APPENDIX 6 NATURAL HERITAGE REPORT





Carlisle Water Storage Municipal Class EA and Conceptual Design

Natural Heritage Report

March 8, 2024

Prepared by:

Prepared for:







Carlisle Water Storage Municipal Class EA and Conceptual Design

Natural Heritage Report

City of Hamilton

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RVA 215933

March 8, 2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	PROJ	ECT O\	/ERVIEW	1	
	1.1		y Area		
	1.2	Proje	ect Scope	1	
2.0	BACK	GROUI	ND REVIEW	3	
	2.1 2.2		ground Review Sources ct Legislative Review		
		2.2.1 2.2.2	Federal LegislationProvincial Legislation		
	2.3	Sumi	mary of Background Information	6	
3.0	FIELD	REVIE	w	6	
4.0	EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS				
	4.1 4.2		6 8		
		4.2.1	Significant Wildlife Habitat	9	
	4.3 Species at Risk				
		4.4.1 4.4.2	Confirmed Habitat within the Study Area Candidate Habitat within the Study Area		
5.0	NATU	IRAL HE	ERITAGE CONSTRAINTS	10	
6.0	CON	CLUSIO	NS	11	
7.0	REFE	RENCE	s	14	

LIST OF FIGURES

- Map 1 Study Area Overview
- Map 2 Natural Heritage Features Overview
- Maps 3a-d Natural Environment Constraints (Locations A-D)

LIST OF TABLES

- Table 2.1 Summary of Information Sources
- Table 3.1 Site Investigation Schedule
- Table 4.1 Ecological Land Classification Communities
- Table 4.2 Incidental Terrestrial Wildlife

APPENDICIES

Appendix A – Species at Risk Background Review

1.0 Project Overview

R.V. Anderson Associates Limited (RVA) has been retained by the City of Hamilton (the City) to provide engineering services for the Carlisle Water Storage Facility Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) and Conceptual Design (the Project).

In support of the conceptual design and EA requirements, this report summarizes the results of the background review, field investigations, Species at Risk (SAR) screening, and highlights significant or sensitive natural heritage features that should be considered during the facility siting and design.

1.1 Study Area

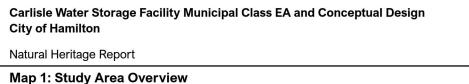
The Study Area is comprised of four properties located within the Carlisle Rural Settlement Area (RSA), hereafter collectively referred as the Study Areas. Location A is located at Tower Park (40, 42, and 46 Woodend Drive), Location B is on a privately owned parcel of land located at 1535 Centre Road, Location C is directly north of the Carlisle Community Centre Park (1496 Centre Road) within the existing baseball diamonds, and Location D is also within the Carlisle Community Centre Park area, south of the community centre near the tennis court (Map 1). Location B was added to the Study Area following field work and was assessed through desktop screening only as described below.

1.2 Project Scope

The objectives of this Natural Heritage Report include:

- High level identification of sensitive or significant natural heritage features and their functions within the Study Areas;
- > Identification and review of applicable environmental legislation, municipal planning policies, and natural heritage considerations relevant to the Study Areas; and
- > Identification of natural heritage features that require additional consideration for the implementation of the preferred Project design.





0 50 100 150 200

Scale: 1:4,000

Date: 2/26/2024 Page 1

RVA: 215933 Draft By: KW

Legend

Alternative Locations for Proposed Carlisle Water Storage Facility





Data Source: Esri Community Maps Contributors, City of Hamilton, Province of Ontario, Esri Canada, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, MFTI/NASA LISGS EPA NPS US Census Bureau LISDA LISEWS NRCan Parks Canada

