



11 January 2012

Bruce Page
Parks Planner
Parks Planning & Design
383 Richmond Street, Suite 1102
London Ontario N6A 3C4

**RE: Response to EEPAC comments on Boler Mountain and Adjacent Lands Subject
Lands Status Report**

Dear Bruce,

Please find attached our response to comments provided by EEPAC (December 20th, 1012).

We have identified some of the comments as issues that will be addressed in ongoing planning initiatives for areas in and around the Boler Mountain study area. The current report prepared by North-South provides technical background information that can inform these next planning steps.

If you require further clarification of the responses provided on the following page please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,

Brent Tegler PhD
Partner/Applied Ecologist
North-South Environmental Inc.



Response to EEPAC comments provided on draft Boler Mountain and Adjacent Lands Subject Lands Status Report (EEPAC meeting December 20th, 2012)

North-South would like to take this opportunity to thank EEPAC for their review and thoughtful comments on the Boler Mountain and Adjacent Lands Subject Land Status Report. Our response to comments are provided below with numbering that follows the numbered comments provided by EEPAC.

1. Eastern Meadowlark (page 24):

- Eastern Meadowlark was observed to the south of the study area, singing from a fence post on the south side of Southdale Road West, approximately 200 metres east of Wickerson Road (see attached Google image with location pin);
- North-South agrees that it would be beneficial for the City to maintain a database for known locations of significant species.

2. Page 31:

- In regard to areas of woodland north of the proposed ESA boundary the existing OS2 zone designation permits the current and planned expanded uses;
- Existing and proposed permitted recreational uses generally precludes these areas from designation as ESA;
- The existing stormwater pond represents a practical/reasonable northern limit to the large natural and relatively undisturbed vegetation patch (north and south of Southdale Road) that makes up the Dingman Creek ESA.
- Future planning studies will consider mitigation and compensation for proposed recreational development within these wetland areas.

3. Bike Trails:

- Developing an appropriate adaptive management strategy that includes detailed restoration strategies and monitoring and the identification of an implementation agency for Boler Mountain, particularly the degraded areas identified in this report are important next steps to protect the natural heritage features and functions present.
- A recommendation to this effect will be added to the conclusions.

4. Plans for proposed walking and cycling pathways are described in detail on page 32:

- Similar to the reply provided above in regard to comment # 3, the identification of trail location(s) and trail type is an important next step that requires acceptance of the conclusions provided in the Lands Status Report and the subsequent identification of trails through a consultative process with the public;



- The recommendation provided in the LSR will be more clearly stated in the conclusions.

5. Recommendation 6 on page 38:

- Field studies completed in the Boler Mountain lands noted that bike trails established, monitored and with use regulated by the Boler Mountain recreation facility showed minimal environmental impact and they were considered an acceptable use within the area proposed for ESA.
- In areas where there was unregulated use (mountain bikes, motorized trail bikes, fire pits, etc.) significant impacts were noted as identified on figures in the LSR.
- Restoration of degraded areas identified in the LSR may be undertaken in conjunction with the establishment, monitoring and regulated use of future trails.
- Details in regard to the restoration strategy, including identification of an implementing agency, will be determined as part of the next planning initiatives for the study area.

6. Stream Reaches page 34:

- Data from geomorphological investigations completed for the Boler Mountain and Adjacent Lands LSR will be provided to the stormwater management group at City Hall for its use in the Environmental Assessment and detail design work for stormwater management that affects these reaches.

7. Requested Clarifications:

- Greater clarity in regard to the areas that were not accessed will be provided in the report. Areas not accessed include an area within the study area boundary that was under active construction, specifically areas of excavation and filling as part of the construction of new ski slopes and an area outside the study area boundary for which some observations were made during breeding bird surveys and amphibian surveys as calls were heard and recorded from areas outside the study area boundary. In our opinion there is no need to complete further field studies in these areas for completion of the LSR.
- The two non-native flora species in question were honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) and trumpet creeper (*Campsis radicans*). Both these species are out of their natural range in Ontario (it is believed they are indigenous only in Essex county; and it is possible that honey locus is also native in Niagara). Thus, preserving the plantings would not contribute to preserving the habitat for this species. In addition, both species are common horticultural plantings, and therefore the genetic origin of the plants was in all likelihood be from outside the province (these species are much more common in the U.S.). Conserving the planted specimens thus would not conserve the natural genetic diversity of these species.



