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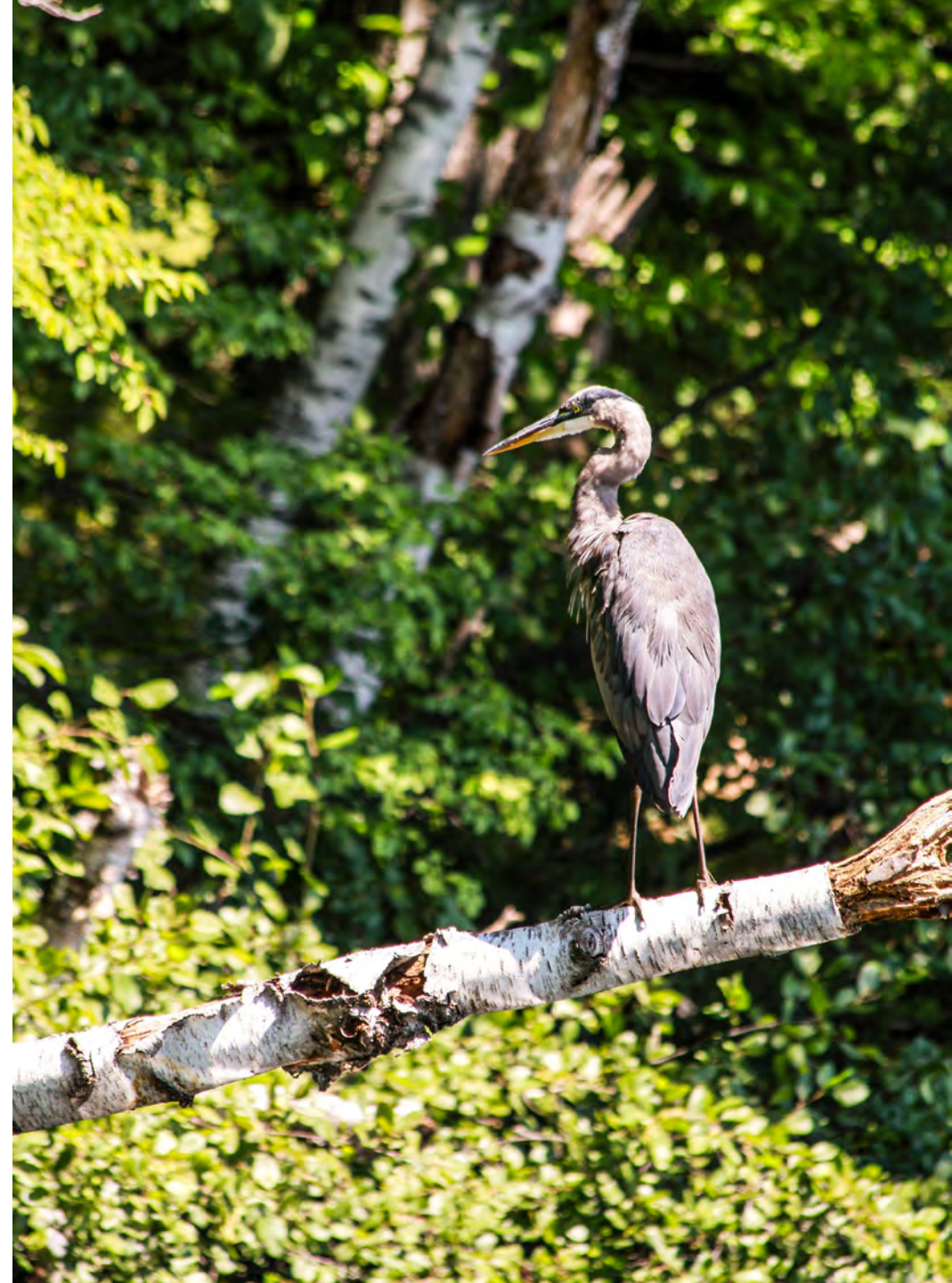
# **Building a Landscape Conservation Approach: The Potential for Regional Conservation and Climate Partnerships in Canada**

**Sarah Winterton, Lead Researcher**

**John Lounds, Director of Business Development**

**2023 RCP Network Gathering**

**November 9, 2023**





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- Support private land conservation through research and policy for strong and leadingedge practices
- Independent voice to enhance public trust and confidence in private land conservation in Canada
- Custodian of the Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices

# CLC initiatives

- Hosted “A National Conversation on Performance Assurance Approaches for Land Trusts in Canada” in February 2020
- Piloting performance assurance program with up to 10 land trusts
- Published “Forever Protected? The potential for sector-wide approaches to stewardship and legal defence of private conservation lands”
- Currently conducting feasibility studies for a federal program to provide matching funds for stewardship endowment and a national insurance reciprocal program, like Terrafirma, to help with legal defence



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# Building a Landscape Conservation Approach

## Goals:

- The potential for regional partnerships to assist in accelerating conservation outcomes in Canada to help meet the 30x30 commitment and ecological restoration objectives, especially in southern Canada
- Prioritize Indigenous reconciliation to achieve sustainable conservation outcomes
- Engage decisionmakers, funders, and the NGO community
- <https://www.lincolninst.edu/publications/working-papers/building-landscape-conservation-approach>



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# Focus Area- Southern Canada

~ 60% of land in the US is privately owned

~ 11% in Canada, 89% is Crown or Indigenous

In southern Canada the percentage of privately owned land is much higher, e.g. southern Ontario over 95%