2.0 Background Review

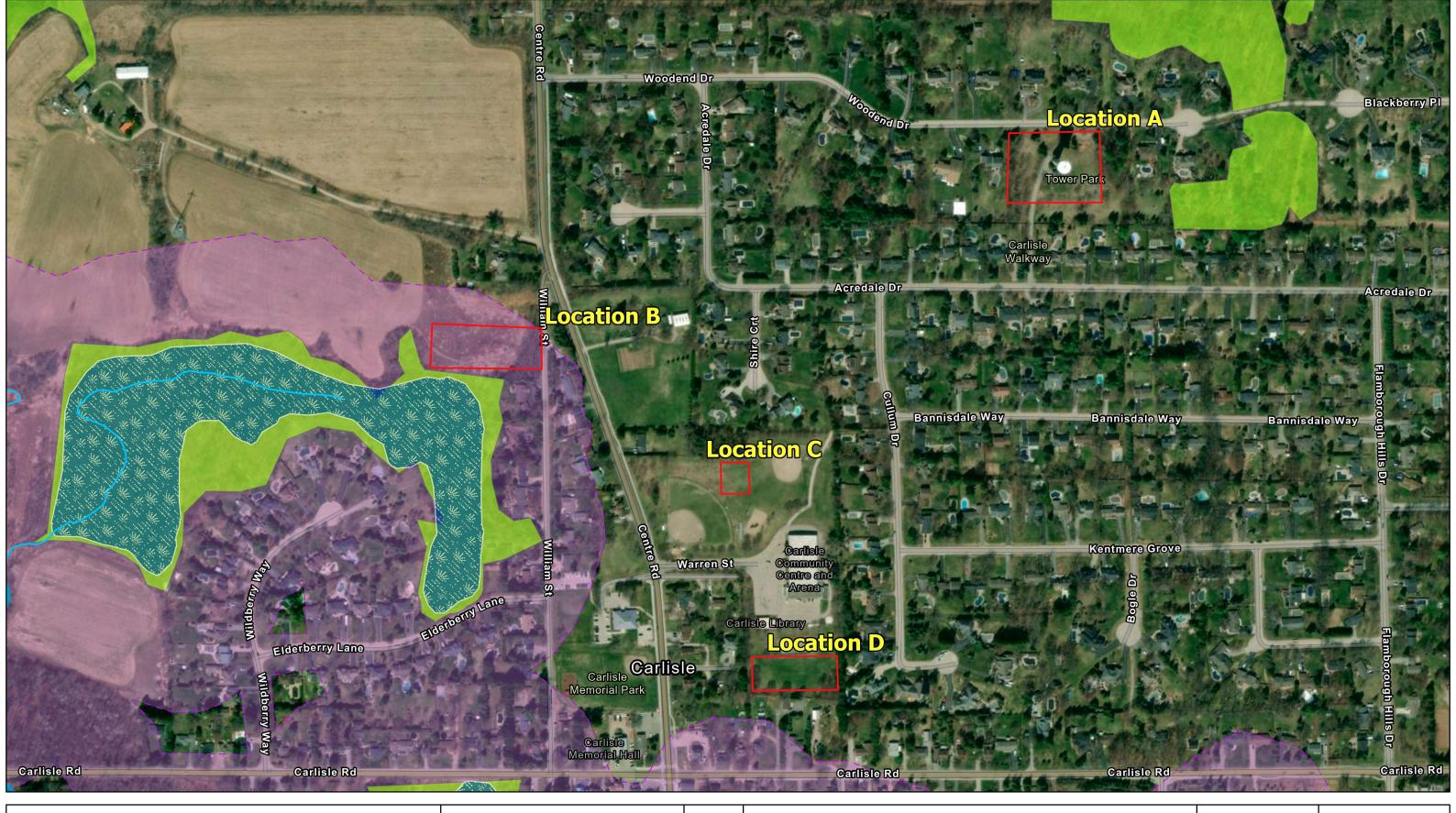
A desktop review was completed to identify natural environment components that are found within and adjacent to the Study Areas (**Map 2**).

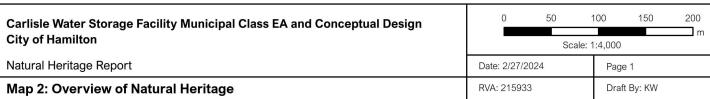
2.1 Background Review Sources

The preliminary desktop review included an examination of publicly available information, related to geological and natural environment components within the Study Areas, that included public databases, published reports, and agency consultation. The information reviewed is listed in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1 – Summary of Information Sources

Source	Data Reviewed			
	> Rural Hamilton Official Plan (City of Hamilton 2021)			
City of Hamilton	Carlisle Rural Settlement Area Plan (City of Hamilton			
	2021)			
Ministry of National Description	Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC) database			
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF)	 Land Information Ontario (LIO) Mapping (Ministry of 			
Torestry (WINTER)	Natural Resources and Forestry 2023)			
Conservation Halton (CH)	Planning and Permits GIS Mapping			
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and	AgMaps Mapping (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture			
Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)	Food and Rural Affairs 2023)			
	Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas (OBBA, Cadman et al.			
	2007)			
	> Ontario Nature – Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas			
	(ORAA, Ontario Nature 2020)			
	iNaturalist (screened to include Research Grade and			
Other Publicly Available Data	Threatened species up to 2023)			
	Ontario Moth Atlas (Kaposi et al. 2023			
	Ontario Butterfly Atlas (MacNaughton et al. 2023)			
	Ontario Freshwater Fishes Life History Database,			
	Robert J. Eakins (1999-2023)			





Alternative Locations for Proposed Carlisle Water Storage Facility Woodland

Evaluated Wetland Conservation Halton
Regulation Limit (Approximate)





2.2 Select Legislative Review

There are multiple federal and provincial environmental regulations and permitting processes in place to protect components of the biotic environment. Based on the location and nature of the Project, there are four main pieces of legislation that pertain to the Project.

2.2.1 Federal Legislation

Migratory Birds Convention Act

The Migratory Birds Convention Act (MBCA) is enforced through the Migratory Birds Regulations administered by Environment and Climate Change Canada. Together the MBCA and Migratory Birds Regulations serve to protect most migratory birds, their nests, and eggs anywhere they are found in Canada.

2.2.2 Provincial Legislation

Endangered Species Act

On provincially regulated lands in Ontario, Species at Risk (SAR) and their habitats are protected under the *Endangered Species Act* (ESA, Government of Ontario 2007) which is administered by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP). Section 9(1) of the ESA prohibits the impacts to individuals of protected species, while Section 10(1) prohibits damaging or destroying their habitat which varies across species. Projects which propose impacts to SAR, or their habitat require a permit or other process (e.g., registration) to proceed without contravening the Act.

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act

The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act (Government of Ontario 1997) sets policies and regulations concerning the use of fish and wildlife resources in Ontario, including fishing and hunting, trapping, wildlife in captivity and the sale and purchase of wildlife and/or parts. This legislation also applies to persons handling wildlife for the purposes of salvage/relocation.

