

To: Aypa Power Canada Development LP      From: Erica Padvaiskas  
Stantec Consulting Ltd.  
Project/File: 160901104      Date: April 5, 2024

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**Reference: Aypa Power Hedley Battery Energy Storage System Project - Natural Heritage Memo**

## 1 Introduction

Hedley BESS LP is currently exploring the Hedley battery energy storage project (“the Project”) in close proximity to the existing Hydro One Networks Inc. (“Hydro One”) transmission lines in Haldimand County, Ontario. Stantec Consulting Ltd. (Stantec) was retained by Aypa Power Canada Development LP (Aypa Power) to complete a Class Environmental Assessment for Minor Transmission Facilities (MTF) Class EA for the Project.

The objective of this *Natural Heritage Assessment Memo* is to identify potential natural heritage features to be considered during development. The natural heritage assessment provides the results of the desktop analysis and field investigations undertaken in 2023, including an assessment of Species at Risk (SAR), Significant Wildlife Habitat (SWH) and designated natural heritage features. The Project Development Area (PDA) encompasses any land, structure, and air space in, on or over which part of the Project is proposed. The Study Area for the natural heritage assessment is the PDA plus 120 meter (m) Adjacent Lands (Attachment A, Figure 1).

## 2 Background Review

### 2.1 Background Information Sources

A variety of background documents and sources of information were consulted to obtain records of natural heritage features within the 120-m Study Area. Records of terrestrial and aquatic SAR and provincially rare species, occurrences of amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals, Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSWs), Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSIs), and fish and fish habitat data were obtained from the following sources:

- The Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC; MNRF 2024a)
- Land Information Ontario (LIO; MNRF 2024b)
- Haldimand County Official Plan (Haldimand County 2019)
- Long Point Region Conservation Authority (LPRCA) Regulated Areas Mapping (LPRCA 2024)
- Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas (ORAA; Ontario Nature 2020)
- Atlas of the Mammals of Ontario (AMO; Dobbyn 1994)
- Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas (OBBA; Cadman et al. 2007)
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada Aquatic SAR Map (DFO 2024)

**Reference:** Aypa Power Hedley Battery Energy Storage System Project - Natural Heritage Memo

- Ontario Butterfly Atlas (OBA; Toronto Entomologists' 2023a)
- Ontario Moth Atlas (OMA; Kaposi et al. 2024)
- eBird Online Database (eBird 2024)
- iNaturalist Online Observations (iNaturalist 2024)

## **2.2 Desktop Study Results**

### **2.2.1 TERRESTRIAL DESIGNATED FEATURES**

The proposed PDA is situated in an agricultural setting, adjacent to rural properties and existing infrastructure (e.g. Hydro One Transmission Line). One wooded community overlaps with the southern boundary of the 120-m Study Area (MNR, 2024a). Two Natural Environmental Areas (i.e. watercourses) occur in the 120-m Study Area, as mapped in the Haldimand County Official Plan (Haldimand County, 2019). See Section 2.2.4 for details regarding these aquatic Natural Environmental Features.

No other terrestrial natural features (i.e., ANSIs, wetlands) occur within the 120-m Study Area.

### **2.2.2 TERRESTRIAL SPECIES OF CONSERVATION CONCERN**

Species of Conservation Concern (SOCC) are those species which are provincially rare (S1-S3 ranked species) or provincially designated special concern species. This category excludes species with a provincial status of threatened or endangered, which are described in Section 2.2.3. Status rankings (S-ranks) for wildlife are based on the number of occurrences in Ontario and have the following meanings:

- S1: critically imperiled; often fewer than 5 occurrences
- S2: imperiled; often fewer than 20 occurrences
- S3: vulnerable; often fewer than 80 occurrences
- S4: apparently secure; uncommon but not rare
- S#B: breeding status rank
- S#N: Non-breeding status rank

Based on a review of background information, 12 SOCC are known to occur in the vicinity of the 120-m Study Area, as shown in Table 2-1. The potential for SOCC to be present in the 120-m Study Area is limited by habitat suitability and availability; therefore, species listed in Table 2-1 may not occur in the PDA.

