

COOPER'S POND HERITAGE AREA

BACKGROUND

During the summers of 1990 to 1992 fieldwork was completed to assess candidate areas in Muskoka for their heritage value. A final report was produced in 1994. In total 48 heritage areas and 11 heritage sites were recognized as being significant within Muskoka.

The current District Official Plan policies that pertain to heritage areas were approved in 1991. These policies need to be reviewed and enhanced where appropriate to help deal with land use issues related to the heritage areas. Heritage areas are at the very heart of what makes Muskoka such a unique and vibrant place.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AREA

Location: Watt Township, Muskoka Lakes

Size: 570 hectares

Features: Cooper's Pond is a small lake, bordered by wetlands, which drains into Three Mile Lake. Constant water levels in the lake have allowed the invasion of floating-leaved aquatic plants and Leatherleaf-Sweet Gale shrubs on a floating sphagnum mat. The upland areas around Cooper's Pond have a mantle of thin sandy tills, with some deeper pockets of fine silty till. Much of the upland is covered in a relatively mature Sugar Maple-Beech-Hemlock forest, with some areas of almost pure Eastern Hemlock.

CRITERIA FULFILLED:

Diversity

Rare Species

Fish and Wildlife Concentrations

Biogeographic Significance

OWNERSHIP & DISTURBANCE

Ownership: Over half of the area is Crown land, the rest is privately owned.

There are seasonal and permanent residences around the edges of the area, and a hydro corridor cuts through the northwest corner.

SENSITIVITY

The sensitivity of the area is related to the wetlands and natural habitat of provincially rare species such as Red-shouldered Hawks.

NEXT STEPS

Muskoka is reviewing existing land use policies within the District Official Plan as they relate to heritage areas. Landowner, agency and interest group involvement in the process will help determine appropriate policy for these valuable natural areas, and will help to identify local concerns and issues.