

MANAGEMENT OF COLONIAL WATERBIRDS AT TOMMY THOMPSON PARK

CORMORANT ADVISORY GROUP MEETING #9

www.trca.on.ca/cormorants

Thursday February 3, 2011
6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Metro Hall, Room 304
55 John Street, Toronto

CORMORANT ADVISORY GROUP
MEETING #9

Thursday February 3, 2011

6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

AGENDA

6:35pm	Welcome and Introductions Review of Draft Meeting # 8 Notes	Karen McDonald
7:00pm	Proposed Strategic Approach for 2011 <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Work plan for 2011 season· Discussion· Timeline· TRCA Board Meeting	Karen McDonald All
8:45pm	Wrap-up and next meeting	Karen McDonald



Review of Draft Meeting #8 Notes

Changes:

- page 4 - # of stakes is actually 16.
- page 5 – deleted sentence “This was the first season observations were made for DCCO nests.”
- page 7 – moved ground nest productivity paragraph and synchronous paragraph up.
- page 7 – clarified that 215 BCNH nests were followed and the usurpation rate was similar to previous years.



PROCESS – DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS AT TOMMY THOMPSON PARK

- **November 2007:** TRCA embarked on a process to involve stakeholders and public in assessing need for management of cormorant populations
- **Goal:** to achieve a balance between the continued existence of a healthy, thriving cormorant colony and the other ecological, educational, scientific and recreational values of Tommy Thompson Park



GOAL

To achieve a balance between the continued existence of a healthy, thriving cormorant colony and the other ecological, educational, scientific and recreational values of Tommy Thompson Park.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase public knowledge, awareness, and appreciation of colonial waterbirds
- Deter cormorant expansion to Peninsula D
- Limit further loss of tree canopy on Peninsulas A, B and C
- Continue research on colonial waterbirds in an urban wilderness context



ADVISORY GROUP

MANDATE

- Provide input and advice
- Ensure that all perspectives are considered
- Provide linkages with other stakeholders

TRCA

Restoration Services

Federal/Provincial

Canadian Wildlife Service

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

Toronto Port Authority

Transport Canada

City of Toronto

Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Academia

University of Toronto

York University

McMaster University

Interest Groups

Aquatic Park Sailing Club

Cormorant Defenders International:

Animal Alliance of Canada

Canadians for Snow Geese

Earthroots

Zoocheck Canada Inc.

Friends of the Spit

Ontario Nature

Toronto Island Residents

Toronto Ornithological Club

Local Experts

Public Consultation Summary 2010-11

Authority Board	March 25, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present the 2010 Strategy for TRCA Authority action
Advisory Group Meeting #9	February 3, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop the 2011 Strategy
Advisory Group Meeting #8	December 9, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the 2010 population data and monitoring program• Review 2010 strategy and preliminary research results• Being discussions on a strategic approach for 2011
Colonial Waterbird Interpretation and Presentations	April – November, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• York University• Centennial College• University of Toronto• International Association of Great Lakes Research• City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation• Society of Conservation Biology speaker series (Toronto Chapter)• Institutes of Journalism and Natural Resources• Toronto Field Naturalists walks• LEAF Tree Tour• Humber Valley Heritage Trail Association• Citizens Coalition for the Future of the Etobicoke Waterfront• Toronto Ornithological Club

11th Annual Spring Bird Festival

Saturday May 14, 2011 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
International Migratory Bird Day

- Early bird hikes
- Baillie Bird-a-thon
- Bird banding demonstrations
- Children's activities
- Specialized workshops
- Educational displays
- **Colonial Waterbird Hike**



Strategic Approach 2010

	Peninsula A	Peninsula B	Peninsula C	Peninsula D
Inactive Nest Removal (prior to 2010 breeding season)			*	
Pre-Nesting Deterrents		*	*	*
Post-Breeding Deterrents			*	*
Enhanced Ground Nesting	*	*		
Habitat Restoration	*	*	*	*

Proposed Strategic Approach 2011

	Peninsula A	Peninsula B	Peninsula C	Peninsula D
Inactive Nest Removal (prior to 2011 breeding season)			*	
Pre-Nesting Deterrents		*	*	*
Post-Breeding Deterrents			*	*
Enhanced Ground Nesting	*	*		
Habitat Restoration	*	*	*	*

Cormorant Conservation Zones



Enhanced Ground Nesting



- **Add structure**
- **Provide nest building materials**
- **Decoys**
- **Audio**
- **Minimize disturbance**

Peninsula A

- Continue with decoys
- Clean/maintain decoys without disturbance
- Improve breeding audio calls
- Add wireless trail camera
- Continue observations



Peninsula B

- Add downed tree nests and nest material to existing ground nest plot to expand area
- Add more structure to east side of Peninsula
- Continue with TRCA decoy plot on east side of Peninsula and nest materials
- Clean/maintain decoys without disturbance
- Add wireless trail camera and update photos to website regularly
- Continue banding chicks, band adults



