

February 13, 2014

Mayor and Members of Council  
City of London  
300 Dufferin

For consideration at your Budget Debate on February 27, 2014

Dear Mayor Fontana and Members of Council

I urge you to support the decision at SPPC to maintain the contract funding amount for the Upper Thames River Conservation to monitor and protect the City owned Environmentally Significant Areas (ESA).

Let me give you one example of the implications of not being able to do the work as is, let alone with less.

In the fall of 2012 city staff asked if my Ratepayer association would support the closing of a trail in the Medway Valley Heritage Forest (ESA). The trail, along the Creek, had eroded away. People were taking their own way through the Forest, cutting new trails hither and yon. We supported city staff and looked forward to the closure and a clearly marked trail being created. I was disappointed to recently discover that this work will only be done this spring as the UTRCA simply could not get to it with all the other work on its plate.

**How much other needed work in our Environmentally Significant Areas won't get done in 2014 and beyond if the budget is cut? Targets are being missed as there isn't enough time to do what needs to be done in a timely manner, in particular, invasive species control.**

Certainly, more is needed. At present, the city is undertaking Conservation Master Plans for three of London's seven publically owned ESAs: The Coves, The Medway Valley Heritage Forest and Meadowlilly Woods. Each of these will have recommendations for work to be done. There will be a cost to implement the Plans and that work will be carried out by the Upper Thames as directed by city staff. Without adequate funds, there is a risk that the Plans will sit on a shelf. Already, there are two completed Plans, one for Westminster/Ponds Mills ESA and one for Sifton Bog that still require work to implement the recommendations. Targets are being missed as there isn't enough time to do what needs to be done in a timely manner including managing and maintaining trails.

The budget cut proposed is small, but the work needed is already great and a cut will reduce efforts to protect our environmental gems from encroachment, invasive species and misuse. Please do not cut this budget item.

Sincerely

Sandy Levin  
59 Longbow Road  
London, N6G 1Y5