8. Missing elements in the SLR:

- The CWS recommends breeding bird surveys be conducted between May 24th and July 10th, not June 10th. North-South conducted breeding bird surveys on July 1st and 12th 2011 and on May 24th 2012. One of the survey dates (July 12th 2011) is two days outside the recommended window for breeding bird surveys, this was due to the late start date of the project in 2011 and it was in part the reason for a third survey being completed on May 24th in 2012. Despite the July 12th survey being conducted on this date we recognize it is still appropriate for obtaining evidence of breeding, as noted by the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas survey guidelines. Further surveys could have been conducted, but it was felt that there was sufficient information to draw conclusions with respect to breeding bird fauna, and that further surveys would not have changed the conclusions that were derived from the consideration of all the surveys as a whole.
- The focus of the bird surveys was to find evidence of probable breeding, as is common for breeding bird surveys. Evidence of confirmed breeding requires highly time-consuming searches for nest sites. As is normally the case in breeding bird studies, we conservatively assumed that any bird recorded on site, in suitable breeding habitat during its breeding season, was likely breeding on the site. As noted in the draft report data collected in 2011 and 2012 did not record sufficient indicator species for the identification of Significant Wildlife Habitat in any of the vegetation communities on the site.
- We have noted, however, that as of December 2012 the status of Wood Thrush has changed, it is now considered “Threatened” in Canada. Wood Thrush was recorded by North-South as a probable breeder within the study area (see figure attached for several locations where singing males were heard). The LSR will be amended to identify Significant Wildlife Habitat (Habitat for Species of Conservation Concern) associated with wooded habitat utilized by Wood Thrush.
- In regard to conducting a fall migration survey for birds, the protocols for determining the presence of Significant Wildlife Habitat based on the presence of “landbird stopover habitat” (i.e. migration survey) requires relatively intensive field surveys during both spring and fall migration periods and there are fairly stringent criteria that must be met as follows:
 - i. This criterion only applies to wooded areas within 5 km of Lake Ontario or Lake Erie.
 - ii. Use of the woodlot by >200 birds/day and with >35 species with at least 10 bird species recorded on at least 5 different survey dates. This abundance and diversity of migrant bird species is considered above average and significant; and
 - iii. Studies should be completed during spring (March/May) and fall (Aug/Oct) migration using standardized assessment techniques.



9. Flora page 16:

- North-South agrees the Kaiser 1983 reference is dated, however we do not know of a more recent assessment of the typical proportion of native to non-native species in Ontario.
- North-South also completed an analysis of Floristic Quality (Oldham et al. 1995) for all vegetation communities and is of the opinion this provides a more accurate assessment of vegetation quality. The Floristic Quality Index (FQI) of the forest within the study area was 55, this is an exceptionally high FQI value, based on the results of other North-South flora surveys within urban natural areas.

10. Significant Stream Corridor:

- The LSR will be updated to clarify the Significant Stream Corridor is 30 metres on either side of the stream.
- The LSR conclusions will be updated to include the recommendation to update Official Plan Schedules where necessary.

11. Maps:

- the steep slopes (15-25% and >25%) shown on figure 6 are intended to convey information about the topography of the study area;
- Official Plan zoning is shown for the study area on Figure 1;
- the assessment of ecological information was completed without a consideration of land ownership, future planning steps may consider of land ownership;
- figures 2 through 6 have been created for printing on 11 by 17 inch paper, at this scale the symbols used can be distinguished;
- the location of future pathways and trails will be determined as part of the next planning steps for the study area; and
- electronic copies of figures can be provided upon request for review.

Response to EEPAC comments prepared by:

Brent Tegler & Sarah Mainguy
North-South Environmental Inc.
January 11th, 2013.



Farm Meadowlark and Wood Thrush – Boler Mountain and Adjacent lands Subject Lands Status Report

