

# Ottawa's Wild Island



Paul Renaud

Coalition To Protect South March Highlands

*[All photos in this presentation were taken in or of the South March Highlands]*

# National Capital's 3 Major Eco-Corridors



# A Wild Island Inside Ottawa

(3x Larger Than Stanley Park)



Old Growth Trees  
> 100 Years Old

30 Eco-Types  
Of Vegetation

10 Distinct  
Habitats

Visible Canadian  
Shield

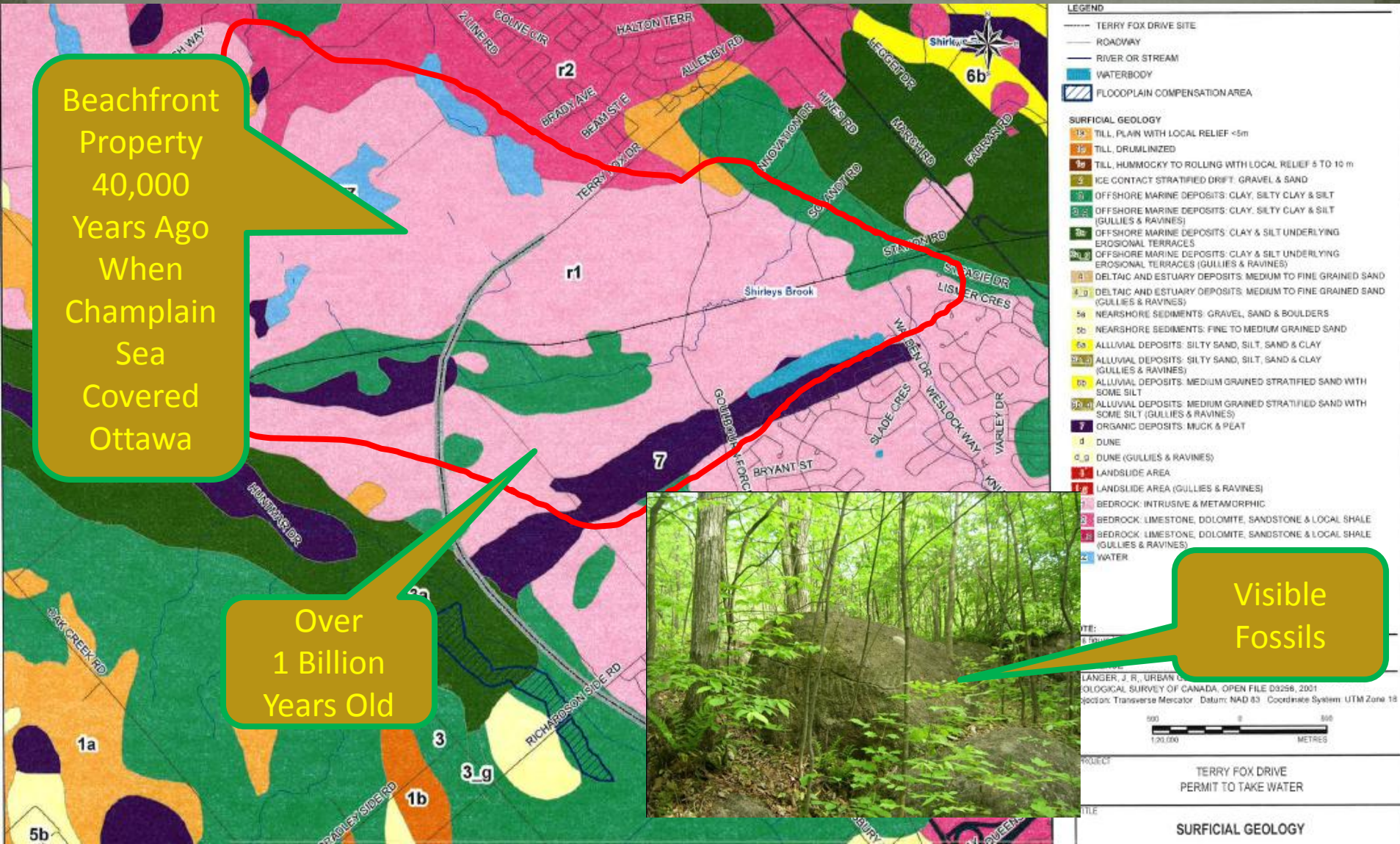
# Visible Pre-Cambrian Shield

Beachfront Property  
40,000 Years Ago  
When Champlain Sea  
Covered Ottawa

Over  
1 Billion  
Years Old



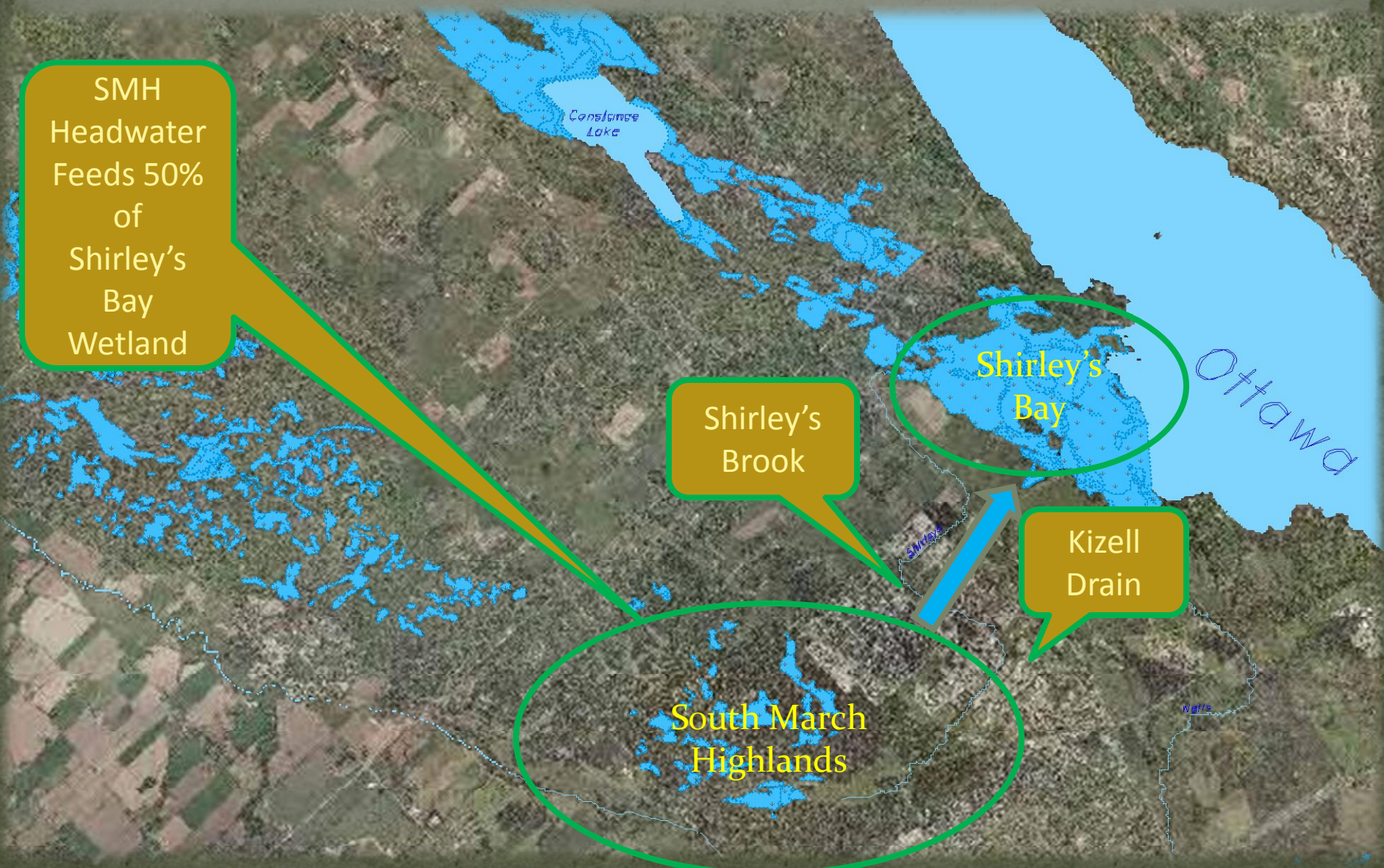
Visible  
Fossils



