

## **City Responses (November 2016) to EEPAC's List of Suggested 2017 ESA Capital Projects and Questions**

Previous capital projects (some of which are in process) – new suggestions highlighted, questions in yellow

### **NEW ASKS**

**Development of a monitoring program to ensure that any informal trails that appear are identified and closed ASAP. This is included in the TVP EA and should be used in any ESA. What will it take to develop such a program and what will be the costs of implementation?**

#### **City Response:**

*Will review this suggestion noting our review of Medway (north) and Kilally in 2015 based on historical aerial photos City and UTRCA mapping determined that unmanaged trails did not “appear” after the managed trails went in, they were all existing. UTRCA has mapped the majority of unmanaged trails within the ESAs and does implement a number of trail closures every year through operations work in accordance with the Guidelines for Management Zones & Trails in Environmentally Significant Areas document which outlines (in Section 2.5) the Maintenance, Monitoring and Management of trails in publically owned ESAs in London. The ESA team install managed trail directional signs at unmanaged trail junctions to direct folks to stay on the managed trails. This work is completed as part of encroachment enforcement, CMP implementation, TAG decision implementation and in response to observation reports.*

**ESA signage – present signs at entrances are OK. What about explanatory signs within the ESAs to explain why the area is significant? QR codes don't seem to work.**

**Signage should be installed in ESAs to explain why an ESA is an ESA. Also helpful would be signage to encourage people to stay on trails. Example from Cape Breton Highlands National Park:**

**Roots die, plants die, animals disappear  
Respect and protect this area  
Do your park, stay on the trail**

#### **City Response:**

*Yes, thank you we are happy to create additional signage to encourage folks to stay on the marked trails. In 2014 - 2016 over seventy (70) of the long, green ESA signs, each with:*

- *the complete ESA name*
- *easy to understand pictographs/symbols for the rules*
- *large text under image of a hiker that clearly reads; “only on marked trails”*
- *QR codes with links to the brochure for that ESA with the map with managed trail routes, descriptions about why that particular ESA is ecologically significant, and list of ESA rules*
- *QR code links to ESA observation forms*
- *An ESA By-law sign with a full list of ESA rules (including hiking only on managed/marked trails) attached on the other side of the post*

*Additional green ESA signs will be installed in 2017. Staff check the QR codes periodically and they do appear to be working. Sorry to hear EEPAC was having trouble accessing the QR codes we are happy to provide EEPAC with a demonstration noting downloading a free QR code reader app such as "Scan Me" is helpful. Many ESAs do have existing kiosk signs that include information about why the area is significant and a list of rules including the one about staying on managed trails, and some ESAs have additional trail signage along the trails in the ESA with additional information about why the area is significant.*

*Two, new, large kiosk signs with information about the Coves ESA ecological significance (and list of rules including staying on the managed trail) maps and history, were installed at 2 access points in 2016. An update to the WMP ESA kiosk behind the tourism building is planned for 2017.*

*The Friends of Medway Creek Adopt an ESA group received a grant from the City through the "Medway Decides" program and will be coordinating a number of educational signs in the Medway VHF ESA in 2017 with the funding.*

### **Conservation Master Plans**

*(note there hasn't been a CMP for Warbler Woods or an update to Killaly or Lower Dingman, despite development pressure there). Are there any scheduled/planned in 10 yr outlook? If none, what is the plan to deal with Riverbend South development adjacent to Warbler Woods? The development adjacent to the Lower Dingman at Pack and Col Talbot?*

### ***City Response:***

***The ESAs are protected from development by the OP, London Plan, PPS and a number of other policies including the Environmental Management Guidelines and by-laws that apply through the development process.***

*A natural heritage inventory is completed as part of a Phase 1 CMP and the CMP provides recommendations for the management of an ESA and are updated as staff time and funding permits noting Medway (south) and Meadowlily are the priority CMPs in 2017 after a seven month pause in 2015/2016 while the 2012 trail guidelines were updated, and, a 9 week work stoppage in 2015.*

