



## Natural Environment Update for Huron County

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

#### **What is the Natural Environment Update?**

The Huron County countryside supports a variety of land use activities, with agriculture being prominent. Natural areas provide important services that help make Huron County a productive area for farming and a great place to live. Forests prevent soil erosion, wetlands filter our water.

The Natural Environment Update, which began as the Natural Heritage Plan (NHP), is a summary of Huron's current approach to natural environment planning and contains suggestions for consideration at the time of local Official Plan and Zoning By-law updates. A supporting document, known as the Technical Document, defines what features are considered significant ecologically and maps these areas.

#### **Is the Natural Environment Update a new approach to protecting natural environment areas in Huron County?**

No. With our increased understanding of the location and significance of the County's natural features from the Technical Document, the update summarizes existing land use policies and makes recommendations for updates to local planning documents.

The Natural Environment Update is a background information document which will be used to help make informed decisions when planning for the natural environment. Implementation will occur at the local level at the time of a Five Year Review of an Official Plan and Zoning By-law updates. A more detailed review and further public consultation under the Planning Act is required before any changes are made.

The primary reason for developing the this Natural Environment Update for Huron County is to update the Natural Environment mapping across the County to more accurately reflect the natural features that exist on the ground. The local Official Plans currently contain Natural Environment mapping which is dated.

#### **What is the benefit to farmers and landowners across the County?**

The update supports the protection of the natural environment; the benefits of a healthy natural environment include clean air and water, protection of the County's valuable agricultural soils from erosion, habitat for plants and wildlife, resiliency to extreme weather events (such as flooding), protection of groundwater (for people and livestock), opportunities for recreation and education, improved physical and mental health, a beautiful landscape, and sustainable economy (e.g. timber harvest, maple syrup production, etc.). The abundance, size, shape, and proximity to other natural areas all contribute to the resilience of the landscape to threats.

#### **What are "adjacent lands"? I have heard about a restricted area that is 50 metres from a woodlot and 120 metres from a provincially significant wetland. What does this mean?**

'Adjacent lands' refers to the area beside significant natural environment features. County Council has directed that adjacent lands be defined in the Official Plans as 50 metres from significant natural environment areas and 120 metres from provincially significant wetlands.

In the adjacent lands, when a building (such as a new barn) is proposed, the impacts on the natural environment must be assessed. This can often be completed through a site visit. In some cases, an Environmental Impact Study may be required.

#### **Can I continue to crop within 50 metres of my woodlot or 120 metres from a provincially significant wetland on my farm?**

Yes, cropping can continue in these areas. Nothing in the Natural Environment Update is intended to limit the ability of agricultural uses to continue

#### **How can I find out more?**

Additional materials for the Natural Environment Update are available on the County's website here: <https://www.huroncounty.ca/plandev/county-wide-projects/huron-natural-environment-update/>