# Canadian context

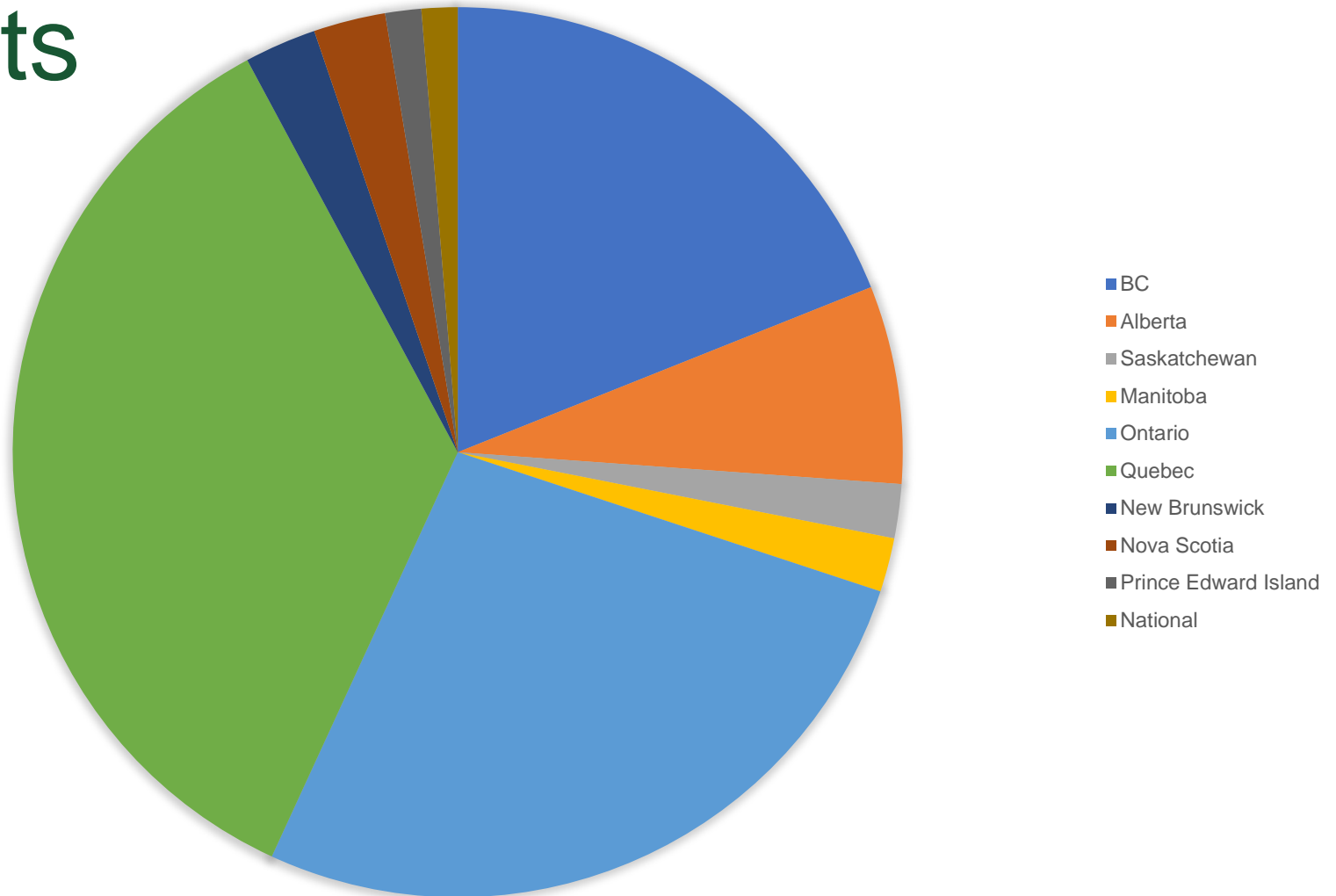
- 150 private land conservation organizations in Canada, with Nature Conservancy Canada and Ducks Unlimited that operate at national level
- 59% of private land conservation organizations have no full-time positions, and 24% support one to six positions, nearly 75% of private land conservation organizations function with limited paid human resource capacity
- More than CA\$2.3 billion in conservation estate is held by private land conservation organizations either in fee simple ownership (ownership of title to the land) or as conservation agreements.
- 37 percent report annual revenue of less than CA\$100,000
- According to the Nature Conservancy of Canada, these groups steward lands supporting over 230 terrestrial species at risk



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# National Distribution of Land Trusts



# Key 'comparisons' with US context

Canada's philanthropic landscape presents challenges for Regional Conservation Partnerships and community-based land conservation organizations, such as:

- A lack of research and capacity building services to support growth;
  - Few organizations or programs fill this niche
- A need for more programs to support sustainable core funding needs; and
  - Lack of core funding for key elements such as a coordinator, logistics
- Low individual donor levels that could provide matching funds for the sector.
  - In 2021, total giving by Americans was US\$327 billion compared to Canadian giving of CA\$11.8 billion. Only 7% of Canadian donors give to environment compared to 11% in the U.S.