*Staff will be working with Sifton to connect existing Level 1 trail to new Riverbend South community in 2018 following the Guidelines for Management Zones & Trails in Environmentally Significant Areas document and process after the City acquires the additional (currently privately owned) Warbler ESA lands in 2017.*

*The 20ha of publically owned land in the Lower Dingman ESA (at Homewood Lane) has been added to the UTRCA's City funded contract for management in 2017.*

*Please clarify the amounts budgeted and still available to implement upcoming recommendations of Medway and Meadowlily CMPs (was told \$200K as of 2015) and available funds for Bog, WMP, and Coves.*

### ***City Response:***

*The 2016-2019 multi-year budget is available on the City website. The Metamora staircase TAG solution including repair of the staircase by our contractors, and new boardwalks and ecological restoration of the*

slope by the ESA team required approximately \$70k of Medway capital funds previously earmarked for Medway (south) CMP implementation post Phase 2.

### **Invasive Species Management**

#### **City Response:**

***We agree that the management of invasive species for the protection of ecological integrity consistent with Conservation Master Plans is the highest priority in our ESAs. The draft “London Invasive Plant Management Strategy” developed with the assistance of the Ontario Invasive Plant Council and circulated to EEPAC in October 2016 demonstrates our commitment to responding to this issue at a City wide level. London is the first City in Ontario to complete a draft City-wide Invasive Species Management Strategy.***

***London is an identified leader among other municipalities in Ontario and among other levels of government in demonstrating a proactive approach to the management and control of invasive species in our parks and protected natural areas (since 2007) and the policies, actions and best management practices implemented by the City are serving as an example for other municipalities and levels of government.***

Buckthorn in the Bog

***City Response:*** Three years of significant buckthorn management followed by two years of follow-up buckthorn work and restoration planting was done, however, more work is needed.

Buckthorn and Dog Strangling Vine in Killaly (2013, 2015)

***City Response:*** A significant buckthorn management project was completed in 2013 and a DSV project in 2015. More needs to be done noting DSV in Killaly is identified as a proposed 2017 capital project.

Aquatic invasives in WMP (water lettuce and water hyacinth) – listed in 2013

***City Response:*** South Pond is inspected annually for water lettuce and water hyacinth - the ESA team manually pull plants and removes them from the ESA.

Tree-azin injections continuing (done once every two years 2012 2014 2016)

***City Response:*** Bi-annual TreeAzin injections for roughly 136 healthy ash trees in 2016 was completed. London is a leader in protecting Ash trees in natural areas.

Coves (buckthorn, knotweed) – 2015

***City Response:*** All Buckthorn, knotweed and exotic Honeysuckle completed in 2015 in East Pond and on the slope near the Elmwood Gateway.

### **What about buckthorn in Medway – south section? Knotweed at EPW?**

*City Response: Knotweed has been managed. Priority in the south for the last few years was to control the Goutweed to protect the Species at Risk (SAR) False Rue-anemone, control the Knotweed (and the Phragmites). This has work been successful as noted in the Invasive Species Control Program Results, Medway Valley Heritage Forest ESA, December 2015 previously circulated to EEPAC in January 2016. We will include this report again on EEPAC's November 2016 agenda as another good news item.*

Medway (north section – buckthorn and frag) – 2015

**City Response:** *Completed in 2016 noting we have now implemented the third year of Medway North Phrag management which involved spraying in dry areas and cutting only in areas with standing/flowing water (cannot legally treat Phrag in standing water at this time). Medway north buckthorn was completed as a 2015 capital project.*

Medway (south section – SAR and goutweed and frag – 2015) also Goutweed at Longbow entrance addressed in 2016.

