

City of London
Planning and Environment Committee
April 4, 2018

Attention: Chair - Councillor S. Turner

STONEBROOK HEIGHTS/UPLANDS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION COMMENTS: Conservation Master Plan
Phase II Medway Valley Heritage Forest ESA (South)

Upon reviewing the above in conjunction with Guidelines for Management Zones & Trails in ESA'S (May 2016), we provide the following comments:

This ESA provides significant habitat for rare, threatened or endangered indigenous species of plants or animals that are rare within the country, province or county.

In particular, this ESA also contains the largest concentration IN THE COUNTRY of the threatened provincially significant flora species, False-rue Anemone, first found in the late 1980's. Yet, until recently, there has never been any enhanced effort over the past 20 years of study to acknowledge or reduce threats due to increased traffic through Medway Valley's ESA. Now the report recommends increasing traffic in this sensitive natural area.

The issue of providing paths through ESA'S has been problematic. The reality is these areas become akin to an off-leash dog park, bicycle paths for all (vs restricted to only bicycles for children as per guidelines) and encroachment into habitat which is meant to be protected i.e. straying off paths.

As the number of people accessing the ESA increases, the threats to and damage sustained by flora, fauna, animals, habitat etc. within the ESA also increases. Protection as identified under 1.2.2 Guiding Principles (Page 10 of the Conservation Master Plan, as well as the Guidelines and London Plan), is reduced vs maintained, and certainly not enhanced.

One might consider that the increasing pathway systems through ESA'S is becoming akin to cut-through traffic in local neighbourhoods (vs arterial roads which are designed for heavy traffic). The inclination to provide increased connectivity is not in the best interest of ESA'S, nor the reason they exist.

The notion to create bridge crossings is contrary to Guidelines for Management Zones and Trails in ESA'S and City Policy which places ecological protection over recreation.

An ESA exists and is to be protected, in and of itself. It does not exist to provide transportation through it, with a specific intent to connect within a neighbourhood. Pathways are provided specifically for folks to be able to passively appreciate, educate and ensure enhanced protection from excessive intrusion.

SUMMARY

We support and recommend:

- . enhanced protection of species at risk in Medway Valley ESA
- . specific strategy defined, implemented and actively monitored with regards to the False rue – Anemone.
- . improve monitoring of ESA's by UTRCA i.e. currently, 4 staff monitor 9 ESA'S. From a budgetary viewpoint, reducing expansion of pathways allows for improved monitoring. A portion of those savings should be allocated to increasing UTRCA staff positions specifically related to ESA monitoring.
- . we note trail construction require piping and drainage. As these trails expand, the ESA will be drier, rather than maintaining current water levels. Species and animal habitats will be further endangered.
- . improved signage, including: bicycles are allowed only for children, dogs must be leashed, better trail signs to ensure traffic remains on pathways.
- . budget be established to protect the ecological integrity and ecosystem health of the Medway Valley ESA, noting same shall have priority in any use or designation.
- . planned bridges crossing Medway Creek be eliminated, as they do not protect – rather, they will result in more harm.

Stoneybrook Heights/Uplands Residents Association
Gloria McGinn-McTeer

April 4, 2018

CC: Councillor M. Cassidy