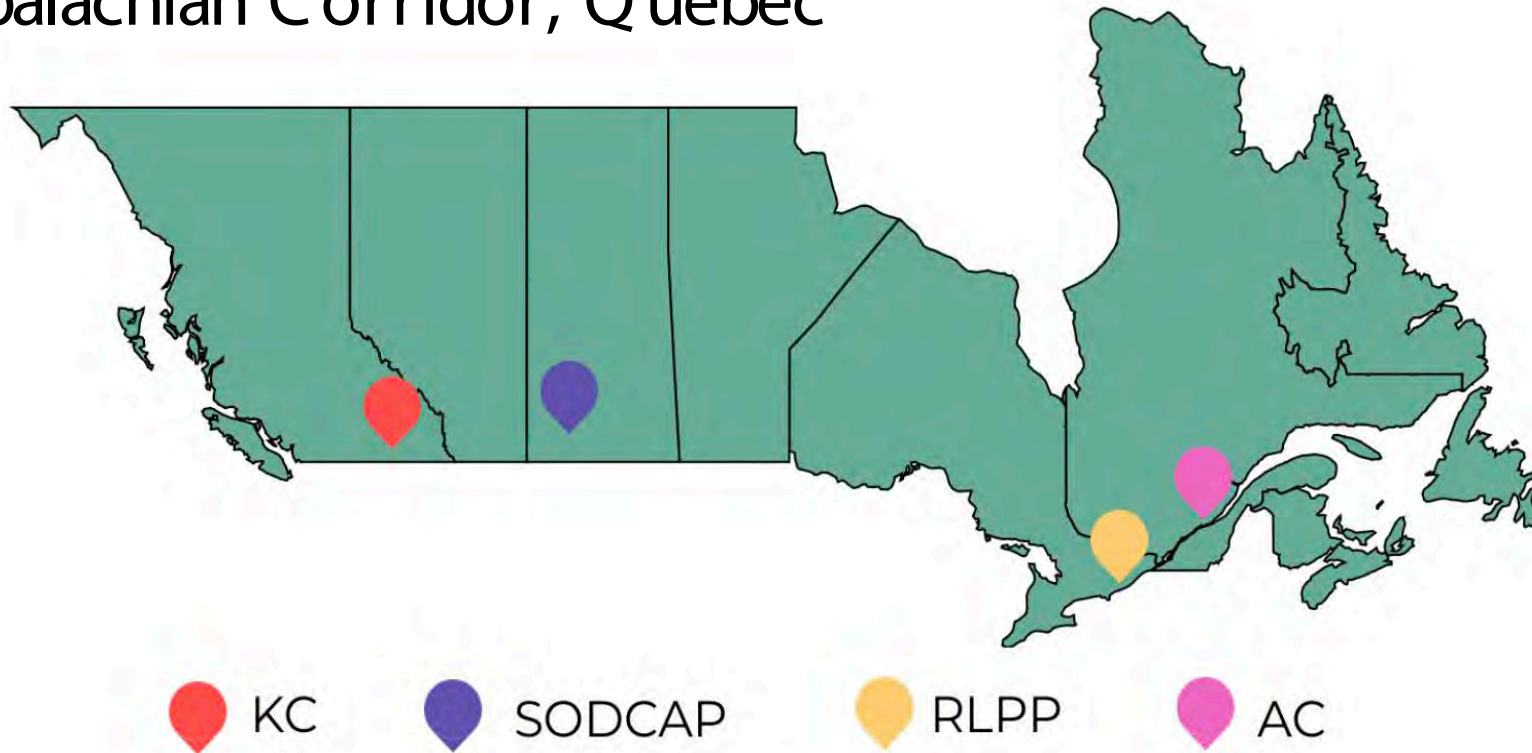
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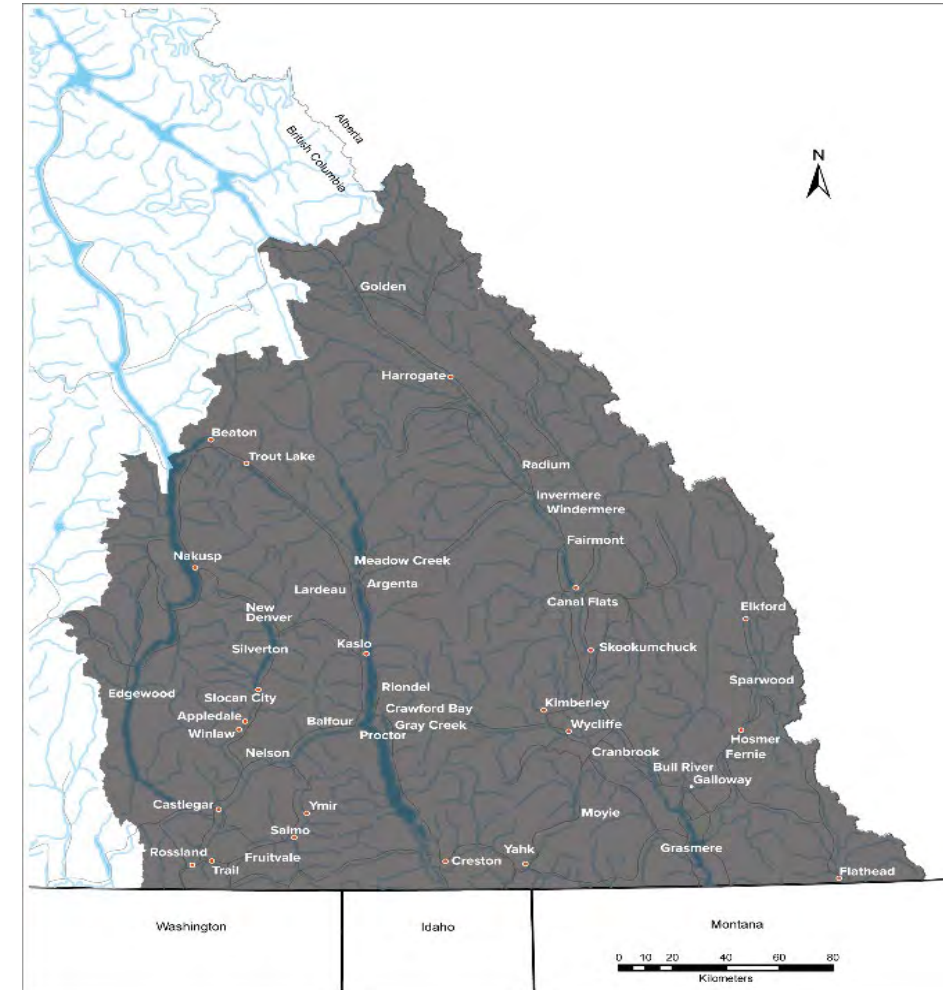
# Four Partnerships Reviewed

- Kootenay Conservation Program, British Columbia
- South of the Divide, Saskatchewan
- Rice Lake Plains Partnership, Ontario
- Appalachian Corridor, Quebec



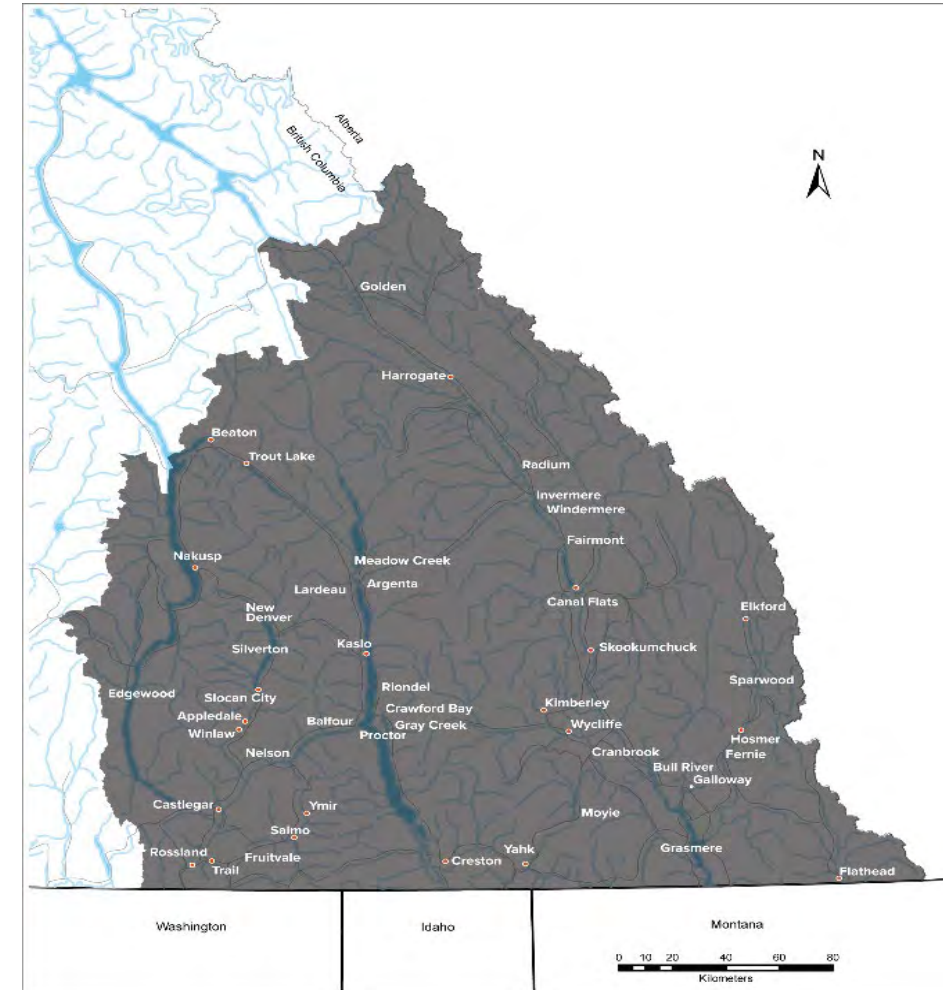
# Kootenay Conservation Program

- Established in 2002, driven by funder
- Covers almost 21.4 million acres
- 8% privately owned
- Population 163,000
- 36 to 85 autonomous organizations - government agencies, First Nations, conservation organizations, land trusts, stewardship groups, agricultural producers, and resource industries.
- Supports partners in protecting species and habitats at risk on private land, to conserve biodiversity, and sustain landscapes' naturally functioning ecosystems



