



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH LAKE SIMCOE NATURALISTS

SLSN is an incorporated not-for-profit Member of Ontario Nature.

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(www.slsnc.ca)

Research Partner with The Zephyr Society of Lake Simcoe (www.zephyrsociety.ca)

Member: Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition

Member: Ontario Greenbelt Alliance

Note: Please renew your membership to receive future Newsletters

Meetings and Outings

Meetings: All Meetings start at 7:30 p.m. at the York Region Police Building Meeting Room (Baseline Road between McCowan and Civic Centre Road) unless noted otherwise. No July or August Meetings. Members events (insurance compliance). Visitors welcome.

York Regional Police, 3 District Community Meeting Room
3527 Baseline Road, Georgina.



Tuesday, May 9 **Wetlands and Natural Habitat – Land Development Impacts**

and Options: Land development, both urban and rural, has been ongoing in the GTA and for many, many years and especially in the earlier days, inadequate protection of the natural resources impacted by this development was evident due to inadequate consideration, understanding and future planning needed to protect and sustain the natural environment for future generations. This meeting will briefly discuss some of the lessons learned, expanded regulations for environmental protection, importance of wetlands and need for conservation of natural habitat. Gord Zwaigenbaum, club 2nd Vice-President will lead our discussions.

Tuesday, June 13 **Costa Rica:** Norma Knowlton, our club treasurer recently went on an adventure tourism trip to Costa Rica. She will lead this meeting with a travelogue and fact based introduction and analysis on the geography of Costa Rica including its diverse rainforest, upland and lowland landscapes.

Phone Paul 905-722-8021 or Norma 905-476-4747 for further information about meetings.

NOTICE about Meeting hours – 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. only.

Outings: All regular outings – Note: **Paid-up members may participate (for insurance compliance).**

2017 SPRING

Due to the heavy and extended rains from May 4 – May 6 the Presqu'ile Trip was postponed by participants to the weekend of May 13 and 14th.

May 13 and 14th **Presqu'ile Provincial Park birding trip:** This early to mid-May (the second bird wave) is the best time for birding at Presqu'ile as the passerines including warblers, tanagers, flycatchers and particularly shorebirds will be arriving then. If the foliage isn't fully out and the weather has warmed up it is the best time to be on the Lake Ontario coast. We could easily get up to 100 species with some effort. We will arrange meeting at the Park on the weekend as the dates arrive. There is camping in the Park, and local accommodations in the area. Book early as spaces will book quickly. Mark Calhoun and Paul Harpley can be contacted for further information.

Information on accommodations in Brighton, Ontario area:

Presquille Beach Motel
243 Main Street
Brighton

877 769 6153

Brighton Inn
40 Young Street
Brighton
613 475 9706

Timber House resort
116 Cedardale Road
Brighton
613 475 3304

Large Development Application Raised Again and Proceeding in Sutton: Ainslie Hill-Continues.

SLSN Update: Gord Zwaigenbaum and myself, and other research partners have been reviewing the past Town staff and developer consultant information for comment on this large subdivision application. We advised, in the meantime the Town of Georgina staff and Council in advance of the development application going forward for consideration of approval to Council at the Wednesday April 19, 2017 Georgina Council Meeting. Council deferred the application to the upcoming Wednesday May 10, 2017 Council meeting, where they were expected to bring the application forth again with Agency recommendations. We prepared and submitted a comprehensive Report to Council (attached) on May 4th for the May 10, 2017 Council Meeting, that had been advised when the application would again come forth (dependent on receipt of outstanding Agencies Review comments). We have checked the Town of Georgina web site and the Ainslie Hill application is not on the agenda. We have had conversations with area residents who in the past have had concerns as well about this large subdivision development, some who have also made submissions to Council. This matter continues.

Paul Harpley

Moatfield Site in Sutton West Active Again: Importation of Fill to Site documented by Community – Continues.

As advised in the SLSN April Talon Newsletter this matter is continuing. The local community and members of SLSN affected, and/or concerned are monitoring the situation of the large Lake that has formed at the Moatfield site, and can be viewed at the end of Elizabeth Street. It is draining off through a forest cut swath through the natural habitat buffer into Sibbald Creek and

Sibbald Point Provincial Park to Lake Simcoe. With large rain events in the last three days concern about impact continues. The importation of fill onto the site remains an issue as well, as does the impact on significant and other wildlife in the area, falling out of our past O.M.B. Hearing “Minutes of Settlement” outstanding issues on this matter.

