The Talon

Vol. 32, No.1, January 2022



## NEWSLETTER COVID-19 edition #12

### SOUTH LAKE SIMCOE NATURALISTS

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

Telephone 905-722-8021 (www.slsnc.ca)

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

As members will recall the executive decided after last summer to continue our outings this past fall in the continuing international COVID-19 pandemic where Ontario was fortunately restriction free except masking, social distancing, and stepped-up public vaccination. On our planned outings waterfowl migrants were highlights on November 25 and December 9 in Brock township and Georgina respectively. The outings were well attended despite cold/ wet weather and resulted in some significant species documented.

Little did we know (though science specialists, W.H.O. and others had been warning) that more COVID-19 and specifically variants could be coming our way. In early November news began to arrive in Canada about the Omicron variant documentation in South Africa and its escape to other parts of the world, including Canada into late November and early December. As Christmas arrived infection in the province was rampant, and in early January we were back into another full-blown provincial lockdown, as Ontario infections skyrocketed, hospitals I.C.U.'s became overwhelmed, and deaths jumped to unheard of numbers. This has of course happened over much of the world as well.

Fortunately, we were able to undertake and complete the Annual Sutton Christmas Bird Count (official final report below), which members contributed to with full field coverage of local and farther afield birders observations.

Moving forward we plan to continue our SLSN Outings as we have had great response and involvement of members in outdoor activities which is of course expected of naturalists! We will continue to follow the advice and guidelines of provincial and municipal public health officials. Consequently, we have planned two winter outings detailed further on in the newsletter, amid some provincial limited re-openings and outdoor gathering numbers increasing occur.

P. Harpley

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## **Annual Sutton Christmas Bird Count Report**

## The 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Sutton Christmas Bird Count (C.B.C.) 2021-12-28 Report

The 35<sup>th</sup> annual Christmas Bird Count was Tuesday December 28, 2021 with a total of 52 observers tallying 10,295 individual birds of 57 species in the count area including York regions of Georgina, East Gwillimbury and northwest Uxbridge districts, and parts of south-east Simcoe County. The day started off fully overcast after 6:30 a.m. for those "owling" with a temperature of -1 degree Celsius. As the day progressed the temperature rose only slightly to 1 degree by late afternoon. Winds began from the west at 16 km./hour, changing to 24 from north-west at 10 a.m. then dropping to 6 by 4 p.m. from the east. The cyclonic change in the wind direction throughout the day was unusual in our experience over 34 years from previous count days. The sun only appeared briefly around 1 p.m. Lake Simcoe, and all rivers and streams were fully open of ice, including Cook's Bay, a rather rare condition from past counts.

A total of 57 species on the day (higher than most years), and 3 count week bird species were recorded. With only some snow lingering on the ground before the count, and seasonally warm temperature, it was noted by participants that some feeders were slow as birds were dispersed feeding on natural forest/field food.

Highlights and notables for the count day were American Black duck (2), Redhead (2), Redbreasted merganser (1), Hooded merganser (8), Sharp-shinned hawk (1), Cooper's hawk (2), Northern harrier (3), Merlin (1), Great Black-backed gull (7), Golden-crowned kinglet (1), Brown creeper (2), Horned lark (4), American robin (33), Northern mockingbird (1).

Despite the windy morning, and generally a "slow bird morning" for many species, the early owling experience was great for those out before first light confirming Barred owl (3), and Great Horned Owl (4). Throughout the day Snowy owl (6) were seen and documented.

Higher numbers were recorded for Bufflehead (78) and Common goldeneye (1266) on Lake Simcoe that on most past counts, with no lake ice formation. Bald eagle (17) was the highest number recorded in the 35 years of the count.

Three land birds of interest with high numbers were Black-capped chickadee (391), European starling (3,343) and American Tree sparrow (104). Our native chickadee is a winter friend to everyone and amazingly despite its small size can withstand our coldest winter weather and thrive, and this year was a high number of them in the forests. European starlings an introduced species to North America, are derived from 2 introductions in New York City, 60 birds, 1890, and 40 birds, 1891. They have spread to the Pacific coast and up into central Canada, are an introduced/naturalized species often considered invasive that continues to thrive everywhere including our area. Tree sparrows this year were easy to find, often at feeders signifying the continuing warm temperatures, whereas on count days of cold weather many of them linger longer and feed here preparing for flying south before the deep winter sets in.

Two bird species expected on count day but not seen, though documented for count week were Ruffed grouse (2) and Pileated woodpecker (1). A significant surprise was the third count week species, Evening grosbeak (33) in one flock two days before the count, at the feeder of Loes and Hans Pape near Elmgrove. This event is representative of an echo flight (from 2019/2020 large irruption) of these grosbeaks out of the boreal forest to the south, looking for good quality native spruce and hemlock seed but also raiding feeders particularly with black oil sunflower seed.

A year ago, in 2020 the Sutton C.B.C. count date marked the Ontario COVID-19 alpha-beta variants hard Lockdown under Emergency Orders where inter-regional travel was restricted. The Sutton count was condensed to local birders and feeder watchers in support of health and safety considerations. Still, 50 species were documented on count day 2020.

Thanks to all field birders and feeder watchers who participated in the count.

### Paul and Debra Harpley



Photo-detail: Black-capped chickadee, Nicky Krayn, 2021 Sutton CBC



Photo-detail: Evening grosbeak, Loes and Hans Pape, 2021 Sutton CBC

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## **Outing Reports**

### November 25, 2021 Outing

Members met at the hamlet of Virginia area and drove north of the Port Bolster area to begin birding Lake Simcoe and beach and forest/field areas near the lake and up the east coast. At the Thorah Park great views of the lake were had. Large groups of Canada geese on the water and flying over honking were memorable, as was the Lesser and Greater scaup on the lake in small flotillas. Proceeding north an occasional forest was watched along the railway line (the habitat remaining from the entire area private cottage properties and expansion of development of houses on the east side of the shore road).