# A Distinctive Setting



# Integral to Shirley's Bay Hydrology



SMH  
Headwater  
Feeds 50%  
of  
Shirley's  
Bay  
Wetland

Shirley's  
Brook

Shirley's  
Bay

Kizell  
Drain

South March  
Highlands

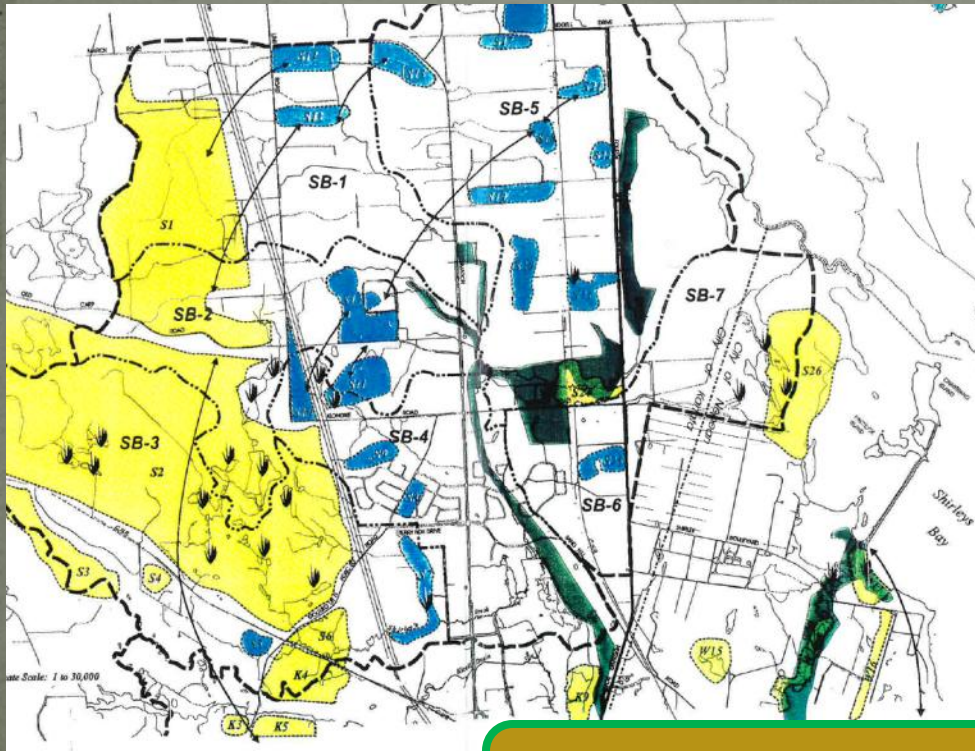
Ottawa

Watte

Shirley's

# Wildlife Corridors in Shirley's Brook Subwatershed

Source: Shirley's Brook / Watt's Creek Subwatershed Study, 1999



Natural  
Eco-Connection  
To  
Shirley's Bay  
Wetlands



Fish of Special Concern  
(Bridle Shiner)

# *Densest Bio-Diversity In Ottawa*

[Brunton, 2008]

Over 679 Species:  
440 Native Plants  
164 Avian  
75 Mammals, Fish,  
Amphibians, Reptiles

