands regulates land use, as well as the location and construction of new buildings and structures through Comprehensive Zoning By-law 35-2004.

Zoning by-laws must conform to the policies of the Official Plan and be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (2005). Zoning by-laws provide specific classes of land use and associated standards to ensure that new construction or changes to existing land uses are undertaken with regard for safety, privacy, the peaceful enjoyment of neighbouring land, and the protection of ratepayers from undue expenses related to development.

Any new development proposal that does not conform to the zoning by-law will require a consent application.

Recommendation – Zoning By-laws

- The BLA should work with the Municipality to update zoning by-laws concerning the following: set lot requirements so as to achieve a built scale that allows the landscape to remain dominant; review the list of land use issues to ensure that they are compatible with the lake and surrounding land uses; and update the Environmental Protection Zones for Provincially Significant Wetlands.

2.2.4. Residential Occupancy

The number of people living on and using the lake has a direct impact on water quality. Longer visits to the cottage as well as conversion from seasonal to permanent residence can increase the amount of phosphorus generated from human waste and sewage.

Current water quality models often refer to “estimates” of “phosphorus loading” based on the total number of shoreline lots regardless of whether the lot is used permanently or seasonally. Better residential occupancy data is required to provide accurate predictions of future water quality, based on known information on the amount of time people stay on the lake.

According to the 2006 resident survey, the average household size during the summer was 4.93 people, which is almost twice the average household size for permanent residences in the municipality, and about 27 per cent of seasonal residents on the lake intend to convert from seasonal residency to permanent. Seasonal households represent about 85 per cent of all built residential properties on the lake.

Recommendations – Residential Occupancy

- BLA should work with the Municipality to update land use information and residential occupancy rates, which in turn can assist the Ministry of the Environment and other agencies involved in assessing the carrying capacity of Baptiste Lake, which is stressed by increased seasonal use and increased conversion to permanent residency.
- The provincial government should maintain current development regulations until there is a solid basis in science – documented in a series of longitudinal studies – concerning which new technologies will assist in accommodating increased development without an adverse impact on the cold-water fishery.

2.2.5. Septic Systems

The Municipality of Hastings Highlands is responsible for reviewing and approving the location and type of new septic systems.

All development in the Baptiste Lake watershed depends on some form of a septic system or holding tank for the disposal of sewage. There are no municipal sewage treatment plants, and there is currently no program established to re-inspect septic systems.

Of those residents surveyed in 2006, 57 percent indicated that they pump their septic systems out every one to three years, whereas 10 percent indicated they

did not know the last time their septic was pumped-out.

Recommendations – Septic Systems

- The BLA should work with the Municipality and lake residents to promote the proper use of septic systems (e.g., Shoreline Advisor Program), and encourage a mandatory septic re-inspection program of septic systems around Baptiste Lake.

2.2.6. Natural Architecture and Viewscape

The many beautiful and rugged rock outcroppings provide a character unique to Baptiste Lake, and the treed shorelines and the punctuating rock and cliffs create yet another signature of the Lake. Landmarks, shoreline, edges, pathways and nodes all work together to define the language the lake speaks to us, making it both unique and understandable.

The naturalness of the landscape and shoreline is one of the four top values treasured by the people of Baptiste Lake. Maintaining the natural landscape is enhanced when development on steep slopes (*see Figure 8*) or narrow water-bodies is sympathetic to the general characteristics of their surrounding landscape.

Development, vegetation removal, and resource extraction on steep slopes can result in substantial alteration of the natural landscape and visual impact due to the prominence and location of development or resource extraction activities. Indirect environmental impacts associated with development or forestry operations on steep slopes include increased erosion, slope instability, a significant increase in storm water runoff and the resulting potential damage to fish and wildlife habitat. Indirect impacts include an altered landscape and development that dominates the landscape.

Recommendations – Natural Architecture and Viewscape

- The natural architecture of the lake should remain untouched.
- The BLA should work with the County and Municipality to recognize the importance – both visual and economic – of the viewscape and natural vistas of Baptiste Lake. The viewscape should be delineated in the official plan, and proposed developments within the viewscape should be compatible with the natural character of the lake.

