AZIMUTH ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING, INC.

Environmental Assessments & Approvals

November 26, 2025 AEC 25-366

Peter Mabson
846 Kamaniskeg Lake Road
Hastings Highlands, Ontario K0J 1L0

Re: **Scoped Environmental Impact Study for a Proposed Garage Development on 846 Kamaniskeg Lake Road, Municipality of Hastings Highlands, County of Hastings**

Peter Mabson:

Azimuth Environmental Consulting, Inc. (Azimuth) was retained by Peter Mabson to provide a Scoped Environmental Impact Study (Scoped EIS) for a proposed development in the Municipality of Hastings Highlands, County of Hastings located at 846 Kamaniskeg Lake Road (Figure 1). The proposed development involves the construction of one single storey detached garage located adjacent to the existing residence as shown in Appendix A. It is our understanding that the Municipality has requested that an EIS be undertaken to identify potential impacts to natural heritage features on and adjacent to the property and verify conformity with environmental policies and accompany the submission of a minor variance application.

This purpose of this Scoped EIS is to identify the candidate Key Natural Heritage Features (KNHFs) present within the study area and address potential impacts to candidate KNHFs. A review of background information in combination with a single site visit undertaken in October 2025 to identify significant natural heritage features and functions. This report also examines potential for Species at Risk (SAR) protected under the *Endangered Species Act,* 2007 (ESA) within the study area. The potential for negative impacts to natural heritage features resulting from the proposed development is considered and recommendations for avoidance and mitigation are provided.

For the purposes of this Scoped EIS the study area described in this report includes the development footprint on Figure 2 and adjacent lands (within approximately 120 metres (m)) of the property limits. Natural features in the overall planning area beyond the defined study area limits are discussed where applicable throughout this report.

1.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

Azimuth has prepared this Scoped EIS relative to the following federal, provincial, and municipal planning policies with potential applicability to the study area:

- Provincial Planning Statement (MMAH, 2024);
- *Endangered Species Act*, 2007 (ESA);
- County of Hastings Official Plan; and,
- Federal *Fisheries Act*.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A review of the following background documents provided information on site characteristics, habitat, wildlife, rare species and communities and general cultural/historic aspects of the study area:

- Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) Ontario Geohub, Land Information Ontario: Wildlife Values Area (MNR, 2025a);
- MNR Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC; MNR, 2025b);
- MNR Fish On-Line (MNR, 2025c);
- MNR Ontario Geohub, Land Information Ontario: Fish Activity Area (MNR, 2025d);
- MNR Ontario Geohub, Land Information Ontario: Aquatic resource area line segment (MNR, 2025e);
- Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario (OBBA; Cadman *et al.*, 2007);
- Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas (Ontario Nature, 2020);
- Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP)'s Species at Risk Ontario list (MECP, 2025);
- iNaturalist (NHIC) Rare Species of Ontario (iNaturalist, 2025);
- Government of Canada's Species at Risk Public Registry; and,
- Atlas of the Mammals of Ontario (Dobbyn, 1994).

3.0 STUDY APPROACH

Azimuth attended the property on October 24, 2025 to carry out an assessment of the natural features within the study area. Prior to undertaking the field studies, an initial classification of vegetation communities was undertaken using recent air photo imagery for an area encompassing the study area. Vegetation community boundaries were then investigated in the field on October 24, 2025 and delineated as illustrated in Figure 2. during the growing season

when the emergent ground cover vegetation layer was present. Vegetation community types were classified using the Ecological Land Classification for Central Ontario: Ecosites of Ontario. Operational Draft. (Banton et al., 2009).

A SAR screening was undertaken for the scope of this assignment that compares the habitat requirements of species with potential to occur in the overall planning area with habitat types that occur on the property. The screening was based on air photo interpretation combined with onsite evaluation of habitats within the study area as described below.

4.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS

4.1 Land Use

The property contains an existing dwelling with associated shed, boathouse, and septic bed. The majority of the property is comprised of maintained lawn and landscape features, with scattered ornamental trees and small pockets of wooded areas. The southern extent of the property abuts Kamaniskeg Lake Road, with the northern extent bordered by Kamaniskeg Lake. The property falls in between other residential properties abutting the eastern and western property lines.

4.2 Vegetation

A field survey was undertaken to evaluate vegetation community types including representative plant species compositions on October 24, 2025. Property access was granted within the property boundary only (Figure 2), and therefore alternative survey techniques (*i.e.* "fenceline"/binocular surveys) were completed for lands located beyond the property line. A photographic record collected during the site visit is presented in Appendix A.