Unknown Number of  
Insect, Bryophyte  
& Fungi Species

All Within an  
Area of 3 x 4 km





# Provincially Significant Life Science Area

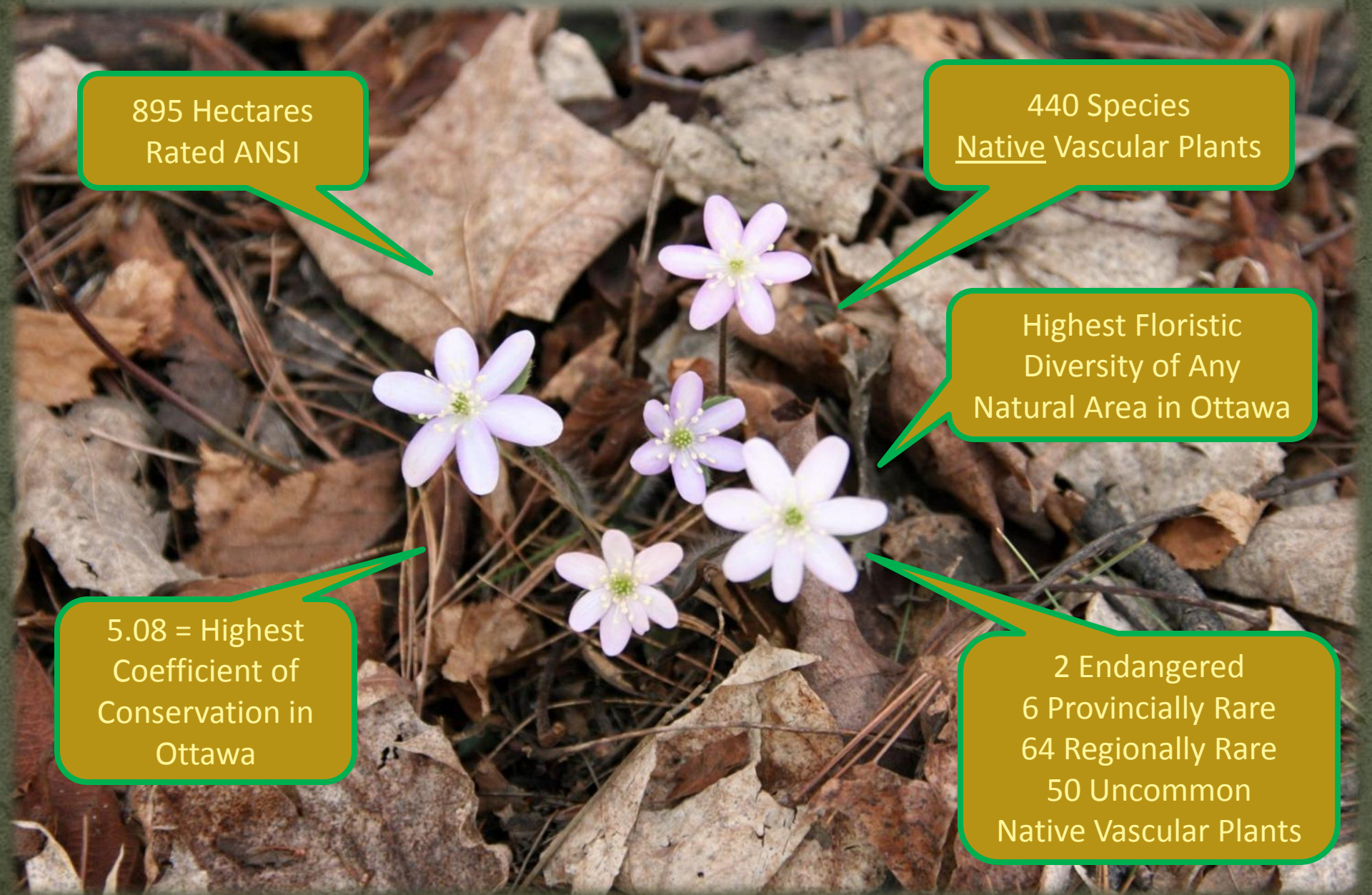
895 Hectares  
Rated ANSI

440 Species  
Native Vascular Plants

Highest Floristic  
Diversity of Any  
Natural Area in Ottawa

5.08 = Highest  
Coefficient of  
Conservation in  
Ottawa

2 Endangered  
6 Provincially Rare  
64 Regionally Rare  
50 Uncommon  
Native Vascular Plants



# Ponds, Meadows & Forests



*“Trillium Woods, which is like a chunk of the Gatineaus in the urban landscape of Ottawa, with rich plant and animal life found nowhere else in the urban part of the City”*

Ottawa Urban Natural Areas Environmental Evaluation  
[Muncaster & Brunton, 2008]

# + Provincially Significant Wetland Complex

114 Hectares  
Rated ANSI

164 Avian Species  
Observed

1 Endangered  
3 Threatened  
5 Special Concern  
30 Regionally Rare  
Avian Species



# 136 Bird Species Nest in the SMH



# Undocumented Number of Vernal Pools

Over 26 identified species of  
Herpetofauna

3 Threatened Species  
2 Special Concern

Insect of Special Concern  
(Monarch Butterfly)