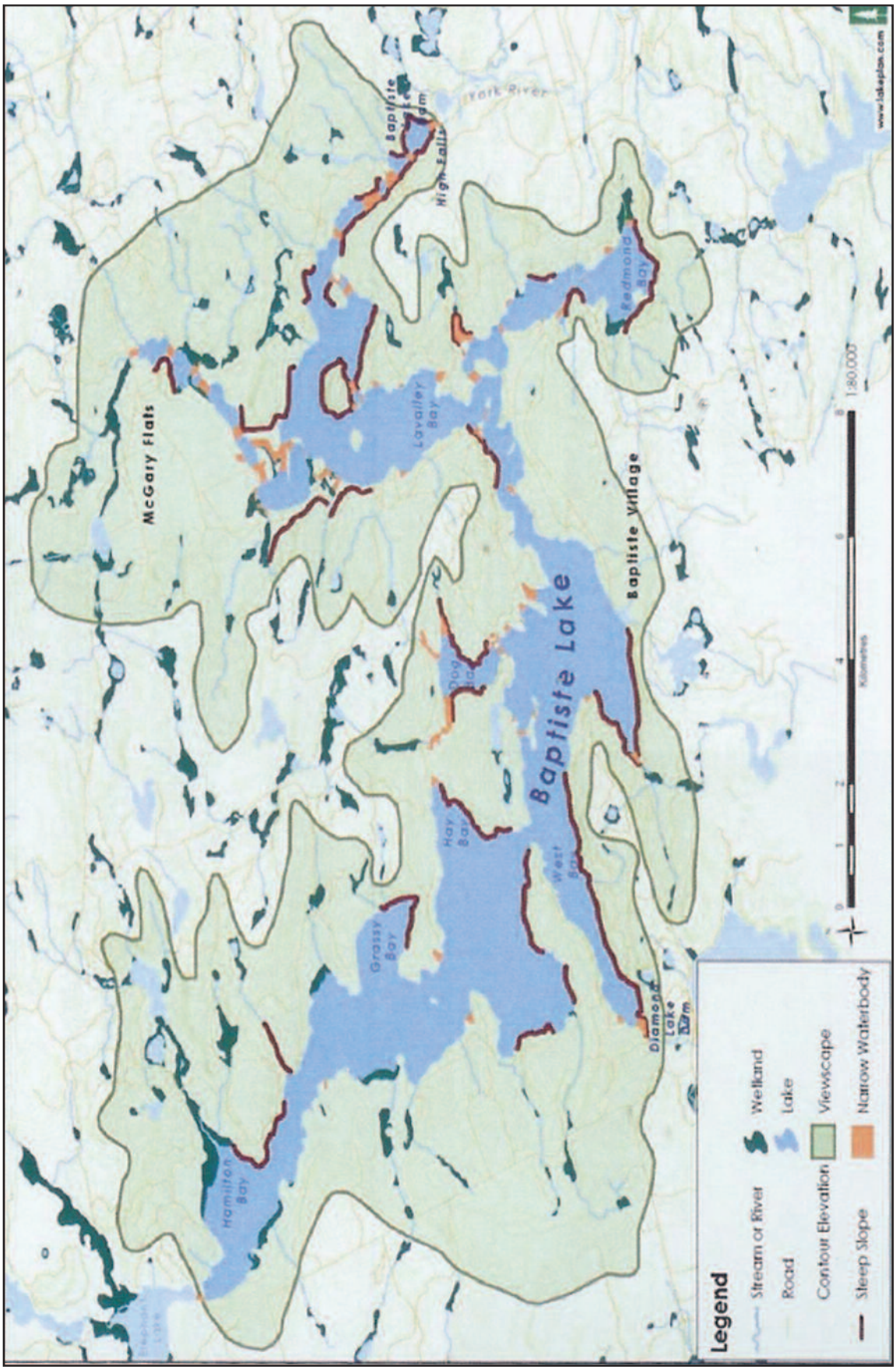
2.2.7. Physical Constraints – steep slopes, narrow water-bodies

The County of Hastings Official Plan provides one very limited policy for residential development in areas of steep slopes. Policy 3.3.5 ii) (page 28) of the Official Plan states that “buildings should be set back far enough from the crest or toe of steep slopes to ensure structural stability and to avoid natural hazards and visual intrusion into the landscape.”

