

MGWA News

July 2004

Maple Grove Road Expansion

The Maple Grove Road will soon be four lanes wide, plus turning lanes. Many of the Maple Grove Wetlands Association (MGWA) members provided comments to the Region regarding the proposed widening. On behalf of the Association, we suggested more extensive sound attenuation barriers be considered, and that proper bridges be built along the creeks where wildlife crossings are substantiated.

HWSS Working Committee Update

Enhancement & Stewardship

You may recall that the Hespeler West Subwatersheds Study (HWSS) had made recommendations as to "enhancement" areas in which naturalization efforts should be focussed. Some of these, if implemented, would have lured wildlife dangerously near to major roads, and ultimately to their demise.

The MGWA has suggested that these recommendations be removed or reduced near roadways, a point to which the HWSS Working Committee was agreed.

And, rather than singling out individual properties for "stewardship" areas the City will be offering opportunities for all the people of the Subwatersheds as a whole, to learn about the natural systems and how they might be enhanced. Insofar as it truly makes all aspects voluntary, the Association is in agreement with this approach.

Buffers

You might also recall that the HWSS recommended 30m (~100ft) buffers around any area which it considered of importance from a natural heritage perspective. In many cases these buffers fell on cultivated fields, residential properties, buildings, even driveways and parking lots. In every case, this was regarded as unacceptable to the people who have raised their concerns with us.

Based on information we had collected, the MGWA has suggested to the Working Committee that buffers around wetlands could be equally effective at 15m. Also, that upland forest buffers could be effective with as little as three meters. And, that the Association does not want any residential areas adversely impacted by the buffers.

What City staff returned with, is that the 30m buffers remain for now, but that they may be rolled back pending the acceptance of an Environmental Impact Study (EIS). This allows for the possibility of reducing the buffer strips to the sizes that the Association suggested at later date.

While this is an important improvement over what had been previously recommended by the Study, the MGWA still has some concern with this approach. An EIS is performed by expensive consultants, and may be required in certain circumstances when building, when altering grade, or when severing a property. The advanced state of human disturbance should be recognized and a smaller buffer strip should be considered as the starting point at which an EIS may be required.

Also, in response to our concerns, the MGWA is pleased that the City has suggested in some cases, buffers might be reduced or eliminated under the auspices of the community plan. The community plan is expected to commence shortly. The additional analysis would be paid for by the City, in those cases.

Wendy Wright, Commissioner of Planning Services, stressed that the buffers would get implemented whenever serviced urban development occurs, and in other circumstances they would not get implemented.

All we can say at this juncture is that that is the subject of continued discussions.

Numerous Errors Corrected

Ron McKitrick comments, that one of the very significant benefits to MGWA members has been the removal of incorrect wetland "designations" by working with the Ontario MNR, thereby avoiding the onerous restrictions.

Additionally, watershed boundaries were corrected, and floodlines are in the process of being adjusted.

Almost Done

At the point of this writing, we have just three more scheduled meetings of the HWSS Working Committee. In

these meetings we hope to get answers to many outstanding questions, such as:

- What will be the affects of the licenced sand extraction on local wetlands and on our wells?
- What will be the affects of the watershed and wetland boundary changes on the Maple Grove Wetland Complex itself?
- What will be the affects of the missed Middle Ck. culvert on floodlines?

Upcoming Events

A number of events are being planned for the coming weeks. Mark your calendars and plan on attending these.

An *Open House* is being held on September 9th at the Wanner Mennonite Church at Beaverdale and Old Maple Grove Rd. The doors open at 6PM, with a presentation at 7PM. This will be subject to confirmation by City staff, so look for a letter in your mailbox in the coming weeks.

If all goes according to plan, the revised HWSS will be considered by *Cambridge City Council* at a special meeting on Tuesday, September 14th. Council meetings are held in the top floor of the Old Galt City Hall and start at 7PM. Again, watch for the letter from the City announcing this.

About the MGWA News

The MGWA News is published four times a year by the Maple Grove Wetlands Association, in Cambridge, Ontario. It is made possible by the generous contributions of members like you. Opinions expressed herein are the authors', and may or may not reflect those of the Association. For more information please contact the Maple Grove Wetlands Association (new mailing address):

Maple Grove Wetlands Association
685 Briardean Rd, RR 31
Cambridge, ON N3H 4R6

E-mail: mgwa@genema.org

Web site: <http://genema.org/MGWA/>