# 18 Known Species At Risk

## Endangered or Threatened

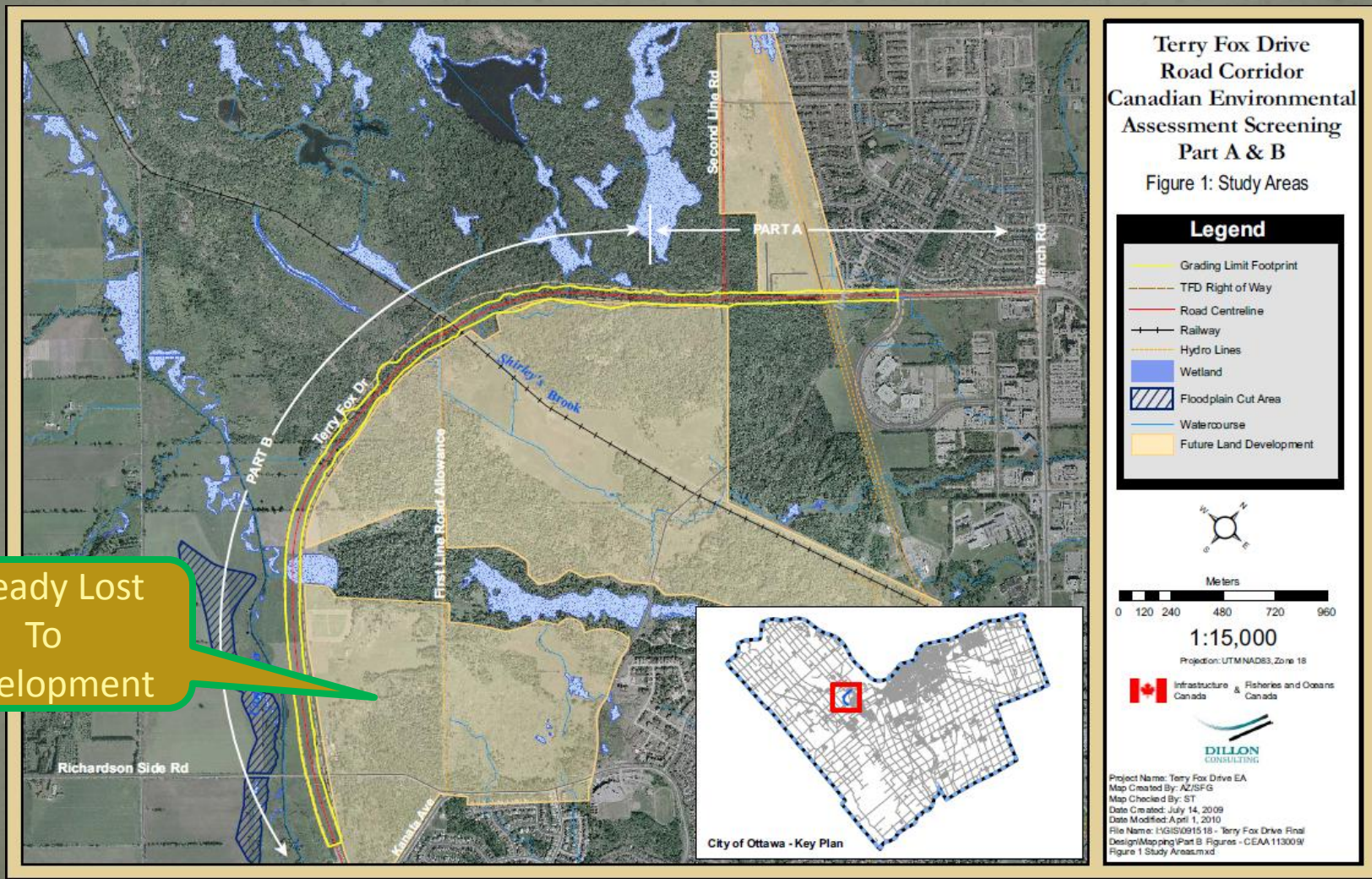
- American Ginseng
- Butternut
- Loggerhead Shrike
- Blanding's Turtle
- Whip-poor-will
- Golden Winged Warbler
- Western Chorus Frog
- Olive Sided Flycatcher
- Eastern Musk Turtle

## Special Concern

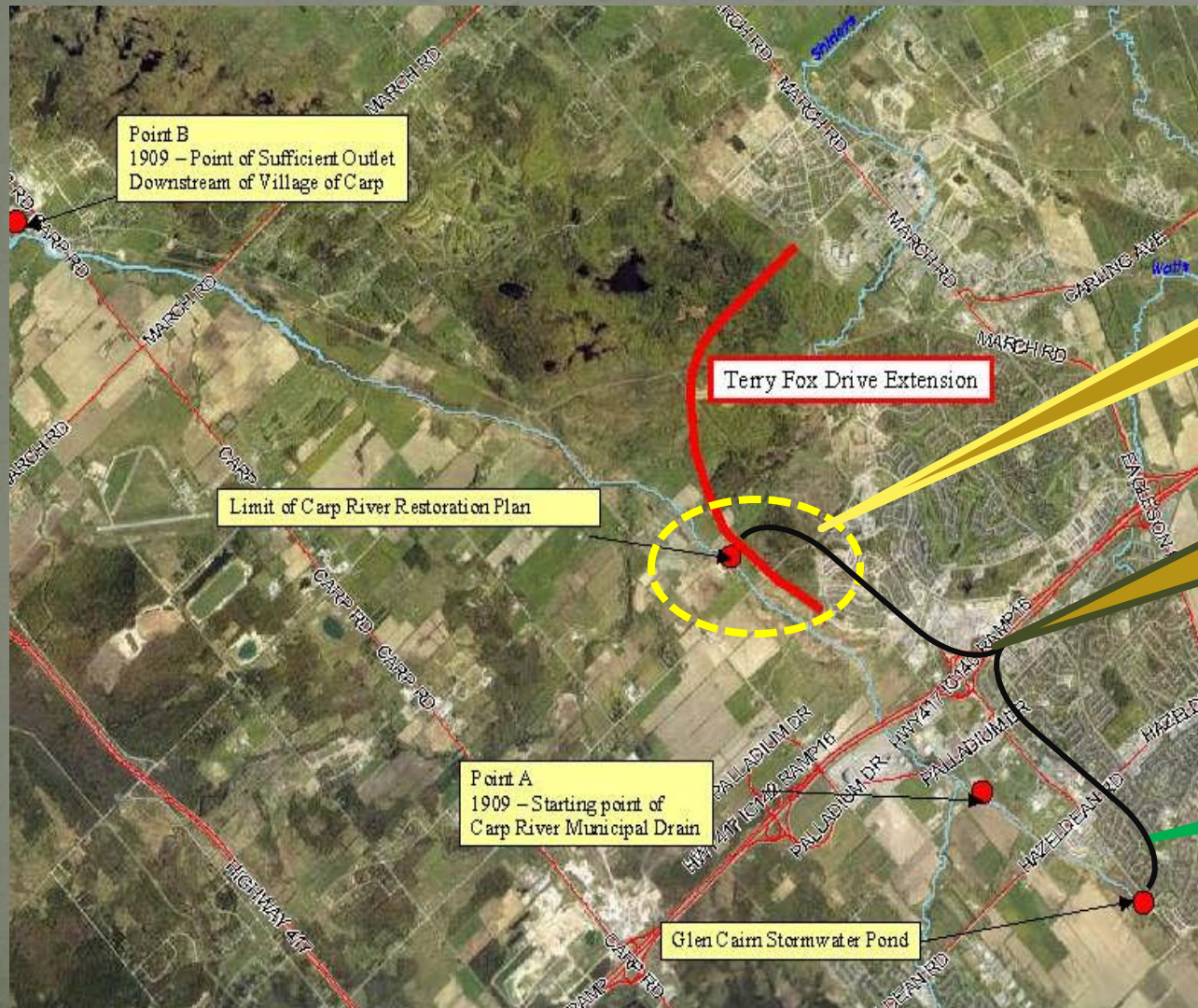
- Bridle Shiner
- Short Eared Owl
- Black Tern
- Common Nighthawk
- Snapping Turtle
- Eastern Milksnake
- Monarch Butterfly
- Bald Eagle
- Red Headed Woodpecker