Up at Beaverton area rain was first threatening at the sewage lagoons upgraded access trail areas. Here we realized was a potential future exploration site. Proceeding to the Beaver River mouth and Beaverton Beach, gulls, waterfowl, and other water birds were seen. A highlight was seeing close-up six (6) Double-crested cormorants looking across the river to them on the far shore where they could be photographed. A conversation about the recent Ontario Government changes to hunting regulations increasing daily numbers of these birds that can be shot, was had by birders.



SLSN members at Beaver River mouth and Beaverton Beach

Moving north up the Brock township coast a birding tour of a mature forest patch surrounded by muck soil soft vegetable farming was productive adding Black-capped chickadees, Mourning doves and a Blue jay. A highlight was a roadside Red-tailed hawk seen closely. It landed on an old the top of a relatively low service pole. Finally, with rain threatening, the group headed north to Centennial Park near Lock 41 at Gamebridge area. Members saw more water birds including scaup, Bonaparte's gull, and a single Bald eagle hunting fish out in the Lake in the considerable surf from increasing wind. The weather turned cold and the rain came. Taking a break for lunch in our cars, some of us headed north-east to the south-west area of the Carden plain, but with rain intensifying the trip ended.

### **Species summary**

D.C. cormorant-9 C. n	merganser – 2 💢 🗸	Am. Goldeneye – 3	33 L.	Scaup - 12
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G. Scaup – 8 Great B-B gull – 1 R-B gull Bonaparte's Gull – 22

Bald eagle – 1 Red-tailed hawk – 1 Blue jay – 1 Black-c. chickadee – 4

Wild turkey – 19 Raven - 3



Double-crested cormorants on shoreline at Ethel Park, Beaverton.

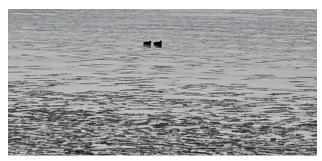
### December 9, 2021 Outing

The early day began seasonally cold meeting in the hamlet of Virginia. The temperature was a bit of a shock as this cold morning had been preceded by some snow the day before, in a relatively warm late fall. We were undertaking our annual SLSN Georgina lakeshore late fall migrants birding survey, with an eye to thinking about scouting for the upcoming Sutton Christmas Bird Count. Ice had quickly formed at the lakeshore, and snow on the ground at Virginia Beach as we got out of cars in a couple of areas and walked wharfs and beach areas. Many Canada geese were seen on the water from the docks and there were more to come later in the morning farther to the east. A few Ravens were seen and heard here, as were Herring gulls. Six (6) cormorants flew low across the lake north toward Georgina Island.

The birders proceeded east by car to Sunkist and McRae Beaches at the Duclos Point area. A group of eleven (11) Purple finch were spotted in some trees at a cottage property at the dead

end at McRae. Participants were able to see their distinctive red colouration well, and more water birds were seen at these locations and added to our list for the day.

Limited access to the lake at Port Bolster with private property cottages and houses makes birding opportunities somewhat limited. Stopping at the few small parks and ends of local roads did result in some more water birds including Lesser and Greater scaup and a few Lesser and Greater Black-backed gulls. The highlight of the day was when the group made our last stop driving down a dead-end street (Port St.) overlooking the lake. There in amongst the ice we saw two (2) American coots, assumed a pair. We all got a good look at these small water birds, all black in colour with a distinctive chubby look, and a large unusual white bill. In spring/summer these marsh birds are very secretive and hard to find. They are usually long gone south by December from our area. In the spotting scope the birds were easily seen. They did not fly away and remained after we left. This was a very good SLSN bird record.



Pair of American coots, on Lake Simcoe in ice-water

### Cell phone photo documentation

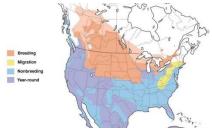


Detail, coots - cell phone photo

### **Species summary**

Canada geese – 325	Mallard – 6	Am. Goldeney	e-8 Hoo	oded merganser – 9	American coot-2
D.B. cormorant – 6	L. scaup – 9	G. scaup - 20	Greater E	Black-backed gull – 2	Lesser B-b gull - 2
Herring gull – 151	Ring-b gull – 2	Raven – 5 C	. Crow – 1	Red-tailed hawk – :	1 Blue Jay – 1
Mourning dove – 12	Rock dove – 1				

Figure-American coot range. Bird Watching H.Q.



Map showing breeding, migration, winter range.

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# Some other December bird observations and photographs by SLSN members





American Kestrel, Irving Himel photo 2021-12-27

Snowy owl, Irving Himel photo 2021-12-27



American goldfinch, SLSN member Heather MacKay photo Joe Seara 2022-01-01



Bald eagle 2022-01-09 Heather McKay, Jackson's Point, detail cropped photo



Irving Himel, Waking up to Swans on Lake Simcoe, 2022-01-04

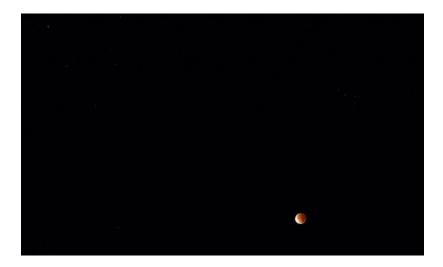
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Outings: All SLSN regular outings are available – Note: Paid-up members in good standing only may participate (for insurance compliance). Provincial and municipal COVID-19 restrictions and safety protocols in effect. Phone 905-722-8021 or 905-476-4747 for more details.

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SLSN member jeff Boylin took these fantastic photos of the partial Lunar eclipse that happened November 18 and 19, 2021.





Background information on the partial solar eclipse.

