

Sunday, April 21, 2024

Re: Meeting of City Council on April 23, 2024
Agenda Item - Byron Gravel Pit Secondary Plan/PEC Report

Dear Mayor Morgan and London City Councillors:

I am a London, Ontario, resident concerned about the possible negative repercussions of the Byron Gravel Pit Secondary Plan/PEC Report. I ask that you support including habitat for Bank Swallows in the development of the Byron gravel pit. Housing for people and Bank Swallows can coexist and be mutually beneficial.

A 2020 survey estimates approximately 2,000 Bank Swallows – a species at risk - live at the quarry. Their voracious appetite for insects creates a healthier environment for Londoners. Typically, they will consume 25-50% of their body mass every day. The impressive swallow colony would promote ecotourism and subsequently aid the city's economy, while also creating a positive image for London as an environmental leader in protecting the rapidly declining avian population. Conserving this Bank Swallow home would demonstrate the City of London's commitment to avian life as a bird-friendly city.

According to the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks website, "Over half of the provincial population of Bank Swallows is estimated to occur in aggregate pits and quarries. Based on data from the North American Breeding Bird Survey, the Bank Swallow has experienced long-term declines with an estimated loss of 95% of its Canadian population from 1970 to 2012. Similar trends have been noted in Ontario with a long-term rate of decline of 93% over the same time period."

Please ensure that the gravel pit development includes habitat for London's Bank Swallows. The City of London has the power to help Bank Swallows not merely survive but actually thrive in our community.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and to consider my request.

Sincerely,
Rebecca St. Pierre