The site visit was undertaken by a qualified ecologist with existing knowledge related to rare, Special Concern, Threatened, and Endangered plant species with potential to occur in the area. The site assessment was focused during ELC work to ensure that appropriate effort was made to detect any federally or provincially designated species, notably SAR as identified under the ESA.

There is one (1) of Element of Occurrence (EO_ID) within 1 kilometre (km) of the study area for provincially Endangered or Threatened, or provincially rare vegetation species according to the NHIC database (MNR, 2025b):

- Ogden's Pondweed (Endangered)

No plant species considered Endangered or Threatened were identified during the site investigation, including Ogden's Pondweed. The adjacent shoreline of Kamaniskeg Lake is subject to active processes (*i.e* wave activity) which does not provide suitable habitat for the Ogden's Pondweed. Further, no provincially rare (S1-S3) species were observed during the field program.

4.3 Wildlife

Direct and indirect observations of wildlife (*e.g.* tracks, scat, fur) were collected as a matter of course during the October 24, 2025 site investigation.

There is one (1) of Element of Occurrence (EO_ID) within 1 kilometre (km) of the study area for provincially Endangered or Threatened, or provincially rare wildlife species according to the NHIC database (MNR, 2025b):

- Evening Grosbeak (Special Concern)

No evidence of Evening Grosbeak or other wildlife species of conservation concern was observed throughout the course of the site investigation. As targeted breeding bird studies were not included as a component of the field program, the species is treated as present in general area and is discussed in the context of the proposed development below.

4.4 Fish and Fish Habitat

<u>Kamaniskeg Lake</u>

Kamaniskeg Lake is a large open water feature that is known to host a diverse fish community. According to MNR Fish ON-Line (MNR, 2025c), fish known to inhabit the lake include, but are not limited to: Burbot, Lake Trout, Largemouth Bass, Northern Pike, Walleye and Yellow Perch. According to MNR Fish Activity Area mapping (MNR, 2025d), Lake Trout spawn around Parcher Island, which is located approximately 1km off shore of where the subject property is located. Given the presence of Lake Trout, Kamaniskeg Lake would be considered permanent direct fish habitat for a coldwater fish community and would be afforded protections under the Federal *Fisheries Act*.

There are no records of aquatic SAR in this watershed or within 1km of the study area (DFO, 2025).

5.0 NATURAL HERITAGE FEATURES AND FUNCTIONS

The results of Azimuth's field studies combined with review of background information indicate the potential for the following candidate KNHFs within the study area:

- Habitat for Threatened or Endangered Species
    - SAR Bats (Little Brown Myotis, Northern Myotis, Tri-colored Bat, Eastern Red Bat, Hoary Bat and Silver-haired Bat)
- Candidate Significant Wildlife Habitat
    - Bat Maternity Colonies;
    - Special Concern and Rare Wildlife Species;
        - Eastern Wood-pewee
        - Wood Thrush
        - Evening Grosbeak
- Fish Habitat
    - Kamaniskeg Lake

The following candidate KNHFs were <u>not</u> identified within the study area during Azimuth's site investigation, and are not considered further in this assessment:

- Wetlands
- Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest

6.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This impact assessment is prepared with regards to the proposed development plan, as described above and illustrated in Figure 2.

6.1 Habitat for Threatened and Endangered Species

Impacts with regards to the ESA and Habitat of Threatened or Endangered Species are covered under Section 9 and 10 of the ESA. Section 9 deals directly with killing or harming living members of a species while Section 10 covers destruction or damage to habitat of Threatened or Endangered species. The following Threatened and Endangered species have the potential to occur within the limits of the property and on adjacent lands:

- SAR Bats (Little Brown Myotis, Northern Myotis, Tri-colored Bat, Eastern Red Bat, Hoary Bat and Silver-haired Bat)

Little Brown Myotis, Northern Myotis, Tri-colored Bat, Eastern Red Bat, Hoary Bat, and Silver-haired Bat were not directly observed throughout the course of the field investigation, however these species are treated as present in lieu of conducting detailed ecological studies to verify presence/absence. Caves, karst topography, and/or abandoned mines are absent within the study area, therefore potential hibernacula are not located within the study area limits. There are no manmade structures within the study area that would provide suitable maternity roosting habitat for the species, noting that the existing dwelling on the property appears in a good state of repair (*i.e.* does not provide potential access points for bats), and the former shed structure had been demolished at the time of the site investigation.

