

I would like to thank you for for accepting our delegation request and allowing us to speak today.

My name is Debbie Park and I live at 1288 Halls Mill Place

Overwhelming opposition to the Byron Valley Nature Trail has been voiced at 2 separate meetings

On November 2017, due to this opposition, City Council directed the Environmental and Parks Planning Services, to have a public participation meeting in Byron to present the plan for the Byron Valley Nature Trail.

At this meeting, held on March 8, 2018 it was revealed that this plan could be whatever the community wanted. Approximately 80 people attended the meeting and all but a few, turned down the entire project, wanting the ESA left untouched.

It was assumed that the city would not proceed. But they have!

This trail would cause an irreversible environmental damage to this area

This is a tiny ESA surrounded by private property so cannot become part of another trail system.

This ESA is the ONLY waterfront property not on... private land, or part of a multi-use park... from the forks of the Thames to the ESA

This ESA is a documented habitat of the Eastern Hognose Snake with photos and site location registered with the Ministry of Natural Resource.

The Eastern Hognose Snake is listed as, Threatened under the Ontario Endangered Species Act and, the Federal Species at Risk Act, and designated a Specially Protected Reptile under the Ontario Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act.

It's habitat is further protected in Ontario, by the Provincial Policy Statement which, protects the habitat of threatened and endangered species and, prohibits SITE ALTERATIONS to their habitat.

Section 6 of the Provincial Planning Act for Species at Risk states, that a wildlife habitat is defined as "an entire area on which a species depends directly or indirectly"

" areas where plants, animals and other organisms live and find adequate amounts of food, water, shelter and space needed to sustain".

Which, is exactly what this ESA does.

It's important to note that, the most significant threat to the Eastern Hognose snake is...habitat loss, habitat fragmentation and people.

This ESA is a recognized habitat, aquatic corridor and vital feeding ground for the endangered Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle. The Parks's department have acknowledged this is a Spiny

Softshell corridor and stated that they “nest across the river “ from the proposed Nature Trail and Lookout.

According to the Endangered Species Act, human recreation is identified as a huge negative factor in blocking access to nesting, feeding, hibernation and basking sites for the extremely shy Spiny Softshell.

So putting a lookout and pathway in an endangered species habitat should not be considered.

Freshwater Mussels are the most endangered organisms in North America.

9 Freshwater mussels species were picked up along the shore in this ESA

1 is considered extremely rare and endangered,

2 are considered very rare

4 are considered rare

Easy public access and parking would provide an area to put kayaks and canoes into the water, damaging this endangered shoreline habitat.

This tiny ESA is the nesting site for Snapping Turtles which are listed as Special Concern by the Endangered Species Act and... is home to many other species including, the river otter and wild mink who have a specific habitat component of limited human contact... critical to their survival.

To realize how small this ESA is and how intrusive this trail would be, it is 800 meters from the gate entrance, to the large storm sewer outlet.

The hill past the storm sewer is too steep and wet to walk and leads to private property.

The distance along the river, from the proposed lookout to Halls Mill Road is a 4 minute stroll

The wheelchair accessible loop takes 3 minutes to walk and is 200 meters

It would involve considerable site alterations

It takes 2 minutes to walk from the beginning of the trail at the top of the hill, to the sewage pumping station.

The hill is extremely steep so the site plan calls for making a bench cut trail into the hill. This would involve considerable site alterations.

To walk the loop from the berm to the lookout and the accessible trail back to the berm takes 4 minutes.

To walk down the hill and around the 2 proposed trail loops take approximately 9 minutes.

This is a nothing trail around a very smelly sewage pumping station which will have an upgrade in 2023 which will triple its capacity.

EEPAC has made no recommendation for this proposed nature trail.

The community feels this Nature Trail is not needed due to the number of trails, parks and pathways already in the immediate area

It is a 4 minute walk from the proposed Commissioners Road access point and from Byron Northview Public School to the paved pathway leading directly into Springbank Park. Byron Northview DOES NOT endorse the Byron Valley Nature Trail.

Participation House is a 1 minute walk to the same pathway leading directly into Springbank Park which has 30 km of paved pathways,

Warble Woods is a 4 minute drive and has 3.9 km of trails,

Kains Woods is a 7 minute drive and has 5.8 km of trails and multi-use pathways.

The Sifton Bog is a 6 minute drive and has 2.7 km of Boardwalk

In closing ...The community has voiced their complete opposition to the Byron Valley Nature Trail...TWICE

This ESA is home to at least 3 endangered and threatened species which must... by law, be protected and is too small to accommodate pathways.

The walking trail loops take 7 minutes and there are already wonderful accessible pathways and nature trails in the immediate area

The existing informal trails identified on the maps are actually well used animal trails which demonstrate that this area is an important year round animal corridor and habitat.

Please consider the concerns of the community and halt any plans for this tiny ESA habitat.

Thank you for allowing us to voice these very serious concerns today