

OAK RIDGES MORaine CONSERVATION PLAN

Technical Paper Series

5 - Identification and Protection of Vegetation Protection Zones for Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI, Life Science)

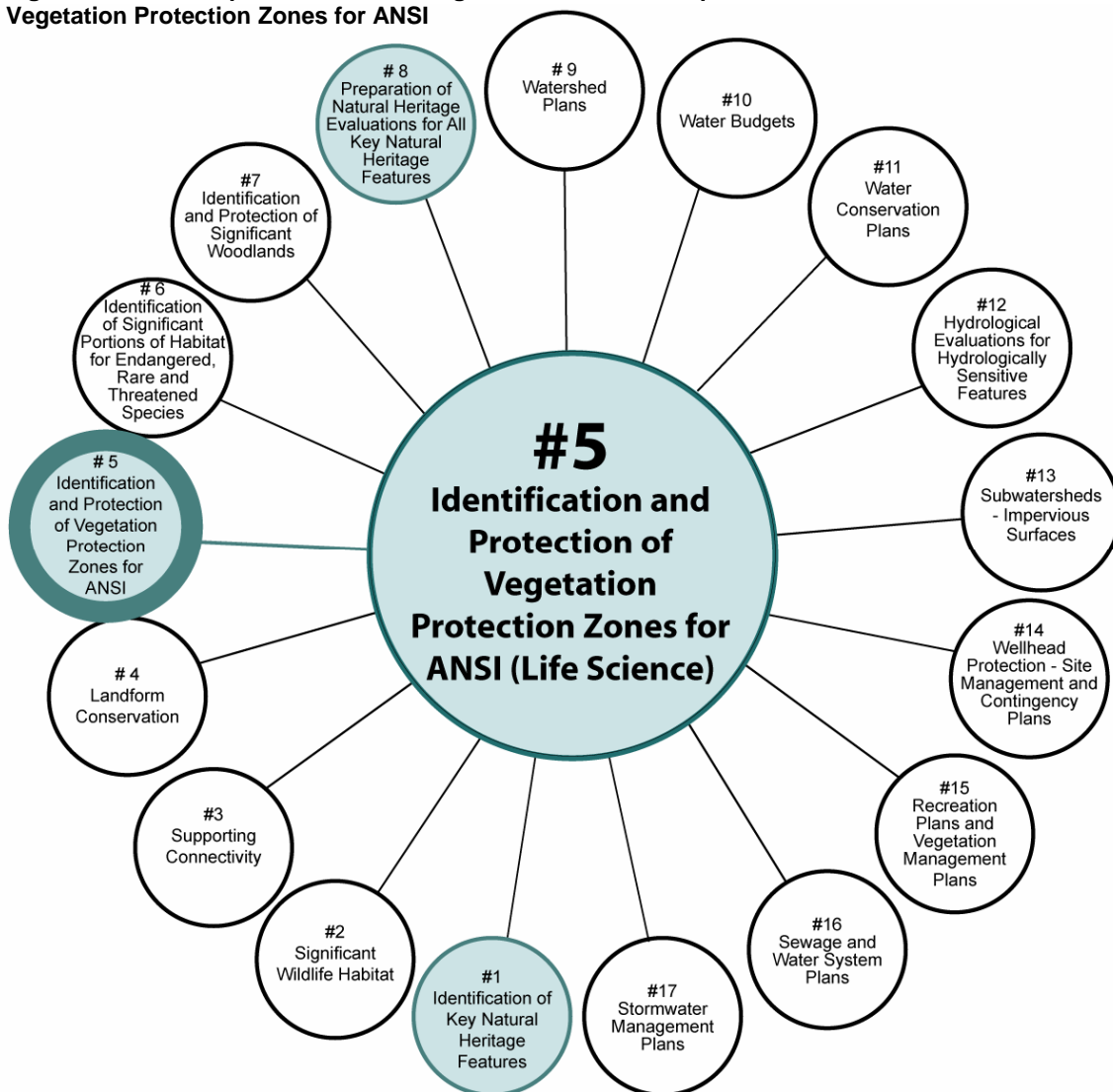
1 Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to provide guidance on the identification of minimum vegetation protection zones (VPZs) next to life science areas of natural and scientific interest (ANSIs); and modifications or amendments to the outside boundaries of life science ANSIs.

2 Related Considerations

It is suggested that the reader also review the highlighted, associated topic areas as discussed in the ORMCP, as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 ORMCP Topic Areas and Linkages with Technical Paper 5 - Identification and Protection of Vegetation Protection Zones for ANSI



3 Background

Section 22 of the ORMCP identifies life science ANSIs as one of eight categories of key natural heritage features that must be protected from development and site alteration.