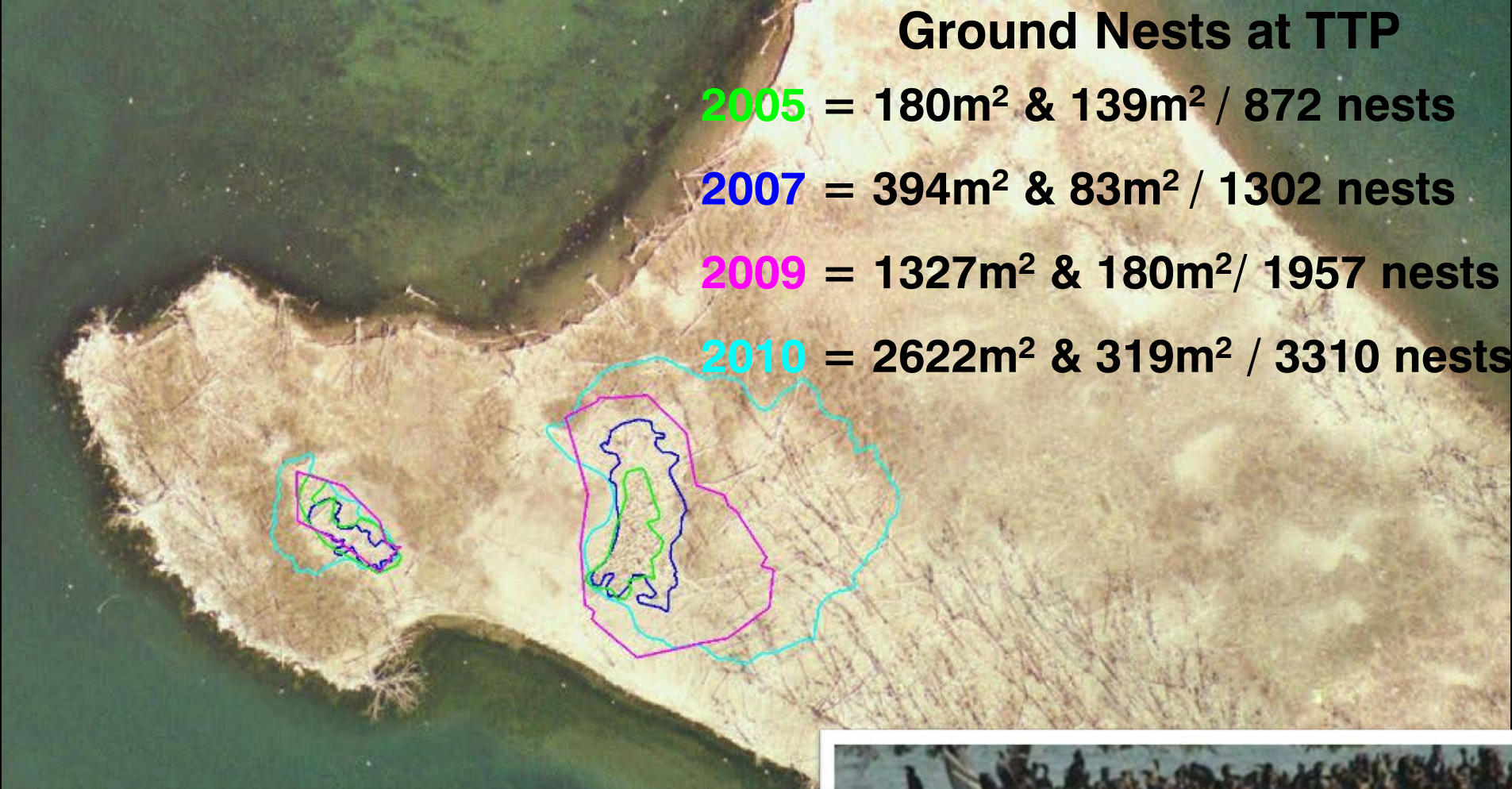
Ground Nests at TTP

2005 = 180m² & 139m² / 872 nests

2007 = 394m² & 83m² / 1302 nests

2009 = 1327m² & 180m² / 1957 nests

2010 = 2622m² & 319m² / 3310 nests



G. Fraser

Restoration

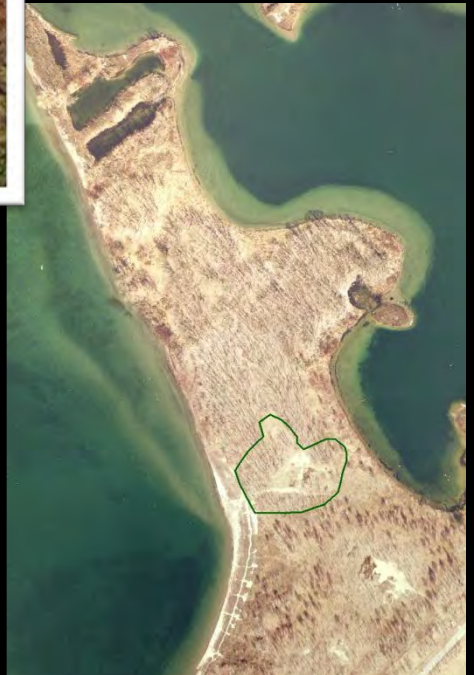
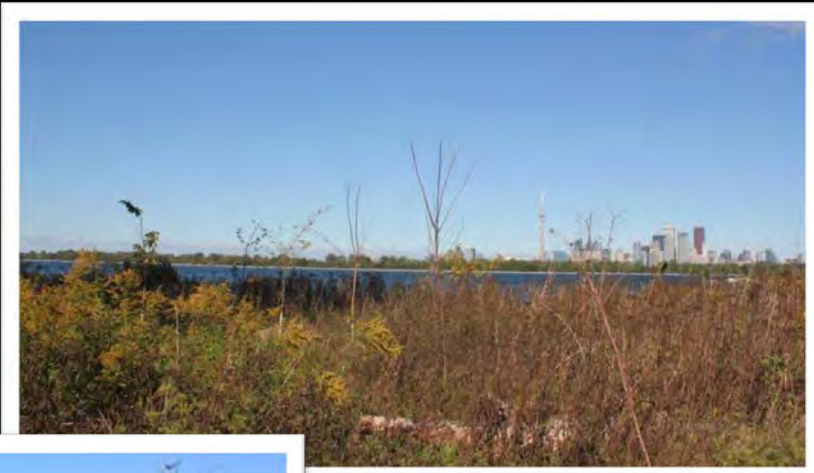
- Soil amendments
- Tree & shrub planting
- Herbaceous planting/seeding
- Plant tending until established
- Protection from herbivory, loafing