With regards for potential roosting habitat, Little Brown Myotis, Northern Myotis, Tri-colored Bat, Eastern Red Bat, Hoary Bat, and Silver-haired Bat may utilize woodlands as maternity roost sites, preferring trees >25cm diameter at breast height with evidence of cracks, holes, splits, lifted bark, *etc.* (called "snags") to provide refuge for the rearing of young during the late spring and early summer months (approximately June). Although larger trees are preferred, trees of any size with suitable access features have potential to be occupied by bats during the active period.

During the site investigation, which included a general screening of the study area for snags and snag clusters during the leaf-off period such that potential cracks, holes, splits, *etc*. could be viewed by the site investigator, it was observed that suitable snags for bat roosting activities were present within the limits of the study area, and in the greater landscape beyond the study area boundaries.

For projects of a similar scope, Azimuth has engaged the MECP regarding potential impacts to woodland bat habitat. Guidance was provided via the Bat Survey Standards Note (MECP, 2022), which clarifies the following:

"If a proposed activity will avoid impairing or eliminating the function of habitat for supporting bat life processes (e.g. remove, stub, etc. a proportionally small number of potential maternity or day roost trees in treed habitats which would not result in fragmentation/barriers) and the timing of tree removal will avoid the bat active season (April 1-September 30 in Southern Ontario)"…"then there is no need to conduct species at risk bat surveys of treed habitats."

The above is consistent with Azimuth's understanding when suitable habitat availability is not limiting, a mitigation approach that restricts vegetation removals during the active period for

bats is a suitable approach to avoid a contravention to SAR bat individuals or habitats under Section 9 and Section 10 of the ESA.

The proposed development may potentially involve minor limb clearance on the periphery of the proposed development footprint to facilitate a hydro connection. There is no expectation that such minor removals would undermine that potential bat maternity and/or day roosting function, and such habitat functions would persist in the post-development setting. In Azimuth's opinion, a suitable mitigation approach that would avoid potential impacts to SAR bats includes a no-cut window from **April 1-September 30** of any given year.

With regard for the assessment provided above, providing works occur in accordance with mitigation and other recommendations detailed in Section 8 below, there is no expectation that the proposed development would negatively impact Little Brown Myotis, Northern Myotis, Tri-colored Bat, Eastern Red Bat, Hoary Bat, and Silver-haired Bat, or the habitat upon which the species depend described in Section 7 of this report.

6.2 Candidate Significant Wildlife Habitat

According to the PPS development and site alteration are not permitted within SWH located in Ecoregion 5E, unless it can be demonstrated there will be no negative impacts upon the feature and its ecological functions. For the purposes of this assessment, Candidate SWH listed in Section 5 above is treated as significant.

6.2.1 Bat Maternity Colonies

Woodlands within the study area and may provide suitable roosting habitat for Bat Maternity Colonies during the late spring period (approximately June). As described in Section 6.1.1 above in the context of SAR bats, an abundance of potentially suitable snags were observed within woodlands adjacent to the property, which were determined to exhibit features such as cracks, splits, peeled bark, and cavities.

As determined through consultation with MECP described in Section 6.1.1 above, extensive, continuous/unbroken forest within and adjacent to the property, and within the greater region would retain potential bat habitat function in the post-construction setting. A suitable mitigation approach that includes a no-cut window from **April 1-September 30** would be anticipated to suitably avoid potential impacts to Bat Maternity Colonies.

6.2.2 Habitat for Special Concern and Rare Wildlife Species

Eastern Wood-pewee, Wood Thrush, Evening Grosbeak

Habitat opportunities for Eastern Wood-pewee and Wood Thrush are characterized by intermediate-aged to mature woodland ecosystems (COSEWIC, 2012a; COSEWIC, 2012b). Habitat opportunities for Evening Grosbeak generally include open, mature mixedwood forests, where fir species (*Abies spp.*) and/or White Spruce (*Picea glauca*) are dominant (COSEWIC, 2016).

The proposed development may include minor limb removals to facilitate hydro connection. There is no expectation that if such minor removals were to occur, that it would undermine that potential available habitat or related functions for any of the above species. A suitable mitigation approach to avoid potential impacts is to ensure tree cutting occurs outside of the breeding/nesting period for the species between **April 15 and August 31** of any given year. By restricting tree cutting to outside of the active breeding period for the species, individuals will not be negatively impacted (as nestlings will not be present) and future nesting opportunities will be retained within the property and local landscape, given the abundance of upland forest habitat suitable for the species.