Paul Harpley

Greenbelt Review Approaching Final Changes: Make your conservation comment to the Provincial Government NOW!

There is Still Time!

Please use the summary below (copy) of planning initiatives we have advanced and had the Town of Georgina support to go to the Province of Ontario now!

***Copy and paste comments below to your submission**

Paul Harpley SLSN

We (SLSN) have been intimately involved in meetings, workshops, presentations and technical comment on the Greenbelt Plan in South Lake Simcoe and particularly in the Town of Georgina, for over 2 years. We have worked very hard to ensure the Town of Georgina has enacted our recommendations below as Policy.

SLSN Two key issues define our needed and recommended improvements,

Growing the Protected Area of the Greenbelt by Shrinking the Pefferlaw Secondary Plan Area in the Town of Georgina (thereby Growing the Protected Area of the Greenbelt in the Town of Georgina).

The Pefferlaw Secondary Plan Area should never have been as large as it is from 2005, when the first Greenbelt Plan was designated. It includes significant parts of three public York Regional Forests (Pefferlaw Tract, Cronsberry and Godfrey Tracts) and on a Provincial Nature Reserve (Duclous Point P.N.R.) other significant forests and wetlands and agricultural areas. This is particularly distressing in light of the Town of Georgina Council Meeting (May 13, 2015) of the proposed report 2015 PROVINCIAL CO-ORDINATED LAND USE PLANNING REVIEW- Report No. PB-2015-0026, (For Georgina Council Consideration May 13, 2015) and later to York Region recommending that the Pefferlaw Secondary Plan area be “Shrunk” (thereby Growing the Protected Area of the Greenbelt in the Town of Georgina). **The details of this Policy change is illustrated in Figure 1 attached for Town of Georgina Approved Report which has been submitted to the Province of Ontario “Comprehensive Review”.. The**

shrinking of the Pefferlaw Secondary Plan has been determined by consultants to be approaching 60 percent.

Urban Valleyland Designations (River Valley Connections) in the communities of Keswick, Sutton and Pefferlaw (Maskinonge River, Black River and Pefferlaw River) in northern York Region (Town of Georgina).

At this point none of the rivers north of the Oak Ridges Moraine are designated in the new Urban Valley Designations even though many of our rivers are degraded through very significant environmental challenges of phosphorus loading, invasive species, erosion, old institutional, municipal and industrial services and site constraints among other things. They are in need of new Policy, future rehabilitation, restoration and funding potential that this designation will hopefully in the future allow. This is particularly important for Georgina in relation to the **Lake Simcoe Act and Plan** moving forward.

Please move these initiatives forward for us as discussed in any way you can for their incorporation into the new Greenbelt Plan for Ontario.

This information above can be copied by SLSN members and pasted into the recent Environmental Defence web site Comment letter on the Greenbelt to Premier Kathleen Wynne and other Government officials.

Environmental Defence Petition:

http://action.environmentaldefence.ca/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=12028

and, or you can send an e-mail directly to Premier Wynne at Premier@ontario.ca

York Region Forest News

Saturday May 13

10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Spring Forest Festival

York Region Forest Hollidge Tract

16389 Highway 48, Whitchurch-Stouffville, Ontario

Hosted by York Region (The Regional Municipality of York)

Go to York Region Web site for more information.

Conservation News

At long last, an end to the snapping turtle hunt

BY ONTARIO NATURE

ON APRIL 3, 2017

IN CONSERVATION NEWS, REPTILE AND AMPHIBIAN ATLAS



Credit: Jory Mullen

It has been a long time coming. Alongside our members, supporters, member groups and partners, Ontario Nature spent years trying to convince the Government of Ontario to end the hunting of snapping turtles, a species at risk. And finally, on Friday March 31, the government announced its decision to terminate the hunt. This was the only correct decision in light of irrefutable scientific evidence that snapping turtles cannot be sustainably hunted. Taking just one or two adults from a population on a yearly basis will lead to decline.

We are truly grateful to those within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry who supported this science-based decision – from biologists and policy advisors right up to Minister Kathryn McGarry. Thanks to them, snapping turtles in Ontario now face one fewer threats to their long-term survival and recovery. The government’s decision sends a clear message to the public about the importance of protecting this at-risk species.