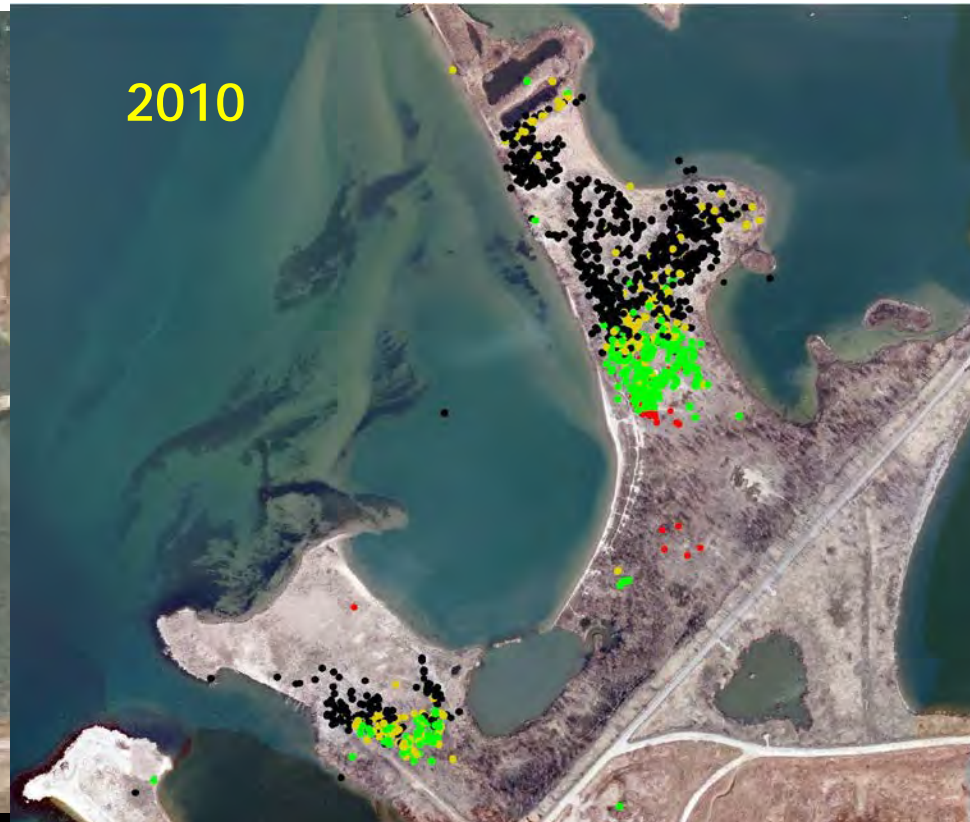
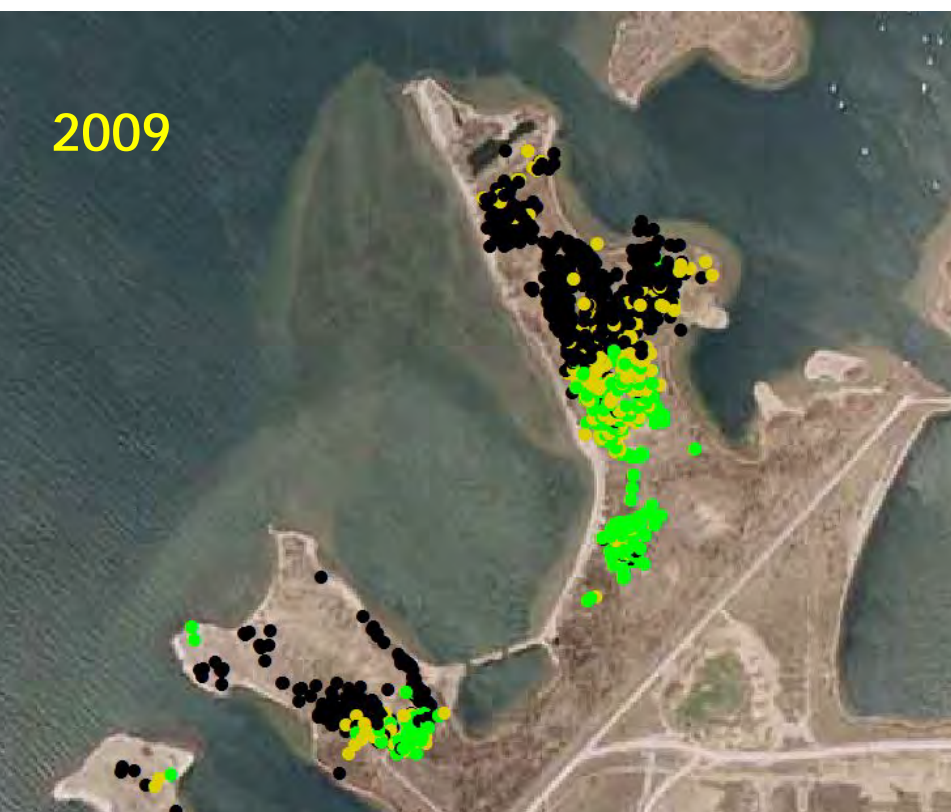
Restoration/Enhancement