#### **City Response:**

*Completed in 2016, Species at Risk (SAR) False Rue-anemone Protection and Goutweed Invasive-species Mitigation Project fully funded by the City and presented at the Ontario Invasive Plant Council's AGM in 2014 and 2015 with Dillon Consulting and ESA team is successful in protecting SAR. The invasive species control, monitoring and restoration continues through 2017.*

Private funding to UTRCA for vinca behind Precious Blood – restoration to come

#### **City Response:**

*Thanks to the donor, the UTRCA continued with vinca management project on private property adjacent to the Medway ESA, and completed the 2016 work. UTRCA eradicated most of the vinca on private property that threatens to spread into the ESA. UTRCA began restoration by planting native wildflowers, wildflower seed and planting trees and shrubs. Monitoring of restoration has shown significant deer browse on the shrubs and some shrub mortality due to drought. UTRCA will monitor for wildflower seed germination in 2017 and implement any follow-up vinca control required. UTRCA may include additional restoration in 2017 based on spring monitoring results.*

Warbler – buckthorn, English ivy, Barberry (2015)

**City Response:** *Completed in 2016 noting additional buckthorn work is needed.*

Meadowlily and Kains – monitor using Early Detection Rapid Response approach (2015) – **success??**

**City Response:** *Yes the approach was successful as DSV did not come back at Kains, and Phrag was detected early and treated in Meadowlily in 2016.*

Kain's - buckthorn, knotweed, goutweed (2016)

**City Response:** *This project had to be deferred to 2017 as UTRCA staff were asked to complete the TAG Metamora staircase trail closures, boardwalk installation, trail re-opening, and slope restoration in 2016.*

WMP – frag, buckthorn, black locust, knotweed (2016)

**City Response:**

*Completed in 2016 in former landfill / meadow areas. Phrag was treated in Glen cairn open space, near Saunders cabin site and North of the Toursim Center building as part of the 2016 ESA Phrag management capital project. Additionally, the team managed black locust, buckthorn and Phrag at South Pond under their operational activities.*

Medway – frag, 3<sup>rd</sup> yr of SAR/Goutweed/Knotweed/restoration project (2016)

**City Response:**

*Species at Risk (SAR) False Rue-anemone Protection and Goutweed Invasive-species Mitigation Project presented at the Ontario Invasive Plant Council's AGM in 2014 and 2015 with Dillon Consulting and UTRCA is successful in protecting SAR. The invasive species control, monitoring and restoration continues through 2017.*

Meadowlily – frag (2016)

**City Response:** *Completed in 2016*

All ESAs monitor using EDRR and touch ups of all 2014/15 work under operating budget – (2016)

**City Response:** *Completed in 2016 and will again be part of 2017 operations work.*

Invasive Species Management Strategy city wide (James).

**City Response:** *Draft completed and circulated to EEPAC for comment in October 2016.*

**Has there been any discussion with the landowner (Drewlo) to deal with the buckthorn forest on his land adjacent to the Bog? – raised in 2015 and at EEPAC**

**City Response:**

***The City's Realty Services staff negotiated with Drewlo for 6 years to purchase or secure an easement over these lands and all the offers were refused by Drewlo.***

*We would note that a 7 hectare, severe, buckthorn infestation removal and restoration project would be very costly for Drewlo and/or the City if a purchase or easement over these lands was secured. The priority is generally to protect and treat buckthorn in higher quality areas with SAR or rare species present and those areas with lower infestation levels first, consistent with the approach recommended by the OIPC noting that 19% of the canopy cover in the City is Buckthorn as described in the UFORE.*

### **Trail related works**

Boardwalks, railings, bioengineering (suggestions appreciated. There should be some bioengineering on the hill where the new boardwalk and restored staircase are in Medway)

#### ***City Response:***

***Yes, this is noted in the TAG Metamora Staircase minutes circulated to EEPAC's representative.***

*The restoration planting/bioengineering was completed by the ESA team in fall 2016. Boardwalks were completed by UTRCA in the summer of 2016. The ESA team planted 100 native shrubs and 5 native trees on the slope where the old staircase was in October 2016. The ESA team will install a coir erosion control matting in November 2016. ESA team to install small log/crib steps on a steep section of trail leading to one of the boardwalks in 2017.*

