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Long-term ecological monitoring in the northwest zone of Ontario Parks

April 11th, 2014
Huntsville, Ontario



What are we doing?

- Initiating long-term annual ecological monitoring strategy in NW Ontario
- Collecting a variety of information in a systematic manner to align with other provincial and national programs (e.g., Ecological Land Classification, Breeding Bird Atlas, Forest Bird Monitoring, Frog Watch, NHIC)
- Creating a full information cycle from field collection to reporting using existing tools (i.e., Ontario Parks Inventorying and Monitoring Program)
- Taking advantage of monitoring devices where and when possible



Why are we doing the work?

- Support objective stated in the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act (2006)
 - “facilitate scientific research and to provide points of reference to support the monitoring of ecological change on the broader landscape”
- Allows for temporal and spatial trend analysis
- Make informed planning and management decisions, both within parks and outside parks
- Compliment and build upon existing monitoring programs
- Other benefits?



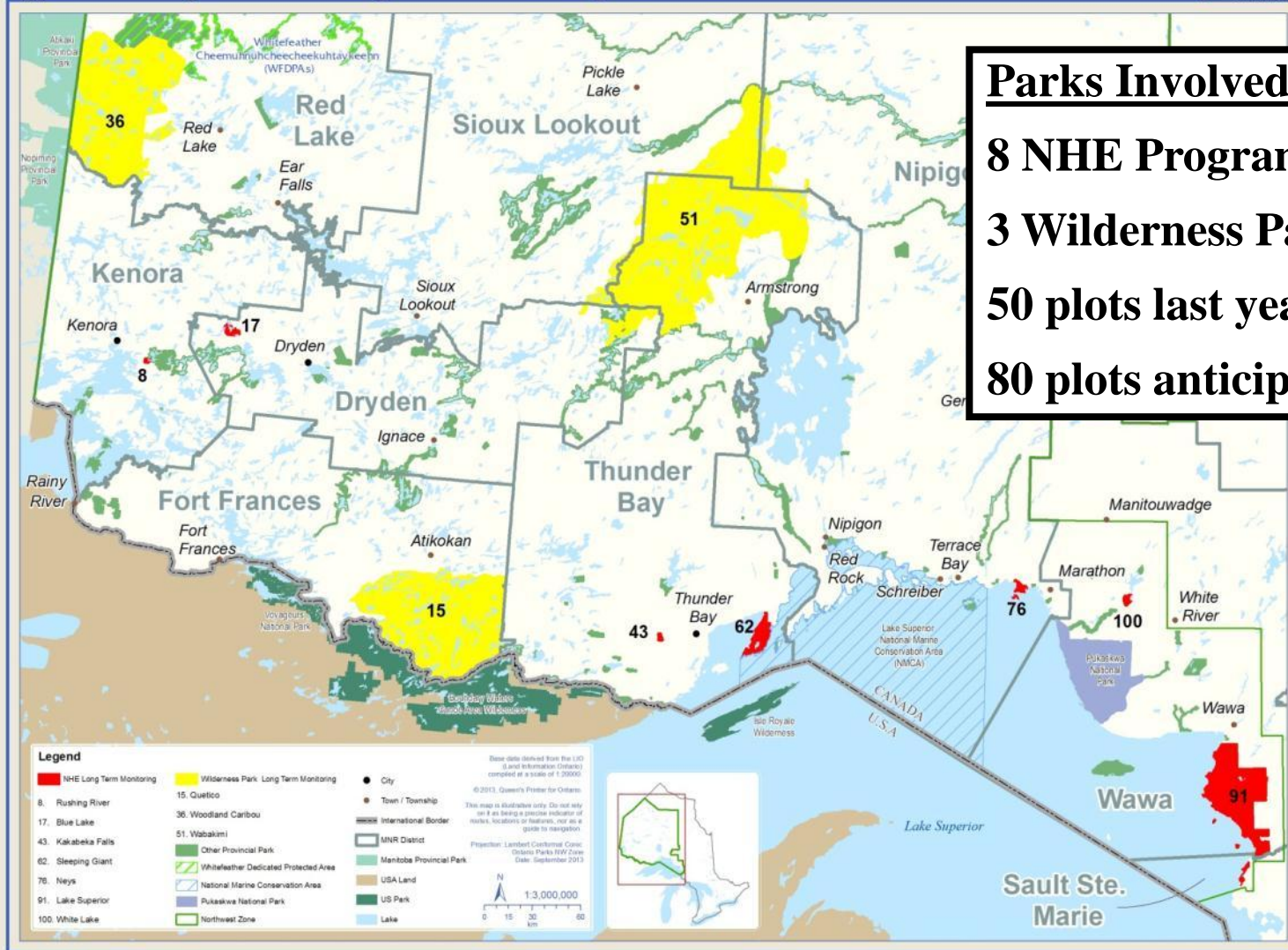
Who is doing the work?