Soil augmentation & nodal plantings
of site appropriate species:

- Willow species
- Red-osier dogwood
- Speckled alder
- Poplar species
- White elm
- Staghorn sumac
- Conifers



The Change in Nest Tree Health between 2009 and 2010



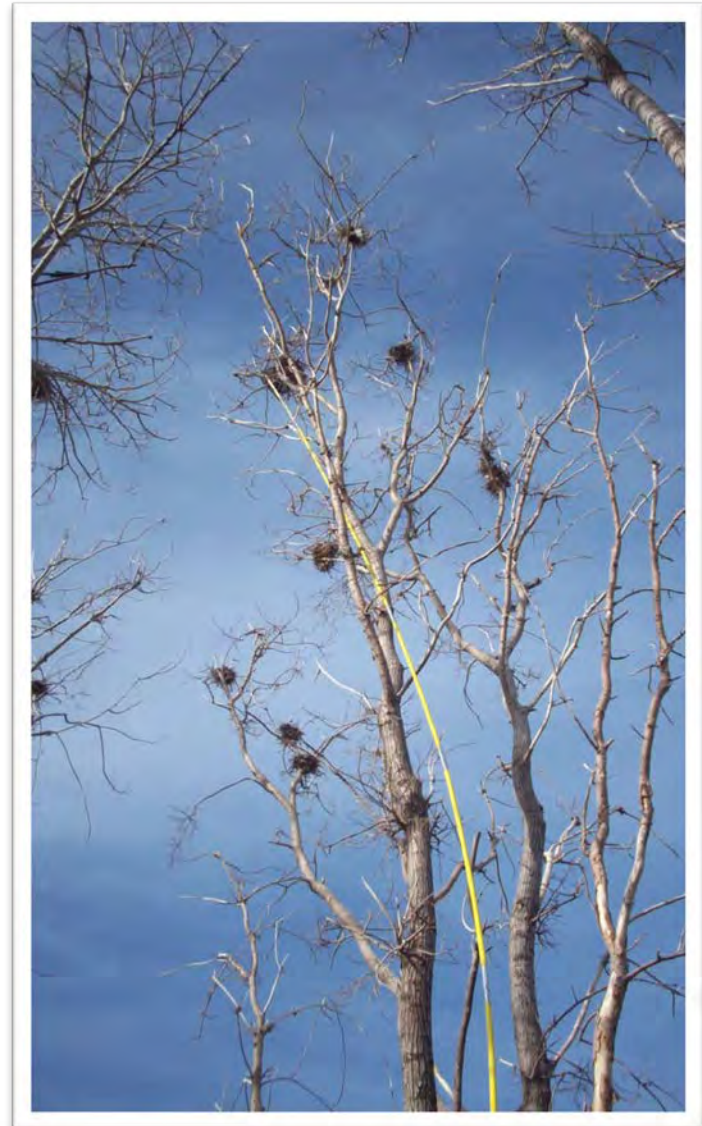
- Live Trees
- Tree in Decline
- Dead or Dying Trees

Inactive Nest Removal

Nests are removed prior to breeding season

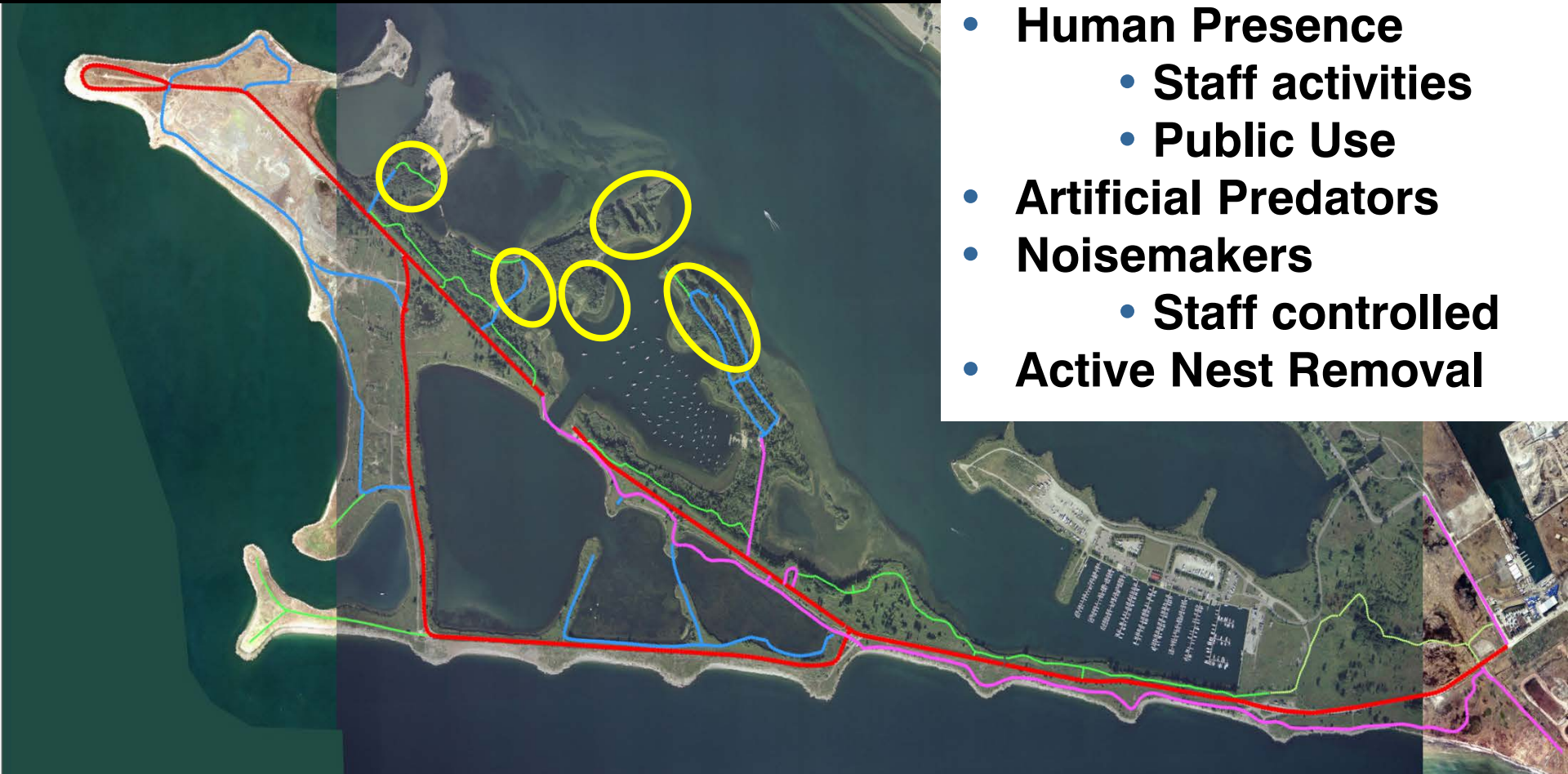
- 2001-2003 - Professional tree climbers removed inactive nests from Peninsula C
- 2004 and 2010 nest removal was done with forestry poles