The more common approach to reduce visual impact that is used by many municipalities across southern Ontario is to require increased lot frontages of up to 400 ft for new lots in areas of steep slopes, and to require well managed vegetation buffer zones as well as lot setbacks.

There are numerous narrow channels, bays and rivers on Baptiste Lake, which adds to the naturalness of the lake and its shorelines. Development on narrow water-bodies at the same density as open areas of the lake can create problems for navigation, resulting in congestion that creates a hazard with respect to water users and recreational activities. Similarly, when too many docks and boathouses protrude into a narrow bay or portion of a river, it decreases the aesthetic beauty of the immediate area.

Figure 8: Steep Slopes



The Official Plan for the County of Hastings defines narrow water-bodies as a physical constraint to property development. “A narrow water-body is an area where the minimum average distance from shoreline to shoreline is 150 metres (492 ft) for a lake and 50 metres (164 ft) for a river” (policy 3.3.5.b, page 29).

The difficulty in applying this policy is the lack of a map showing the location of all narrow water-bodies on the lake. The Official Plan contains policy that requires lot frontages on narrow water bodies of 100 metres (328 feet), as compared to 150 feet required in open areas, for new lots being created.

Recommendations – Physical Constraints

- The BLA should work with the County and Municipality to include a map in the Official Plan of all narrow water-bodies on Baptiste Lake, and to amend zoning by-laws by adding a new zone that recognizes the location of these areas and requires a minimum lot frontage for new lots (e.g., of 100 metres), thus preventing the appearance of overcrowding.
- Consideration should be given to posting speed limits for boats in narrow water bodies (river channels and some bays) and/or environmentally sensitive areas.

2.3 Baptiste Lake Community

Thus far, the focus of the Lake Plan has been on the natural elements – the lake, the land, the animals and the vegetation – as well as the built environment. It is now time to turn our attention to the people and the community of Baptiste Lake.

Our vision is premised on a vibrant Baptiste Lake community, one where we come together to meet one another, socialize and have fun, discuss matters of common concern, and take collective action where we think it is necessary.

The process of building this Lake Plan is an outstanding example of Baptiste Lake community effort.

2.3.1 Community Values

In terms of recreational activities valued by lake residents, swimming ranked number one in the survey (90 per cent of respondents), followed by nature appreciation and reading (over 80 per cent). This highlights the importance of peace and tranquility to lake residents.

Power boating and socializing (over 70 per cent), and canoeing and fishing (over 60 per cent), and hiking (over 50 per cent) were next on the list, highlighting the value of “on-the-water” activity of lake residents. This was also the case for waterskiing, kayaking, snowmobiling, winter skiing, and ice skating, which were choices of between 20 and 50 per cent of the respondents. In contrast, driving personal watercraft and scuba-diving were reported by five per cent or less of lake residents.

A number of safety issues were raised in regard to recreation – threats to peace and tranquility, boat and personal watercraft speed and night-lights, swimming in safety, the need for a nautical map of the lake, the lack of a public beach or walking trails.

Recommendation – Light and Noise Pollution

- Further information should be provided to inform lake residents and visitors of the damage of light pollution to the night sky, and of the damage of noise pollution to the tranquility of the lake environment. The municipality has a bylaw against excessive noise after 11:00 p.m., which is triggered by a formal complaint process. There is no municipal bylaw on light pollution.

Recommendation – Water Safety

- Further awareness should be encouraged on safety issues related to

swimming, boating and personal watercraft (e.g., speed limits in certain areas).