# Kootenay Conservation Program

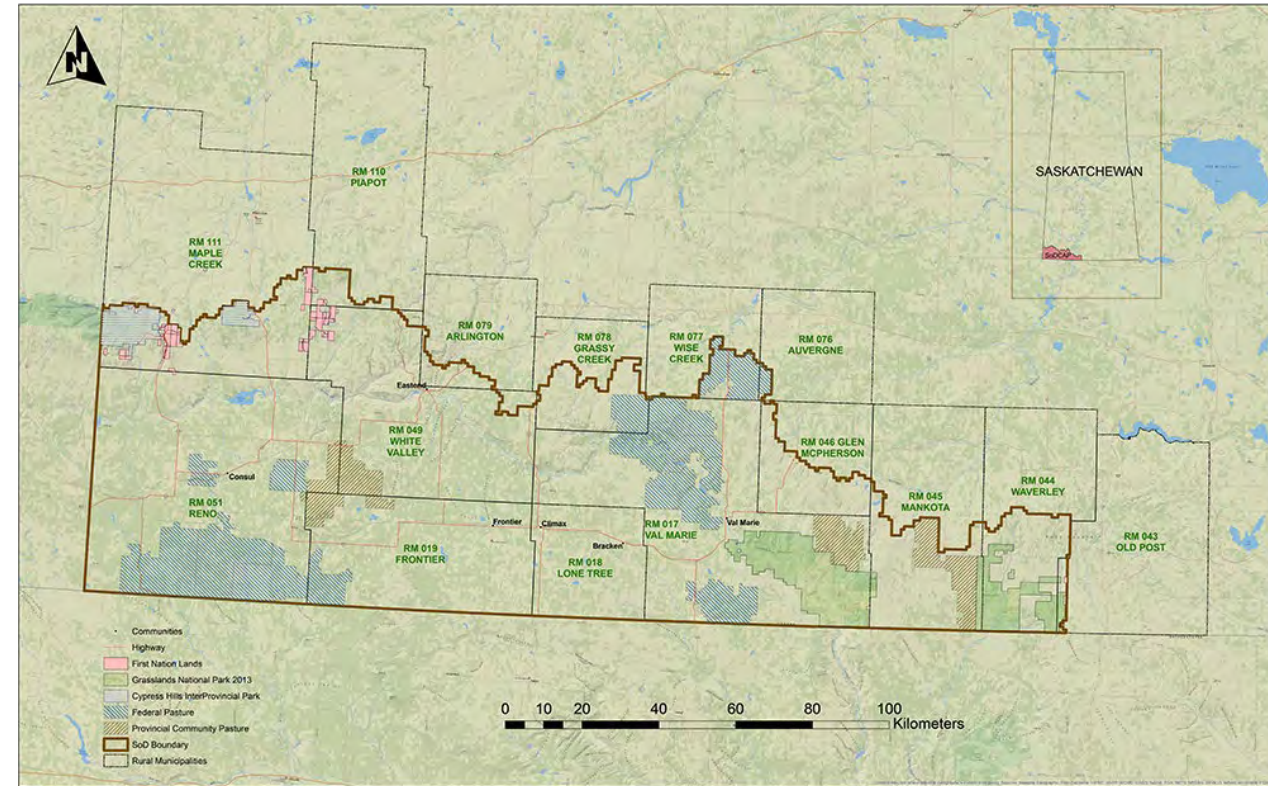
- Conserved over 593,000 acres, includes 204,304 acres of private land (12 percent of total area of private land)
- Coordinated with land trusts to acquire 60 properties
- Local Conservation Funds (LCF) - legally binding local government mechanisms – municipal parcel tax
- Invested CA\$2.73 million and facilitated 61 LCF-funded projects
- CA\$3.96 million through CNPP-funded Kootenay Connect Priority Places – 3.95 million ac and over 50 collaborative stewardship and restoration projects





