

**Westminster Ponds/Pond Mills Environmentally Significant Areas
Master Plan Implementation Update Meeting
January 10th, 2007**

Presentations were made by Tara Tchir, Ecologist, UTRCA and Dan Jones, ESA Supervisor, UTRCA. Their presentations outlined work completed in 2006. Some of the projects highlighted:

- § LHSC land transfer
- § LHSC property boundary fence removal
- § Groundwater monitoring at South Pond well
- § Ducks Unlimited projects - TVDSB dock at north pond, information kiosk at South Pond, Henderson Trail boardwalk installation
- § Spettigue Pond boardwalk
- § Citi Card Canada community day – project boardwalk employee day
- § Sunoco Earth Day - community tree planting
- § Get your ward on board for Earth Day program
- § Rotary Club of London West boardwalk name routing program
- § TD employee clean up day
- § Environment Canada school planting – trees and shrubs planted as buffer

Presentations were made outlining some proposed implementation initiatives for 2007 by Jeff Bruin, Parks Project Coordinator, City of London and Tara Tchir, Ecologist, UTRCA. Potential projects reviewed included:

- § CNR Crossing
- § Naturalization projects
- § Improve Western Counties road
- § Fire Tower Area - support concepts compatible with Master Plan
- § Trail master plan
- § Improve entrance at tourist office on Wellington Road
- § Improve main trail spine through ESA
- § Close identified trails
- § Improve Saunders Cabin site
- § Monitoring plan

After the presentations, attendees were given the opportunity to share their comments, ideas, concerns, and opportunities for the 2007 proposals for master plan implementation. The comments are summarized below:

Minimize Impact to Saunders Pond

- § Concerned about the suggested location for the boardwalk on the west side of Saunders Pond. This could be detrimental to the waterfowl breeding location.
- § A concern was expressed about allowing human access to the west side of Saunders Pond. This section should be protected from human impact.
- § How can we protect existing species of wildlife at Saunders Pond?
- § Minimize trails in the ESA. Look carefully at trails such as the one north of Saunders Pond. What will be the affects to small tree-cavity nesting birds such as

chickadees and nuthatches if a trail goes through and the hazard tree policy is enforced?

- § Concern about the location of the proposed trail along the eastern edge of Saunders Pond and the impact that may have on this area of the ESA that is now relatively undisturbed.

Trails

- § Could a small looped accessible trail be available for students in close proximity to the TVDSB Environmental Centre?
- § Need to review which trails can be closed first.
- § Disappointed that the trail approaches to the new Spettigues boardwalk did not seem to include best practices. Would like to see a moratorium on trail development until best practices for trails is developed.

Monitoring

- § Could any existing sightings of wildlife at Saunders Pond be given to Tara Tchir at the UTRCA for her to compile?
- § A request was made to look at trail monitoring data before construction.
- § Consider involving students from Fanshawe College or the University of Western Ontario for biological monitoring at Westminster Ponds/Pond Mills ESA
- § An explanation of water budgets was requested.

Hazard Trees

- § A concern was expressed that excessive cutting of dead trees is occurring at Westminster Ponds/Pond Mills ESA and a request was made for an update on cutting standards of hazard trees in the City of London.
- § The City of London Hazard Tree policy seems to be more aggressively addressed in ESA's than in city parks. There seems to be a different standard between parks and natural areas.
- § Boardwalks are used to protect plants, hazard trees are important to wildlife. Cutting trees should use the same thinking.

Entrance Areas

- § Is there a need to expand the parking area at the Wellington Road Tourist Office? Why increase the size of the parking, it never seems to be full?
- § Could we utilize some of the paved area at the Fire Station if additional parking is required in the future for the Wellington Road Visitor's Centre entrance?

Fishing

- § Is fishing allowed?
- § Could we designate certain areas where fishing is not allowed?

Information

- § Is there literature about flora and fauna for each pond?
- § Is there information available at the Visitor's Centre on flora & fauna?

Process

- § Could the Local Advisory Committee be brought together again to discuss the emerging issues?
- § Could we develop a citizen's advisory committee to address trail issues?

Others

- § How is the Westminster Ponds Area funded?
- § One of the biggest impacts to Westminster Ponds is all of the houses that have been built around the ponds.
- § Consider making certain areas as nature reserve and some areas as recreational.
- § Could we get an update on the possible acquisition of the old gas station property that is for sale at Adelaide Street South and Southdale Road?
- § How do we continue to protect the boundary to Westminster Ponds/Pond Mills ESA along Commissioners Road?
- § Human interest appears to be taking precedent over protection of the ecological values.