Above all, we owe a heart-felt thanks to the many organizations and individuals who have been tirelessly fighting to end the hunt since at least 2007. Eleven thousand people signed a petition to terminate the hunt back in 2012. Even more spoke out against a government proposal this year to continue the hunt, demanding instead that it be closed. This strong, steadfast alliance of concerned individuals and scientific experts – too numerous to name – has finally won the day.

It has been a collaborative journey of dogged determination, fueled by letters to ministers, petitions, reports, opinion editorials, action alerts, blogs and social media campaigns. When the going got tough, the fair and informed coverage by the press and by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario helped immensely to buoy weary spirits and keep the issue in the public eye.



Snapping turtle convoy; Credit: Scott Gillingwater

Thank goodness we never gave up. Thank goodness the government listened. Thank goodness for snapping turtles, those amazing, clunky, long-lived, prehistoric-looking creatures who play such a necessary role in our local ecosystems and whose very existence enriches the human experience in so many ways.

Anne Bell, Ontario Nature’s Director of Conservation and Education.



*Seize the conservation
opportunity, today*

Seize the opportunity of a generation

We have an unprecedented opportunity over the next three years to protect much more of Canada's land, freshwater and ocean.

We invite you to watch the video below to find out why now is such a critical time to support CPAWS work.



Minister of Environment commits to re-focusing Parks Canada on nature conservation!

Last month CPAWS welcomed an important speech by Minister of Environment and Climate Change Catherine McKenna to the Canadian Parks Conference in Banff. In it she

committed to re-focus Parks Canada on protecting the ecological integrity of our national parks.

Speak up now to protect wildlife in Jasper National Park

A new bike path may seem innocuous, but this one is anything but. The “Icefields Trail” project is a proposed \$86 million paved corridor stretching from the Town of Jasper to the Columbia Icefields through some of Jasper National Park’s most sensitive valley bottom wildlife habitat, including for an endangered caribou herd and three other species at risk. It would also run right through important grizzly bear habitat, posing significant risk to cyclists and bears. The bike path would just be the tip of the iceberg. Internal Parks Canada documents acknowledge there will quickly be pressure for more infrastructure to support the trail, like campgrounds, access roads and parking lots.

Public consultations on this proposal are happening right now. This is a great opportunity for you to call on the federal government to deliver on its promise to limit development in our national parks and re-focus on conserving nature by saying no to the damaging and expensive Icefields Trail proposal, and investing in conserving caribou and grizzly bears instead.

UN Report concludes Canada is failing to protect Wood Buffalo National Park

In a damning report released in March, a UNESCO World Heritage monitoring mission concluded Canada has failed to adequately protect the “Outstanding Universal Value” of Wood Buffalo National Park. The proposed Site C dam upstream on the Peace River in BC, oil sands development along the Athabasca River upstream of the park boundary in Alberta, and a lack of capacity and conservation focus in Parks Canada are all named as serious threats facing the park.

You can help make sure Canada acts on the report’s recommendations to protect the park and the people and wildlife who depend on it by writing to the Prime Minister and Premiers today.

Save the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

By Amy Janzwood Kitchener, Canada



Dear Catherine McKenna,

As you know, **the Great Lakes are a source of drinking water for 10 million people in Canada and provide support for nearly half of our nations' industrial capacity.** Moreover, the Great Lakes are the largest system of fresh, surface water on earth. As your Ministry has noted, **the Great Lakes' ecosystems and water quality have been severely devastated by pollution and other human activity.** Your Ministry has undertaken laudable measures to improve and protect the Great Lakes including support for identified Areas of Concern, enhanced research and monitoring capacity, and leadership and coordination of governance activities.

Restoring and protecting the Great Lakes is a joint responsibility and the **United States and Indigenous governments are essential partners.** That's why the federal government updated, in 2012, the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA), the purpose of which is "to restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the waters of the Great Lakes basin ecosystem."

The recent leak from the American federal government indicates that the **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)**—the federal program designed to accelerate restoration and protection of the Great Lakes—**could have its budget cut by 97 percent, from \$300 million to \$10 million.** These cuts would **directly threaten** the core objectives of the GLWQA. This is of utmost concern for Canada and your Ministry.

The GLWQA has provided to \$2.2 billion to 3,000 projects that align with the objectives that the International Joint Commission identified in 2012, including cleaning up Areas of Concern, managing invasive species, reducing nutrient runoff, and restoring habitats to protect endemic species. The proposed cuts to the GLRI would significantly undermine the progress and momentum gained in working towards the GLWQA's Lake Ecosystem and Substance Objectives.