### **Earth Sky**

# Deep partial lunar eclipse November 18-19: Great for North America

### November 18, 2021



For us in North America, the partial lunar eclipse will take place overnight on November 18, and in the early morning on November 19, 2021. The moon will be high in North American skies, shifting toward the west. In this illustration, the times are in EST. Mid-eclipse will be at about 4 a.m. EST, 3 a.m. CST, 1 a.m. PST, etc. Precise time of mid-eclipse is 9:03 <u>UTC</u>. But watch the creeping shadow on the moon's disk for an hour or so before that time, too! In this illustration, the white disks represent partially eclipsed moons. The maroon disk represents the moon at greatest eclipse, 97% covered by the Earth's dark <u>umbral</u> shadow. Watch for the dipper-shaped <u>Pleiades</u> star cluster near the eclipsed moon. Chart by <u>John Jardine Goss</u>

## Partial lunar eclipse

A deep partial lunar eclipse will darken the moon for much of the globe on November 19, 2021 (overnight on November 18 for North America). Most locations will see up to 97% of the moon slip into Earth's shadow. North America has the best location to see the entirety of the eclipse. Find maps and timing for the eclipse below. In some cases, the times are in <a href="UTC">UTC</a> and you must <a href="convert">convert</a>.

This is an exceptionally deep partial eclipse with an *umbral eclipse magnitude* of 0.9742. In other words, 97% of the moon will be covered by Earth's <u>dark umbral shadow</u>. With a just thin sliver of the moon exposed to direct sun at maximum eclipse, the rest of the moon should take on the characteristically ruddy colors of a total lunar eclipse.

More information: <a href="https://earthsky.org/astronomy-essentials/partial-lunar-eclipse-november-19-2021/#:~:text=A%20deep%20partial%20lunar%20eclipse,the%20entirety%20of%20the%20eclipse.">https://earthsky.org/astronomy-essentials/partial-lunar-eclipse-november-19-2021/#:~:text=A%20deep%20partial%20lunar%20eclipse,the%20entirety%20of%20the%20eclipse.

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## **Plastic Issue Update**

The South Lake Simcoe Naturalists have followed and educated members and the broader community regarding the serious Plastic issue locally and internationally. It is an issue all of us can take action on every day in our personal lives. Some recent important information is below.

2021-01-10

### York Media

Protecting the environment should be everyone's 2022 resolution

Cutting down our use of plastics must be a top priority, writes Beverley Golden

Beverley Golden YorkRegion.com Wednesday, January 5, 2022

Each new year offers an opportunity to make resolutions for what we want to accomplish.

It's interesting that health and weight loss are consistently the <u>top resolutions</u>, yet a majority of people are not actually successful, committing to the same resolutions year after year.

As I walked my dog on a recycling day in my neighbourhood, I wondered if we would see permanent, effective changes for the better, if the environment could become our top collective resolution.

That walk had me questioning what it will take for people to recycle properly, or if people even know current recycling dos and don'ts.

After seeing containers with food particles still stuck to them, paint cans and everything in between, I wondered if we are winning or losing the battle on recycling. And why do some homes still have seemingly hundreds of single-use plastic water bottles filling their recycling bins?

#### Plastics in the news in 2021

Perhaps our biggest win happened last May, when Canada added manufactured plastic items to the <u>toxic list</u> under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act and proposed a <u>ban of six singleuse plastic items</u>. Although the ban was to take effect by the end of 2021, the government has delayed its implementation until 2022 with a troubling loophole that still allows export of these products.

Have your say during the 70-day public comment period (ending March 5), to comment on the proposed Single-Use Plastics Prohibition Regulations.

### Next steps on plastics

Although it's a step forward, our government needs to implement even stronger regulations on plastics. Ultimately, consumers can only do so much through their recycling efforts.

Canada needs to expand the ban list to include a thorough list of non-essential problematic plastics and disposable plastic items.

More information: <a href="https://www.yorkregion.com/opinion-story/10547945-protecting-the-environment-should-be-everyone-s-2022-">https://www.yorkregion.com/opinion-story/10547945-protecting-the-environment-should-be-everyone-s-2022-</a>

resolution/?s=n1?source=newsletter&utm\_content=a04&utm\_source=ml\_nl&utm\_medium=email&utm\_email=6EA0E815B8FFE40A55C58C2297DE34C8&utm\_campaign=yrop\_115603

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## **Oceans and Plastic**

2022-01-19

### **Greenpeace Canada**

## **Global Ocean Treaty U.N.**

We asked you to call on Canada and other global governments to finalize a strong Global Ocean Treaty at the UN this March.

We're going to be releasing lots of crucial updates about this campaign in the lead-up to the UN meeting set to begin on March 8th

Sarah

Head of Oceans & Plastics Campaign, Greenpeace Canada

More Information: https://www.greenpeace.org/canada/en/tag/plastic/

## **Environmental Issues information and links:**

2022-01-20

### **Environmental Defence**

# OTTAWA WANTS TO DELAY BANS OF HARMFUL SINGLE-USE PLASTICS BY TWO YEARS

The federal government finally released draft regulations to ban six single-use plastic items. Unfortunately, as it stands, the regulations wouldn't rid Canada of these items until sometime in 2024. An absurd timeline that undermines the government's own promises to ban problematic plastic packaging and products as of 2021, and rid Canada of plastic waste by 2030.

More information: https://environmentaldefence.ca/2022/01/12/ban-plastics-now/

**Plastic Pollution** 

# **Government Must Ban Harmful Single-Use Plastics Now, Not in Two Years**

2022-01-12

**Karen Wirsig** 

Plastics Program Manager

The government finally posted draft regulations to ban six single-use plastics over the holidays. Unfortunately there's a catch. As written, the regulations wouldn't rid Canada of the harmful products until sometime in 2024 at the earliest, an absurd timeline that undermines the government's own promises to reign in plastic pollution.



99% of flexible plastics in Canada end up in landfills, incinerators, or the environment.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau had vowed to ban problematic plastic packaging and products, including bags, straws, cutlery and takeout containers, "as of 2021." He missed that deadline but must modify the draft regulations to ensure these products are no longer made or sold in Canada before the end of this year.