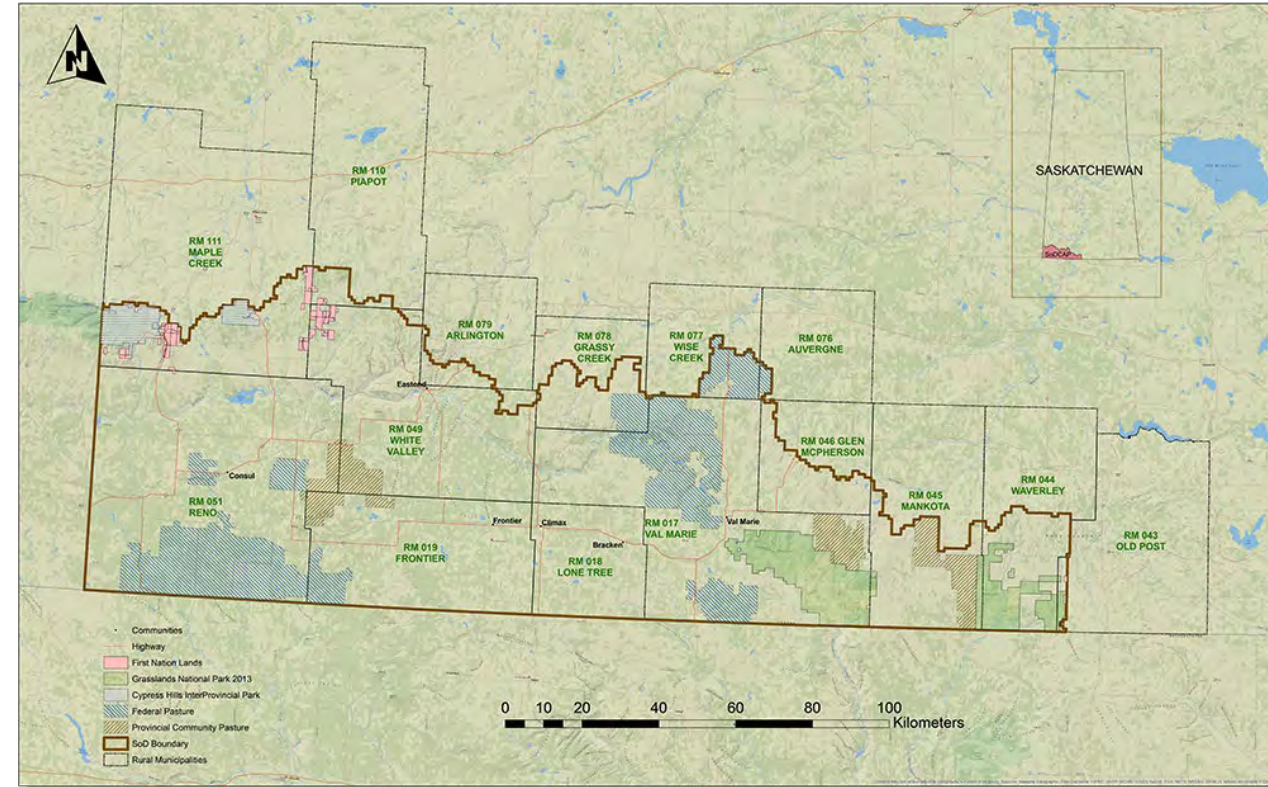
# SODCAP

- Established in 2014 – driven by federal government to meet SAR mandate
- 15 partners - land managers, land conservation organizations, industry associations, provincial and federal agencies, and government and private funders.
- Area of over 3.45 million ac - population 3,000 – 4,000
- Over half the landscape supports a natural mixed-grass prairie
- 46% privately owned, 50% is provincial Crown land, 3% is federally owned, and 1% belongs to First Nations



# SODCAP

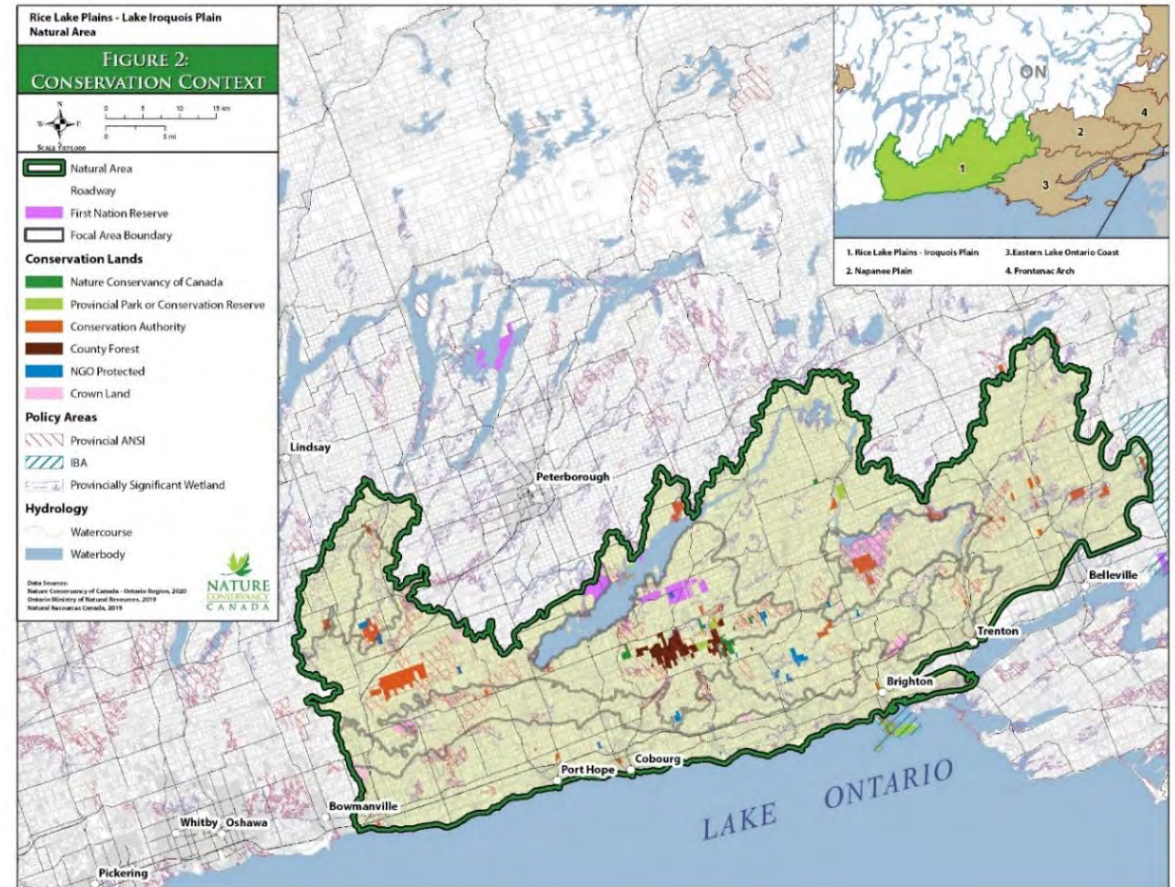
- Action plan focuses on 13 different species listed under the federal Species at Risk Act
- Delivers “results-based agreements” - producers receive financial incentives for protecting and restoring habitats for SAR
- 16 Results Based Conservation Agreements (77838.195 ac)
- 13 Habitat Management Agreements (127,506 ac)
- 6 Habitat Restoration Agreements (691 ac)