- Zone staff are championing the program
 - Creating the strategy (e.g., what to measure, time to measure, devices to use, location of plots, organizing data)
 - Providing training (e.g., monitoring devices, entering data, viewing data)
 - Measuring base data (e.g., substrates, vegetation, ground cover) and analysing sound recordings for birds and amphibians
 - Championing tools for information management (e.g., OPIAM)
- Park staff are providing park specific expertise
 - Determining location of plots with zone staff
 - Moving monitoring devices to collect information at appropriate times
 - Analysing camera trap information



Where are we doing the work?

Long Term Ecological Monitoring for Provincial Parks in Northwest Zone



Parks Involved

8 NHE Program Parks (red)

3 Wilderness Parks (yellow)

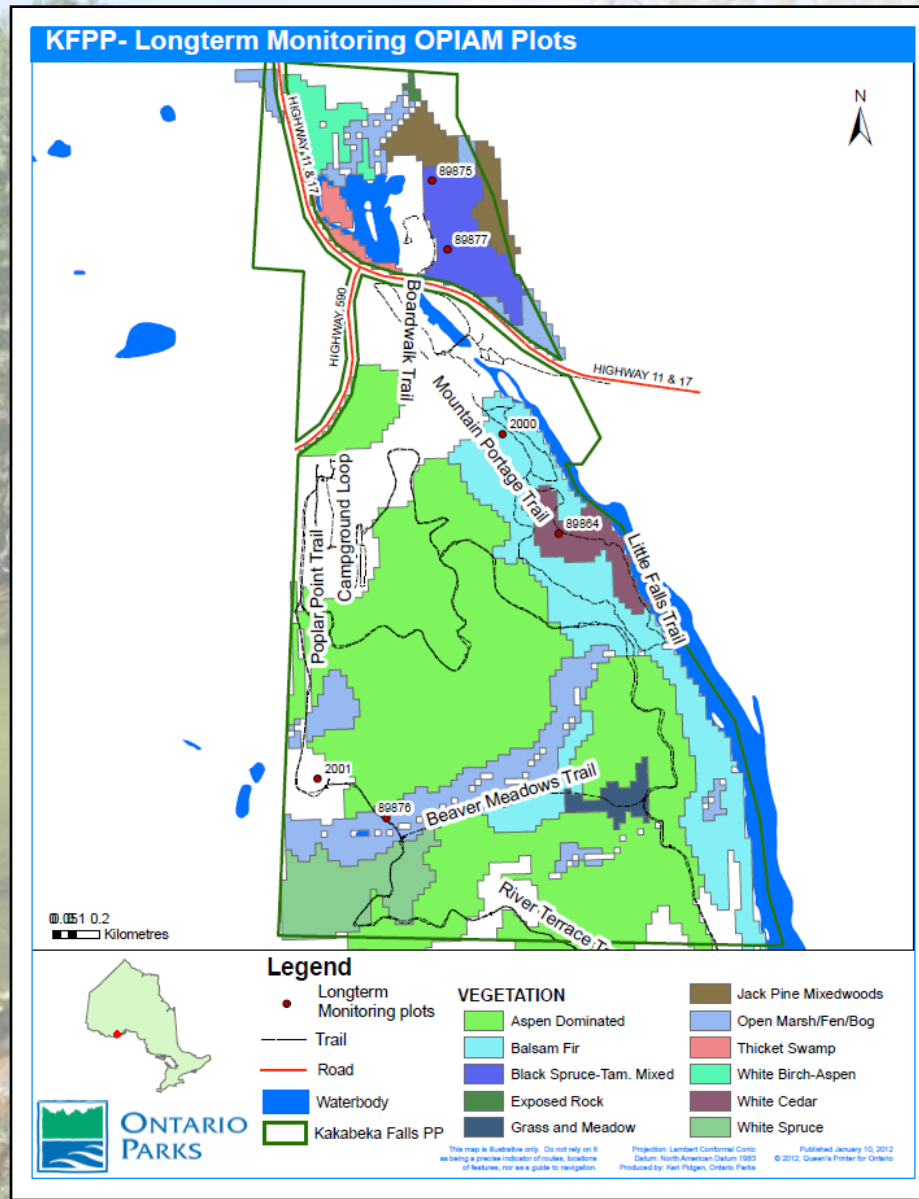
50 plots last year;