Year	Nests Removed
2001	31
2002	281
2003	647
2004	~400
2010	32



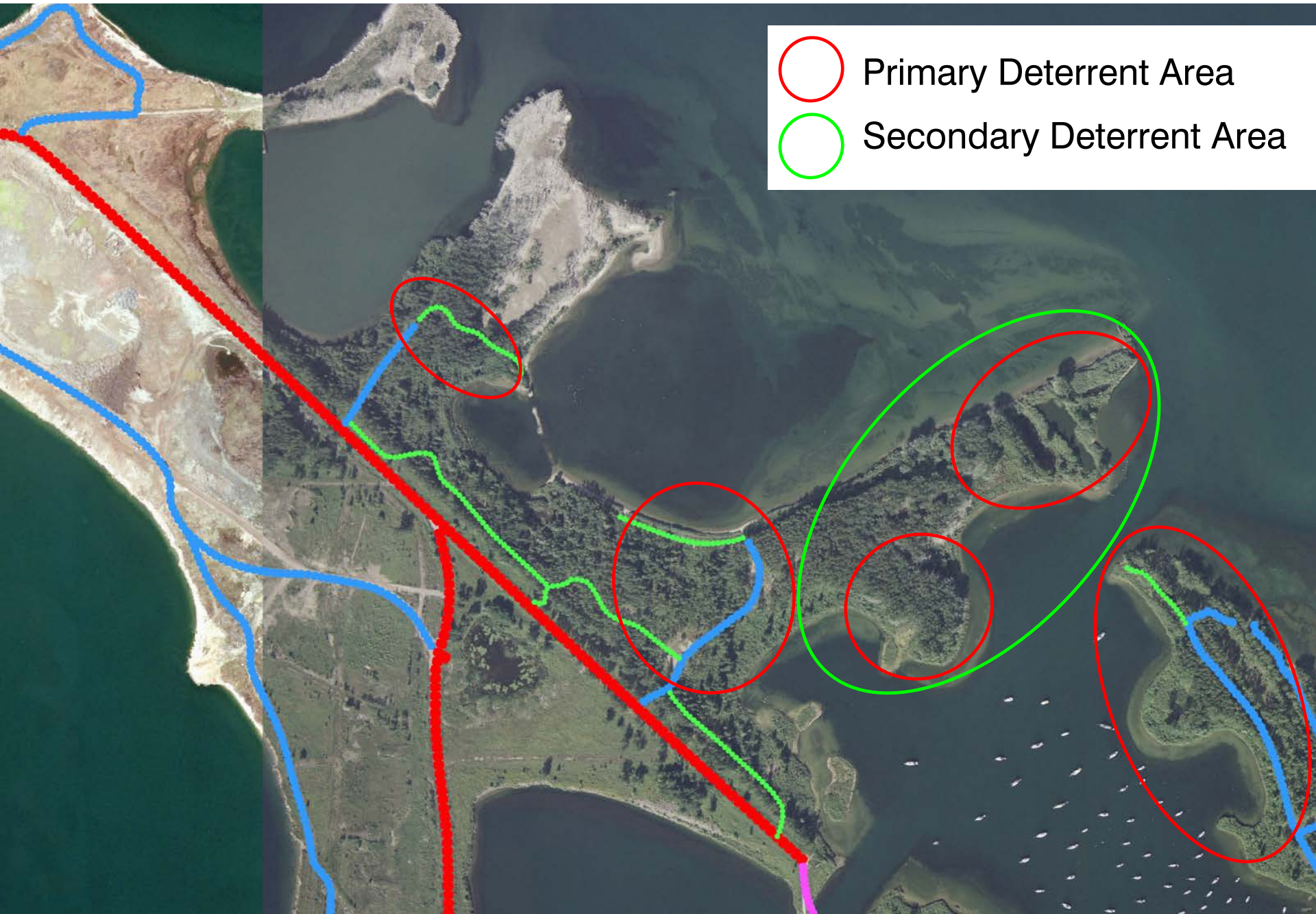
Proposed Pre-Nesting Deterrents - 2011

- Deterrent Areas target healthy trees
- Least intrusive methods favoured
- Techniques will escalate if necessary
- Caution around other nesting species
- Continue monitoring