# Development Triggered by TFDE



# 45,000 m<sup>3</sup> Impact on Carp River Floodplain



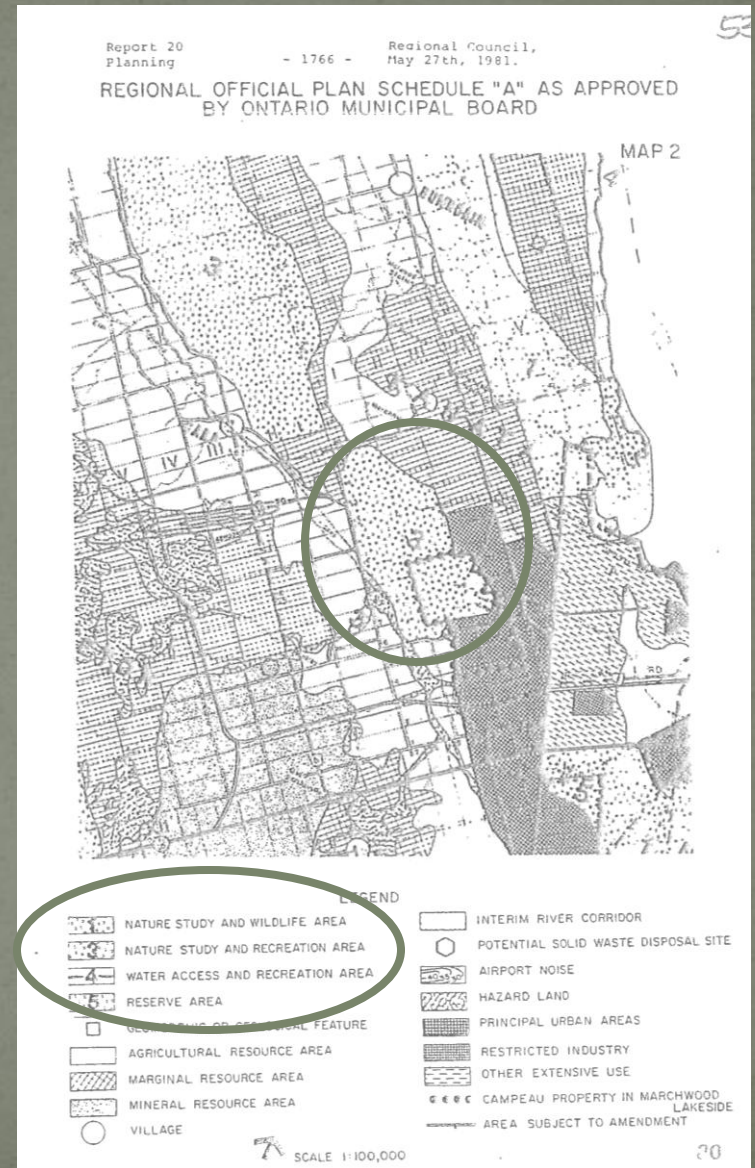
1.4 km TFDE  
Overlap with CRRP

Carp River  
Restoration Plan  
(CRRP) Area

100-Year Flooding  
2x in 2 years!



