

**Westminster Ponds/Pond Mills Environmentally Significant Areas  
Master Plan Implementation Update Meeting  
January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

Presentations were made by Jeff Bruin, Parks Project Coordinator, City of London; Brandon Williamson, ESA Operations Assistant, UTRCA; and Tara Tchir, Ecologist, UTRCA. Their presentations outlined work completed in 2007. Some of the projects highlighted:

- § Wellington Road Tourist Centre Entrance Improvements
- § Dr. WE Saunders Cabin Site Improvements
- § Trail Plan Implementation
- § Boardwalk Installation
- § Hazard Tree Assessment
- § Enforcement
- § Volunteer Work Projects
- § Community Events
- § Wildlife Trees in ESAs

Presentations were made outlining some proposed implementation initiatives for 2008 by Jeff Bruin, Parks Project Coordinator, City of London and Tara Tchir, Ecologist, UTRCA. Potential projects reviewed included:

- § Review scope of CN Rail Crossing
- § Habitat Restoration
- § Install Second Monitoring Well
- § Develop a Monitoring Plan
- § Implement Trail Closures
- § Removal of Silverdale Staircase

After each presentation, attendees were given the opportunity to share their comments, ideas, concerns, and opportunities for 2008. The comments are summarized below:

**Saunders Pond Viewing Platform**

- § Should include a blind for end of viewing platform
- § What happened to this idea?
- § Disappointed that there is no longer a blind within the plan
- § A blind is definitely needed
- § Other local blinds are resistant to wind damage
- § Should take another look at the natural blind concept

**Wheelchair Pathways**

- § Which paths will allow wheelchairs?
- § How far will the path to the north be paved?
- § Why are the paved paths so wide behind the Tourist Information Centre?

**ESA Trails**

- § Has there been much damage from cyclists?
- § If the Silverdale staircase is removed, what will be put in its place? What measures will be put in place to stop damage to the bank from erosion? Concerned about the Glen Cairn slope as well.
- § Has anyone spoken with CN Rail asking for help with the potential rail crossing project?

- § What will be the approximate cost of the CN crossing? Has anyone been hurt? Could this money be used for another project instead?
- § Would fencing be necessary along the tracks for the CN rail crossing?
- § Without the staircase at Silverdale, there will a lot of damage to the side of the steep slope. What is the liability if we funnel students toward the tracks?
- § Concern about lowland trail approaches (steep and slanted). Will these be rectified this year?
- § Some areas of new trails have Y intersections to trails. Are they necessary?
- § What are the red stakes north of Saunders Pond marking?

### **Trees/Naturalization**

- § What species of trees were used for naturalization?
- § How many trees were taken out as hazard trees in 2007?
- § What programs does the UTRCA have for monitoring trees planted (e.g., drought, animal damage)? There should be a separate budget for tree maintenance.
- § How much of the land (percentage) within Westminster Ponds is managed as trail buffer?
- § More study is required to demonstrate the importance of wildlife trees in ESAs and the effect of trail management
- § Using the minimum standard for old growth may not be realistic in an urban environment. Perhaps wildlife friendly is the correct term.
- § Do deer over-graze our natural areas? What is the impact?
- § Have noticed that the older growth, dead trees are missing from these areas
- § Is anyone doing a study on natural/wildlife friendly criteria within a city
- § The area of study is not representative of Westminster Ponds. Could we reduce the study to ½ hectare which seems to make sense ecologically?
- § Trees in the meadow beside the Fish and Game Club have disappeared. Do we know where they went?
- § How are the species of trees and wildlife shrubs determined for planting?

### **Signage**

- § Need more signs warning about keeping dogs on leashes
- § Are we getting new trail markers and a map?

### **Dogs**

- § Seems to be a large increase in off leash dogs. Westminster seems to be viewed as an off leash dog park.
- § Need more receptacles for dog scat
- § Could ESAs become dog free?
- § Need to publicize the fines for being caught without having a leash on your dog - \$220.00
- § Is there a dog park going in along Commissioners Road?

### **Water Quality**

- § Need proper curbs and gutters in the most sensitive areas along Wellington Road
- § Any discussion with the fire department about water use and runoff into Westminster Ponds ESA?
- § There is sheet erosion problems with the unfinished pathways behind the Tourist Information Centre and the sediment flows toward Saunders Pond