- Human Presence
 - Staff activities
 - Public Use
- Artificial Predators
- Noisemakers
 - Staff controlled
- Active Nest Removal

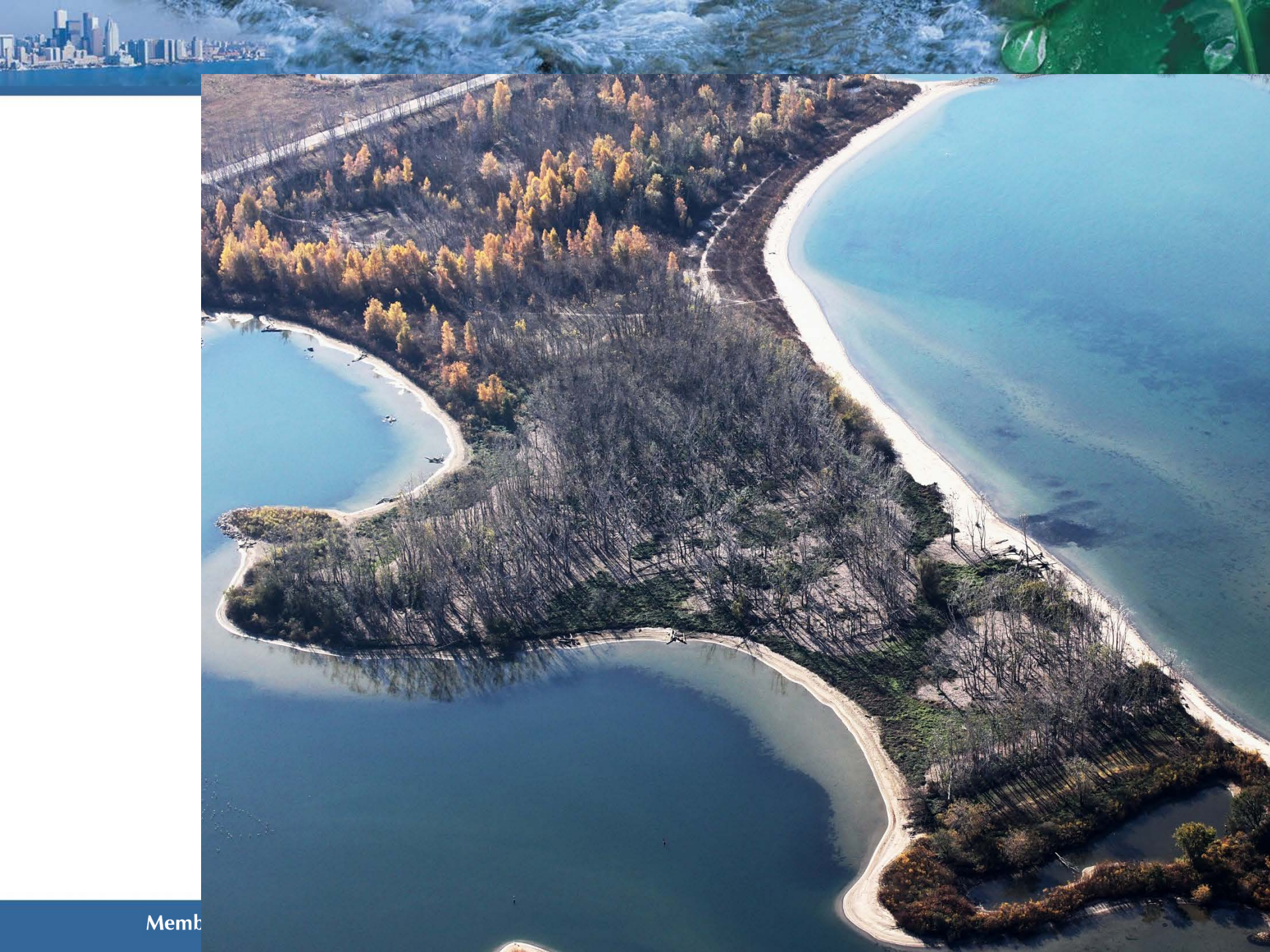
Proposed Pre-Nesting Deterrent Areas - 2011