# Original 1970s Zoning

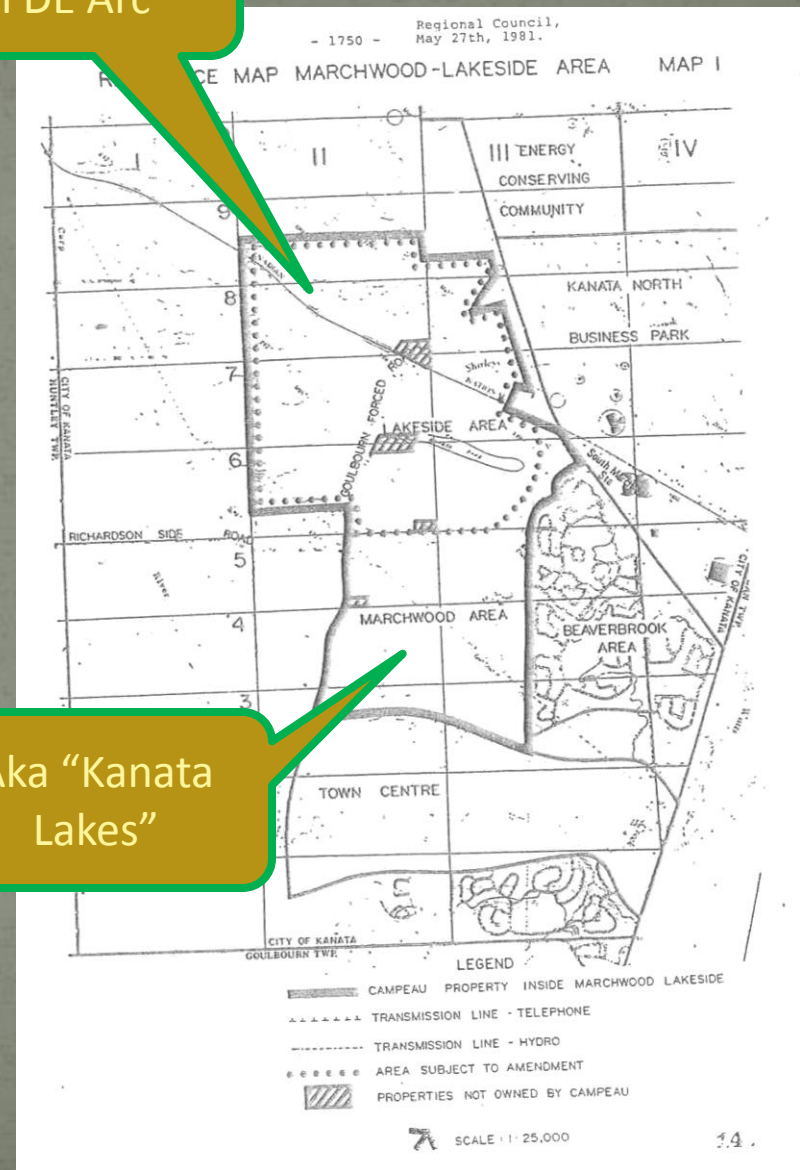


# 1981 Rezoning



Area Inside  
TFDE Arc

Aka "Kanata  
Lakes"



# Opposition to the 1981 Re-Zoning

- Ottawa Valley Field Naturalists
  - *“Insufficient basis for a sound planning decision”* due to *“lack of a comprehensive environmental assessment”* of the SMH
  - Campeau Environmental Assessment was *“woefully inadequate”*
    - Insufficient field time
    - Field coverage incomplete
    - Ignored important data bases
    - No critical interpretation of sources
- The system of Natural Environment Areas established within the RMOC represented an achievement matched in only other places in Canada
  - Planning Staff recommended that the Campeau proposal be denied
  - Regional Planning Council rezoned the SMH over these objections

# Subsequent Changes To Planning Context

- Ontario Environmental Protection Act (1990)
- Federal Wetlands Policy (1991)
- Ontario Wetlands Policy (1992)
- Ontario Environmental Bill of Rights (1993)
- Canadian Species At Risk Act (2003)
- City of Ottawa Official Plan (2003)
- Ontario Provincial Policy Statement (2005)
- Ottawa Greenspace Master Plan (2006)
- Ottawa Greenspace Amendment to Official Plan (2006)
- Ontario Species At Risk Act (2007)
- Ottawa Auditor General Report on Population Forecast (2007)
- Ottawa Revised Transportation Master Plan (2008)
- Ottawa Urban Natural Areas Evaluation (2008)
- Ottawa SMH Conservation Forest Study (2008)
- Ontario MoE Ministerial Part II Order for the Carp River Floodplain (2008)
- Ottawa Distinctive Tree By-Law (2009)



# TFD Severs Eco-Connectivity of SMH

- What Scientists have to say:
  - *“Ecologically the worst possible place to put a road ... TFD dramatically reduces the ability of the SMH to withstand change”* [Daniel Brunton]
  - *“TFD will lead to the inevitable eradication of the Blanding’s Turtle – regardless of the mitigation measures proposed”* [Ron Brooks – Lead Turtle Scientist for Canada COWESIC Committee]
  - *“Grave concerns about the ecological damage caused by the TFD extension”* [City of Ottawa’s Forest & Greenspace Advisory Committee]
  - *“TFD creates a Berlin Wall that blocks eco-passage and kills anything that tries to cross it”* [Daniel Brunton]