Recommendation – Public Amenities

- The lack of public amenities on Baptiste Lake – such as a public beach, public walking trails and a community centre – should be investigated with a view to providing greater public and community access to the lake.

Recommendation – Nautical Map

- An accurate nautical map of greater Baptiste Lake should be available to all lake residents and visiting boaters, including markers for shoals.

2.3.2 Community Activities

Many residents value the various social events that are held on Baptiste Lake, including:

- Victoria Day Weekend welcoming party and fireworks at Camp Ponacka
- Dog Bay summer party
- BLA Annual General Meeting
- Baptiste Lake Regatta
- Fishing Derby
- BLA corn roast on Labour Day Weekend
- Thanksgiving dinner at Birch Cliff Lodge
- Vetter family bowl on Thanksgiving Sunday

A concern was expressed, however, that the youth in the Baptiste Lake community lack social opportunities, which leads to the question of whether or not there is a need for a community centre for Baptiste Lake (see recommendation above), or other initiatives that would meet this need.

Lake residents also identified other community-supported activities – such as Dock Talk, Welcome Wagon, stream identification and maintenance, and Neighbourhood Watch – as valuable, and some advocated the idea of monthly public talks on topics related to the lake and our environment.

Community places are also important to lake residents, since they link us to the land and the history of the area. If these places are to be protected for future generations, it is important for the community to develop an awareness and appreciation of these unique features of Baptiste Lake.
The following list highlights some of the community places and activities identified as important through the survey:

- High Falls Dam
- Old Dam snorkeling
- Blueberry Island
- Diving Rock
- wetlands of Dog Bay
- Baptiste Village (store and church)
- Camp Ponacka
- Birch Cliff Lodge
- Scott's Cottages
- Marina
- Chief Sam Baptiste's cabin
- David Milne's painting cabin
- municipal dock
- railroad bed
- pirate ship boathouse
- Herschel Island Fishing Club
- public boat launches

There were some concerns expressed about community places. It was noted in the stakeholder workshops that resort owners need to have the flexibility to renew, expand and develop their businesses.

Concerns were also expressed about signage, with suggestions that signs for house-painters, real-estate brokers, drywall installers, picture framers and other tradespeople not be permitted, since they detract from the natural beauty of the lake.

Recommendation – Signage

- The municipality should review its bylaws with regard to commercial signage and its effects on the natural beauty of the lake. Hastings Highlands Municipality is considering such a bylaw, as it is the only area municipality without one.

2.3.3 Private Property Security

The neighbourhood issue of greatest importance to residents in the survey was security of their property. Almost 85 per cent of lake residents expressed this concern, while a third of all respondents reported a break-in or loss of items or damage to their property.

An overwhelming 97 per cent were in favour of the Cottage Watch program. The vast majority of those surveyed were in favour of increased police surveillance and increased boat patrolling on the lake.

Part 3: Toward Implementation

3.1 Suggestions for Implementation

The many important actions identified in the Baptiste Lake Plan will not be implemented on their own. Many different individuals and organizations (such as lake residents; boaters; lake users; local businesses; municipal, county, provincial and federal governments; the Baptiste Lake Association, often working in partnership with such organizations as the Federation of Ontario Cottage Associations or the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters) will need to play a part in making these recommendations a reality.

Some recommendations involve lake residents and the BLA fostering improving awareness and stewardship. Others, such as those relating to municipal bylaws and official plans, involve facilitation by the BLA and official action by county and municipal governments.

It is suggested that the Baptiste Lake Association assume a coordinating role to oversee the implementation of the lake plan, perhaps through the development of a five-year implementation plan. The BLA would provide its members and others with annual progress reports.

Some program elements, such as Dock Talk and Neighbourhood Watch, already exist, and can be expanded. New initiatives, such as stream identification and Welcome Wagon, are in the process of being developed.

To ensure that our shared vision remains intact, we need to come together to secure the future of our cherished lake.