Conservation Authorities Act

Section 28(1) of the Conservation Authorities Act empowers Conservation Authorities with the ability to make regulations governing development that can have an impact on watercourses and water bodies, including wetlands. The Study Area is located within the Conservation Halton (CH) watershed, and sections are regulated under the Regulation of Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses,

Ontario Regulation 162/06. CH may grant permission to modify lands within their regulation limit under conditions outlined in the regulation.

2.3 Summary of Background Information

Review of the information sources listed in **Section 2.1** indicated that several SAR are found or are potentially found within the vicinity of the Carlisle Water Storage Study Areas. The MNRF Make-a-Map: Natural Heritage Areas application identified significant natural heritage features adjacent to the Study Areas including Woodlands, Unevaluated Wetlands, and Locally Significant Wetlands. A section of the Location B Study Area is within the regulation limit of Conservation Halton under the *Regulation of Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses, Ontario Regulation* (O. Reg.) 162/06 (Government of Ontario 1990).

3.0 Field Review

Terrestrial field investigations were conducted during the 2023 field season including a single season floral inventory, Ecological Land Classification (ELC) community delineation, and incidental wildlife observations within the Study Areas (**Table 3.1**).

Survey Type Date Weather RVA Staff

Single-season site review/ELC; Incidental Wildlife Observations October 3, 2023 Sunny, clear, light breeze Zachary Anderson and Paul Mikoda

Table 3.1 – Field Investigations Schedule

4.0 Existing Site Conditions

4.1 Vegetation and Vegetation Communities

A single-season floral inventory and ELC community survey was completed for the Study Areas. The field visit was completed during the fall inventory window for plants and protocols for ELC were completed as per Lee *et al.* (1998).

Vegetation surveys were restricted to within the Study Areas and the immediate surrounding areas. Surveys were completed during a single site visit by walking transects throughout the parklands, wooded features, and areas where property access was granted. Areas exhibiting variation in floral or topographical composition, such as ditches or vegetation clumps, were reviewed in further detail. Species not readily identifiable in the

field were sampled and identified later utilizing Michigan Flora Online (Reznicek *et al.* 2011). Vegetation communities identified within the Study Area are described in **Table 4.1**.

Table 4.1 – Carlisle Water Storage Study Area Vegetation Communities

ELC Code	ELC Vegetation Community	Description
CUM1-1	Mineral Cultural Meadow Ecosite	Meadow and grassland communities that have a history of anthropogenic influence. Non-native floral species are often the most dominant vegetation form.
FOD4	Dry-Fresh Deciduous Forest Ecosite	Typically a young forest community with tree species associations that are either uncommon or because of disturbance or management. Dominant species within this community include Green Ash and White Birch
CUW1	Mineral Cultural Woodland	Wooded communities that have a history of anthropogenic influence. Non-native floral species are often the most dominant vegetation form.

The Study Areas are within a landscape that is primarily estate residential land use interspersed with remnant natural features through the greater Carlisle RSA. The surrounding area is a mixture of agricultural areas, estate residential, and large tracts of wooded natural features. Three of the Study Areas are predominantly located within community park areas, and the dominant vegetation community is best described as Parkland with a floral composition dominated by common, maintained grass species (*Poa spp.*).

The Location A Study Area is adjacent to a wooded community that is described as a Dry-Fresh Deciduous Forest Ecosite (FOD4). The canopy of this community is dominated by White Pine (*Pinus strobus*), Freeman's Maple (*Acer x freemanii*), White Birch (*Betula papyrifera*), and Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*). The understorey is dominated by Tatarian Honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica*), Green Ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), and Common Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*). The ground layer is dominated by Wild Sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*), White Baneberry (*Actaea pachypoda*), and sapling Green Ash.

The Location C and D Study Areas are within maintained lands of the Carlisle Community Center Park. Location C is located north of the park but is adjacent to a private lot and a Mineral Cultural Woodland (CUW1) community. Location D abuts maintained residential properties.

Location B was not included in the field investigations but was reviewed using publicly available imagery (Google Earth). Along the frontage of William Street, the property and roadside are populated mainly by young Ash trees (*Fraxinus spp.*) with some Staghorn

Sumac (*Rhus typhina*) in the shrub layer, forming a community that would be considered a Mineral Cultural Woodland (CUW1). To the southwest of the road, the property is regenerating from prior agricultural use, which would be classified as a Mineral Cultural Meadow (CUM1). Though not clearly discernable in images, this community is very common in southern Ontario, generally composed of a mixture of cool-season exotic pasture grasses, goldenrods (*Solidago spp.*) and asters (*Symphyotrichum spp.*). Some active re-forestation efforts have occurred on this property as evidenced by recently planted conifer saplings. To the south, Conservation Halton classifies a tree community as a Mixed Swamp (SWM), a component of the Locally Significant Carlisle Wetland Complex and a tributary of Bronte Creek.

No additional natural/successional vegetation communities were identified within the remaining Study Areas; however, several hedgerows and small pocket woodlands, likely classified as Mineral Cultural Woodlands (CUW1) and comprised of a combination of native and non-native tree and shrub species, are identified adjacent to the Study Areas. These features were not investigated in detail and community observations were made strictly from the edges of the Study Area locations.

4.2 Wildlife and Wildlife Habitats

During field investigations on October 3, 2023, all terrestrial wildlife observed, including calls and signs, were recorded. Due to the rural nature of the Study Area, it is anticipated that most wildlife species in the area are limited to those that tolerate some degree of habitat fragmentation and cultural landscapes. Due to the timing of the survey, birds recorded have been assumed to be breeding locally. **Table 4.2** lists all wildlife species identified during field investigations.