80 plots anticipated this year



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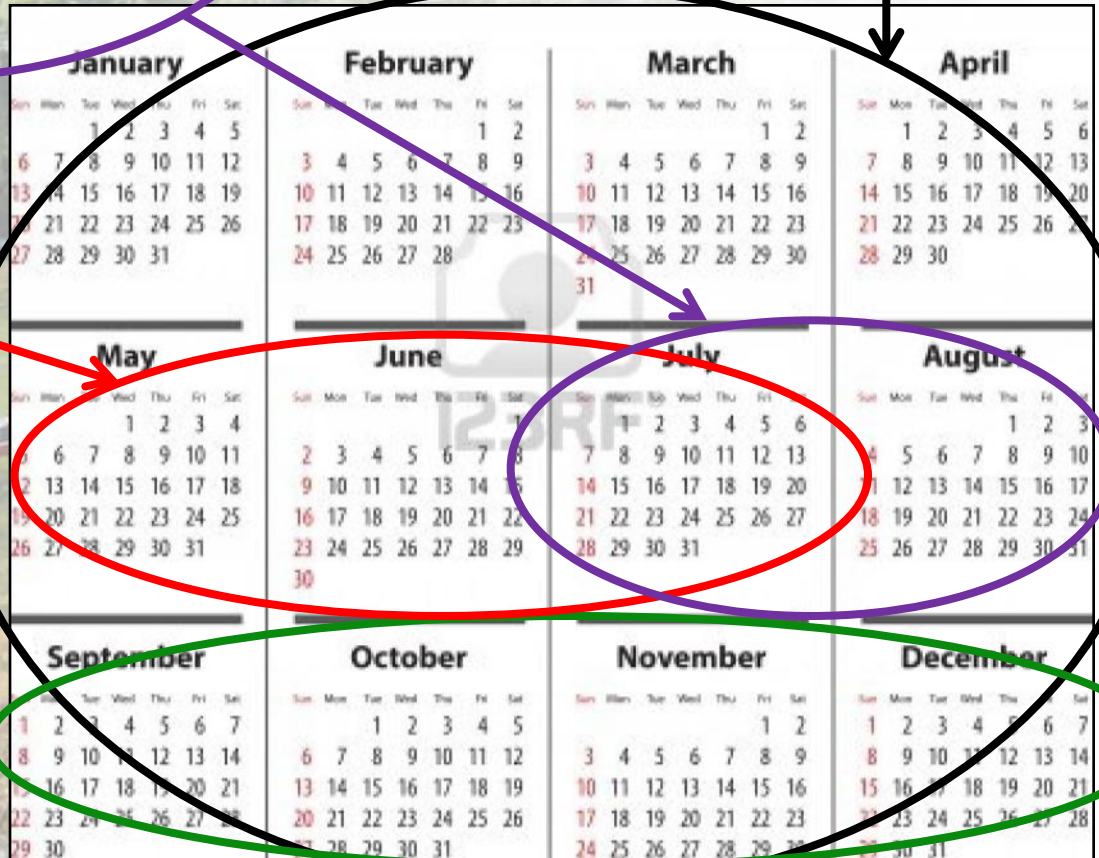
Where are we doing the work?