# Rice Lake Plains Partnership

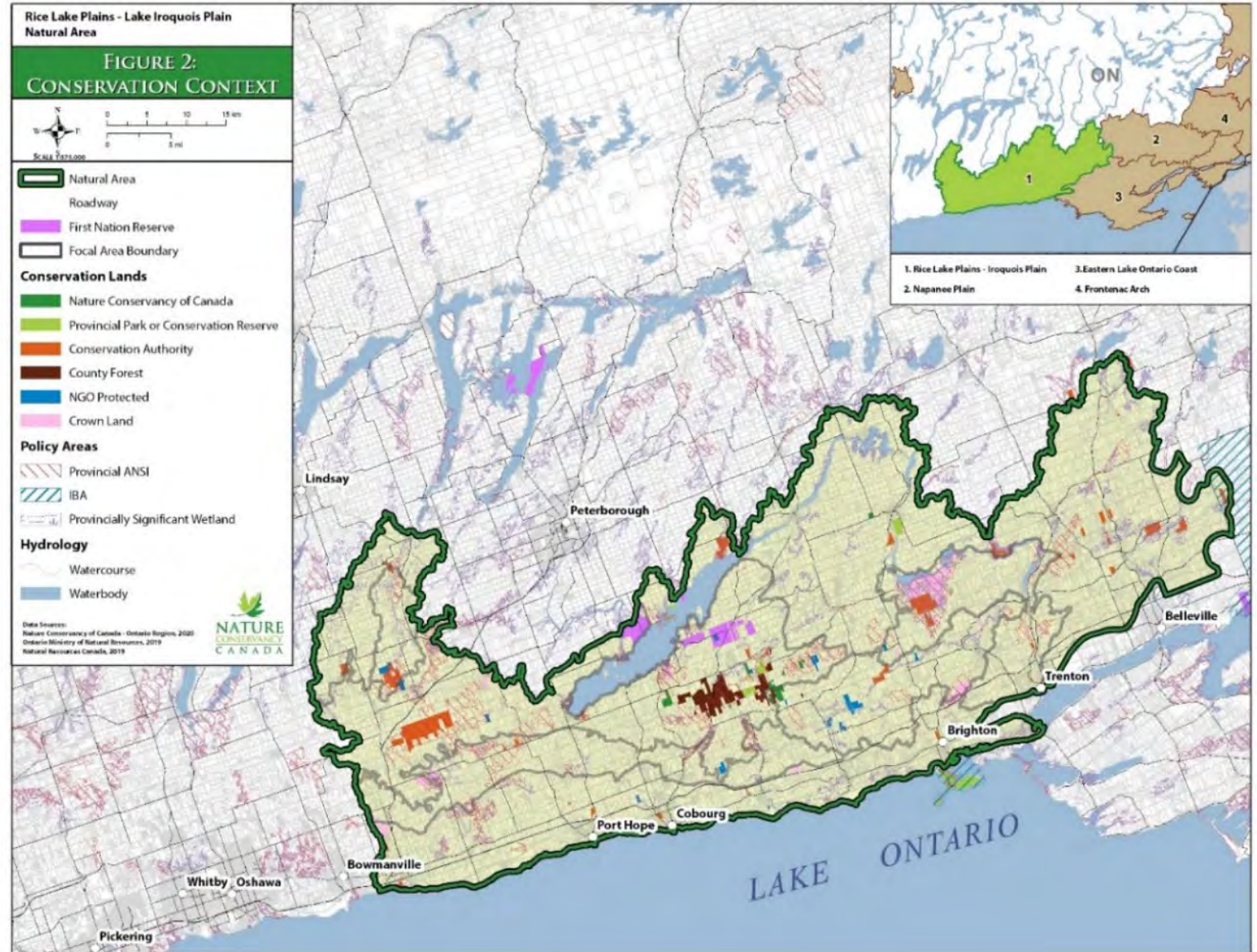
- Established in 2002 – driven by NGO mandate – Nature Conservancy
- Partnership area of 101,313 acres - one of the largest remnants of a Black Oak Savanna remaining the area
- 14 partners - First Nations, land trusts, government, conservation authorities, conservation organizations, and a foundation.
- Population 89,000
- 97% privately owned – 23% forested, 41% agriculture, 18% wetland, 7% urban, and about 3% percent is public or First Nation land - less than 3% is protected





# Rice Lake Plains Partnership

- Partnership takes a whole landscape approach
- Identified around 2,000 priority properties for outreach and engagement
- Exploring the process of organizing as a Regional Conservation Partnership – currently it is an open question whether they will continue as a coordinating body or undertake more ambitious plans



# Incorporating NatureSmart Climate Solutions - RCCP

Given the inextricable relationship between biodiversity and climate issues, the report explored how these partnerships also focus on nature smart climate solutions

- **Kootenay Connects** - To support an increase in ecosystem resilience, the KCP's goal of reducing habitat fragmentation and protecting landscape functions on a broad scale will give species the opportunity to adapt.
- **Rice Lake Plains Partnership** - the tallgrass prairie is an important habitat for species at risk and a crucial landscape for carbon sequestration – in restoring the ecosystem to healthy native prairie grasslands, it also reestablishes its potential to capture and cycle carbon.
- **SODCAP** - ranchers are managing or restoring native grasslands, so results-based agreements with these producers are also supporting the capacity of the land to store more carbon.
- **Appalachian Corridor** - forests as connected habitat for a diversity of species is a conservation driver - protecting existing wild forests is an important strategy for supporting long-term carbon storage - the AC's initiatives to protect forests preserve an important natural carbon-storage system.



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A photograph of a field of tall, thin grasses at sunset. The sky is a warm, golden yellow, and the grasses are silhouetted against it. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the lower left portion of the image, containing the word "Recommendations" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

# Recommendations

- The RCCP concept should be further investigated for wider application in Canada, to foster and encourage the establishment and development of more RCCPs and significantly expand their geographic reach and impact.
  - ✓ Pilot project CLC/Kawartha Land Trust
- A workshop in early 2024 for current RCPs, Priority Place and Community-Nominated Priority Place initiatives, and other partnerships in Canada should be undertaken to share information and determine a scope of action on the potential role for RCCPs, and on how to support current partnerships, help establish RCPs in new geographies, and leverage partnerships to establish sustainable funding.
  - ✓ Funding received