Table 4.2 – Incidental Terrestrial Wildlife

Common Name	Scientific Name	Provincial Status (S Rank) *	ESA Status
Birds			
American Crow	Corvus brachyrhynchos	S5B,SZN	-
American Goldfinch	Carduelis tristis	S5B,SZN	-
American Robin	Turdus migratorius	S5B,SZN	-
Blue Jay	Cyanocitta cristata	S5	-
Field Sparrow	Spizella pusilla	S5B,SZN	-
Northern Cardinal	Cardinalis cardinalis	S5	-
Northern Flicker	Colaptes auratus	S5B,SZN	-

* S Rank: S5 – Secure, S4 – Apparently secure, S3 – Vulnerable, S2 – Imperiled, S1 – Critically imperiled, SNA – Nonnative, SZN – Non-breeding migrants/vagrants

4.2.1 Significant Wildlife Habitat

Significant Wildlife Habitat (SWH) was assessed based on the collection of targeted and incidental field data and comparisons to thresholds set out in the Significant Wildlife Habitat Criteria Schedule for Ecoregion 7E (OMNR 2015), a significant component of which is the ELC communities described earlier. SWH are areas or features that are rare or provide important habitat functions and are subsequently protected through the Natural Heritage section (2.1) of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS; OMMAH 2020). In many cases, to complete a full suite of evaluations for every potential SWH would be extremely arduous and time consuming, so in many cases professional opinion and experience is utilized to screen potential SWH. The PPS does not apply to the Project due to the nature of the work (infrastructure) but is being discussed regardless given the importance of SWH features.

During site visits within the Study Area, terrestrial wildlife observations, including call and signs, were recorded. Specific habitats surveyed for included mammal burrows (often on slopes), recently disturbed soils, potential cover objects, or other anomalous or unique features or habitat within the Study Area including large dead or decaying (wildlife) trees. Wildlife surveys were conducted in conjunction with floral inventories, described above.

No provincially rare vegetation communities were observed during site investigations nor were any candidate or confirmed point-source areas of wildlife concentration/specialized habitats, such as terrestrial reptile hibernacula, turtle nesting areas, or terrestrial crayfish burrows. Targeted surveys for snag and cavity trees (i.e., in leaf-off conditions) were not included in the scope of the Project. All trees greater than 10 cm diameter at breast height (DBH) including healthy or dead/decaying individuals, may provide SWH for bat maternity colonies, as well as habitat for at-risk bats.

4.3 Species at Risk

Provincially protected Species at Risk (SAR) can be found throughout Ontario in both documented and undocumented populations and are protected through the Endangered Species Act (ESA 2007) administered by the MECP. According to the sources reviewed in **Table 2.1**, a variety of floral and faunal species of provincial interest have been recorded within or in the vicinity of the Study Area. These species and their habitat are generally found in more natural landscapes; however, some listed species have adapted to

anthropogenic habitats. Additionally, the province has not been surveyed extensively and novel individuals and populations can be located during site-specific surveys.

A full list of SAR identified in the background sources with potential to be found in the Study Area is presented in **Appendix A**. The field studies described above were compared to the known habitat preferences and general locations of SAR to determine the potential that these species or their habitat could occur in the Study Area. No SAR individuals identified in background review were observed during the completed field investigations within the Study Area. Habitat within the Study Area has the potential to support some species listed in **Appendix A**. Open tree habitats associated with parklands has the potential to support both Eastern Wood-pewee (*Contopus virens*, Special Concern) and Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*, Endangered).

4.4 Natural Heritage and Significant Habitat Summary

4.4.1 Confirmed Habitat within the Study Area

No fish or wildlife habitats of significance were confirmed within the Study Area during site investigations. While not mapped as provincially significant, a wooded community classified as FOD4 (Dry-Fresh Deciduous Forest) was identified adjacent to the Location A Study Area that is comprised of native woodland species (Wild Sarsaparilla, White Baneberry, etc.) and mature trees. Given the natural composition and age of the woodland, it is our opinion that this feature merits additional discussion with respect to potential project constraints and impacts.

4.4.2 Candidate Habitat within the Study Area

Candidate significant wildlife habitats with potential to occur within the Study Area (i.e. were not confirmed, but could not be ruled out following field investigations) consist of:

- Candidate SAR Bat maternity roosting habitat (treed communities)
- > Location B is within a Mineral Cultural Meadow (CUM1-1) habitat that has the potential to support open-habitat/grassland breeding birds, including rare and SAR.

5.0 Natural Heritage Constraints

A map of the Study Areas was created identifying low, moderate, and high constraint areas (Maps 3a-d) based on candidate and confirmed natural heritage features and functions and applicable legislation. To address the proximity of adjacent features, a 50m buffer was given to each Location. Location B is located within 50m of one section of the Carlisle Wetland

Complex LSW. No areas defined as a high natural heritage constraint (e.g. provincial natural heritage areas, direct fish habitat, provincially significant wetlands, or habitats that have a high likelihood of supporting SAR) were identified within or adjacent to the remaining Study Areas. Moderate natural heritage constraint areas include higher quality woodland habitats and those areas regulated by Conservation Halton under Ontario Regulation 162/06 for Development, Interference with Wetlands and alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses. The remaining land within the Study Areas and adjacent lands, consisting primarily of parkland habitat, Cultural Meadow, and residential lands, are presented as being a low natural heritage constraint.