What is status of boardwalk design SE of Naomee Park? – Bog (2013)

***City Response:*** *This has been added to list of proposed capital projects for 2017.*

Shrub planting and improved barrier at trail closed location (turtle nesting site) – from 2013. **Not done?**

***City Response:*** *This was a suggestion from Nature London (not EEPAC) based on their observations in 2011 and was completed.*

Bike racks at ESA entrances (implemented from 2014 project list)

***City Response:*** *Yes these have been installed and are being used to lock up bikes outside the ESAs.*

### **Trail for Riverbend South to Warbler (2016) and Boardwalk repairs in southern portion (2016)**

***City Response:*** *Working with Sifton to connect existing Level 1 trail to new Riverbend South community in 2018 after the balance of the ESA lands are transferred to the City in 2017. Boardwalk improvement in the south in 2016 by UTRCA (completed). Garlic Mustard pull by ESA Team completed this past spring.*

Coves implementation of CMP (2015, 2016)

***City Response:*** *As circulated to EEPAC in June 2016 ESA Committee minutes:*

*East Pond implementation and extensive restoration completed in 2015; local stakeholders very pleased Elmwood Gateway, Silver Creek Ravine and Euston Meadows as per CMP and LIC on track for 2016 / 2017. Friends of the Coves have secured a Canada 150 Grant of \$42,000 and a Trillium Grant of \$150,000 for trail implementation as per CMP and LIC. Kiosk signs are now in place at Elmwood Gateway and Springbank Drive.*

All ESAs continue un-official trail closures with Warbler as a priority (**2015 – what happened? Did it work?**)

***City Response:*** *A number of trails leading to private property in Warbler were barricaded and closed in 2015.*

Assess all unmanaged trails in newly acquired portion of Meadowlily ESA. Manage a minimal trail system that is anticipated to follow a route already established by the Thames Valley Trail Association (2012) – what happened?

**City Response:** Trails will be reviewed again in 2017/2018 during Phase 2 of CMP following the updated trail guidelines process.

### **Encroachments**

What can be done from capital for this? (2014 was supposed to have assistance with removal and restoration at Killaly and Warbler – Benson Cres?)

What about a by law to prevent new owners from putting gates in fences?

Finalize the ESA Encroachment Strategy (2012) – status?

**City Response:**

*The ESA Team and City By-law staff are inspecting ESA encroachments across the City with Warbler, Killaly and Coves as a current focus. City by-law staff are following up with a number of steps for enforcement including in some cases issuing residents with a Work Order or a Notice to Discontinue Activity under the Municipal Act for contravention of the City of London Parks & Recreation Area By-law (most recently for some homes on Springfield adjacent to Warbler, and, some homes adjacent to Coves).*

*Nearly 2000 Living w Natural Areas brochures, developed by EEPAC that include detailed info on encroachments, yard waste, pets on-leash and invasive species were mailed out on April 6, 2016 to all homes adjacent to City owned ESAs to assist with better voluntary by-law compliance and stewardship of the ESAs.*

*Thanks for the suggestion for a by-law for gates in fences for new owners we will review this. Fences with no gates is a standard requirement and clause for site plans, condos and subdivisions adjacent to natural areas to prevent encroachment into significant natural features including ESAs.*

### **EEPAC/NL did receive a staff response to its suggestions for 2015 ESA Capital Budget List:**

Trail closure, remove pavement and restore lands in new ESA (Pottersburg) when new pathway and rail crossing is installed.

STAFF: Agree and this work is incorporated in project scope.

When is this project scheduled?

**City Response:** The Transportation Section will be implementing this project in 2017.

Unmanaged trails in Killaly should be closed.

STAFF: Agree and will review as UTRCA and staff time permits. What happened?