More specifically, Section 22(2) of the ORMCP requires that:

“All development and site alteration with respect to land within a key natural heritage feature or the related minimum vegetation protection zone is prohibited, except the following:

- 1. Forest, fish, and wildlife management.*
- 2. Conservation and flood or erosion control projects, but only if they have been demonstrated to be necessary in the public interest after all alternatives have been considered.*
- 3. Transportation, infrastructure, and utilities as described in section 41, but only if the need for the project has been demonstrated and there is no reasonable alternative.*
- 4. Low-intensity recreational uses as described in section 37.”*

Section 22(3) goes on to specify that an additional minimum VPZ adjacent to a key natural heritage feature needs to be established having the same limitations to development and site alteration as the feature itself. In most cases, a minimum VPZ is specified in the table that is found on Page 58 of the ORMCP. However, for life science ANSIs, minimum VPZs are to be determined by a natural heritage evaluation carried out under Section 23(1) and 23(2) of the ORMCP. Natural heritage evaluations must be prepared for development or site alteration that is proposed within 120 metres of the outside boundaries of the ANSI.

This paper provides additional guidance on how the requirement of 23(1) and 23(2) can be fulfilled with respect to life science ANSIs.

Life Science ANSIs are representative segments of Ontario’s biodiversity and landscapes that have been identified by the MNR. They contain relatively undisturbed vegetation/landform combinations, and their associated species and communities. The selection and evaluation of life science or ecological resources has taken its direction from A Framework for the Conservation of Ontario’s Biological Heritage (Beechey 1980), and more recently Natural Heritage Gap Analysis Methodologies Used by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (Crins and Kor, 2000)

ANSIs are ranked by MNR as being of either provincial or regional significance. For the purposes of the ORMCP, life science ANSIs include both provincially and regionally significant life science ANSIs.

MNR maintains information and mapping on ANSIs. Information on each ANSI includes ANSI type, location, size, and relationship to other ANSIs, vegetation, landform, current uses, management details and list of known rare species. This information will be made available to approval authorities

4 Criteria for Establishing a Minimum Vegetation Protection Zone adjacent to Life Science Areas of Natural Scientific Interest

A VPZ next to a life science ANSI shall include:

- the VPZs specified for other key natural heritage features and hydrologically sensitive features (as described in the table on Page 58 of the ORMCP) located within the ANSI where these VPZs extend beyond the outside boundary of the ANSI;
- any additional minimum VPZs as determined by a natural heritage evaluation carried out under Section 23(1) and 23(2) of the ORMCP; and
- any additional minimum VPZs as determined by a hydrological evaluation carried out under Section 26(4) of the ORMCP.

In preparing a natural heritage evaluation for development or site alteration that is proposed within 120 metres of an ANSI, the applicant shall:

- (a) describe the essential features, forms and functions of the ANSI in accordance with reports prepared by the MNR;
- (b) identify all known and potential key natural heritage features and hydrologically sensitive features and associated minimum VPZs located within and adjacent to the ANSI as identified in the Table on Page 58 of the ORMCP;
- (c) identify other natural features or attributes located within the ANSI but outside other key natural heritage features or hydrologically sensitive features that are essential to the identification and protection of the ANSI.
- (d) assess the need to establish minimum VPZs next to the outer boundary of the ANSI or next to features or attributes described in © due to potential adverse effects on the ANSI and its associated form, feature and functions such as:
 - highly erodible or unstable soils; and
 - existing vegetation cover that may support or enhance the value or resilience of the ANSI and its associated features and attributes to development and site alteration.
- (e) based on the above, identify the areas that should be set aside as a minimum VPZ adjacent to the boundary of the ANSI.

5 Criteria for Modifying the Outside Boundary of a Life Science Area of Natural and Scientific Interest

A refinement of the outside boundary of a life science ANSI may be considered in cases such as mapping errors or where more detailed information becomes available on the feature provided:

- the refinement will have no adverse effects on the ANSI or on the related ecological functions;
- the approval authority is satisfied that the criteria identified in section 3 of this paper have been satisfactorily carried out; and

- the MNR District Manager has advised that the proposed refinement to the outside boundary has been approved in accordance with MNR's ANSI Confirmation Procedure.

6 References

Beechey, T.J. 1980.

A Framework for the Conservation of Ontario's Biological Heritage, Parks and Recreational Branch, MNR, Peterborough, Ontario

Crins, W.J. and P.S.G. Kor. 2000.

Natural Heritage Gap Analysis Methodologies Used by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Version 2.0. Ontario Parks Open File Natural Heritage Technical Report 2000-1. MNR, Peterborough.