Reference: Aypa Power Hedley Battery Energy Storage System Project - Natural Heritage Memo

**Table 2-1 Terrestrial Species of Conservation Concern**

Species	S-Rank	SARO	Source
<b>INSECTS</b>			
Finlayson's Oakworm Moth ( <i>Anisota finlaysoni</i> )	S2	-	OMA
Monarch ( <i>Danaus plexippus</i> )	S2N, S4B	SC	OBA
<b>BIRDS</b>			
Barn Swallow ( <i>Hirundo rustica</i> )	S4B	SC	NHIC, OBBA
Eastern Wood-pewee ( <i>Contopus virens</i> )	S4B	SC	OBBA
Grasshopper Sparrow ( <i>Ammodramus savannarum</i> )	S4B	SC	OBBA
Purple Martin ( <i>Progne subis</i> )	S3B	-	OBBA
Upland Sandpiper ( <i>Bartramia longicauda</i> )	S2B	-	NHIC, OBBA
Wood Thrush ( <i>Hylocichla mustelina</i> )	S4B	SC	OBBA
<b>HEPTILES</b>			
Eastern Milksnake ( <i>Lampropeltis triangulum</i> )	S4	NAR	ORAA
Midland Painted Turtle ( <i>Chrysemys picta marginata</i> )	S4	-	ORAA
Snapping Turtle ( <i>Chelydra serpentina</i> )	S4	SC	ORAA
<b>MAMMALS</b>			
Woodland Vole ( <i>Microtus pinetorum</i> )	S3?	SC	NHIC, AMO

Notes:

- AMO - Atlas of the Mammals of Ontario – Dobbyn 1994
- NHIC - Natural Heritage Information Center (MNRF 2024a)
- OBBA - Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas (Cadman et al. 2007)
- OBA - Ontario Butterfly Atlas (Ontario Nature 2024a)
- ORAA - Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas (Ontario Nature 2019)
- SARO - Species at Risk in Ontario List
- END – Endangered
- THR – Threatened
- SC – Special Concern

### 2.2.3 TERRESTRIAL SPECIES AT RISK

For this report, SAR are defined as those species identified as endangered or threatened under the provincial *Endangered Species Act, 2007* (ESA). The ESA was created to protect SAR and their habitats in Ontario. Endangered, threatened, and extirpated species listed on the Species at Risk in Ontario (SARO) list (O. Reg. 230/08 under the ESA) automatically receive legal protection from harm or harassment under the ESA. In addition to species protection, the ESA prohibits damage or destruction of habitat for endangered or threatened species. A given species' habitat may have either general habitat protection or regulated habitat protection, where the type of protection each species is provided depends mainly on when the species was added to the SARO List, its designated status, and if a habitat regulation has been developed specifically for this species.

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Based on a review of background information, 8 SAR are known to occur in the vicinity of the 120-m Study Area, as shown in Table 2-2. The potential for SAR to be present in the 120-m Study Area is limited by habitat suitability and availability; therefore, species listed in Table 2-2 may not occur in the PDA.

**Table 2-2 Terrestrial Species at Risk**

Species	SARO Status	SARA Status	Source
<b>BIRDS</b>			
Bobolink ( <i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i> )	THR	THR	NHIC, OBBA
Chimney Swift ( <i>Chaetura pelagica</i> )	THR	THR	OBBA
Eastern Meadowlark ( <i>Sturnella magna</i> )	THR	THR	NHIC, OBBA
<b>HEPTILES</b>			
Gray Ratsnake - Carolinian Population ( <i>Pantherophis spiloides pop. 2</i> )	END	END	ORAA
<b>MAMMALS</b>			
Eastern Small-footed Myotis ( <i>Myotis leibii</i> )	END	-	AMO
Little Brown Myotis ( <i>Myotis lucifugus</i> )	END	END	AMO
Northern Myotis ( <i>Myotis septentrionalis</i> )	END	END	AMO
Tricolored Bat ( <i>Perimyotis subflavus</i> )	END	END	AMO

Notes:

- AMO - Atlas of the Mammals of Ontario – Dobbyn 1994
- NHIC - Natural Heritage Information Center (MNRF 2024a)
- OBBA - Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas (Cadman et al. 2007)
- OBA - Ontario Butterfly Atlas (Ontario Nature 2024a)
- ORAA - Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas (Ontario Nature 2019)
- SARO - Species at Risk in Ontario List
- END – Endangered
- THR – Threatened
- SC – Special Concern

## 2.2.4 AQUATIC HABITAT

The proposed 120-m Study Area overlaps with two unnamed tributaries to Sandusk Creek MNRF 2024b: (Attachment A, Figure 1).