3.2 Taking Action

All the recommendations included in Part 2 are repeated here, but organized in the following manner: recommended actions pertaining to the lake itself; those relating to the land around the lake (further subdivided into shoreline and viewscape/watershed); the built environment; and the Baptiste Lake community.

Following each recommendation is an indication of the various stakeholders – lake residents and businesses; the BLA; the municipality of Hastings Highlands; the county of Hastings; or the provincial or federal governments – that are most responsible for implementing each recommendation.

3.2.1 Actions involving the physical lake

Water Quality

• Encourage more volunteers to continue to collect water quality information through annual or more frequent spot-checking, as well as initiate, with Ministry of Natural Resources staff, the monitoring of tributary streams, and continue to inform residents of the results of this research (including trends over time) in a timely fashion. (Natural Heritage Inventory) – **BLA**

Water Levels and Regulation

• Get involved in any proposal for a hydroelectric generating facility affecting Baptiste Lake, and ensure that the proponent conducts an assessment to demonstrate that there will be no negative impact on lake levels and surrounding environments, including lake trout and their spawning activity. (Physical Elements Report) – **lake residents, BLA**

Fish and Fish Habitat

• Not oppose a maximum of two fishing derbies per year, one in July and one in August, outside of fish spawning seasons, until an analysis is completed on the impacts of fish derbies on tourism and the local economy. (Natural Heritage Inventory) – **BLA**

• Work with the Ministry of Natural Re-

sources on rehabilitation of the fishery. (Natural Heritage Inventory) – **lake residents, BLA**

• Encourage the provincial government to take measures that will sustain and enhance the Baptiste Lake trout fishery, since the presence of lake trout is the sign of a healthy deep water lake (Stakeholders Meeting) – **BLA**

Boating

• Consider posting speed limits for boats in narrow water bodies (rivers, channels and some bays) or environmentally sensitive areas. (Stakeholders Meeting August 2008) – **lake residents, BLA**

• Establish a washout station on the lake (site to be determined), and establish a bylaw making washouts mandatory for incoming boats. In addition, signage regarding the washout station and invasive species should be mandatory at all boat launch locations for incoming boats to Baptiste Lake and its watershed. (Stakeholders Meeting August 2008) – **municipality**

Wildlife and Habitat

• Continue to promote Loon Watch, and to encourage lake users to respect loon habitat when boating, in order to prevent excessive wake damage or harm to young loons. (Natural Heritage Inventory) – **lake residents, BLA**

Invasive Species

• Focus activities primarily on education and awareness for lake residents and visitors, to prevent the introduction of new invasive species into Baptiste Lake and its watershed. (Natural Heritage Inventory) – **lake residents, BLA**

• Continue to work with the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters on monitoring the water quality of Baptiste Lake, and support programs regarding the prevention of invasive water species. (Natural Heritage Inventory) – **BLA, local businesses**

3.2.2 Actions involving the shoreline around the lake

Water Quality

• Work to educate lake residents about shoreline preservation and stewardship, and about the shoreline threats to water quality, such as manicured lawns and paved driveways, which threaten water quality by increasing erosion and runoff, and the use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, which degrade water quality. (Natural Heritage Inventory) – **BLA, municipality, province**

Land Use

• Work with the Municipality of Hasting Highlands to update the official plan and zoning bylaws, and to prepare a communications and regulatory program regarding the rehabilitation and protection of shoreline areas (shoreline buffers prevent erosion and detract Canada geese). (Land Use Study) – **BLA, county, province**

Development

• Retain the shoreline landscape on any site development on the lake. (Architectural Survey) – **lake residents, municipality, county**

Natural Areas of Vegetation

• Encourage lakefront owners to restore the shoreline areas back to a natural state wherever possible, and protect and retain native vegetation, in order to reconstitute lost shoreline landscape. Municipal planning documents should continue to require the mandatory protection of shoreline buffer areas (e.g., 15 meters for existing lots). (Natural Heritage Inventory and Architectural Survey) – **lake residents, BLA, municipality, province**

