

To: Planning and Environment Committee, City of London

Re: Conservation Master Plan for the southern portion of the Medway Valley Heritage Forest Environmentally Significant Area (MVHF ESA)

I am writing to you to support the recommendation of Nature London's Conservation Action Committee that the proposed construction of two pedestrian bridges over Medway Creek, as recommended in the Conservation Master Plan, be removed from the Plan.

My understanding is that the purpose of Environmentally Significant Areas is to protect the ecological integrity of areas of the City designated for their special qualities. I believe the construction of the bridges could be more detrimental to the ecological integrity of the MVHF ESA than deleting this portion of the plan that is more concerned with connecting neighbourhoods than contributing to enhanced protection and conservation.

I understand that should the bridges be constructed they would need to be in compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, but if no bridges are built this is a moot point.

As a biologist and naturalist, I am naturally concerned about the substantial loss of habitat for native species in the Carolinian Zone of Canada, and this is exemplified by the threatened vascular plant, the False Rue-anemone (*Enemion biternatum*), which occurs in all of Canada only as scattered populations in southwestern Ontario (http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/species/speciesDetails_e.cfm?sid=249). Currently only six populations are extant, with the largest population in the MVHF ESA.

Human activities, due to the proximity of False Rue-anemone populations to public areas and trails, are the main threat to this species and at this point it is reasonable to assume that construction of the proposed bridges would increase the threat in the MVHF ESA and this proposal should therefore be removed from the Plan.

Thank you for taking my views into account in your deliberations.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Neish

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