The first unnamed tributary runs parallel to the southern boundary of the PDA and overlaps with the woodland community and 120-m Study Area. The second tributary intercepts the northeastern edge of the 120-m Study Area. Both tributaries have an intermittent flow regime and a warmwater thermal regime (MNRF 2024b). Sandusk Creek supports the following fish species: Banded Killifish, Bluntnose Minnow, Brook Stickleback, Brown Bullhead, Common Carp, Common Shiner, Creek Chub, Fathead Minnow, Johnny Darter, Largemouth Bass, Pumpkinseed, Quillback, Rock Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Spoffin Shiner, White Sucker (MNRF 2024b).

The two unnamed tributaries provide fish habitat (Haldimand County 2019) and as such, are mapped as Natural Environmental Areas (Haldimand County 2019). A 15 m buffer from the high-water mark should be maintained around these streams as per the official plan (Haldimand County 2019).

**Reference:** Aypa Power Hedley Battery Energy Storage System Project - Natural Heritage Memo

There are no records of provincially or federal protected aquatic species at risk within the 120-m Study Area (DFO 2024, MNR 2024a).

## **2.3 Natural Heritage Policy Review**

### **2.3.1 HALDIMAND COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN**

The Haldimand County Official Plan (Haldimand County 2019) designates Natural Environment Areas as lands that are essential to ecological functions and protect natural biological diversity. According to Section 2.A.2 of the official plan, Natural Environmental Areas include: Provincially Significant Wetlands; coastal wetlands, provincially significant areas of natural and scientific interest (both earth and life sciences); environmentally sensitive areas; Habitat of Endangered and Threatened Species; fish habitat; Carolinian Canada sites; and locally significant and unevaluated wetlands.

As noted above, the two watercourses within the 120-m Study Area constitute as fish habitat under the Haldimand County Official Plan and as such, are mapped as Natural Environmental Areas (Haldimand County 2019).

Development is generally not permitted in Natural Environment Areas. According to the Haldimand County Official Plan development on lands adjacent to Natural Environment Areas (i.e. 30 metres from habitat measured from the high-water mark) may require a satisfactory Environmental Impact Study (EIS) or equivalent study to demonstrate that the proposed development causes no negative impacts on the natural features or their ecological functions.

The Haldimand County may waive the requirement for an EIS for development on adjacent lands where it is determined, in consultation with the appropriate agency, that there will be no negative impact on the natural features or ecological functions.

## **3 Field Investigations**

### **3.1 Survey Methods**

A Stantec terrestrial ecologist visited the Site on November 17, 2023, to document existing vegetation conditions and conduct wildlife habitat assessments. Vegetation communities were mapped and classified using the Ecological Land Classification (ELC) system for Southern Ontario (Lee et al. 1998) and the updated ELC Catalogue (2008) as guides.

Fisheries habitat assessments were not carried out, as the proposed development is not anticipated to impact fish and fish habitat.

### **3.2 Results**

#### **3.2.1 VEGETATION COMMUNITIES**

Vegetation communities documented during the site investigation are shown on Attachment A, Figure 2 and summarized in Table 3-1 below. The focus of the ELC survey was the Subject Property of the proposed storage facility; the remaining vegetation communities were characterized from the edge of the property and through aerial photos interpretation.