• Support programs, such as Dock Talk and the Stewardship Council (which provide free advice, shrubs and trees), to educate, assist and encourage landowner

stewardship, and to encourage the 'naturalization' of degraded shorelines. (Natural Heritage Inventory) – **lake residents, BLA, province**

3.2.3 Actions involving the viewscape and watershed around the lake

Natural Architecture

• Maintain the natural and landscape architecture of the lake in its current status. (Architectural Survey) – **lake residents, municipality, county, province**

Viewscapes

• Work with the County and Municipality to recognize the importance – both visual and economic – of the viewscape and natural vistas of Baptiste Lake. The viewscape should be delineated in the official plan, and proposed developments within the viewscape should be compatible with the natural character of the lake. (Physical Elements Report) – **lake residents, BLA**

Natural Areas and Vegetation

• Encourage the Municipality to develop a tree-cutting or tree-preservation forestry bylaw to ensure that lots retain a percentage of their natural vegetation, and thereby reduce storm water runoff. (Natural Heritage Inventory) – **lake residents, BLA**

Streams

• Inventory and water-test streams flowing into Baptiste Lake. (Natural Heritage Inventory) – **BLA, Ministry of Natural Resources**

• Design a 'name that stream' program to name all unnamed streams flowing into Baptiste Lake. (Natural Heritage Inventory) – **BLA**

• Continue to recognize the location of all permanent and intermittent streams in official plans and zoning by-laws, and include a policy to protect these against development impacts, especially cold water streams that protect water quality and fish habitat. (Natural Heritage Inventory) – **municipality, county, province**

Wetlands

• Initiate a wetland evaluation to inventory the wetlands around Baptiste Lake and to determine if these wetlands qualify as Provincially Significant Wetlands. Funding from government agencies should be sought for this purpose. (Natural Heritage Inventory) – **BLA, province**

• Continue to identify the location and size of wetlands in official plans and zoning by-laws, and provide appropriate policy to ensure their protection. (Natural Heritage Inventory) – **BLA, municipality, county**

Wildlife and Habitat

• Encourage lake residents to identify and protect important wildlife habitat areas (e.g., sites for turtle nesting) and to inform BLA of their efforts. (Natural Heritage Inventory) – **lake residents, BLA, province**

Invasive Species

• Encourage lake residents to identify invasive plant species, including purple loosestrife, and to report their location to the local MNR and the BLA. (Natural History Inventory) – **lake residents, BLA, province**

Rare Species and Species at Risk

• Inform lake residents of provincial and federal legislation regarding rare species and species at risk, including the incentives that are available for private stewardship initiatives. An inventory of such species in and around Baptiste Lake should be conducted. (Natural Heritage Inventory) – **BLA, province**

Minerals and Aggregates

• Review all new or expanded existing mineral and aggregate sites and quarry expansions, as well as asphalt plants, to prevent negative impacts on streams feeding the Baptiste Lake watershed.

(Physical Elements Report) – **municipality, county, province**

• Encourage the County, Municipality, and Ministry of Natural Resources to amend their official plans and policies in order to prohibit the creation of new pits, quarries, or mining sites within the 'viewscape' (site horizon) of Baptiste Lake, which would harm tourism and the quality of life of lake residents and visitors. (Physical Elements Report) – **lake residents, BLA**

3.2.4 Actions involving the built environment

Built Scale

• Recommend that buildings on the lake should be built on a scale that allows the landscape to remain dominant. Developments that substantially change geographic or landscape profiles – the language of the lake – should be avoided. (Architectural Survey) – **lake residents, municipality, BLA**

Residential Occupancy

• Work with the Municipality to update land-use information and residential occupancy rates, which in turn can assist the Ministry of the Environment and other agencies involved in assessing the carrying capacity of Baptiste Lake, which is stressed by increased seasonal use and increased conversion to permanent residency. (Land Use Study) – **BLA, province**

• Maintain current development regulations until there is a solid basis in science – documented in a series of longitudinal studies – that new waste-disposal technologies will accommodate increased development without an adverse impact on the cold-water fishery. (BLA Lake Planning Committee) – **BLA, province**