6.3 Fish Habitat

No direct in-water works are proposed as a result of the proposed garage development. Therefore, the proposed development would not result in the direct impact of fish habitat. However, indirect impacts to fish habitat can still occur as a result of adjacent or nearby works. The proposed development footprint occurs further away from Kamaniskeg Lake than the existing garage, maintaining a 25m setback from the lake, and utilizes the prior disturbed footprint of the former shed structure to the extent possible, further reducing the area of vegetation removal that would be necessary to accommodate the proposed garage structure. If standard mitigation measures outlined in Section 8 are applied, no impact to the adjacent fish habitat is anticipated.

Overall, in combination with the setback, the installation of heavy-duty sediment fence during future construction activities as recommended in Section 8, no negative impacts to fish habitat within Kamaniskeg Lake are anticipated as a result of the proposed garage development .

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Species at Risk

It should be noted that the absence of a protected species within the study area does not indicate that they will never occur within the area. Given the dynamic character of the natural environment, there is a constant variation in habitat use. Care should be taken in the interpretation of presence of species of concern including those listed under the ESA. Changes to policy, or the natural environment, could result in shifts, removal, or addition of new areas to the list of areas currently considered SAR habitat. This report is intended as a point in time assessment of the potential to impact SAR; not to provide long term "clearance" for SAR. A review of the assessment provided in this report by a qualified person is expected to be sufficient to provide appropriate advice at the time of the onset of future site works.

While there is no expectation that the assessment should change significantly, it is the responsibility of the proponent to ensure that they are not in contravention of the ESA at the time that site works are undertaken. Activities must occur in conformity with Section 9 and Section 10 under the ESA that afford individual and habitat protection, respectively, to species listed as Threatened or Endangered in Ontario. The MECP has provided Azimuth with specific direction that the agency no longer issues Letters of Advice (LOAs) nor does MECP "sign off" on every proposed development. The roles and responsibilities of the proponents are outlined in the Draft Client's Guide to Preliminary Screening for SAR (MECP, 2019), which advises that the proponent should consider whether a proposed activity is likely to contravene the ESA prior to initiating correspondence with MECP. Where an assessment determines a proposed activity is not expected to contravene the ESA, there is no requirement to contact MECP.

The ESA was recently updated following adoption of Bill 5, *Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act*, 2025. Subsequent to Royal Assent (June 5, 2025), several "interim" changes to the ESA have taken place. It is anticipated the ESA will be repealed and the new *Species Conservation Act*, 2025 will be implemented. At the time of this EIS analysis, only the "interim" changes to the ESA were in effect. Information related to SAR may have to be revised/updated as new information is released by the province.

7.2 Migratory Breeding Birds and Bats

Activities involving the removal of vegetation should be restricted from occurring during the breeding season. Migratory birds, nests, and eggs are protected by the *Migratory Birds Convention Act*, 1994 (MBCA) and the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act,* 1997 (FWCA). Environment Canada outlines dates when activities in any region have potential to impact

nests at the Environment Canada Website (https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/avoiding-harm-migratory-birds/general-nesting-periods/nesting-periods.html). In Zone C3 vegetation clearing should be avoided between **April 15 through August 31** of any given year. If work requires that vegetation clearing is required between these dates screening by an ecologist with knowledge of bird species present in the area could be undertaken to ensure that the vegetation has been confirmed to be free of nests prior to clearing. It is advisable that migratory bird nest screenings during the breeding window are generally appropriate for "simple" habitats (*e.g.* hedgerows, disturbed areas) and less suitable for "complex" habitats (*e.g.* thickets, woodlands) given the increased risk for non-detection of active nesting sites in dense areas.

Activities involving tree removal should be avoided between **April 1 through September 30** of any given year, during the active period for bat species that may utilize trees for maternity and day roosting purposes. It is anticipated that adherence to this timing restriction will avoid impacts to individual SAR bats, therefore remaining in compliance with Section 9 of the ESA affording individual protection to Endangered species.

7.3 Site Preparation and Operations

Diligent application of sediment and erosion controls (ESCs) and adherence to Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the duration of site works is recommended for the mitigation of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts upon retained natural heritage features and functions. Recommendations related to implementation of ESCs and BMPs are listed below, and should be adhered to throughout the duration of the site activities:

- Installation and maintenance of ESCs are recommended for all future construction activities to minimize the extent of accidental or unavoidable impacts to adjacent vegetation communities, wildlife habitat and fish habitat.
- Prior to the commencement of site works, silt fencing should be applied along the length of directly adjacent natural or naturalized features.
- Routine inspection/maintenance of the silt fencing should occur throughout construction.
- ESCs should be maintained until vegetation is re-established post-construction, where applicable.
- Materials storage on the property (*i.e*. soil stockpiles) should be located over 30m from natural features where feasible. Material storage areas should be contained with ESCs to avoid potential indirect impacts to natural features onsite.