If other disciplines (i.e., geotechnical, archaeology, etc.) are engaging in future field work within the Study Areas where vegetation clearing may be required during sensitive periods, these areas should be reviewed for species and habitats protected under the ESA (SAR Bats) or other legislation prior to the initiation of works. One notable piece of legislation is the federal Migratory Birds Convention Act (1994) that protects most birds, their nests and young from disturbance or injury. In all instances of field work there are general timing windows that protect fish and wildlife during vulnerable life stages (i.e., spawning or nesting), and any work that has the potential for disturbance to fish and wildlife should only be completed with respect to these windows.

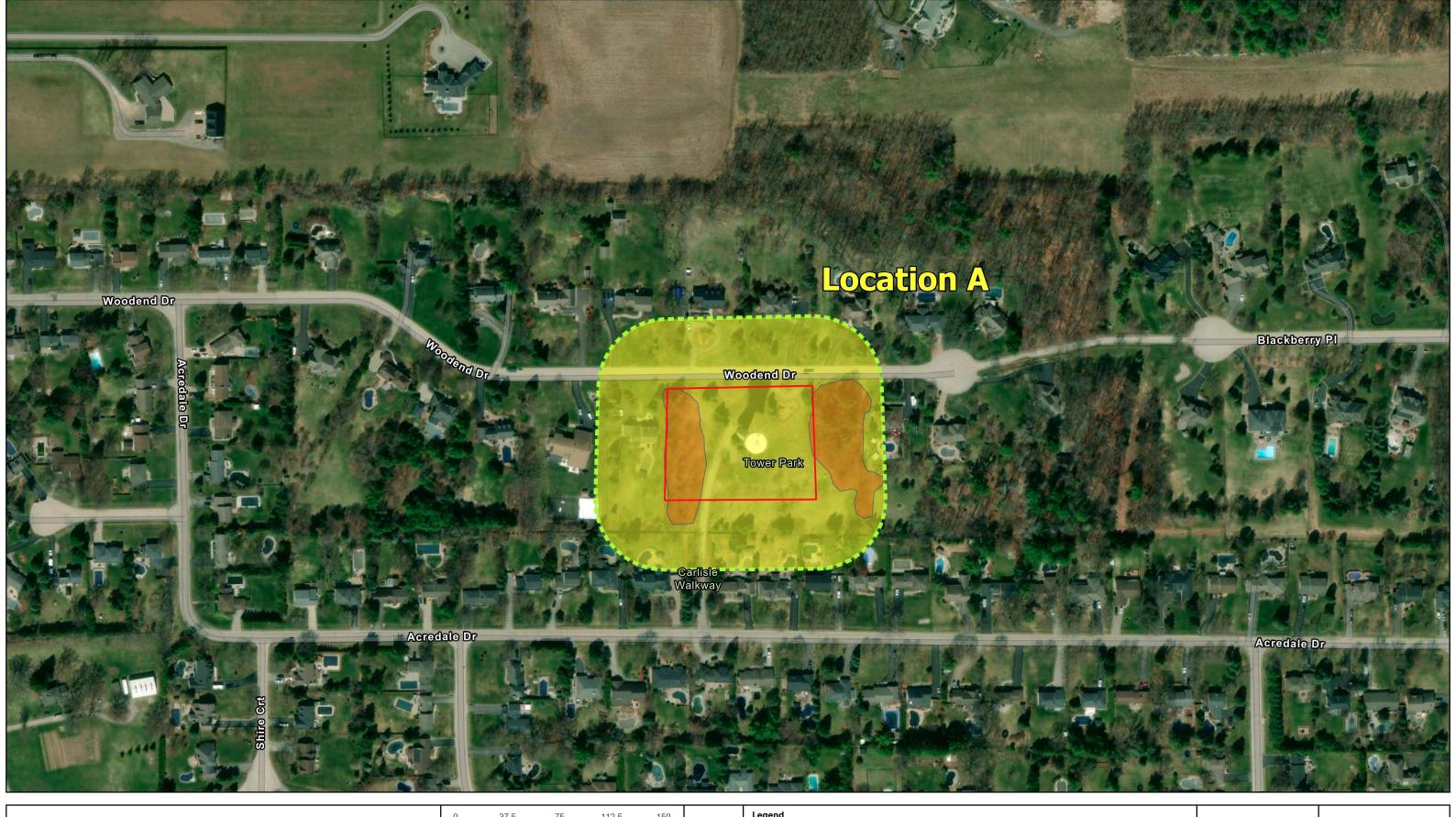
6.0 Conclusions

This Natural Heritage Report documents the existing conditions within the Carlisle Water Storage Study Areas, supported by field studies completed in 2023. These studies included a single season review for rare and at-risk species, as well as a wildlife habitat assessment, and incidental wildlife observations.

Within the PPS (2020), Section 2.1 Natural Heritage, describes the identification, protections and prohibitions provided to natural features and areas. Key among these statements is the prohibition of development within various important features or functional areas. However, with the definitions of the PPS, development does not include, among other actions, activities that create or maintain infrastructure authorized under an environmental assessment process. Because of this definition and that all prohibitions are described in reference to development, Section 2.1 does not generally apply to this project, as it is proceeding under an environmental assessment process. Irrespective of planning process, this project must consider SAR protected under the ESA, birds protected under the Migratory Birds Convention Act (MBCA 1994), and species protected under the Fish and Wildlife Act, all of which require consideration. Overall, there are limited natural heritage

concerns with this project, and those that do exist relate to incidental impacts that may occur during construction.