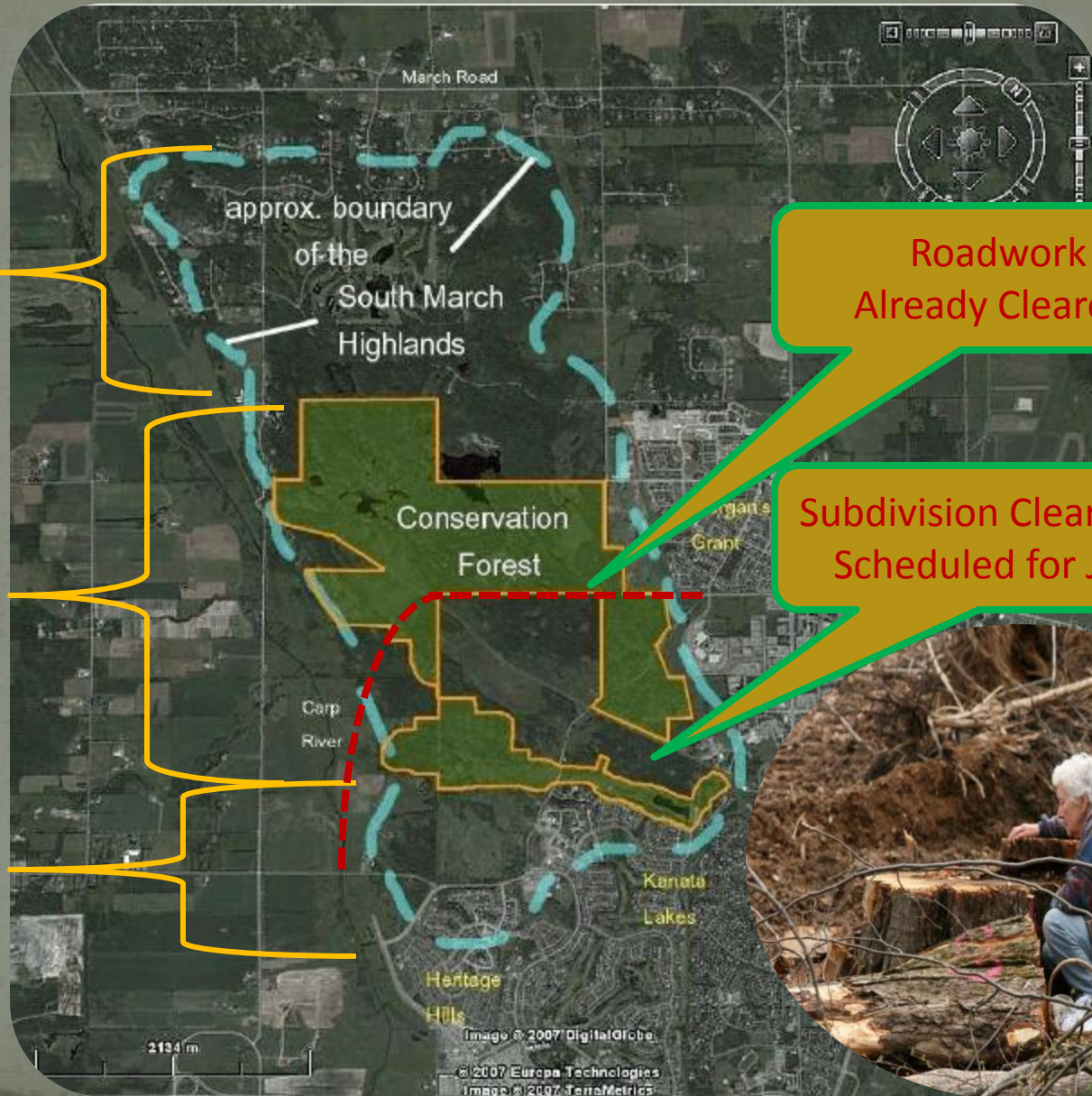
# Failure to Act Now = Lost Forever

Unprotected  
Steady Loss To  
Development

Piecemeal  
Protection

Gaping hole  
in centre

Already Lost  
Since Photo  
Was Taken



Roadwork  
Already Clearcut

Subdivision Clear-Cutting  
Scheduled for July 17



# Opposition to Development

- Coalition To Protect South March (4000+ people)
- David Suzuki Foundation
- Sierra Club of Canada
- Greenbelt Coalition
- Canadian Biodiversity Institute
- Canadian Parks & Wilderness
- Ottawa Federation of Community Associations
- Green Party of Canada
- Ottawa Riverkeeper
- Ecology Ottawa
- Ottawa Valley Field Naturalists
- Ottawa Carleton Wildlife Centre



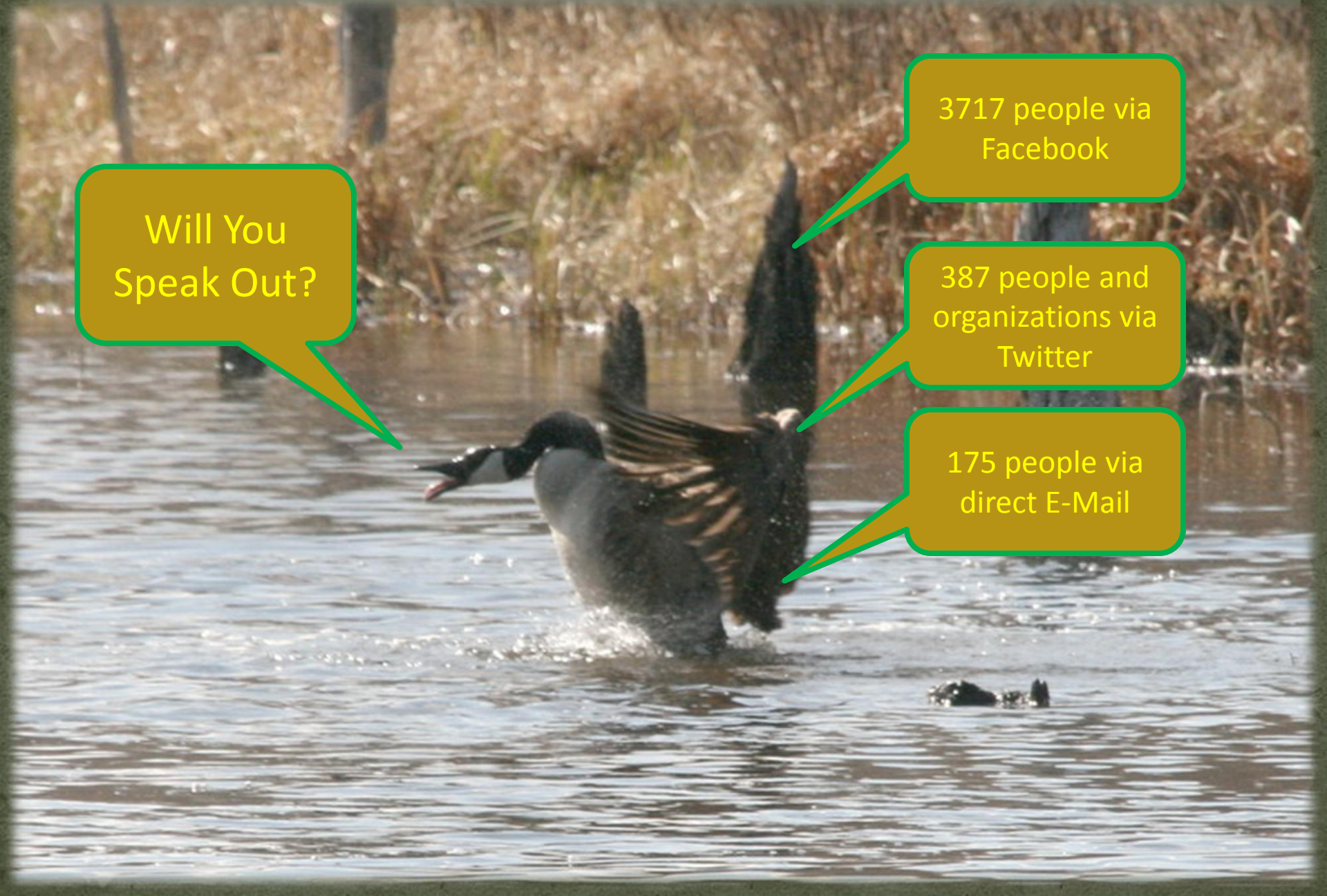
# The Public Wants To Save This Forest

Will You  
Speak Out?