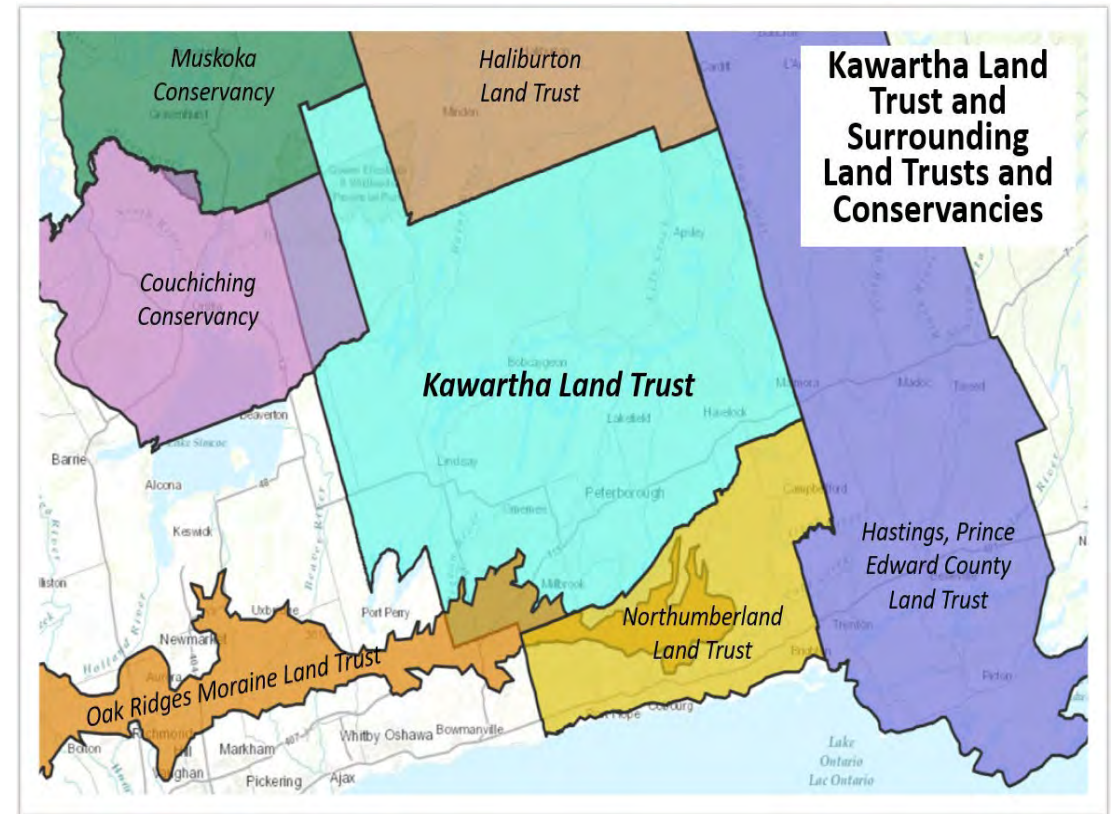
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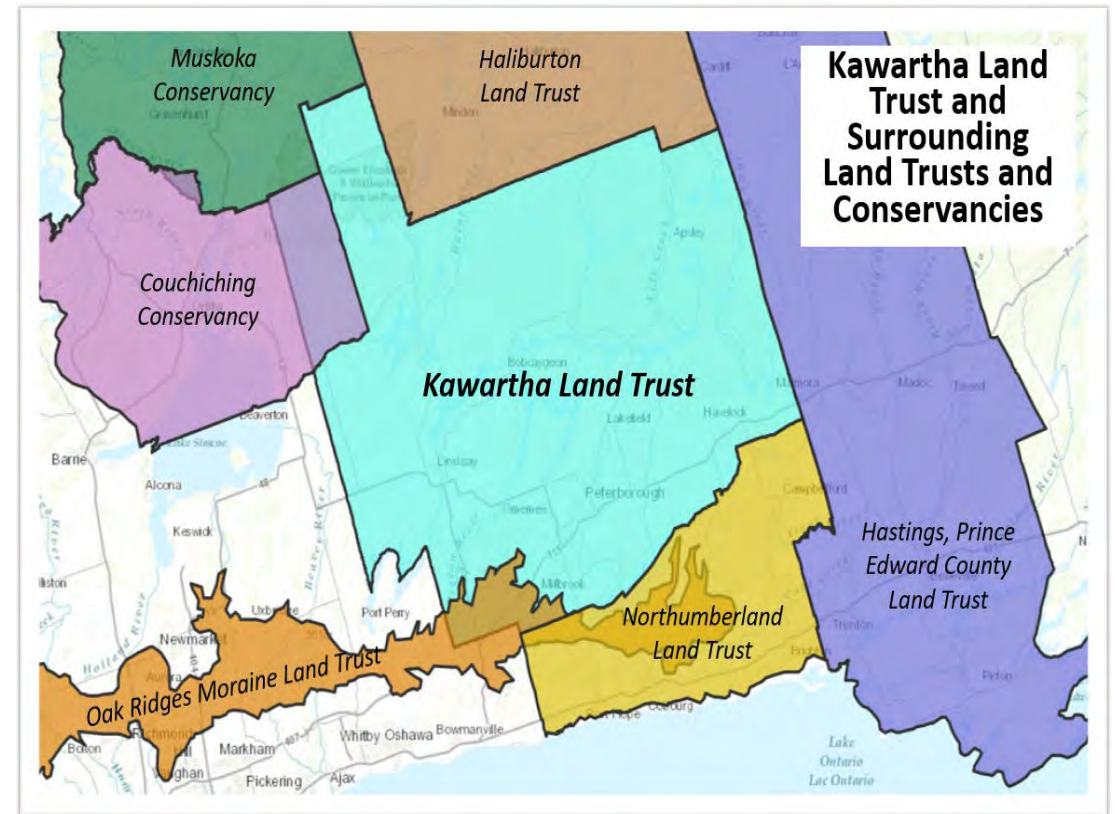
# Kawartha Land Trust

- The Peterborough and Kawartha Lakes – transitional area from Greater Toronto Area to near-north and eastern Ontario.
- Contains the ecological, economic, and social values needed for a resilient landscape.
- About 15% of the land base is agriculture, and 40% is forests, meaning the agricultural and sustainable forestry users are critical
- Growth projections for the region threaten the habitat and character of the landscape, but protection, land stewardship and deepening cultural appreciation of the land can still be achieved before its too late.



# Kawartha Land Trust

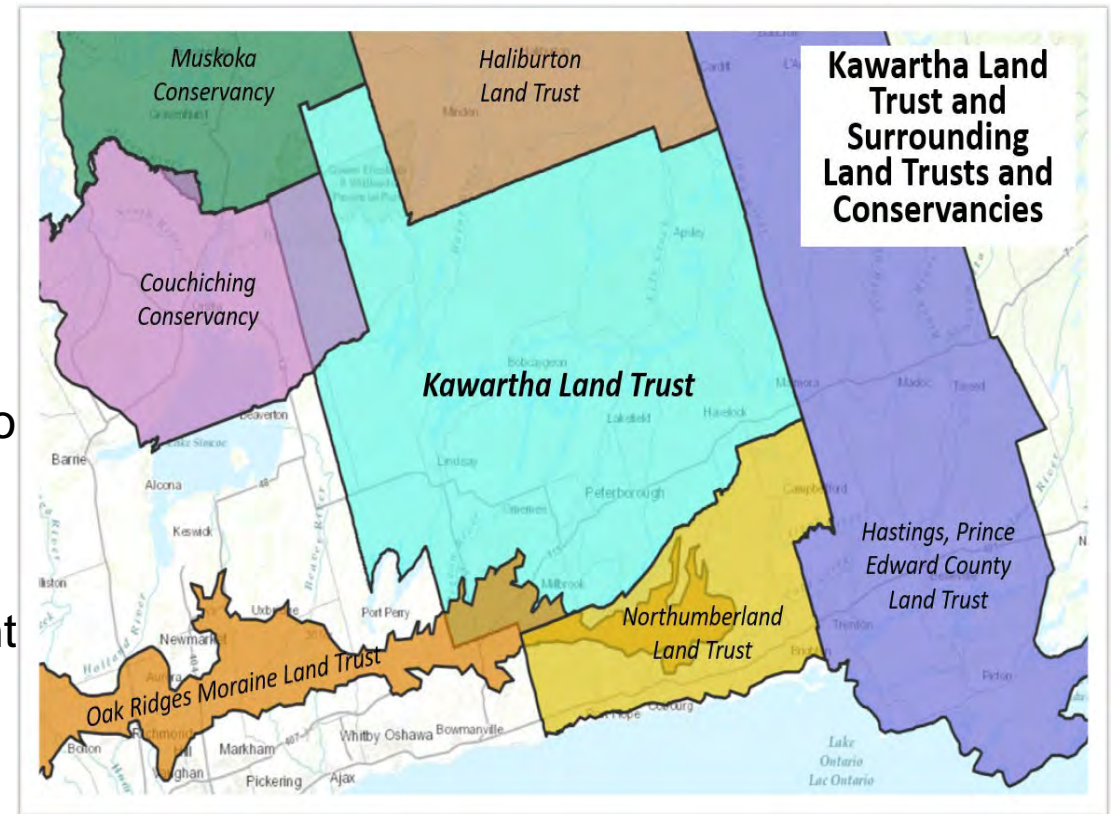
- In partnership with the Centre for Land Conservation, KLT is exploring a Regional Conservation and Climate Partnership.
- Total project budget for pilot is \$770,000
- \$525,000 confirmed over the next 3 years,
- Hire a coordinator
- Greg Moore of Golden Gate Conservancy to assist with facilitation of first meetings.