What's more, the draft regulations only address import and sale in Canada, ignoring the fact that plastic pollution is a global problem. Canadian companies would still be able to make the damaging products for export, where they would pollute local environments and harm wildlife elsewhere – and even find their way back onto Canadian shores. The final regulations must not allow this loophole.

The public can comment on the draft regulations until March 5, 2022. The final regulations will be posted (hopefully very soon) after that. We'll be combing through the details to give comprehensive feedback and also pointers for supporters to submit their own response shortly.

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2022-01-16

### **NGF** Alliance

# When will the Maple Lake Estates lands be transferred to the Conservation Authority?

On June 16, 2021, Caroline Mulroney announced that the Maple Lake Estates lands would be transferred to the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) to create an 890-acre publicly owned nature reserve in the North Gwillimbury Forest.

Unfortunately, the land transfer from the DG Group to the LSRCA has still not occurred.

### What you can do

Please contact Caroline Mulroney and ask her to ensure that the land transfer occurs before the upcoming provincial election in June.

Email the minister at Caroline.Mulroneyco@pc.ola.org

Jack Gibbons Chair, North Gwillimbury Forest Alliance

## **Bradford By-Pass - Petition to the House of Commons**

This is to inform you that petition e-3766 is authorized for online publication, <u>has been published and is open for signature</u>.

Link: https://petitions.ourcommons.ca/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-3766

Please do not reply to this email. If you have questions about the e-petition process or encounter technical problems, please contact the Clerk of Petitions at <a href="mailto:PMB-AED@parl.gc.ca">PMB-AED@parl.gc.ca</a> or at 613-992-9511.

e-3766 (Environment)

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## **Just Recovery Simcoe.ca**

Join former Ontario Environmental Commissioner, Gord Miller, and Ecojustice environmental lawyer, Laura Bowman, for a discussion about the **Bradford Bypass aka "Holland Marsh Highway".**This webinar will also feature a call to action phone zap led by Margaret Prophet, Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition. Hosted by Just Recovery Simcoe and Community Health Climate Action Initiative.

Time: January 27, 2022 07:00 PM in Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Webinar ID

868 5292 7177 To register for the Webinar

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\_rs1vzHgMSX-U4kLBYDwpmw

Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device

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2022-01-20

### **David Suzuki Foundation**

## Take two minutes to sign this and protect at-risk caribou

I have, shall we say, an obsession with caribou. I've been advocating for them for almost 20 years. I talk about them whenever I can (sorry fam!). It's not just because they're gorgeous and important to ecosystems, but because they're in trouble.

**Boreal woodland caribou are at risk across Canada**, including in Ontario, where habitat loss and fragmentation threaten their future.

Don't take my word for it. The latest <u>auditor general report</u> criticizes Ontario's mismanagement of the recovery of species at risk, including boreal caribou.

In fact, **the province just missed a November 2021 deadline** that Canada gave it to strengthen caribou recovery measures.

Instead, Ontario has gutted its Endangered Species Act, granted the logging industry an ESA exemption and produced plans to double logging in the province.

Tell the feds: Intervene to protect caribou in Ontario

# **COP 26: United Nations Conference of the Parties - Reports**

SLSN as an organization have been involved long-term in research, education and informing members and the public aware of the science of Climate Change for many years.

2021-11-01

### Live Science

Major climate conference in Glasgow. Pre- Conference Context, as a primer to actual actions coming out of the Conference for SLSN members.

By Stephanie Pappas 1 day ago



A giant sand artwork adorns New Brighton Beach to highlight global warming and the forthcoming COP26 global climate conference being held in November in Glasgow. (Image credit: Christopher Furlong/Getty Images)

The United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) begins Sunday (Oct. 31) in Glasgow, and the outcome may determine whether the world moves closer to a net-zero carbon economy by 2050.

The climate conference will bring together delegates from around the world to discuss their plans for reducing emissions and limiting <u>climate change</u>. The key question is whether nations will expand their commitment to the <u>Paris Agreement</u>, an international plan set in 2015 that aims to keep global warming below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above preindustrial levels, and preferably below 1.5 C (2.7 F) by 2100.

Though 197 parties to the 2015 conference agreed to the Paris Agreement, commitments by nations to reduce emissions are not sufficient to stabilize the climate below 1.5 C. Climate scientists say that to reach this goal, the globe would need to rapidly shelve fossil fuels as an energy source, achieving a 45% reduction over 2010 levels by 2030 and hitting net zero in 2050. Politicians within member nations have not always been as committed as the original signers of the agreement: In 2019, the United States exited the Paris Agreement under President Donald Trump, Live Science reported. President Joe Biden re-committed to the agreement upon taking office in 2021.

Related: 10 Signs Earth's climate is off the rails

The goals of COP26, according to the organizers, are to get countries to agree to plans for ambitious reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030; to work together to support adaptation to climate change that has already occurred; to mobilize developed countries to provide \$100 billion in climate finance per year for investment in global net zero, meaning the amount of emissions we produce is no more than the amount removed by the atmosphere. The final goal would be to finalize the Paris Rulebook, the step-by-step guide on reaching the Paris Agreement.

The COP meeting happens every year (this year's is the 26th ever). But eyes are on this year's conference: As part of the Paris Agreement, countries agreed to provide an update every five years on their highest ambitions for reducing emissions. That should have occurred in 2020, but that year's COP meeting was delayed by the coronavirus <u>pandemic</u>. Thus, those updates will occur in Glasgow this year.

All countries are also asked to provide an "Adaptation Communication," which will outline the challenges that each faces in adapting to a changing climate, and what they plan to do to overcome those hurdles.

Nations, especially developed nations, will also be asked to put their money where their mouth is. The Paris Agreement committed developed countries to raising \$100 billion each year to help developing countries finance their climate goals. According to the intergovernmental Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), developed nations provided a joint total of \$78.9 billion in financing in 2018.

