

This is the first time AWAC has had a chance to present information on beaver in London. AWAC's reports explain why beavers are a key stone species and the important role they play in our natural areas. While the reports recognize the problems they may cause to public infrastructure, the emphasis is on itemizing the many successful, inexpensive, and non-lethal ways to avoid any health and safety issues. As you would expect, AWAC is proud to have been able to help Council support developing a humane response to human wildlife conflicts in June as well as non-lethal intervention to resolve the beaver issue at Stanton Drain in July.

The Engineer's report to the Planning Committee last Monday recommends that the construction of the Stanton Stormwater Management System go forward and that relocation of the beaver to Muncee First Nations take place. The Planning Committee has approved this BUT the Engineer's Department is very interested in the advocacy groups' recommendation to send the beavers to Aspen Valley Wildlife Sanctuary.

AWAC has also researched the effects of relocation on beavers and we are concerned.

It has been made very clear by leading experts that relocation to any natural area (including Muncee) at this time of year is lethal. The beavers would lose their winter food (stored in the lodge and dams); be confused and move for up to two weeks trying to find their territory; have to compete with other beaver; and try to rebuild a lodge without the time to do so. They would die of starvation.

Aspen Valley has an enclosed habitat with a constant supply of food and water. Rehabilitators are experienced and trained to meet the beavers' needs so they can return to a natural environment. Furthermore, live trapping and moving beaver requires special equipment skills. Howard Smith at Aspen Valley possesses both.

We are delighted that the Engineer's department is concerned to provide the best relocation possible for the beavers and hope they are able to convince Council to relocate the beaver to Aspen. Many animal advocates have contributed greatly to this effort.

Of course, we will continue to develop an Urban Wildlife Policy with the Environment, Parks Planning Department. Thank you for this opportunity to speak.