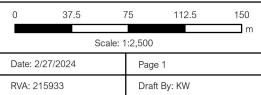
The conceptual design for the proposed Carlisle Water Storage area should take into consideration the natural heritage features and functions noted above and depicted on Maps 3a-d, to confirm compliance with policy as well ecological sustainability through appropriate stewardship. It is recommended that appropriate mitigation measures to protect the identified natural heritage components be incorporated into an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) at detailed design, including discussion of site preparation (e.g. vegetation clearing) and construction timing windows, Erosion and Sediment Controls (ESCs), and contractor education.





Natural Heritage Report

Map 3a: Constraints for Location A





Alternative Locations for Proposed
Carlisle Water Storage Facility

Buffer of Proposed Water Storage



Low later Storage

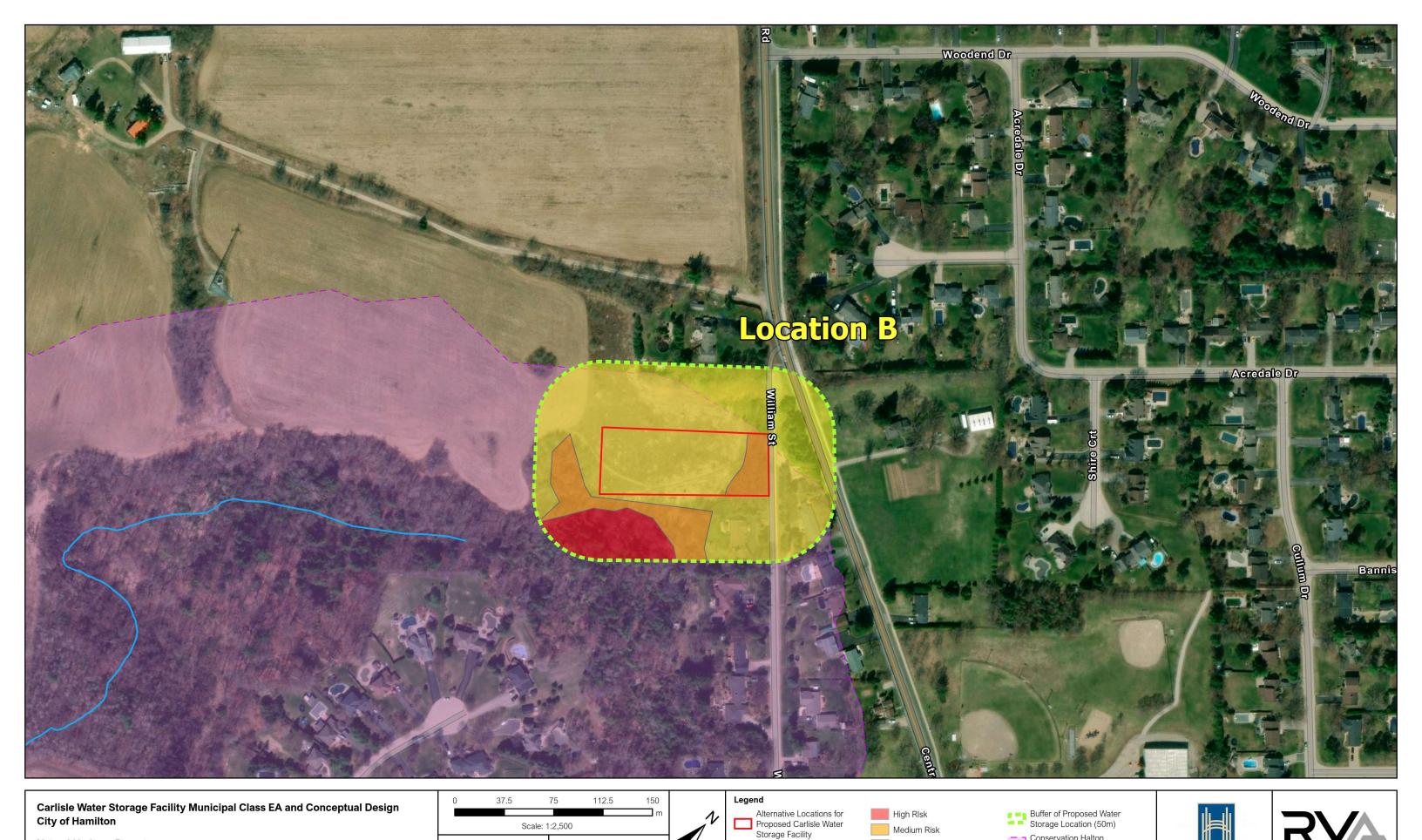
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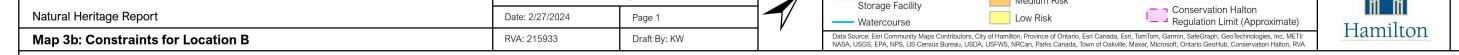
Medium Risk

