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OUR LAND					
Sufficient amounts of protected land to maintain healthy ecosystems.	Healthy ecosystems support healthy plant and animal populations, clean groundwater for drinking, lake water quality and our economy.		There has been an increase in protected areas with the completion of the Ontario Living Legacy program. However, the distribution of protected areas leaves large portions of Muskoka vulnerable.		Increased development pressure, lack of viable options for the protection of private property and tax disincentives threaten a comprehensive approach to habitat protection.
Large natural areas with connecting corridors.	Fragmentation by roads and large scale development reduces the quantity of habitat, increases risk of species mortality and allows the introduction of parasitic and invasive species.		The current average road density in Muskoka will support most native species including song birds, and large and small mammals. Some species such as lynx are either stressed or no longer populate this area.		Development pressure and the increase in private roads to water-access properties contribute to habitat fragmentation.
Quality natural habitat.	Key species give an indication of the quality of the natural areas in Muskoka. Our key species include several warblers, pileated woodpeckers, merlins, loons, moose, deer and pine marten.		A wide variety of native birds and mammals are found across Muskoka.		Habitat fragmentation, poor logging practices, acid rain, climate change, development, and the introduction of aggressive exotic species threaten both the amount of forest and the quality of the habitat they provide.
To maintain the naturally forested environment.	Forests support biodiversity, clean groundwater for drinking, lake water quality and our tourism- and forestry-based economy.		Forest covers 98% of the land mass in the watersheds of Muskoka.		
Naturally vegetated shorelines and adjacent areas.	Shoreline vegetation filters run-off, reduces erosion, absorbs nutrients, and provides flood control, shade, and habitat. It also has aesthetic appeal and protects property values.	 	Based on a survey of 13 lakes, an average 80% of the shoreline and adjacent areas remains naturally vegetated.		Lack of knowledge with respect to the value of shoreline vegetation often results in clearing. High property taxes encourage people to subdivide existing lots, often resulting in the removal of more vegetation.
Wetlands are adequately protected.	Wetlands support biodiversity, filter and clean water, provide habitat, reduce flooding, and maintain water levels year round.	 	16 Provincially Significant Wetlands have been identified to date. A portion of 6 are protected as Conservation Reserves or Provincial Parks. All other wetlands have some level of protection through provincial or municipal policy.		Wetlands are threatened by a lack of knowledge related to their value, increasing development pressure, tax disincentives and few viable options for protection. Existing policy may not be sufficient to protect all wetlands or it may not be implemented consistently.
OUR COMMUNITIES					
All farms have an Environmental Farm Plan.	An Environmental Farm Plan indicates the commitment of the owner to environmental excellence.		Over 90% of registered farms in Muskoka currently have an Environmental Farm Plan.		The attitude and knowledge of the individual farmer will determine environmental practices.
All owners of 100+ acres of forested land participate in the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP).	Participation in MFTIP is an indication of forest stewardship by individual property owners.		11% of privately owned lots of 100+ acres participate in MFTIP.		The knowledge and attitude of the individual property owner will determine the stewardship practices on specific land parcels. Technical issues with the existing program do not encourage widespread participation.
All marinas participating in the 'Clean Marine' program.	Marinas can have a significant impact on pollution levels with oil, gas, and boat washing practices.		The program began in 2001. Currently 50% of marinas in Georgian Bay and 33% in the rest of Muskoka participate.		The knowledge and understanding of the marina owner about environmental issues will determine involvement in the program.
Strong environmental ethic and responsible civic attitude among all residents of Muskoka.	The attitude of individuals is key to improving many environmental indicators.		Awareness and action oriented programs are currently under development in Muskoka.		The attitude of people toward activities such as littering, recycling, composting, motorized recreation, and natural areas will impact our ability to achieve environmental objectives.
60% of waste recycled by 2008.	Diverting waste from landfill sites extends the life of these sites, saving a significant amount of public funds.		Residential properties in Muskoka currently recycle 40% of waste. Some industrial and commercial operations must be encouraged to participate more fully in programs.		The knowledge and attitude of property owners and businesses about recycling and composting will determine involvement in the program. Improved markets for recycled material are required to support program growth.