I thus implore you to **make a recommendation on behalf of Canada**, through the GLWQA's International Joint Commission, that the **US maintain its commitments through the GLWQA and maintain funding to its core programs like the GLRI**. As called for by the Alternative Federal Budget, I also urge your government to allocate \$500 million to implement a comprehensive action plan to protect the Great Lakes in the 2017 federal budget. Communities around the Great Lakes need your leadership now more than ever.

Guelph chapter of the Council of Canadians to call on Liberal MP to protect waterways

Brent Patterson
March 18, 2017 - 11:03am



Speed River

The Council of Canadians Guelph chapter and allies will be calling on Liberal MP Lloyd Longfield to take action to protect lakes and rivers.

Guelph Today reports, "Next week, on Wednesday, Mar. 22, three organizations will come together and take a stand on the issue of water protection in Guelph and across Canada. The event is part of World Water Day. A crowd will gather in the park, 1765 Gordon St. (across the river from The Boathouse) at 4 p.m. Some words will be said at the gathering, a group photograph will be taken, and participants will be

asked to sign a message that will be delivered to Guelph MP Lloyd Longfield. The message is a demand for stronger federal water protection measures."

The article adds, "The Council of Canadians, Wellington Water Watchers, and the Guelph/Wellington Coalition for Social Justice are hosting the World Water Day gathering."

The photo will be taken at the confluence of the Speed and Eramosa rivers.

Event organizer Karen Rathwell says, "It's a photo snap and a quick message signing to send to Lloyd Longfield, to say we need the government to step up and protect those 99 per cent of our rivers and lakes that are now unprotected. It's a beautiful watershed and a beautiful water system, and we really need to step up to protect our fresh water in Ontario."

In December 2011, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers pushed for changes to the Navigable Waters Protection Act and the Fisheries Act in Canada (as well as a number of other Acts including the Species at Risk Act). By June 2012, federal oversight of pipelines and power lines were removed from the Navigable Waters Protection Act and by December 2012, the Navigable Waters Protection Act was changed to the Navigation Protection Act, significantly reducing its scope of rivers and lakes by delisting 31,000 lakes and 2.25 million rivers from federal oversight.

During the October 2015 federal election, Justin Trudeau stated, "Stephen Harper's changes to the Fisheries Act, and his elimination of the Navigable Waters Protection Act, have weakened environmental protections. We will review these changes, restore lost protections, and incorporate more modern safeguards."

But 17 months after taking office, the Liberals have not taken any real action on this file apart from various consultation processes.

Council of Canadians & 25 organizations ask Trudeau government for meeting on the Fisheries Act

Brent Patterson
February 7, 2017 - 4:34pm



Teztan Biny (Fish Lake), Tsilhqot'in Nation, British Columbia.

Council of Canadians chairperson Maude Barlow has signed on to a joint letter with twenty-five other organizations that calls on the Trudeau government to make good on its promise to restore and enhance the Fisheries Act.

The letter to the Minister of Fisheries Dominic LeBlanc states, "It is our understanding that the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans (FOPO) will release their report and recommendations by February 28, 2017. As conservation and environmental organizations, we would like to meet with you and senior staff following the release of the report to discuss the Committee's recommendations and next steps in the legislative amendment process."

Among numerous recommendations, the letter calls on the government to:

- "[Reinstate] strong, comprehensive fish habitat protection that applies to all fish across the country into the Fisheries Act. Specifically, we would like to see the Act state: 'No person shall carry on any work, undertaking or activity that results in the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat.'"
- "Restore protection of all native fish, not just those that form part of a commercial, recreational or Aboriginal fishery."
- "Designate key areas of essential fish habitat that cannot be destroyed or compensated."
- "Strengthen local habitat stewardship through shared decision making with First Nations, stakeholders, and affected communities."

The letter highlights, "The Fisheries Act should be viewed as an important piece of legislation towards achieving reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. A nation-to-nation process should be established to ensure that national and international commitments to uphold Indigenous rights are enshrined in a modernized Act."

And the letter concludes, "As mentioned, we would like to meet with you end of March or early April to discuss the FOPO Committee report and expand on some of the above and additional recommendations to truly modernize the Fisheries Act."

The letter was signed by numerous other organizations including the Canadian Environmental Law Association, ecojustice, the David Suzuki Foundation, Greenpeace, and the Skeena Wild Conservation Trust.
