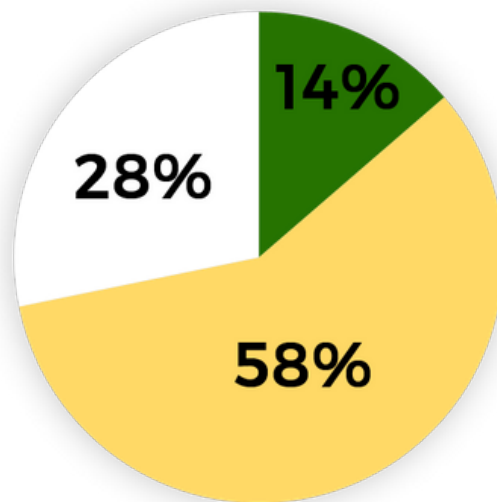
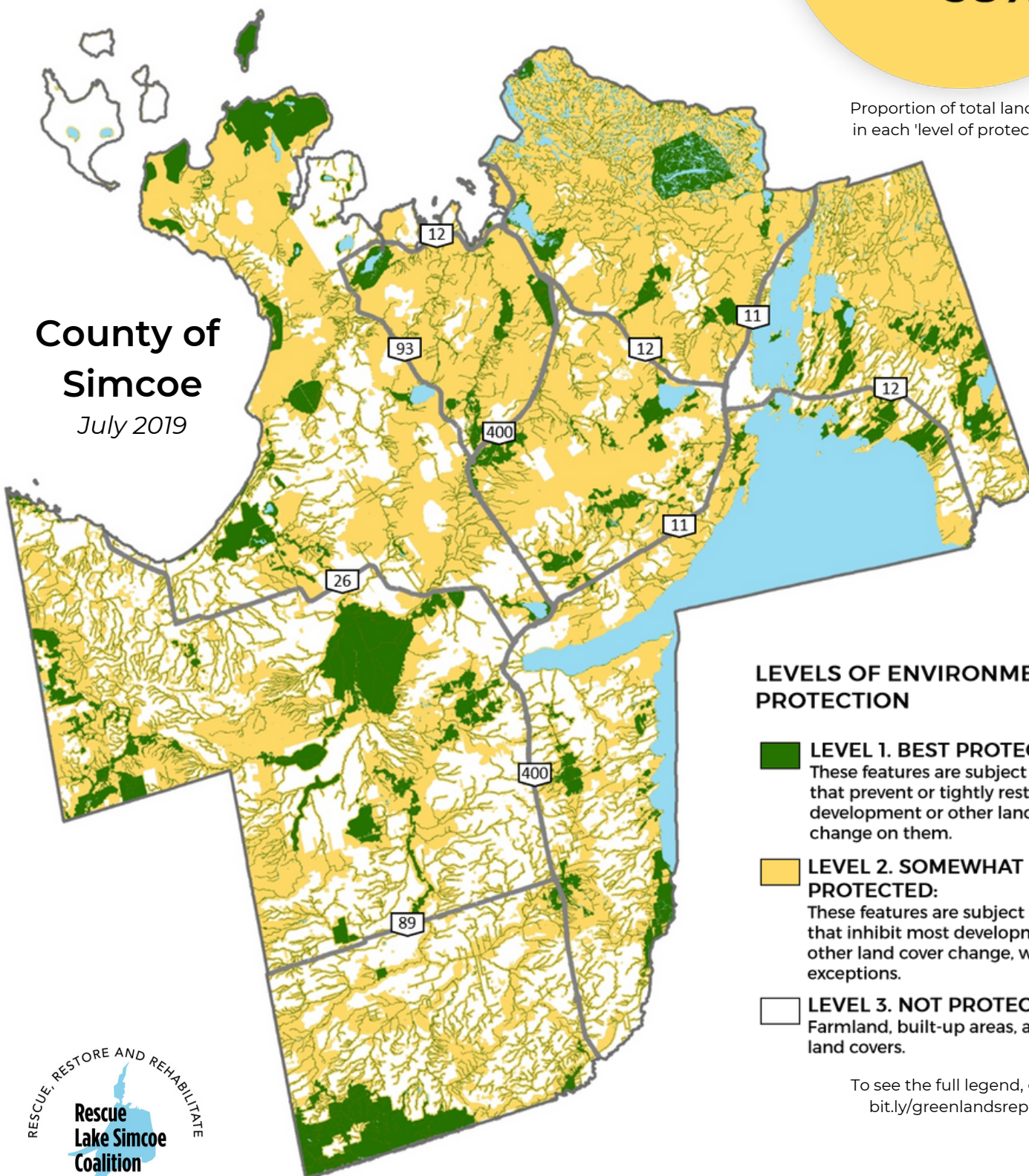