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When are we doing the work?

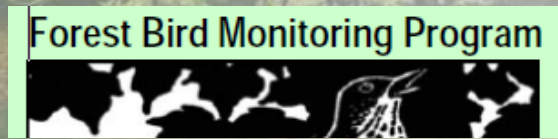




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What are some critical pieces?

Leveraging Existing Programs



- Consistent collection standards
- Easily share and blend data

Engaging Staff



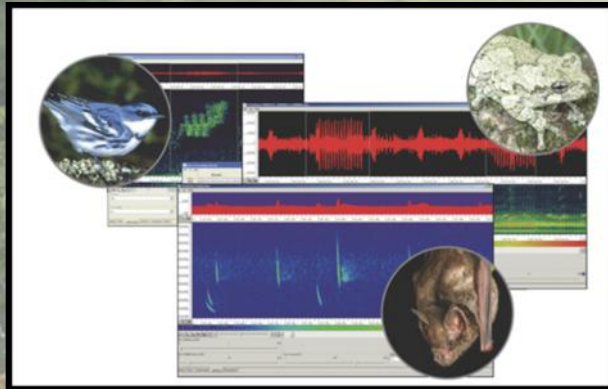
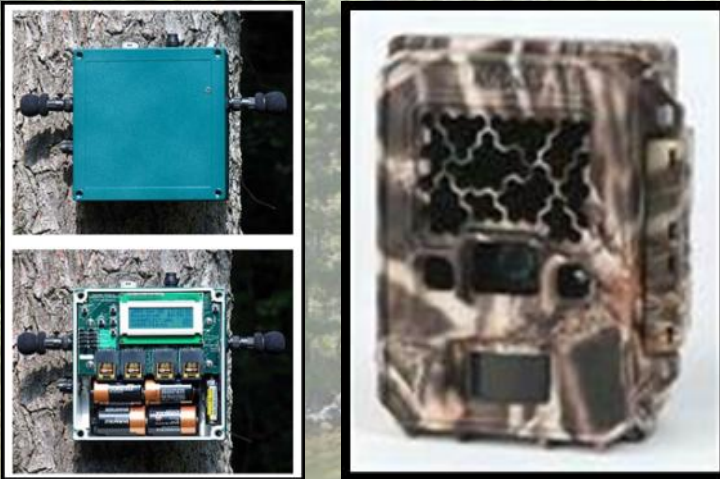
- With all aspects of the program (e.g., design, training, field work, data entry and reporting)



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What are some critical pieces?

Use of Technology



- Monitoring devices
- Analysis software

Information Management



- Modular design
- Provides direction and the tools necessary for all components of the information management cycle (i.e. from field to reports)



What are some additional benefits?

- Park staff are engaged and excited about the program
 - Increased interest in the flora and fauna within the park, as well as Ecological Integrity in general
 - NHE staff are starting to use monitoring information within their naturalist programs
 - NHE staff are communicating to the public the importance of parks as baselines of information
- Provincially, sounds and photos will be used in social media environments to engage public
- Increased partnerships with monitoring programs, including citizen science programs, to 'blend' data



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Questions or comments?

**Feedback will
be greatly
appreciated**