7.4 Fish and Fish Habitat

As specified above, future development on the property should have regard for the adjacent natural environmental features, and utilize BMPs during construction as follows:

- All site disturbance should be minimized to the extent possible.
- All ESC measures are to be installed prior to ground disturbance and maintained until all disturbed soils have been restored and stabilized following construction.
- It is recommended that heavy duty sediment fence by installed to prevent sedimentation outside active work area.
- All maintenance activities (including refueling) required during future construction should be conducted at least 30m away from natural features to prevent accidental spillage of deleterious substances that may harm natural environments.
- Disposal of excess material should occur in a timely fashion to minimize risk of entry into the watercourse.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

Based upon our analysis, it is concluded that the environmental conditions are not limiting to the proposed development of a single storey detached garage through incorporation of the environmental protection measures described in Section 7 of this report. With consideration for an appropriate mitigation program outlined above, there is no expectation that the proposed development will result in a negative impact upon KNHFs or their ecological functions.

Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours truly,
AZIMUTH ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING, INC.



Kent Johnstone, B.A., T.FWC, CAN-CISEC
Ecologist

Attached:
Figure 1 (Site Location)
Figure 2 (Environmental Features and Proposed Development)
Appendix A (Photographic Record)

9.0 REFERENCES

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LEGEND

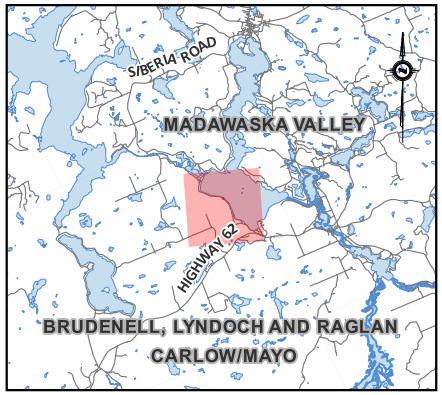
- Approx. Property Boundary
- Waterbody
- Mapped Watercourse
- Unevaluated Wetland
- Wooded Area
- Road
- Highway

NOTES

1. Watercourse, Waterbody, Wetland, Woodland and ANSI layers are derived from MNRF GIS data, retrieved December 2022.
2. The metric grid displayed on the map corresponds to NAD83 / UTM zone 18N (EPSG:26918).

REGIONAL MAP

SCALE 1:500000



0 0.25 0.5 0.75

KILOMETERS

AZIMUTH ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING, INC.
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS & APPROVALS

SITE LOCATION

846 KAMANISKEG LAKE ROAD
HASTINGS HIGHLANDS, ON

DATE ISSUED:	NOVEMBER 2025
CREATED BY:	A.L.
PROJECT NO.:	25-366
BASE MAP:	MNRF

Figure No.
1

KAMANISKEG LAKE

PROJECT NORTH

TRUE NORTH

OLD SHED LOCATION

PROPOSED GARAGE ENVELOPE

RESIDENTIAL LOT

KAMANISKEG LAKE ROAD

G058Tt

LEGEND:

APPROX. PROPERTY BOUNDARY

ELC UPLAND COMMUNITIES:

G058Tt	DRY TO FRESH, COARSE: MAPLE HARDWOOD

LOCATION PLAN



0 6.25 12.5

HORIZONTAL SCALE 1: 250

AZIMUTH ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING, INC.
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS & APPROVALS

ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES & PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

846 KAMANISKEG LAKE ROAD
HASTINGS HIGHLANDS, ON

DATE ISSUED:	*NOVEMBER 2025*	Figure No.
CREATED BY:	*A.L.*	2
PROJECT NO.:	*25-366*	
REFERENCE:	*HASTINGS COUNTY*	

Plotted by: ALU on November 20, 2025 at 3:41pm
File: \\Azimuthsrv\data\projects\Y25 Projects\25-366 846 Kamaniskeg Lake Road Hastings-Highlands EIS\04.0 - Drafting\25-366 Site Layout.dwg Layout: EFPD Plotscale: 1

APPENDIX A

Photographic Record



Photograph 1: Overview of proposed garage footprint facing east – October 24, 2025



Photograph 2: Overview of proposed garage footprint facing north – October 24, 2025



Photograph 3: Landscaped areas adjacent to proposed garage footprint– October 24, 2025



Photograph 4: Vegetated slope between Kamaniskeg Lake Road and proposed development– October 24, 2025