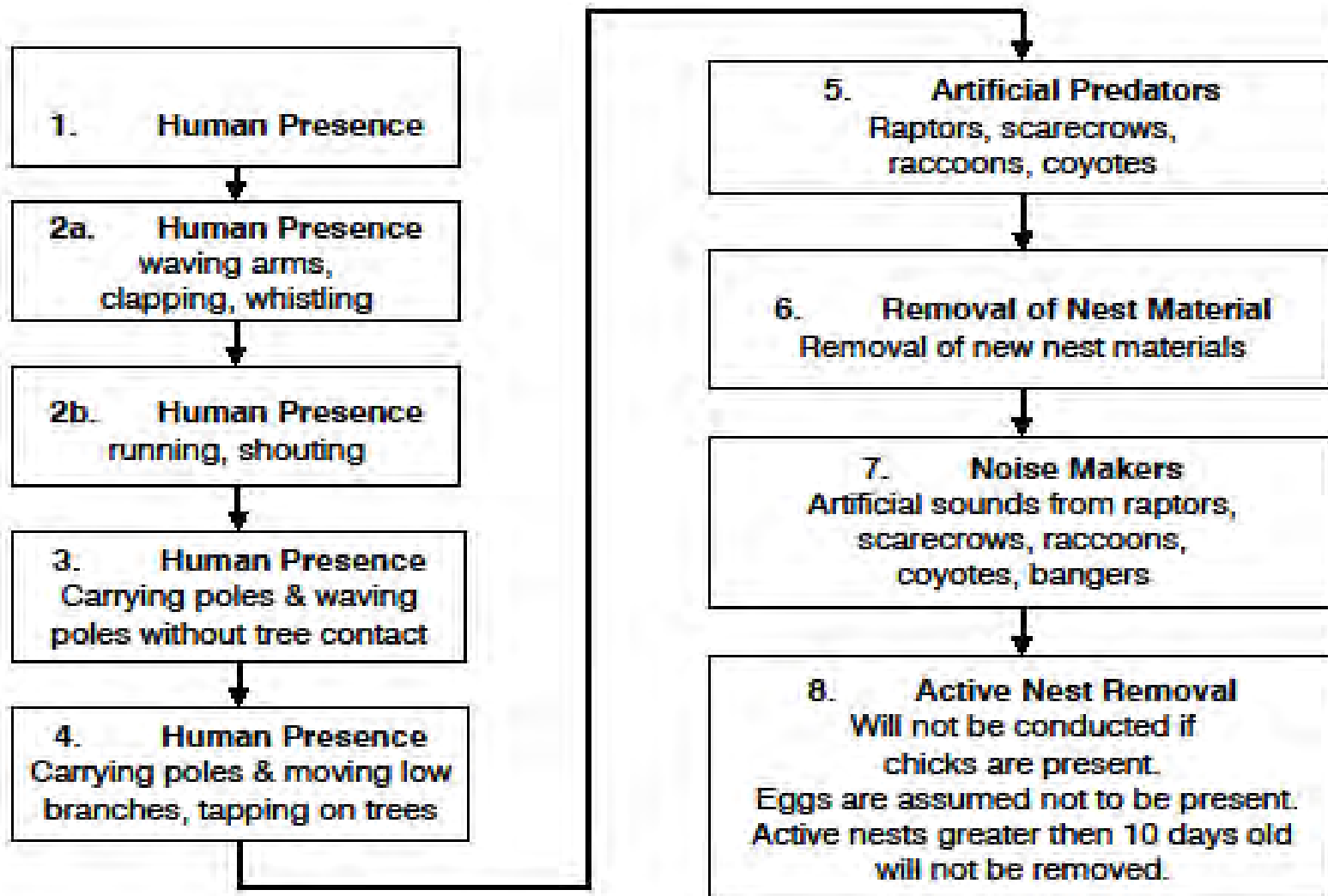
Peninsula B

- Target healthy trees in discrete area
- Inactive nest removal
- Mimic nest predation
- Active nest removal
- Continue monitoring
- Add viewing blind?