Septic

• Work with residents and the Municipality to promote the proper use of septic systems (e.g., Dock Talk), and encourage a mandatory septic re-inspection program of septic systems around Baptiste Lake. (Land Use Study) – **lake residents, BLA, municipality**

Back Lots

• Support the Municipality of Hastings Highlands and Hastings County in the practice of discouraging the development of back lots (i.e., lots behind lakefront lots) that would place further stress on Baptiste Lake. (Stakeholders Meeting August 2008) – **BLA, lake residents**

Crown Land Use Regulations

• Continue lobbying the provincial government, together with the Federation of Ontario Cottage Associations (FOCA), to keep the 'no development' policy on Crown land. (Land Use Study) – **lake residents, BLA**

County Official Plan

• Work with the Municipality in updating the official plan, and offer specific recommendations for the maintenance of a healthy Baptiste Lake. (Land Use Study) – **lake residents, BLA, municipality**

Municipal Zoning Bylaws

• Work with the Municipality to update zoning bylaws in areas such as: setting lot requirements so as to achieve a built scale that allows the landscape to remain dominant; reviewing the list of land-use issues to ensure that they are compatible with the lake and surrounding land uses; and updating the Environmental Protection Zones for Provincially Significant Wetlands. (Land Use Study) – **lake residents, BLA, municipality**

Narrow Water Bodies

(rivers, channels, some bays)

• Work with the County and Municipality to include a map in the Official Plan indicating all narrow water bodies on Baptiste Lake, and to amend zoning bylaws by adding a new zone that recognizes the lo-

cation of these areas and requires a minimum lot frontage for new lots (e.g., of 100 metres), thus preventing the appearance of overcrowding. (Physical Elements Report) – **BLA**

3.2.5 Baptiste Lake community actions

Light and Noise Pollution

• Provide further information to lake residents and visitors concerning the damage of light pollution to the night sky and of noise pollution to the tranquility of the lake environment. The municipality has a bylaw against excessive noise after 11:00 p.m., which is triggered by a formal complaint process. The municipality has no light pollution bylaw. (Lake Residents Survey) – **lake residents, BLA, municipality**

Water Safety

• Encourage further awareness on safety issues related to swimming, boating and personal watercraft. (Lake Residents Survey 2006) – **lake residents, BLA, local businesses, province**

Public Amenities

• Investigate the lack of public amenities on Baptiste Lake – such as a public beach, public walking trails and a community centre – with a view to providing greater public and community access to the lake. (Stakeholders Meeting August 2008) – **lake residents, BLA, municipality**

Nautical Map

• Make available to all lake residents and visiting boaters an accurate nautical map of greater Baptiste Lake. (Stakeholders Meeting August 2008) – **BLA, local businesses, federal government**

Signage

• Review municipal bylaws with regard to commercial signage and its effects on the natural beauty of the lake. The municipality is in the process of considering this action, since it is the only local area municipality without such a bylaw. (Stakeholders Meeting August 2008) – **lake residents, municipality**

Appendix 1: List of Contributors

Thank you to the following individuals and organizations who made financial donations, offered services, donated goods, and helped us fund the Baptiste Lake Plan at the 2006 Gala, and in fundraising activities in 2007 and 2008:

A. J. Family Footwear, Brad Allison and Maria Batten, Marla Allison, Robert & Penelope Anderson, Ashlie's Books

Bancroft Furniture & Appliances, Bancroft Golf Course, Bancroft Just Wine and Beer, Bancroft Sport and Marine, Baptiste Lake Association, Baptiste Lake Marina, Baptiste Station Restaurant, Bare Naked Ladies, Beauty Escape Day Spa, Kim Benn and Frank Walker, Birch Cliff Lodge, Mark & Karen Bonokoski, Joan Brent, John & Gillian Broere, Barbara Burbidge