HOW WELL-PROTECTED ARE GREENLANDS IN SIMCOE COUNTY?



Proportion of total land area in each 'level of protection'.

County of Simcoe
July 2019



LEVELS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- LEVEL 1. BEST PROTECTED:**
These features are subject to policies that prevent or tightly restrict development or other land cover change on them.
- LEVEL 2. SOMEWHAT PROTECTED:**
These features are subject to policies that inhibit most development or other land cover change, with some exceptions.
- LEVEL 3. NOT PROTECTED:**
Farmland, built-up areas, and other land covers.

To see the full legend, go to bit.ly/greenlandsreport.



HOW WELL-PROTECTED ARE GREENLANDS IN SIMCOE COUNTY?

The Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition's greenlands[i] mapping project seeks to identify how well-protected Simcoe County forests, wetlands and shorelines are by analyzing the strength of the policies that protect them, and mapping the results of our findings.

Cartographers created four maps for this research, showing the land use mix in Simcoe County, the breakdown of the levels of protection, the locations of aggregate resources that could eat into the best protected greenlands if extraction were permitted, and the features identified in our "Best Protected" category.

What should we have?



Forest cover

50% forest cover or more of the watershed is likely to support most potential species, and healthy aquatic systems.[ii]

- Simcoe County has 22%, but is losing forest cover.



Wetlands

The greater of (a) 10% of each major watershed and 6% of each subwatershed, or (b) 40% of the historic watershed wetland coverage, should be protected and restored, and no net loss of wetlands. [iii]

- Simcoe County has 14% wetland cover based on our analysis, and approximately half of its historic wetland cover.[iv] Simcoe County is losing wetlands. [v]

Simcoe County's land use mix does not meet ideal greenlands protection targets, but it is possible to get it right in Simcoe County, and permanently protect an effective Natural Heritage System to buffer our waters and ecosystem from the impacts of climate change and development.

Solutions

- Municipalities and the County should implement the Growth Plan's Natural Heritage System for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and related policies as soon as possible to better protect linkages between the best protected natural features;
- Ensure First Nations' perspectives and Traditional Ecological Knowledge are incorporated into provincial policies that protect natural heritage;
- Permanently protect "high quality natural cover" in the 2019 review of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan;
- Expand the Greenbelt into Simcoe County;
- Build denser communities to reduce the need to build on greenlands.

[i] In the context of this report greenlands are primarily forests and wetlands, and the buffers around forests, wetlands, lakes and rivers, that make up Simcoe County's Natural Heritage System, or NHS. Our analysis excludes water bodies.

[ii] Environment Canada. 2013. "How Much Habitat Is Enough?" Third Edition. Toronto, Ontario: Environment Canada. https://www.ec.gc.ca/nature/default.asp?lang=En&n=E33B007C-1#_01.

[iii] Ibid

[iv] Ducks Unlimited. 2010. "Southern Ontario wetland conversion analysis." p. 8.

[v] Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority. 2013. "Watershed health checks, 2002 - 2008." <https://www.nvca.on.ca/watershed-science/watershed-report-cards>

To see the full report go to bit.ly/greenlandsreport



The Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition is a lake-wide member-based organization, representing 22 groups in the Lake Simcoe watershed, that provides leadership and inspires people to take action to protect Lake Simcoe.

www.rescuelakesimcoe.org

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Thank you to the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation for their support.