The delegates to COP26 will also attempt to finalize the Paris Rulebook, much of which was formally adopted in 2018 at the UN COP24 conference in Poland. But there are still a few outstanding guidelines at play. One of the most crucial outstanding issues is that countries still need to agree upon how to ensure that emissions reductions aren't double-counted. Part of the structure underpinning the Paris Agreement is carbon markets: Countries or companies that have a hard time reducing emissions, like airlines, can buy emissions credits from companies that are more capable of reducing emissions. This should create a balance that keeps overall emissions low.

More Information: <a href="https://www.livescience.com/cop26-glasgow-climate-conference?utm\_source=SmartBrief&utm\_medium=email&utm\_campaign=368B3745-DDE0-4A69-A2E8-62503D85375D&utm\_content=943803A8-905B-4FDB-9457-1EFE7057FCFC&utm\_term=3c30b0b9-105e-4eaa-aadd-1cf345de8be1</a>

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## **COP 26 KEY RESULTS Reports**

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2021-11-04

### **Quartz News**

More than 40 countries pledged to quit coal at COP26.

Some of the world's biggest coal-dependent countries, including Australia, India, China, and the US, did not sign up to end their use of the dirtiest fossil fuel. Separately, more than 20 countries and financial institutions have decided to stop financing fossil fuel development abroad from next year. Instead they'll divert the spending to green initiatives, generating an estimated \$8 billion a year around the world for clean energy.

More information: https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-59159018

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## **New Focus on Methane Emissions**

2021-11-03

### **New Scientist Daily**

### **COP 26: Methane Cuts**

More than a hundred countries including the US, Japan and Canada have pledged a significant cut this decade on emissions of methane, the short-lived but powerful greenhouse gas. The Global Methane Pledge announced at COP26 in Glasgow today commits signatories to reducing emissions 30 per cent by 2030, compared to 2020 levels. The US government also published a detailed blueprint of how it intends to meet the goal. While international climate summits usually focus mostly on carbon dioxide (CO2), the dominant driver of the 1.1°C of global warming that has occured since pre-industrial levels, the new initiative puts the spotlight on methane (CH4) leaking from oil and gas wells, pipelines and other fossil fuel infrastructure. Methane is responsible for about 30 per cent of global warming to date, and atmospheric concentrations of the gas have surged since 2007, sparking concern from scientists.

**More information:** <a href="https://www.newscientist.com/article/2295810-cop26-105-countries-pledge-to-cut-methane-emissions-by-30-per-methan

cent/?utm source=nsday&utm medium=email&utm campaign=NSDAY 031121

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## **Coffee Bird Friendly and Climate Change perspective**

## Article recommended by SLSN member Sheila Maxwell

2022-01-24

### Birds and Beans / Warblers

Drinking what we love: the link between birds and coffee

When it comes to coffee and birds there's a surprising amount we can learn. Many of our beloved migrant birds spend their winters in southern climes. In coffee plantations in fact. Shade-grown, organic, fair-trade, and bird-friendly coffee – what's up with all the certifications? What difference does it make if my coffee is certified bird-friendly?

Dr. Ana Gonzalez grew up among the coffee plantations of Colombia and is now living in Canada. Ana tells us about her work and the important role coffee plays in the lives of many bird species that are in trouble. And the role we can play in helping them.

Research and conservation actions by Ana and collaborators have been supported by Environment and Climate Change Canada, Selva, Birds Canada, University of Saskatchewan, Nature Canada, Selva and other local partners.

### More information:

https://podcasts.google.com/feed/aHR0cHM6Ly9mZWVkcy5idXp6c3Byb3V0LmNvbS8xNzg0MjY5LnJzcw/episode/QnV6enNwcm91dC05Njc0NTYy?ep=14

Friendly Day by Kevin MacLeod is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 license. https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Source: http://incompetech.com/music/royalty-free/index.html?isrc=USUAN1100223

Artist: http://incompetech.com/

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2021-04-19

### **New Scientist**

### 'Lost' coffee plant can resist climate change and tastes just as good

**ENVIRONMENT** \_2021-04-19

By Ibrahim Sawal



Coffea stenophylla plant E. Couturon, IRD

A rare species of coffee has been found to have a similar flavour to the varieties favoured by coffee growers for their high quality — but it is also more tolerant of the higher temperatures and more varied rainfall that are becoming increasingly typical of coffee-growing regions.

Many types of coffees favoured for their taste only grow in a narrow range of conditions, meaning they might not survive if temperatures increase. In fact, around 60 per cent of wild coffee species are facing extinction.

Coffea stenophylla may offer a solution. Farmers stopped cultivating ...

More information: <a href="https://www.newscientist.com/article/2274931-lost-coffee-plant-can-resist-climate-change-and-tastes-just-as-change-and-tastes-as-change-an

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## **SLSN Response to Key Planning and Conservation Issues**

SLSN Letter/Report of Regarding York Region Council Meeting
Decision on Growth Plan 2051 - SLSN have over many years made
comment on Regional and Municipal Official and Secondary Plans and Provincial
Policy initiatives. The recent York Region Growth Plan our organization, like
many others advised of priorities in intensification, retention of Greenbelt and
White Belt lands from development among other initiatives. In spite of a
groundswell of opposition in the region against sprawl development Regional
Council voted to proceed in that direction.

### **SOUTH LAKE SIMCOE NATURALISTS**

SLSN is a Not-for-profit Member of Ontario Nature.

