

AD HOC TRAILS FOCUS GROUP - Meeting #4 update

Thursday, May 5th, 2016 (Lauren Des Marteaux - EEPAC rep.)

PURPOSE

In 2016, London City Council hired Dillon Consulting to review the Trail Standards document for conformance to provincial and national standards, and to revise the document based on discussions with the ad hoc Trails Focus Group. A full draft of the new document, 'Guidelines for Management Zones & Trails Within Environmentally Significant Areas' was presented to the focus group on May 5th for feedback and discussion.

MAIN FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS

- The terms 'trail' and 'pathway' have different implications with respect to AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) policies. The guideline must therefore make careful use of terms and definitions such that there are no conflicts with AODA requirements for 'built areas'. **Michael Dawthorne (Accessibility Advisory Committee), Andrew MacPherson, and Linda McDougall will work with Dillon to resolve any terminology issues.**
- Suggestion: That the list of ecological features and their general compatibility with trails should include *regionally-significant / regionally-rare* species in addition to species at risk and provincially-rare species. However, consideration of trail compatibility with regionally-significant or regionally-rare species (which are mapped during trail inventories) is expected during the trail design and consultation processes. **Wording to reflect this may be incorporated in a subsequent draft of the guideline.**
- Off-leash dogs are a big concern for wildlife/habitat disturbance in current trail systems and should be considered when designing new trails. While enforcement / fines, signage, public education, and creation of off-leash dog parks can help, the problem cannot be eliminated. **No consensus was reached as to whether the guideline should be further modified to address this issue.**

A final draft of the guideline will be sent to the Trails Focus Group mid-month, with potential for a final meeting on May 16th if further discussion is necessary.