

## Stantec Sifton Bog Report- 2016

### Part I: Boardwalk and Relocation of Public Viewing Platform Associated with Redmond's Pond

Redmond's Pond is located in the kettle peatland area of Sifton Bog. Thirty two different plant species were observed and identified in this specific area surrounding Redmond's pond. In addition, 4 aquatic plant species including the rare large yellow pond lily, 17 species of Odonata and Snapping Turtle which is listed as Special Concern under the Endangered Species Act. However, the Stantec survey indicates that the population of large yellow pond lily is healthy at Sifton Bog and that no turtle nesting habitat was found near the viewing platform or the boardwalk leading to the platform.

The present public viewing platform is located on the eastern shore of Redmond's Pond and represents the end point of a boardwalk leading from the north parking lot off of Oxford St. to the viewing platform on Redmond's Pond. According to the Stantec Report, the boardwalk and the viewing platform require repair. It appears that the issue of the boardwalk and platform is one of public safety.

The suggested plan is to move the viewing platform 9m further from the edge of Redmond's Pond and further into the kettle peatland area and increase its elevation for better viewing. Stantec suggests that this plan would provide an **“overall net benefit both ecologically and for the visitor experience”**.

#### **Specific Conclusions and Recommendations:**

The Guidelines for Management Zones and Trails in ESAs 2016 provide the following guiding principles:

“Size and number of necessary structures should be minimized.”

“...structures shall be of minimum cost and require the simplest structures to achieve the desired outcome and be visually compatible with the landscape setting.”

“Location of trails adjacent to watercourses shall be minimized and subject to the determination of a suitable buffer (setback required to control compaction, sedimentation, and erosion.....”

“Where appropriate, viewing areas may be provided to allow users access to the water's edge”

“Primary reason for trails in an ESA is to provide appropriate recreation and promote ecological education.”

1. We agree with Stantec the boardwalk and the viewing platform must be repaired for public safety.
2. However, based on the guidelines presented above, we do not accept the conclusion that a new elevated viewing platform 9m further away from the edge of Redmond's Pond will provide **“overall net**

**benefit both ecologically and for the visitor experience”**. Certainly no evidence to support this conclusion is presented in the report.

We suggest that construction of a new viewing platform 9m from the present site as planned will probably have a net negative ecological impact. To accommodate stairs up to the platform, the footprint would have to be enlarged. A larger elevated structure would require more support infrastructure involving larger heavier building equipment (i.e. pile-driving machinery). Furthermore, no consideration of the impact of equipment transport into the area and subsequent construction activities of the new viewing platform is considered. Furthermore, the suggested new platform will no longer be at the edge of Redmond's Pond but 9m further away from the shore. Thus, the construction of a new, larger viewing platform is inconsistent with the guiding principles outlined in the Guidelines for Management Zones and Trails in ESAs 2016.

3. UTRCA and TVDSB conduct regular field trips to Sifton Bog. The highlight of the trip involves capturing and identifying benthic organisms in the pond by leaning over the rail of the platform and using pool skimmers and sieves. Elevated platforms would not support this educational activity.

4. The report raises a concern about food littered in the area surrounding the viewing platform and the introduction of invasive species by visitors. These concerns can be addressed quite simply through an educational program and prominent signs on the floating platform. A new, larger, elevated platform does nothing to solve these issues.

### **General Conclusion**

Overall, the Stantec Report does not provide sufficient details regarding the pros and cons of construction and movement of a larger platform 9m from the edge of Redmond's Pond. Thus, we do not recommend construction of the new platform as described by the Stantec Report on the Sifton Bog. What will be the impact of this larger elevated platform on the pond as well as the kettle peatland area affected? Why not simply replace the present viewing structure at the edge of Redmond's Pond?

Submitted on behalf of

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