Post Office Box 1044 Sutton West, Ontario, L0E 1R0 (<u>www.slsnc.ca</u>)

Research Partner with The Zephyr Society of Lake Simcoe (<u>www.zephyrsociety.ca</u>)

### York Region Chair and Council

Report Submission to York Region Council Special Meeting, October 21, 2021

2021-10-20

### **Executive Summary**

The South Lake Simcoe Naturalists (SLSN) believes York Region should be accommodating at minimum of 60% of projected demand for new homes and workplaces within existing built-up areas (the intensification rate), and we concur with York Region Report Alternate 2051 Forecast and Land Needs Assessment Scenarios in Response to Consultation, alternative forecast scenario 4. Although Regional staff have clearly identified the obvious economic, social and particularly environmental benefits of this scenario, their recommendations to Council fall short and are not in our opinion of sufficient justification. It is the role of Council to push the envelope of creative thinking with their decision in our opinion, as responses to recent pandemic has all shown us. The Region should also be developing its existing designated greenfield area densities no less than the 80 residents and jobs per hectare as previously in 2017 prescribed under the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

With regard to intensification, there should be zero settlement area boundary expansions for 10 years. There is demonstrably much land for infill in York Region as has been repeatedly demonstrated by the Neptis Foundation and others. By prioritization of these lands for this development, where servicing already exists, York Region to undertake meaningful, and planned Environmental Assessments for upgrades and servicing without settlement area boundary expansions in the sensitive Lake Simcoe watershed area of the Region, which is our primary concern. It is expected this strategy would result in more transit-supportive communities, not prioritize York's clear need for affordable housing, and not adequately conserve more farmland and natural areas for future generations. New and innovative ideas are needed now. It is also concerning that only now, yesterday Bill 5, York Region Wastewater Act passed second reading, has the overall future servicing of Upper York Region been decided after

years of protracted and financially wasteful undertakings and decision. More time and work is needed to proceed with a final Growth Plan to 2051 before decisions are rendered on the issues above.

No matter what, protect the currently delineated Greenbelt area (protected countryside) and the Oak Ridges Moraine lands in perpetuity. We believe we need solid ground-breaking leadership at the political level by York Region Council at this time, not the same old sprawl subdivisions apparently still proposed by many development interests. Objective and rigorous academic gaze and review of intensification development scenarios presented must happen before decisions are made. Concepts like Degrowth (examples especially from Europe), and in the Countryside landscape new restoration, Rivers focus of mitigation of development and restoration of natural features and functions ahead of development and developer proposals across the landscape, ReWilding concepts, science informed landscape ecology principled planning, and detailed Climate modelling geographically focused and informed across the Region.

### Response to YR Council Reports

SLSN recognize the significant challenges of the population increase directed by the province for an increase by the province for 2.2 million people to the 30-year, 2051 horizon for York Region. Given what has been characterized by many as a considerably short timeframe to produce reports at this time for politicians, we commend them for their efforts. However, we warn and caution the necessarily surficial nature of analysis and recommendations of growth projections and density scenarios are problematic. Our organization's members are concerned about impacts on the complex natural areas, the landscape of human cultural communities, and their interrelationships. We think much more detailed work of reconnaissance, data collection, human social science survey investigation and analysis, mapping, overlay studies etc., would better characterize community-informed opinion on scenarios presented. Community concern exists regarding the real future constraints and emerging concerns, a few of which we have listed below.

A necessary rigorous and defensible Regional Climate Plan that is geographically specific to the Growth Plan proposed to existing urban and exurban (White Belt areas) must be community comprehensive and part of this exercise now, so that Regional Council, municipal Councils and the broader York Region constituent communities have input and community confidence of environmental integrity of what is actually being done to mitigate this proposed considerable growth projected and landscape upheaval expected to 2051.

First Principal, no matter what, protect the currently delineated Greenbelt area (protected countryside) and the Oak Ridges Moraine lands. As detailed by regional staff, and I understand steadfastly supported by the current provincial government, these unique landscapes and natural/cultural community places will be invaluable natural, farmland/foodlands and rural communities in 75, 100 years and beyond. Their conserved value will be really obvious in the future.

### **Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine Protection:**

Our organization was involved in community movements, consultations, and submissions to three levels of government over the past decades, and I have never received more impassioned advocacy in our members for full continuing conservation of these Provincially identified and protected planning units. As senior regional staff in York Region Report regarding Alternative 2051 Forecast and Land Needs Assessment Scenarios in Response to Consultation have details; Provincial Policy prohibits Urban Expansion into the Protected Countryside of the Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine Plan areas. Similarly, the current Provincial Government of Doug Ford has been very clear publicly, that they will continue to protect these areas.

The Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine protect the headwaters creeks and streams, and entire reaches of our three main rivers in South Lake Simcoe the Pefferlaw, Black and Maskinonge. We have further implored the Ontario Provincial Government for years in past consultations to designate their urban reaches in Pefferlaw, Sutton and Keswick, including the recent "Growing the Greenbelt" consultation "Urban River Valley designation". This

York Region Growth projection to 2051 in the northern part, our support of Greenbelt protection, in which much of the geographic area of our membership is located is summarized recently by the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance which we support.

The Greenbelt is a broad band of permanently protected land which:

- Protects against the loss and fragmentation of the agricultural land base and supports agriculture as the predominant land use.
- Gives permanent protection to the natural heritage and water resource systems that sustain ecological and human health and that form the environmental framework around which major urbanization in south-central Ontario will be organized.
- Provides for a diverse range of economic and social activities associated with rural communities, agriculture, tourism, recreation, and resource uses; and

Concomitant with the 2051 Growth Plan must be a Re-Wilding Plan for York Region (should be for the entire G.T.A.). Previously we recommended this action more than a decade ago as a stakeholder organization in the development of the Lake Simcoe Act and Plan process undertaken by the Province of Ontario at that time. Our organization and other community groups were able to undertake projects in this regard. Fortunately, much of this work occurred through the Federal Lake Simcoe Clean-Up Fund (LSCUF) whereby significant project monies and Environment Canada staff resources were brought to reducing phosphorus in non-point source and point source circumstances through community and agency engagement and research. Projects were designed, undertaken, and completed in this program for almost a decade, and much important on-the-ground restoration and research projects addressing then-current priority actions to many landscapes water filtration, natural areas connection, and specifically phosphorus loading reduction in the Lake Simcoe watershed. This York Region Growth Plan for the future should have a focus in these Lake Simcoe health, long-term sustainability planning of development in these scenario documents politicians are expected to vote on.