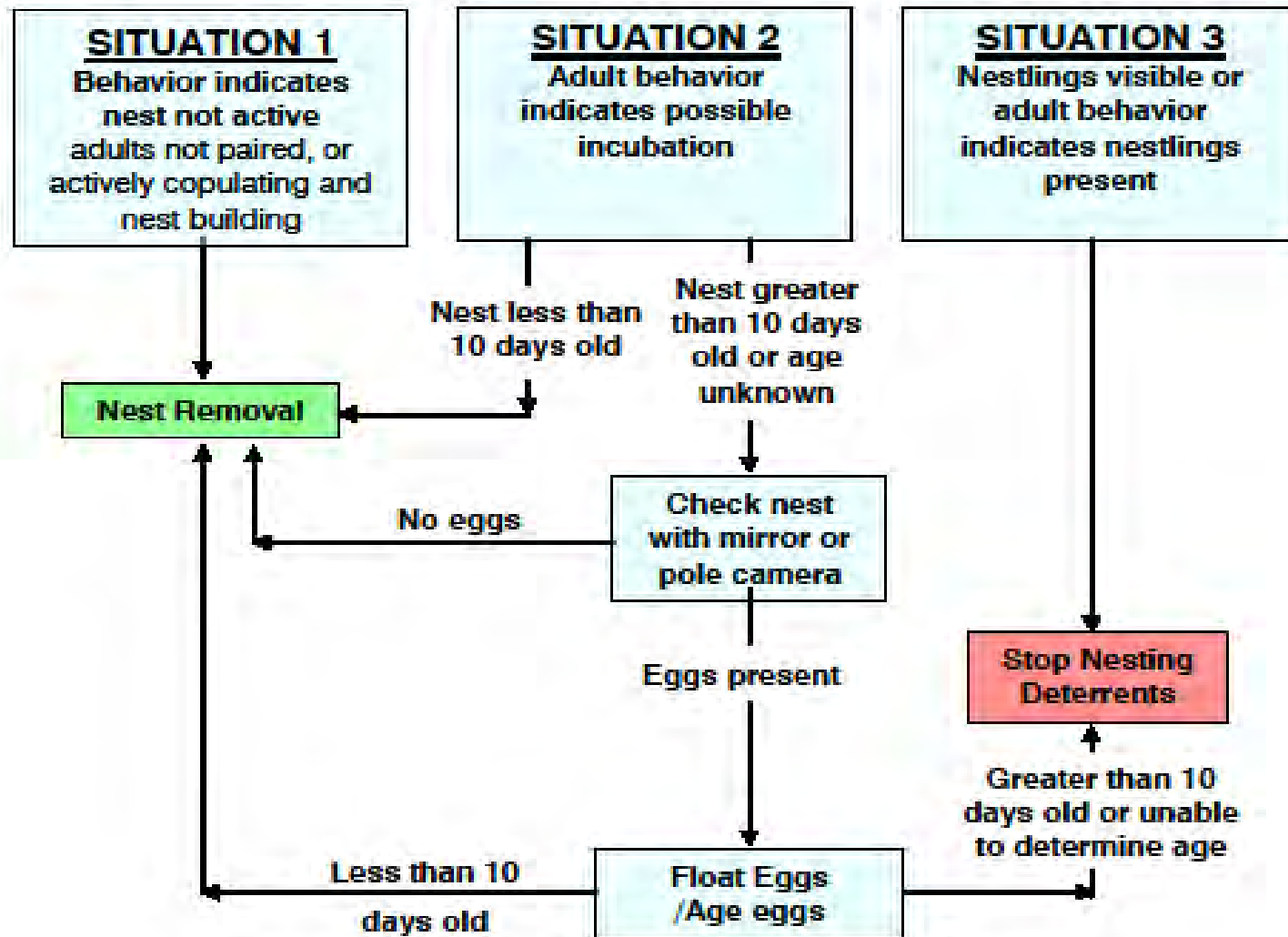




Deterrent Escalation

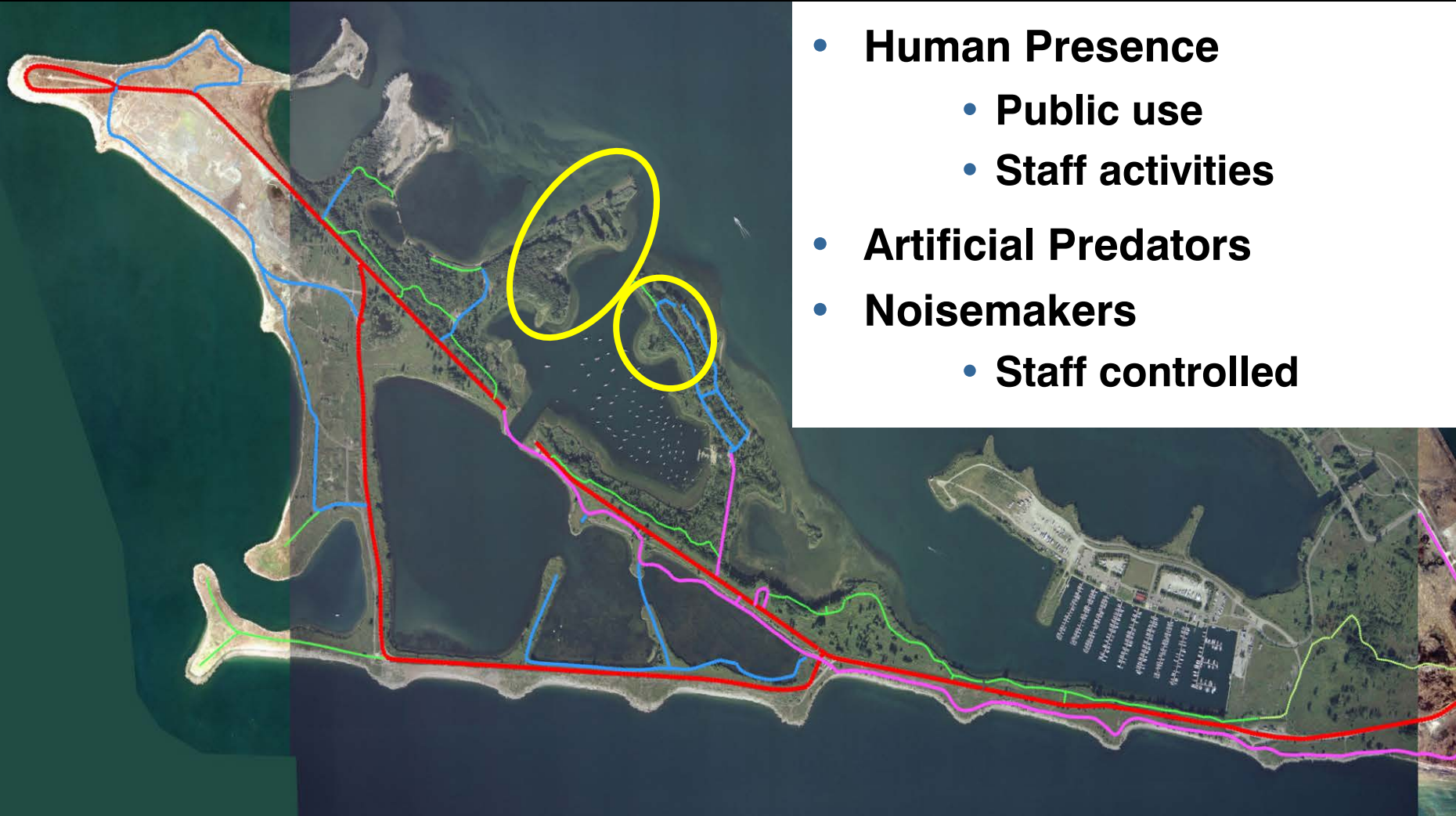


Active Nest Removal Flow Chart



Post-Breeding Deterrents

- Least intrusive methods favoured
- Techniques will escalate if necessary



- **Human Presence**
 - Public use
 - Staff activities
- **Artificial Predators**
- **Noisemakers**
 - Staff controlled

- Improve predator guards
- Continue habitat enhancements
- Continue monitoring
- Continue research support
- Others?



A photograph of three black cormorant chicks on a nest made of dry sticks and twigs. The chicks are dark with lighter-colored beaks and throats. One chick in the foreground has a small white tag on its leg. A speech bubble is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Thank you!