

Critical Elements of the Lake Simcoe Protection Act



Prepared by Environmental Defence, the Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition, and Ontario Nature

In the Lake Simcoe and Nottawasaga River Natural Heritage System and Watershed Protection Area that includes Lake Simcoe and the County of Simcoe,

1. Restore water quality and quantity to levels compatible with cold water fish reproduction and control of algae and weeds;
2. Recognize the development pressures that the Oak Ridges Moraine, Greenbelt, and Places to Grow Acts have placed on the Lake Simcoe watershed by creating a natural heritage and agricultural system to protect green space and restrict new development to existing and approved settlement areas;
3. Consult with First Nations to identify and protect First Nations heritage sites;
4. Enshrine a governance structure as recommended by the Lake Simcoe Environmental Management Strategy (LSEMS) Working Group and, in large part, by the LSEMS Steering Committee;
5. Ensure that large-scale resort developments such as Big Bay Point are consistent with the Lake Simcoe Protection Act;
6. Create recreational access that helps people treasure the lake and does not harm it;
7. Increase commitment to the restoration and rehabilitation of the Lake.

Full text:

1. Restore water quality and quantity to levels compatible with cold water fish reproduction and the control of algae and weeds.

- a. Protect the ecological and hydrological integrity of the Lake Simcoe watershed, and enforce that protection.
- b. Only land and resource uses that maintain, improve or restore the ecological and hydrological functions of the watershed area are permitted.
- c. The burden of proof is placed on the developer or project proponent to demonstrate compliance with the Act.
- d. All new riparian, riverine, or shoreline activities must result in protection of, and improvement to, fish habitat.

- e. Improve sewage treatment system standards and water management infrastructure, with the goal of removing sewage treatment plants from the Lake.
- f. In the interim, all development must meet or exceed Provincial Water Quality Objectives and for drinking water areas, Drinking Water Quality Standards.
- g. No inter-basin transfer of water will be allowed.
- h. Water balance studies for Lake Simcoe's watershed must be used as baseline data. Clear limits on impervious surface cover in the watershed and water-taking permit limits must be set in accordance with water availability now and under climate change modeling.
- i. Provide funds to improve water quality monitoring and reporting, equipment and procedures.

2. Recognize the development pressures that the Oak Ridges Moraine, Greenbelt, and Places to Grow Acts have placed on the Lake Simcoe watershed, by creating a natural heritage and agricultural system to protect green space and restrict new development to existing and approved settlement areas.

- a. Cities and towns must meet Ontario Provincial Policy Statement density targets first before allowing development of greenfields.
- b. Use peer reviewed science on annual phosphorus loading and water availability to determine, on a sub-watershed basis, an area's ability to accommodate new developments.
- c. Assumptions that remediation projects will be undertaken, or the anticipation of their positive ecological impacts, must not be used as arguments for approving new growth.
- d. Wetlands, forest cover, and agricultural land are to be protected from incompatible development as a natural heritage system in the area defined by the Act.

3. Consult with First Nations to identify and protect First Nations heritage sites.

- a. Consult with First Nations regarding cultural and heritage sites before making any decisions regarding land use designations.
- b. Partner with all three Founding First Nations: Anishinabe, Huron-Wendat, and Haudenoshonee in the identification process.
- c. Formally identify and permanently protect First Nations' land-based and submerged cultural and heritage sites.

4. Enshrine a governance structure as recommended by the Lake Simcoe Environmental Management Strategy Working Group and in large part by the LSEMS Steering Committee.

- a. Create a new lake governance entity for Lake Simcoe, with core dedicated staff and operating resources that coordinates and integrates the efforts of the public, industry and government, and has equal representation from each stakeholder sphere.
- b. The new body must be supported by high level political appointments and high level representatives from industry and the public.
- c. Subcommittees, representing all stakeholders, must focus on science and monitoring; policy and planning; restoration and retrofitting; fund coordination and communication, education and outreach.
- d. Annual progress reports should clearly define goals, what action is taken, results, and what remains to be completed.

5. Ensure that large-scale resort developments such as Big Bay Point are consistent with the Lake Simcoe Protection Act.

- a. Resort developments should be considered as urban settlements under the Places to Grow Act.
- b. Resort developments should be considered as part of the overall growth management strategy for the watershed.

6. Create recreational access that helps people treasure the lake and does not harm it.

- a. Provide funds and incentives for public land purchase for increasing public access to the lakeshore, managing public areas, and regenerating the shoreline.
- b. Provide land and waterway trails through the watershed area for access by all.
- c. Restrict new motor boat launches and new marinas, and restrict motor boat use during peak spawning seasons as part of MNR fishing regulation process.
- d. Develop new standards for the regulation of marinas on Lake Simcoe.
- e. Focus efforts on beach quality monitoring and public access through the Blue Flag program.
- f. Developers provide 10% of lands for urban public green space, and for restoration, free of charge, or provide funds in lieu for parkland acquisition elsewhere. Parkland must be purchased prior to development being completed.

7. Increase commitment to the restoration and rehabilitation of the Lake.

- a. Raise development cost charges to contribute to phosphorus-reduction remediation projects.
- b. Commit funds to support a farmland and rural landowner restoration and remediation program to pay for ecological goods and services to improve water quality and quantity and natural habitat.
- c. Create financial incentives for shoreline restoration.
- d. Develop specific Lake Simcoe education programs for youth and others in partnership with the private sector.

**Final
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Campaign Lake Simcoe's critical elements of the Lake Simcoe Protection Act are supported by the following 38 groups and organizations:

Alliance for a Better Georgina
Barrie Living Green
Blue Mountain Watershed Trust Foundation
Bondhead / Bradford West Gwillimbury
Residents for Responsible Development
Carden Field Naturalists
Couchiching Conservancy
Crescent Harbour Association
Eight Mile Point Cottagers' Association
Environmental Defence
Federation of Ontario Cottagers Association
Friends of Wye Marsh
The Georgina Lakers EcoAction Group
Georgian Students for Environmental
Awareness and Research
Glenhaven Beach Road Association
Innisfil District Association
Innisfree Limited – DeGrassi Point
Kids for Turtles – Environmental Education
Ladies of the Lake

Lakewatch Society - Canada
Loretto Maryholme Spirituality Center
Moon Point Homeowners Association
Moosenlanka Residents Association
Nobleton Alert Residents Association Inc.
North East Sutton Ratepayers Association
North Mara Beach Residents Association
Oak Ridges Trail Association
Ontario Nature
The Orillia Naturalists Club
Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition
savelakesimcoe.com
Save the Maskinonge
Sierra Club of Canada - Ontario Chapter
South Lake Simcoe Naturalists
West Humber Naturalists
West Oro Ratepayers' Association - WORA
Windfall Ecology Centre
York Region Environmental Alliance
York-Simcoe Naturalists