In 2020, as part of the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People "The Peoples Summit" <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wb5xsKTFDcl&ab\_channel=WildlandsLeague">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wb5xsKTFDcl&ab\_channel=WildlandsLeague</a>, Canada committed to protecting 25 % of its lands and waters by 2025 and 30 % by 2030. These new targets reflect the urgent need to make peace with nature and stem the accelerating loss of biodiversity worldwide, and evolving climate change impacts. While the Government of Ontario announced in April 2021 its intention to expand the province's protected areas, it was silent on the new collective targets. Currently, less than 11 % of Ontario is protected. We can and must do better!

With this 2051 Growth Plan a redoubling of all these resources above, and more to mitigate and manage natural and cultural historic landscapes of Provincial funding due to new orders of magnitude population numbers increasing across the Region, being planned now. International emerging concepts of future planning change and social and cultural societal changes like Degrowth and related in the academic literature, should inform ideas in this Growth planning to 2051 and beyond. SLSN advise additional to reinstating the LSCUF, that Federal resources again be aggressively sought by all three levels of Ontario (Municipal, Regional and Provincial political forums) and agencies, to immediately plan and undertake this growth process. The focus of Rivers is timely as Environment and Climate Change Canada has recently announced a Canada Water Agency in a process of wide-ranging consultations across the country. York Region and other G.T.A. and the Golden Horseshoe would do well to bring in resources to their Growth Plan development especially as regards the future health of Lake Simcoe.

As always SLSN remain interested and available for further positive consultation within the limitations of our resources.

Paul Harpley BSc. (Hons.) M.A.

**President**, South Lake Simcoe Naturalists, Ontario Nature **Director**, The Zephyr Society of Lake Simcoe Organization

## **Proposed Pefferlaw Aerodrome**

### **SLSN Comments**

### SOUTH LAKE SIMCOE NATURALISTS

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2021-12-22

Company Representative: New Aerodrome Ontario 2021

Attention: Mr. Mauro Marchioni

comment@NewAerodromeOntario2021.ca

Dear Sir:

### **Context:**

It is great trepidation I write this letter to you with regard to your proposed Aerodrome project a fast-emerging threat to the natural and cultural heritage of the Town of Georgina, the Ontario Greenbelt and Lake Simcoe. Rather than professionally undertaking a community-based planning process with the local municipality politicians, and our local federal M.P. Scot Davidson, all declared unanimously opposed to your project. The local M.P.P. representing the Province of Ontario appears also not to be involved. The way your planning has been undertaken, and the scale of bad will you have generated with everyone involved, especially the local community people is despicable. We offer just three of many local media references, facebook comments and e-mails etc. regarding your lack of transparency, concerns about fill dumping and obvious lack of this conduct documented for all to see in the Town of Georgina Virtual Council Meeting the evening of 2021-12-15. Previous to this, and according to the local newspaper "the Georgina Post" articles below, a continuing concerning behaviour. Our membership is incredulous in their lack of respect of your actions to this point in this regard.

We provide science and community comments below, but under protest of your above documented actions to this point in this matter, and demonstratable poor planning, and thereby threatening the health of Lake Simcoe! I became aware of your project only recently from conversation and protestation of members of our organization.

Contrary to your stated understanding of your project in the Town of Georgina Virtual Council Meeting 2021-12-15, its implementation in our view at this point regards the fearful destructive fate of a very important natural heritage area and wildlife refugia, water resource stream headwater and groundwater area in the protected countryside of the Ontario Greenbelt. Nothing we have seen or heard to this point from you gives us any confidence otherwise. Given the lack of details (only basic information and a very conceptual map on an inconspicuous sign on the north side of Old Homestead Road) that we have not had reference to interrogate, the short community notice and short time to prepare comment, we relate concerns below. They can only be

speculative as we have nothing scientific or otherwise to review and comment on from you. They are necessarily basic and provisional for the reasons listed above. Much more and will be said going forward if necessary.

#### **Initial Technical Concerns:**

### Planning:

We reference the Town of Georgina Official Plan (2016) Section 2.2.3- Natural Environment Guiding Principle, reads as follows: The preservation, protection, enhancement and support of the natural heritage and hydrologic features, functions, attributes and interconnections of the natural environment is essential in order to maintain a sustainable ecosystem, not only to provide a healthy environment. We have seen no substantive reporting or documentation that any of these standards will be met by your proposed project, and therefore cannot support it.

Indeed, your proposed project is contrary to, or in conflict with, the Official Plan's Vision statement, the Natural Heritage Guiding Principle, the Rural and Agricultural Areas Guiding Principle, the Agricultural Area designation and Environmental Protection Area designation policies, and the Airports and Aerodrome policies (pointed out in Town of Georgina Report, Interoffice Memorandum, Dec. 3, 2021, Agenda item letter, Town of Georgina Meeting, 2021-12-15). We are of the same opinion as the Town of Georgina in this regard and are fully therefore opposed to your proposed project as minimally presented at this point.

In this same Town of Georgina municipal report, clearly documented is your project's non-compliance to other basic landuse planning directives and standards in this province, as far as we are aware from apparent lack of transparency and fair notice.

"The subject properties are designated a combination of Agricultural Protection Area (APA) and Environmental Protection Area (EPA) in the Town's Official Plan. All of the subject properties are subject to the Greenlands System Overlay (refer to Attachment 6, in the Town of Georgina Meeting Agenda documents). The intent of the APA designation is to protect prime agricultural areas for long-term agricultural use. The intent of the EPA designation is to protect lands that contain environmental features and their buffers. The Greenland System overlay reflects the boundaries of the Natural Heritage System as defined in the GBP. The Greenlands System includes key natural heritage and hydrological features, their buffers, and linkages between features. Schedule 83 - Source Water Protection Areas shows a portion of the Subject Lands is located within a Significant Groundwater Recharge Area, Ecologically Significant Groundwater Recharge Area, and Highly Vulnerable Aquifer (refer to Attachment 7). Schedule C - Natural Hazards shows a portion of the Subject Lands, specifically the areas surrounding the southern watercourse, are hazard lands (refer to Attachment 8). In Section 9.2.6.2-Airports and Aerodrome, it states that "the Town shall not be supportive of airports and aerodrome facilities being located within the Environmental Protection Area designation or in locations that would result in land use conflicts with surrounding uses." (Town of Georgina Report, Interoffice Memorandum, Dec. 3, 2021, Agenda item letter, Town of Georgina Meeting, 2021-12-15).