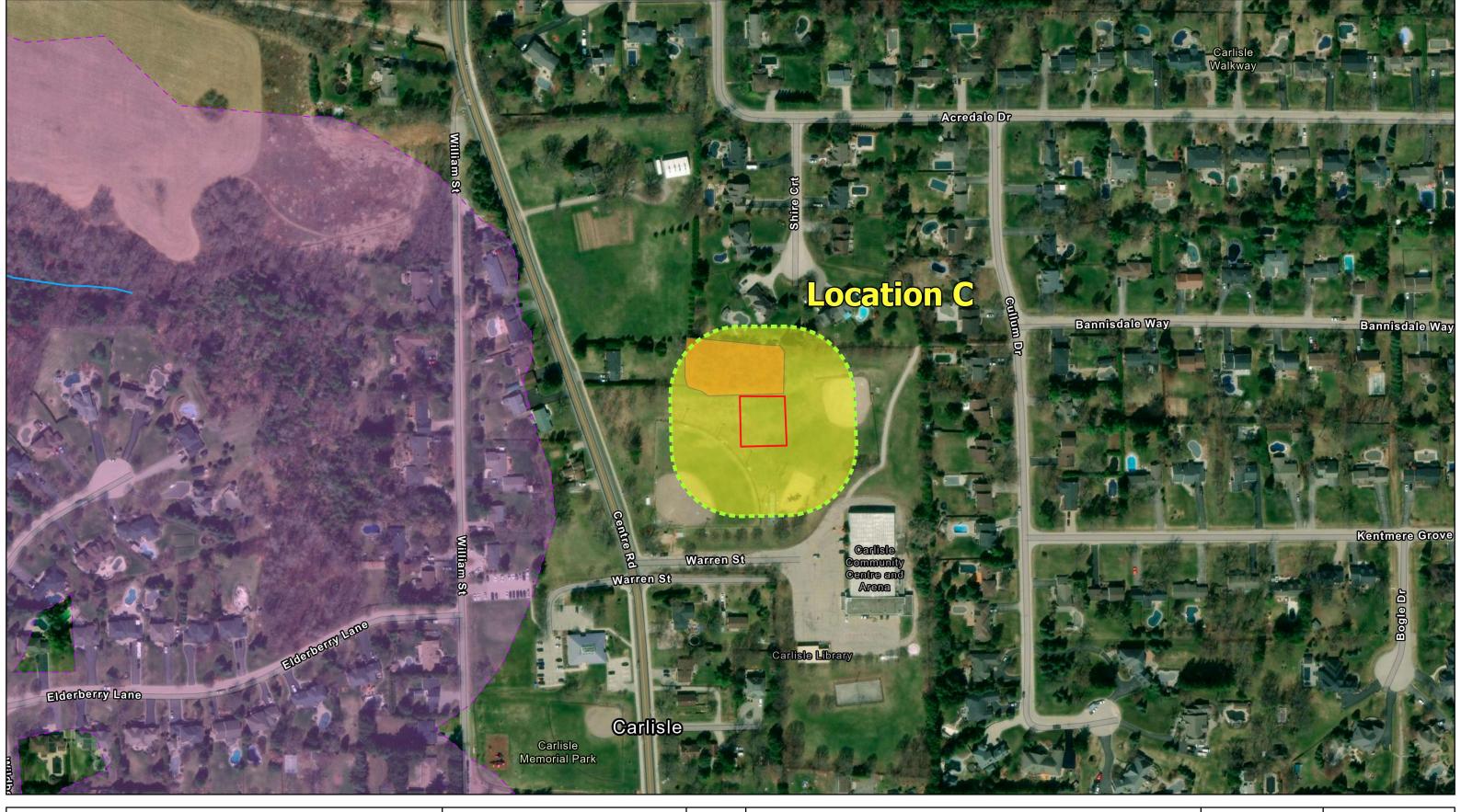


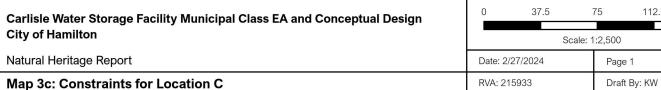


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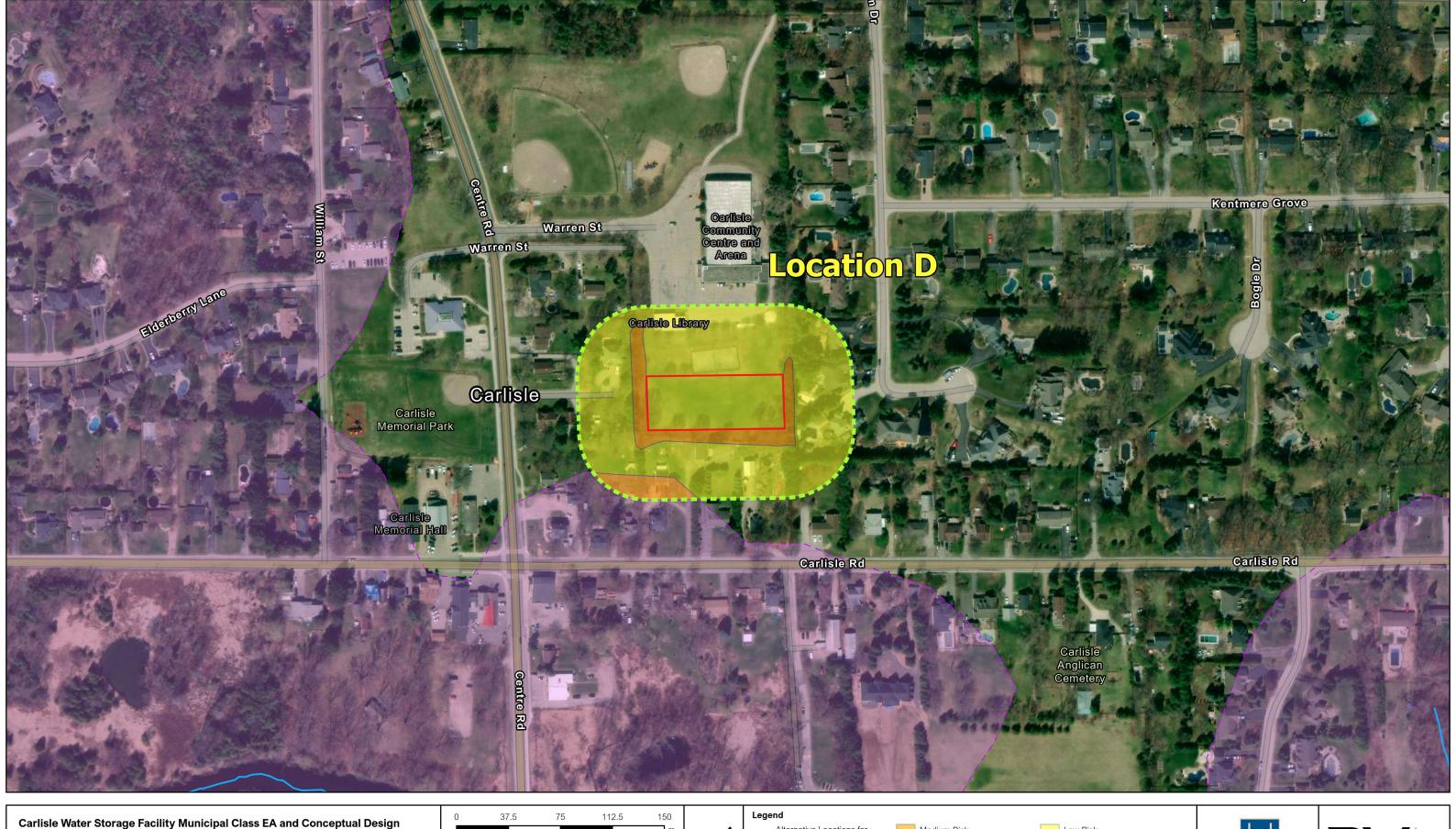






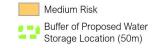








Alternative Locations for Proposed Carlisle Water Storage Facility



Low Risk

Conservation Halton
Regulation Limit (Approximate)





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APPENDIX A

Species at Risk Background Review



Table 1: Rare and At-Risk Species Potentially Present in the Vicinity of the Study Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	S-Rank	ESA/SARA Status	Source*	Last Observed (Year)
FLORA					
Black Ash	Fraxinus nigra	S4/G5	END/THR	INAT	2019
FUNGI AND LICHENS					
-	-	-	-	-	-
BIRDS	,				
Red-headed Woodpecker	Melanerpes erythrocephalus	S3/G3	END/END	NHIC	-
Bobolink	Dolichonyx oryzivorus	S4B/G5	THR/THR	NHIC; OBBA; eBird	2023
Eastern Meadowlark	Sturnella magna	S4B/G5	THR/THR	NHIC; OBBA; eBird	2023
Chimney Swift	Chaetura pelagica	S3B/G4G5	THR/THR	OBBA	2005
Eastern Whip-poor-will	Antrostomus vociferus	S4B/G4	THR/THR	NHIC	-
Bank Swallow	Riparia riparia	S4B/G5	THR/THR	OBBA; eBird	2023
Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica	S4B/G5	SC/SC	OBBA; eBird	2023