# Kawartha Land Trust

- Builds on partnership development the KLT has been doing, including with First Nations within the Williams Treaty, and with key stakeholders in the area
- A multisector mapping exercise called *Kawarths Naturally Connected* to identify the most valuable lands in the Kawarthas for conservation
- Service area of 1.2 million acres, 5,500 acres protected
- Received a NatureSmart Climate Solutions grant to further develop their *Partners in Conservation* program working across sectors
- Close proximity to Rice Lake Plains



Some potential initiatives for consideration at the workshop include:

- An RCCP Learning Exchange Initiative, similar to those delivered by the Lincoln Institute for Land Policy, as a regular capacity building forum available to the sector;
- A collaboration with Environment and Climate Change Canada to determine the value and capacity of RCCPs in implementing activities under Canada's Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund that help to achieve quantifiable outcomes related to carbon and biodiversity goals through a whole landscape approach, including:
  - Testing and delivering a proof of concept through the RCCP framework on how to implement and track measures that increase carbon sequestration and reverse biodiversity loss at the landscape level
  - Examining funding mechanisms, such as the Catalyst Fund in the US, to identify effective models to leverage additional sustainable funds for these activities and conducting a feasibility study for implementation.



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- Concepts and definitions for mechanisms and strategies to support the expansion of RCCPs in other regions
- A suite of shared tools, resources, and mechanisms for RCCPs and other partnerships that help inform priority setting, conservation actions and stewardship, including new technologies, such as remote sensing and GIS, and datasets that are accessible through an online portal. This would include identifying the capacity and funding needs for implementation
- Standards for good practice and governance
- A plan for sustained action through development of local and regional sustainable matching funding that can be replicated across jurisdictions. This would include a pan-Canadian study of municipal powers to establish mechanisms like local conservation funds



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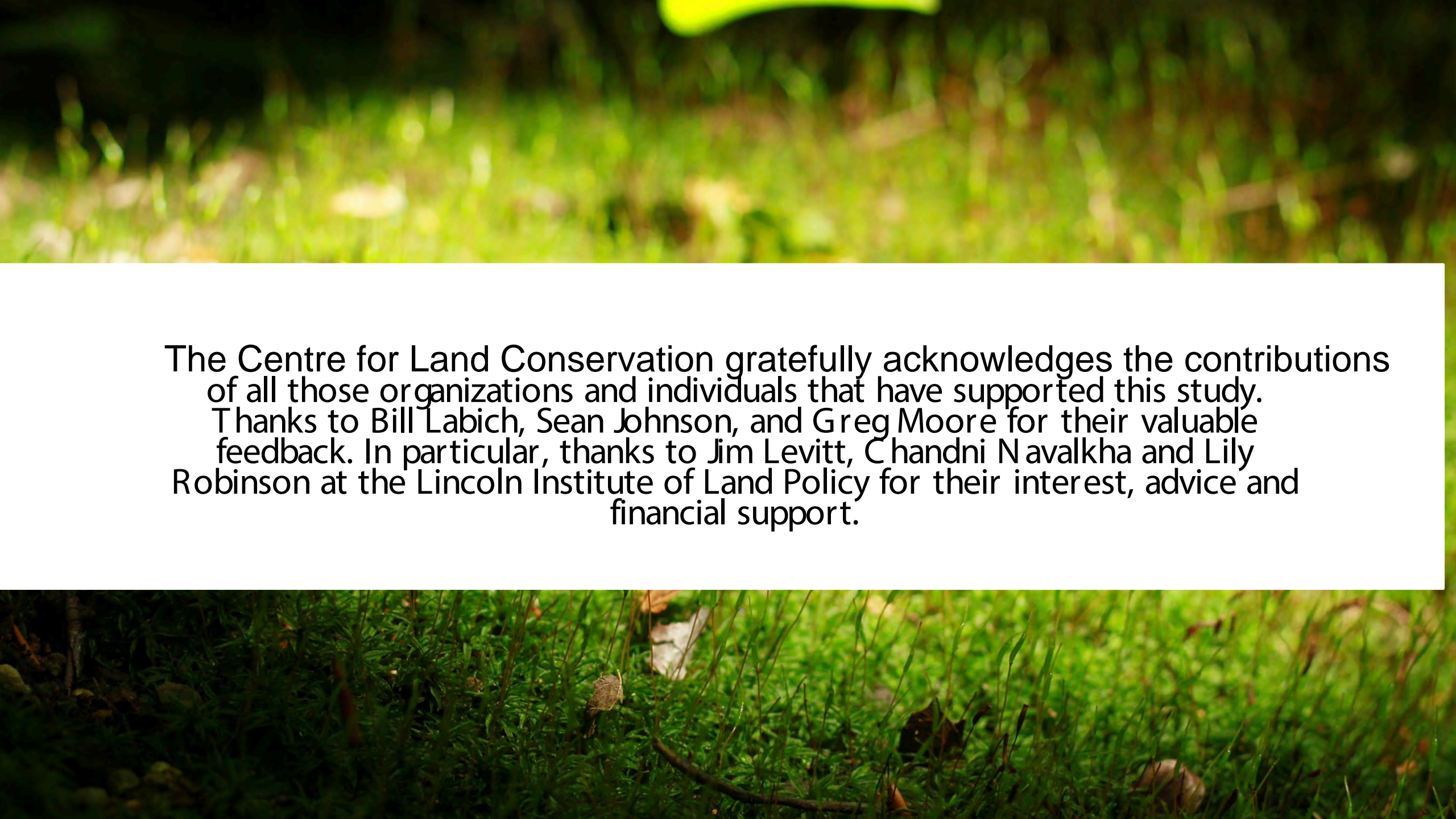
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The Centre for Land Conservation gratefully acknowledges the contributions of all those organizations and individuals that have supported this study. Thanks to Bill Labich, Sean Johnson, and Greg Moore for their valuable feedback. In particular, thanks to Jim Levitt, Chandni Navalkha and Lily Robinson at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy for their interest, advice and financial support.

# Discussion



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