Reference: Aypa Power Hedley Battery Energy Storage System Project - Natural Heritage Memo

**Table 3-1 Vegetation Communities**

ELC Code	Community Description
<b>Woodland Communities</b>	
WOD Deciduous Woodland	Semi-closed treed community in which canopy cover varying from 35% - 60%. This community is dominated deciduous tree species including Shagbark Hickory ( <i>Carya ovata</i> ), American Hop-hornbeam ( <i>Ostrya virginiana</i> ), Hawthorn species ( <i>Crataegus sp.</i> ), European Buckthorn ( <i>Rhamnus cathartica</i> ), Red Oak ( <i>Quercus rubra</i> ) and American Beech ( <i>Fagus americana</i> ).
<b>Meadow Communities</b>	
MEMM3 Dry – Fresh Mixed Meadow Ecosite	Narrow strips of mixed meadow that separate agriculture fields and constructed roads. These communities are dominated by grass and forb species.
<b>Agricultural Communities</b>	
AG Agriculture	Agricultural fields that have recently been plowed.
OAGM2 Perennial Cover Crops	Agricultural field planted with perennial crops such as alfalfa.
OAGM1 Annual Row Crops	Agricultural fields planted with annual crops including corn, soya, and wheat.
OAGM1 Annual Row Crops CVI Transportation and Utilities	Hydro corridor constructed over agricultural fields planted with annual crops.
<b>Constructed Communities</b>	
CVI_1 Transportation	These communities include roads and hydro corridors.

None of these vegetation communities are considered rare in the province.

No SAR or SOCC trees or plants were documented on the Site by Stantec during the November 16, 2023, site visit.

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### **3.2.2 WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT**

General wildlife habitat assessments focused on the identification of wildlife habitat features that could support SAR and/or SOCC. Features that may support Significant Wildlife Habitat (SWH) features as outlined in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF)'s Criteria Schedule for Ecoregion 7E (MNRF 2015) were also assessed.

SWH may occur in one of four categories: seasonal concentration areas, rare vegetation communities or specialized habitats for wildlife, habitat for SOCC, and animal movement corridors. Targeted wildlife surveys are typically required to confirm habitat use and significance of SWH.

#### **3.2.2.1 SIGNIFICANT WILDLIFE HABITAT**

The following candidate significant wildlife habitat (SWH) may occur within 120 m of Site:

- Habitat for SOCC
  - Eastern Wood-Pewee and Wood Thrush potentially present in in the wooded community (WOD in Attachment A, Figure 2).

#### **3.2.2.2 SPECIES AT RISK**

No wildlife SAR were observed during site investigation on November 16, 2023. However, the survey was outside of the active season for most species.

Results of the background review and habitat assessment indicated that bat SAR may be present in the woodland community or in mature deciduous trees within the 120-m Study Area (WOD in Attachment A, Figure 2).

## **4 Recommendations**

The primary natural heritage constraints in the 120-m Study Area are the natural heritage features (i.e. woodland and watercourses). It is recommended that the proposed development avoid these natural heritage features; the recommended setbacks are described below.

The woodland community overlaps with the southern boundary of the 120-m Study Area and may contain habitat for SAR and/or SOCC. To avoid potential harm to these species through and/or vegetation removal, a 5 m buffer should be maintained around the edge of the woodland (Attachment A, Figure 2). If the 5 m environmental setback can be maintained, additional SAR surveys are not anticipated.

Two mapped watercourses also overlap with the 120-m Study Area. As noted above, these watercourses are identified as fish habitat in the Haldimand County Official Plan. In accordance with the Haldimand Official Plan, a 15 m buffer should be maintained around these streams to protect fish and fish habitat (Attachment A, Figure 1). If this 15 m buffer can be maintained, then the streams are not expected to be impacted by the proposed Project. A DFO Request for Review may be required if work is anticipated to occur below the high-water mark where fish habitat is present.

**Reference:** Aypa Power Hedley Battery Energy Storage System Project - Natural Heritage Memo

Additionally, since the PDA is within 30 m of fish habitat (i.e. a Natural Environmental Area), an EIS may be required to demonstrate that there will be no negative impacts on these natural features or their ecological functions (Haldimand County Official Plan 2019). If a 15 m setback surrounding the streams is maintained, then the proposed development is not anticipated to affect the mapped streams or their ecological functions. As such, further consultation with the County is recommended to determine the need for an EIS.

There is potential for Bat SAR to be encountered within the 120-m Study Area (i.e. woodland community). However, if the 5 m buffer surrounding the woodland can be maintained, then interactions with these species or their potential habitat are not anticipated during project implementation.