Eastern Wood-pewee	Contopus virens	S4B/G5	SC/SC	OBBA; eBird	2023
Wood Thrush	Hylocichla mustelina	S4B/G4	SC/THR	OBBA	2022
Common Nighthawk	Chordeiles minor	S4B/G5	SC/THR	eBird	2023
REPTILES AND AMPHIBIA	ANS				
Jefferson's Salamander	Ambystoma jeffersonianum	S2/G4	END/END	ORAA	2017
Blanding's Turtle	Emydoidea blandingii	S3/G4	THR/END	ORAA	2017
Snapping Turtle	Chelydra serpentina	S4/G5	SC/SC	NHIC; INAT; ORAA	2019
Eastern Milksnake	Lampropeltis triangulum	S4/G5	-/SC	NHIC; ORAA	2019
Midland Painted Turtle	Chrysemys picta marginata	S4	-/SC	NHIC; ORAA	2019
INVERTEBRATES (exclud	es mussels)				
Monarch	Danaus plexippus	S4B/G4	SC/SC	OBA; INAT	2022
West Virginia White	Pieris virginiensis	S3/G2G3	SC/ -	OBA; INAT	2023
FISH AND MUSSELS					
Redside Dace	Clinostomus elongatus	S1/G3	END/END	NHIC; DFO	-

*Source Abbreviations:

INAT – iNaturalist.ca (filtered for Research Grade and Threatened)

NHIC - Natural Heritage Information Center

ORAA – Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas (Ontario Nature)

OBA - Ontario Butterfly Atlas (Toronto Entomological Society)

OBBA – Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas (Birds Canada)

DFO – Department of Fisheries and Oceans Species at Risk Mapping Application

eBird - Courtcliffe Park - Hamilton County - Hotspot