**Map 3: Provincially Significant Wetland (PSW) vs Non-Provincially Significant Wetland (Non-PSW) vs Not Evaluated Wetlands**

Main Point:

This map illustrates provincially inventoried wetlands across the Niagara Watershed by significance status. Note that the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System (OWES) is both a natural resource management inventory and an assessment tool. It is therefore both an identification protocol and an assessment protocol.

For a wetland to be **provincially significant** it must:

1) achieve a total score of 600 or more points; or 2) achieve a score of 200 or more points in either the Biological Component OR the Special Feature Component.

[250 points is the maximum points that can be assigned to any category (Biological, Social, Special Feature and Hydrological) or 1000 points overall]

A **non-provincially significant wetland** is used to describe any evaluated wetland which does not meet the score to be considered Provincially Significant. In Southern Ontario, an evaluated Non-Provincially Significant Wetland is any wetland that scores below the threshold considered Provincially Significant, therefore, categorized as non-provincially significant wetlands, in recognition of the value which all wetlands provide. Although, the OWES for southern Ontario is designed to identify important wetlands on a provincial scale, all wetlands have value, both to society and intrinsically.

Other wetlands such as non-provincially significant wetlands are significant on a local scale and may be protected. These wetlands can include: (a) evaluated wetlands that have been identified as not provincially significant; and (b) partially evaluated and unevaluated wetlands that have been confirmed as wetland habitat and mapped using the ground-based OWES methodology or interpretations of remote-sensed imagery.

**Unevaluated wetlands** - Some wetlands within the watershed have not been evaluated and delineated under the OWES. These wetlands could be mapped or unmapped. Unevaluated wetlands may be identified through review of available information such as Land Information Ontario (LIO), Ecological Land Classification (ELC), Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) as identified by the Province, NPCA’s Natural Areas Inventory (NAI), aerial photography interpretation, or site visits by qualified professionals.

Complementary Point:

In the Niagara Watershed, most evaluated wetlands are Provincially Significant slough forests, that are unique provincially but abundant on the local landscape. Complexing is a major contributing factor as to how the assessment protocol is applied to the individual wetland features inventoried.