Camp Ponacka, Canadian Tire, Kan & Chris Chhatwal, Norman & Freida Coghlan, Paul & Anne Coleman, Richard & Carol Coulter

John and Dorothy Davies, Al Davis, Paul Dennis, Julia Daubaras, Susan & David Daubaras, Double Fish Designs

Douglas & Evelyn Ellis, Ron & Sonia Emond, Robert & Beverley Everett, Evergreen Farm and Garden

Marshall Rex Farrell, Linda & Brian Fell, Lorraine Fell, Floral Traditions

General Electric Co., Dagmar Gontard-Zelinkova, Doug & Nancy Gordon, Chris & Joan Grant (Bowes & Cocks), Melanie & David Grindley, Diana Gurley

Beth & Leonard Harvey, Friederich Haun, David & Pauline Hawkes, Home Hardware, Marlin Horst

I.D.A., John & Jeanne Irwin, Katherine Irwin, Mavis Irwin

John & Pat Jared, Paul Jenkins, Alan & Dale Jones, Cathy & Dewey Jordan, Norm Jull, Jungle Imports

Josie & Roelof Kattouw, Glenn & Nancy Keating, Richard & Margaret Kirsh, Kris Ann Jewellers, Joseph & Stella Kryzanowski, John & Dian Kuder

Greg Latremoille, Susan Latremoille, Laugh Lines Theatre, Tracy Leach, Lock Stock and Barrel Sports Centre, Rod & Kevin Loftus, Hansjuergen Lubeseder

Carol Maclennan, Madawaska Kanu Centre, Market Café and Fudge Factory, Joseph Marshall, Marie Maschke, David Milne & Pam Gibb-Carsley, Gwen Morawetz, Tim Morawetz, John Morson, Mike & Ineke Moxam, McCaskie T.V. & Stereo, Wally & Pat McColl, Bob & Maureen McWhirter

Nan's Bulk and Basic Food, Bruce Nicholson, Northern Comfort

Office Extra, Oliver Bocancini Restaurants, Peter & Maureen Oliver

Paddlers Co-Op, Allan & Darlene Paterson, Peller Estate Winery, Pepin's No Frills, Shelley Pichard, Pop's Malt Shop, Bill & Wendy Porritt, Posie's Flowers and Gifts

Bob & Ann Redford, Andrew & Regina Robinson, Jerry Revenberg, Vic & Noella Rice, Roger & Marguerite Rivard, Riverside Casuals, Mike & David & Donna Robertson, Ed Robertson & Natalie Herbert, Andrew & Regina Robinson, Michael Rudanycz

Nathan & Kathy Schactman, Monica J. Schnurpel, Horst Seidel, Richard & Leslie Sheriff, Robert & Donna Stanistreet, Susan Stechly, Bernice & John Steinmann, Hugh & Catherine Stephens, Ron & Helen Storey, Switzer's Auction & Appraisal Service

Tana's Frames 'n Things, TD Bank, Terra Sun, The Bancroft Times, The Cottage, The Cottage Rentals, The Grail Springs Spa, The Granny Flat, The Old Tin Shed, The Pant Hanger, The Secret Gardener, The Shed, The Stone Kitchen, The York River Co., Tim Horton's, Trailhead

Jack & Judy Vance, Max & Cathy Vandervoet, Jim & Patti Vetter

Bob & Menna Weese, Bryn Weese, West Wind Gallery, Marilyn Wilson
Ya Ya Gallery, Richard & Eleanor Yip-Chuck

Karl & Isabel Zakss, Zihua Boutique

Photos from the August 2006 Gala at Birch Cliff Lodge

Appendix 2: Members of Baptiste Lake Plan Committee

Don Bocking
Joan Brent
Chris Chhatwal
Kan Chhatwal
Lorraine Fell
Elaine Fournier
Pam Gibb-Carsley
Dagmar Gontard-Zelinkova
Diana Gurley
David Hawkes
Laura Mason
David Milne
Tim Morawetz
Michael Moxam
Bob Redford
Craig Walton
Menna Weese (Chair)