3717 people via  
Facebook

387 people and  
organizations via  
Twitter

175 people via  
direct E-Mail





# What the City of Ottawa Must Do:

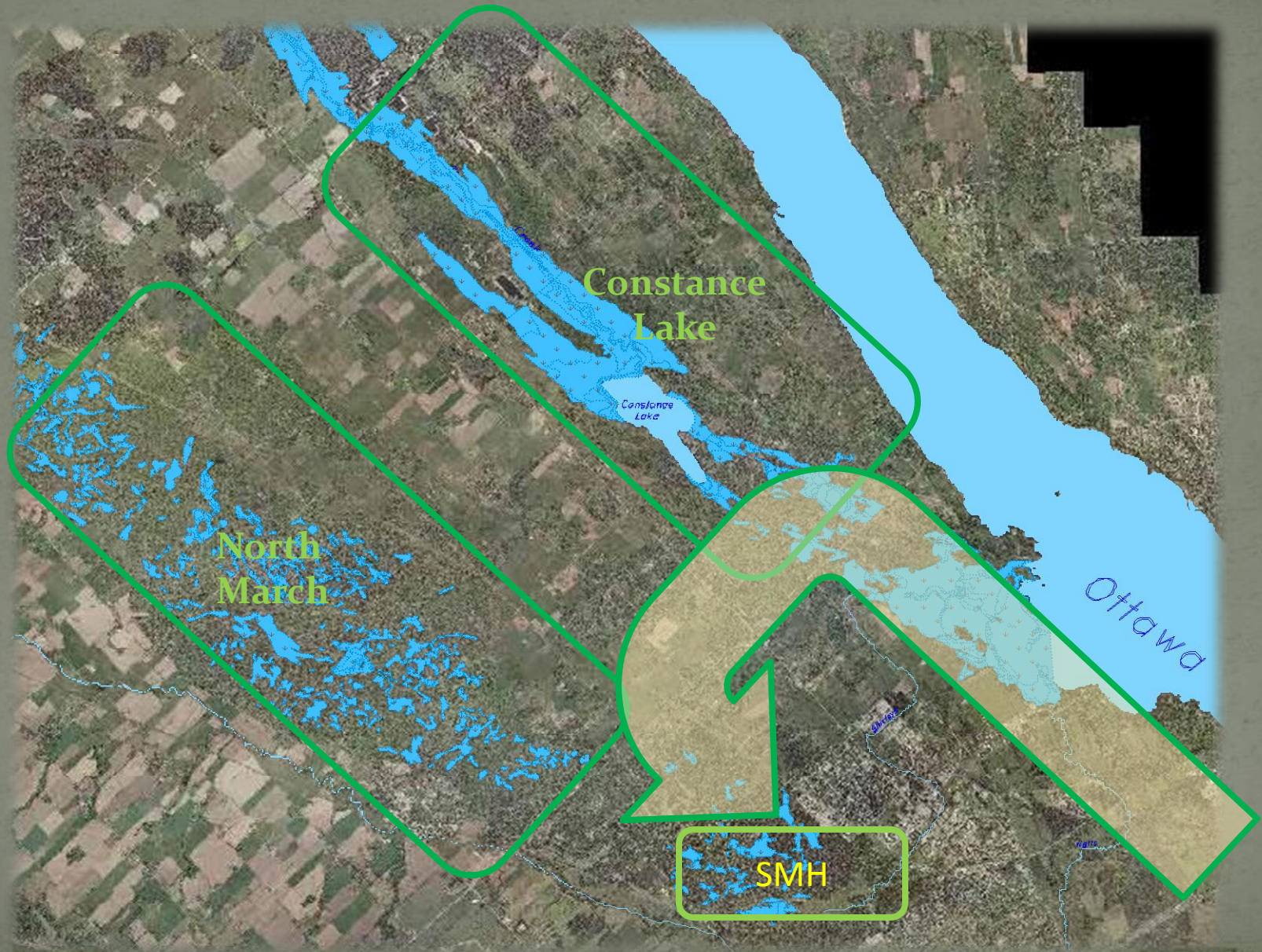
- Stop the TFDE project and all development in SMH
  - O'Brien stopped the Siemens tunnel project downtown after he took office, proving that an in-flight project can be stopped.
  - The TFDE project is no longer justifiable if a realistic traffic study is done.
- Rescind delegated authority that allows staff to approve a plan of subdivision without public review
  - Force developers to operate in the open under public review.
- Create a General Manager equivalent position for the Office of Environmental Affairs.
  - This office should be given a mandate to implement green aspects of the OP
  - Also given approval authority over all infrastructure projects to ensure that green-hat interest balances black-hat construction.
- Per the current official plan, purchase lands adjacent to current conservation forest.
  - Leverage purchasing power by working with the National Capital Commission and the Nature Conservancy of Canada
  - Working with the NCC, expropriate all land within the arc of TFD
- Insist that City Staff stop promoting development in the SMH at taxpayer's expense.
  - This includes dropping the "ultimate" realignment of Shirley's Brook at a cost of \$1M
- Establish working relationship with NCC that results in transfer of wilderness areas to NCC and urban recreational lands to City.
  - Maximizes core competency of each authority



# “Shepherd’s Hook” Extends Greenbelt



# Alternative Eco-Corridor Vision



# Alternative Vision of Eco-Corridors Revitalizing The Emerald Necklace



11 Eco-Corridors  
Linking  
7 Ecological  
Reservoirs