**City Response:** ESA team installed a number of directional signs and fresh trail blazes and trail closed signs and barriers etc. to assist with way finding through the meadows. These are effective and helpful.

Install additional fencing perpendicular to existing fencing at Wonderland Road entrance to Snake Creek to reduce by passes to bike gate at this location.

STAFF: Agree and will implement in 2015 (Was not done). There is also an unmanaged access to Snake Creek from the west side of Wonderland under the bridge. Jeff Bruin alerted and passed along to Linda McDougall

**City Response:**

***Staff heard back from S. Levin in October 2016 that this additional fencing at the Wonderland Road entrance to Snake Creek was not necessary and is no longer an issue.***

*The City funded UTRCA ESA team do inspect the Snake Creek area on a regular basis to clean up garbage, enforce City by-laws and will continue to do so. L. McDougall is working with Parks Operations staff to help address the issue on the west side of the bridge.*

Trail to Saunders Cabin and South Side of Saunders Pond are heavy clay and muddy when it rains. Is this part of the Canada 150 funding?

**City Response:**

***Yes, this will be addressed in 2017 and is a good example of an EEPAC capital project suggestion leading to a grant application, leading to a TAG walk and implementation (including a restoration project) noting the TAG minutes were circulated to the EEPAC representative.***

Better trail marking/signage for Sifton Bog

STAFF: Agree and will review in light of Management Zone Map (status?)

**City Response:**

*Will review this in 2017 noting ESA team does freshen up trail blazes annually and will increase frequency of trail markings/blazes and directional signage as required during annual trail template updating going forward. Sifton Bog project had been postponed as ESA CMP implementation projects with grant funds in place are prioritized. The implementation of the Coves CMP is a current priority as community raised (Friends of the Coves) grant funds are currently in place. A Do Not Dump Pets or Goldfish sign was installed in 2015 and does get vandalized and replaced periodically.*

Budget for work in converting Euston Park to Euston Meadows as part of ESA in order to protect SAR and its habitat was high priority in CMP for Coves.

STAFF: "...we will work to improve and protect the habitat, naturalization opportunities, signage and ensure trails are outside of the NZ zones. Status?

**City Response:**

***Yes, Euston Meadows implementation as per CMP and LIC is on track for 2016 with the funding secured by the Friends of the Coves to implement the Coves CMP.***

*We would note that since 2014 many signs with a photo of a Meadowlark that read: "Sensitive Ground Nesting Birds in Area Please stay on paths. All Dogs must be on leash at all times in accordance with the*



*Parks and Recreation By-law and the Dog Licencing and Control By-law” are clearly posted throughout Euston Meadows (and in the WMP landfill meadow).*

*In 2015 the long, green ESA signs, described in a previous response were installed at the access points to Euston Meadows. The City funded UTRCA management contract includes Euston Meadows for enforcement of our by-laws to protect this habitat. Additionally in 2016 we asked London Animal Care to assist with enforcement for dogs off leash at the Coves (and WMP landfill meadow), for protection of the habitat. Additionally, managing buckthorn in Euston Meadows in 2017 will likely improve the habitat for Meadowlarks.*

We noticed the upswing in purple loosestrife and staff noted they and UTRCA will be working with Donna Mackenzie of Ontario beetles

**City Response:**

*Yes, a biological control of Purple Loosestrife was implemented in the WMP ESA near Worthington in 2015 as a capital invasive project, and more beetles will be released in WMP at Saunders Pond, Thompson Pond and in Coves West and East Ponds in 2017. It will take at least 2-3 years for the beetle populations to build and provide measurable impact post-release. Donna Mackenzie provided the Adopt an ESA members with a Loosestrife update at the volunteer appreciation event this fall.*

*The City is coordinating a Community Education & Stewardship Event as part of the planned 2017 Loosestrife beetle releases with D. Mackenzie of Ontario Beetles in June 2017 in WMP ESA, Saunders Pond.*