## 4.1 Mitigation Measures

The general mitigation measures are recommended to reduce impacts to wildlife in the 120-m Study Area:

- Vegetation removal should not occur between April 1 – August 31 to avoid nesting birds which are protected by the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1995* (ECCC 2019). Should limited vegetation clearing activities be unavoidable during this window, a program should be implemented to reduce and avoid impacts to migratory birds and their nests. This program should include preventative and mitigation measures but may also include avoidance of clearing during key sensitive periods and in key locations.
- When conducting activities for the Project, avoid tree clearing from April 1 – September 30 when bats could be roosting in trees.
- If wildlife is encountered during construction, personnel are required to move away from the animal and provide reasonable time for the animal to move off the construction site.
- In some instances, handling wildlife may be required, such as the movement of an animal to outside of harm's way, or the transportation of an injured animal to an authorized wildlife rehabilitator; however, this activity should occur under the direction of a professional with knowledge of wildlife handling.

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## 5 Closure

This report documents work that was performed in accordance with generally accepted professional standards at the time and location in which the services were provided. No other representations, warranties or guarantees are made concerning the accuracy or completeness of the data or conclusions contained within this report, including no assurance that this work has uncovered all potential liabilities associated with the identified property. Conclusions made within this report consist of Stantec's professional opinion as of the time of the writing of this report and are based solely on the scope of work described in the report, the limited data available and the results of the work.

Regards,

**STANTEC CONSULTING LTD.**

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Attachment      Attachment A - Figures  
                         Figure 1 - Site Location and Natural Heritage Background Information  
                         Figure 2 - Vegetation Communities

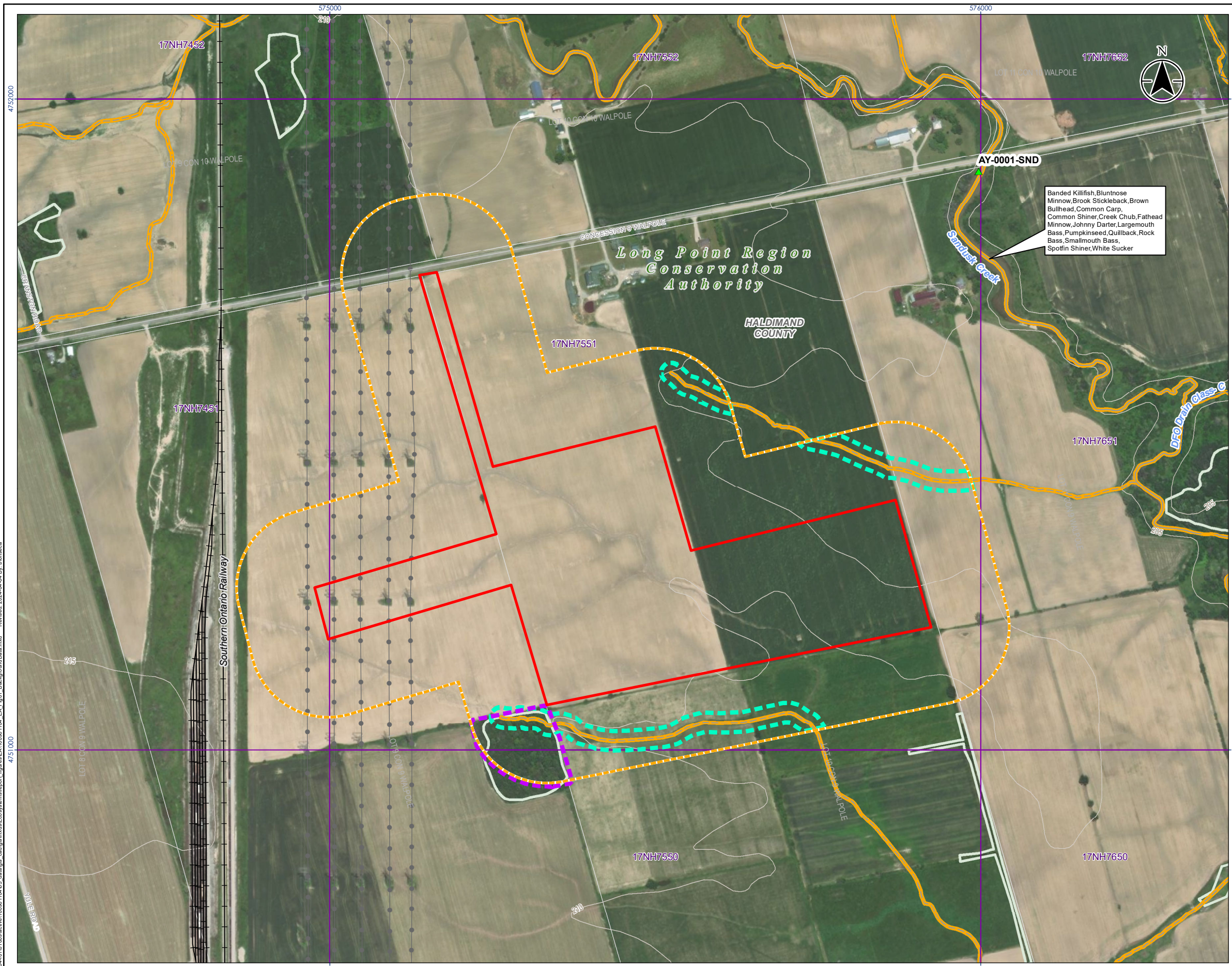
cc. Kristen Wozniak (Kristen.Wozniak@stantec.com)

Reference: Aypa Power Hedley Battery Energy Storage System Project - Natural Heritage Memo

## 6 References

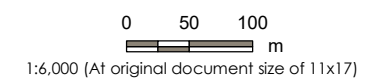
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## **Attachment A   Figures**

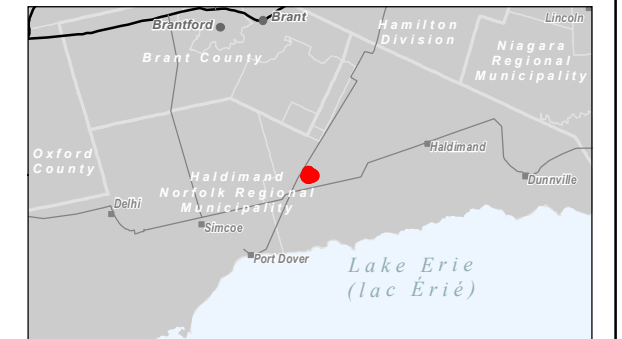


- Legend**
- Project Development Area
  - Study Area (120 m)
  - ▲ Fish Survey Point (ARA)
  - Constructed Drain
  - Contour (masl)
  - Hydro Line
  - Minor Road
  - Railway
  - Thermal Regime, Warm
  - Watercourse (Intermittent)
  - Watercourse (Permanent)
  - Conservation Authority Administrative Boundary
  - Lot
  - Wooded Area
  - Stream Environmental Setback (15 m)
  - Woodlot Environmental Setback (5 m)
  - 1 km UTM Grid

Banded Killifish, Bluntnose Minnow, Brook Stickleback, Brown Bullhead, Common Carp, Common Shiner, Creek Chub, Fathead Minnow, Johnny Darter, Largemouth Bass, Pumpkinseed, Quillback, Rock Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Spottin Shiner, White Sucker



- Notes**
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Project Location: 160901104 REV2  
 Prepared by BF on 2024-04-04  
 Technical Review by DH on 2024-01-29

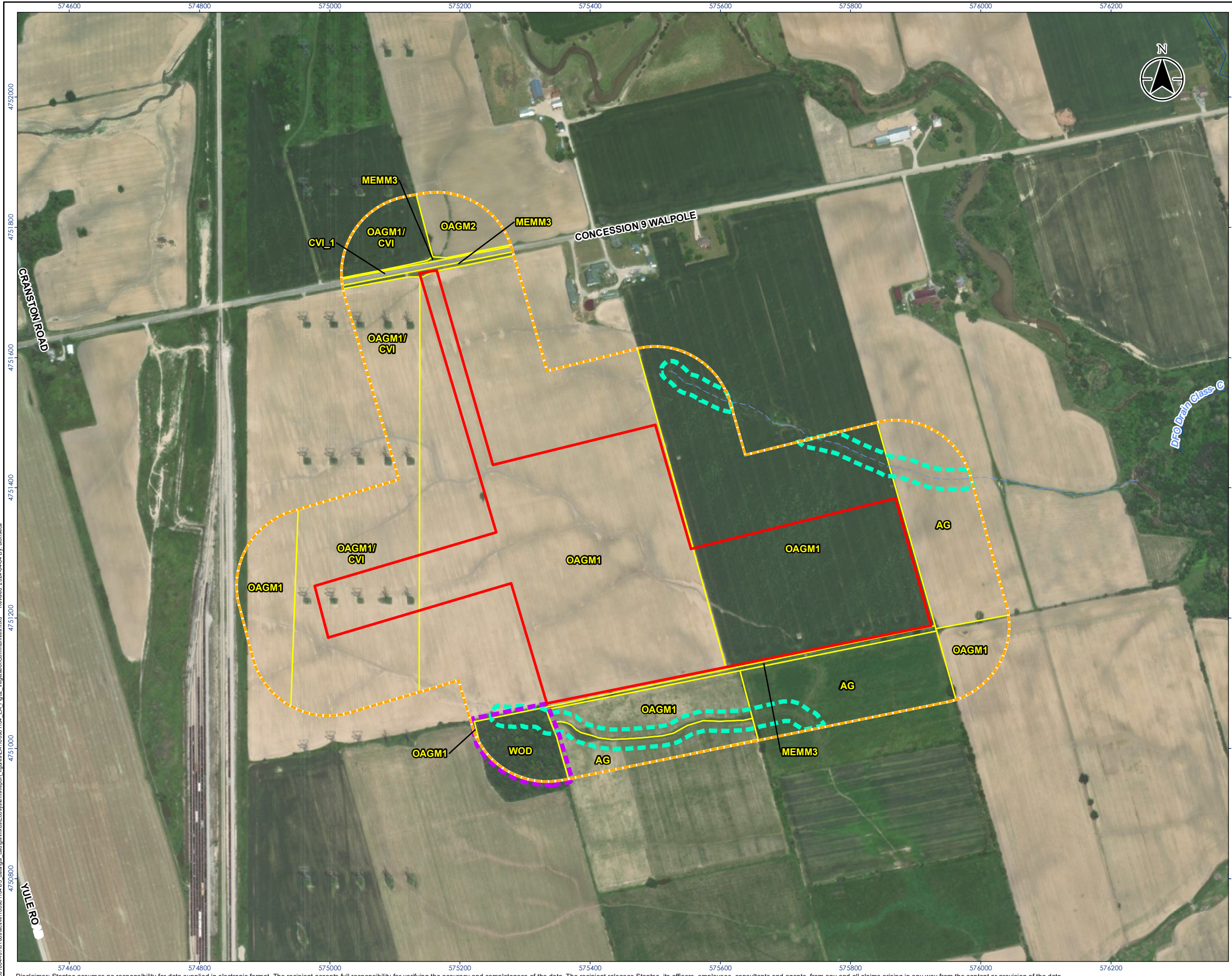
Client/Project: AYP POWER CANADA DEVELOPMENT ENERGY STORAGE SITES

Figure No.: 1

Title: Site Location and Natural Heritage Background Information - Hedley Project

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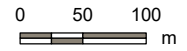


**Legend**

- Project Development Area
- Study Area (120 m)
- ELC Community Boundary
- Constructed Drain
- Watercourse (Intermittent)
- Stream Environmental Setback (15 m)
- Woodlot Environmental Setback (5 m)

**ELC Description**

- AG (Agriculture)
- CVL\_1 (Transportation)
- MEMM3 (Dry - Fresh Mixed Meadow Ecosite)
- OAGM1 (Annual Row Crops)
- OAGM1 (Annual Row Crops), CVI (Transportation and Utilities)
- OAGM2 (Perennial Cover Crops)
- WOD (Deciduous Woodland)



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**Notes**

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Project Location: 160901104 REV2  
 Prepared by BF on 2024-04-04  
 Technical Review by DH on 2024-01-29

Client/Project: AYPower CANADA DEVELOPMENT ENERGY STORAGE SITES

Figure No.: **2**  
 Title: **Vegetation Communities - Hedley Project**

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