### Natural Environment and Landscape Ecology:

As with everything else about this proposed project there is little or no information of any kind upon which to comment even though your development group indicates you have undertaken consulting work of this kind in your public statements at the Town of Georgina Virtual Council Meeting the evening of 2021-12-15. We have great concern for all the myriad areas of natural heritage impact, ecology, conservation, and all species survival, particularly for species at risk at this point. From conversation and initial inquiry we offer a basic list of concerns.

- Proposed Aerodrome location is within a local documented migratory bird zone of flight activity, and breeding bird regular foraging movement area, for various species including but not limited to Sandhill crane, Tundra swan, Canada geese, various Sandpipers including some at risk and significant species (various waterfowl including historically phalarope --- species, and movements in this area of Georgina of

other species of concern including Eastern Loggerhead shrike). The ecological relationship of the functional connection of Lake Simcoe, Georgina Island, Duclous Point and the natural wetland and seasonal ponding habitat on this site and others in the area are critical to these species and others and are of concern in relation to your project. All of which may be problematic for an aerodrome facility the size, complexity, and volume of use especially if it is to replace the Buttonville Airport in the G.T.A. as you advised, for the first time to our knowledge at the Town of Georgina Virtual Council Meeting the evening of 2021-12-15.

- The proposed Aerodrome is in what would seem like a most inappropriate geographic site location to undertake the kind of natural area disturbance proposed, being situated at an extensive complex wetland/wet forest and upland forest/ grassland meadow landscape, of important groundwater and riparian source function. The location area includes related noteworthy drumloid, and remnant glacial Lake Algonquin shoreline features, and associated other glaciolacustrine and presumed eolian deposits contributing to the important water resource functions. In particular, the bringing in of massive volumes of fill from off site, and extensive grading change that will be needed for what the purported final site will be like, as in the basic concept drawing on the site sign, is concerning. Aerodrome flight/runway location aside (disputed by other community small airplane experts) there must be numerous much better sites for this kind of facility, that should be the subject of a Provincial/Federal Feasibility study in the G.T.A. to arrive at a rigorously determined location to locate a closing "Buttonville Airport"!
- With regard to hydrogeology, aquifer recharge, and ecological function affected by changes anticipated with this proposed aerodrome, to hydrogeology and surficial hydrology, we have significant concern with the proposed site grading anticipated and the level of science that would need to be presented supporting such proposed development. This is particularly concerning with the very large volume of fill expected to be brought to the site revealed at the Town of Georgina Virtual Council Meeting the evening of 2021-12-15.

Surficial and groundwater movement is typical to these local Georgina sand plain areas, sometimes low-lying lacustrine clay lenses or pans particularly at wetlands and streams which is the case here. Drainage and flow lines north-east to south at the extensive wetland/forests through expected significant seeps on the site, could be problematic over time if buried in huge volumes of fill, especially in the future with moisture model protections with climate change modelling for Southern Ontario. Local stream fish and other aquatic life impact is a concern. Again, we have not seen any science research or design information on these potential situational site impacts of the site changes anticipated. Local residents on wells have good reason to be concerned about their wells in the area given these considerations. Impact of significant aquifer recharge areas in the proposed fill and grade areas for an Aerodrome, and roads in the area is a concern to us, in the absence of much more detailed and rigorous science, and public release for review and comment.

Consequently, from past experience in other area OMB Hearings and Mediations we do not have confidence in the impact of the proposed lands works on local existing wells. The project proponent must be held responsible for hydrology and hydrogeological impact and must undertake detailed ground water investigations, analysis and long-term monitoring here, none of which have been released for review and comment. The glacial drumloid feature, in the low undulating Lake Simcoe sand plain of the Town of Georgina, has been identified as an important Groundwater Recharge Area

The site area ecologically is extremely strategic to the natural form and function of natural heritage in east Georgina and the Greenbelt. Its north-south landscape connection (corridor linkage) location, is strategic from a landscape ecological perspective linking two critical east-west natural areas corridors across a very

fragmented agricultural intermediary zone corridorThe value of the existing life science, natural areas also are very important and integral in terms of wildlife resources and Landscape Ecology (Core and Corridor natural habitat connections) within the Region of York as the central Region of York Greenlands System Vision maintaining connection to Lake Simcoe is significant. Wildlife movement corridors for mammal species like White-tailed deer (including winter congregation), coyote (Brush wolf), Red fox and others.

### Further,

In summation regarding natural heritage and other landuse planning criteria, in concurrence with regard to the Town of Georgina's Official Plan, we believe your project is not appropriate on the site property. We refer you to the Town of Georgina narrative in this regard (Town of Georgina Report, Interoffice Memorandum, Dec. 3, 2021, Agenda item letter, Town of Georgina Meeting, 2021-12-15).

"Based on the limited information provided, it would appear that the proposed Aerodrome is of a much larger size and scale such that it would not comply with all of the requirements of Section 28. 4, and hence would not be in compliance with Zoning By-law No. 500. Concluding Comment The Project is proposed to be located in the heart of Georgina's Green/ands System, partially within, and largely surrounded by, provincially significant wetlands and significant woodlands. The site and surrounding area serves a provincially significant hydrological function as a groundwater recharge area and highly vulnerable aquifer, as noted by York Region and as shown on the provided LSRCA mapping. Based upon Provincial, Regional, and local planning policy, and without any detailed information on the Aerodrome proposal, Staff are of the opinion that the Subject Lands are not an appropriate location for the proposed Project, both from an environmental perspective and that of maintaining the rural character and visual landscape in this part of Georgina, which needs to be protected for current residents and future generations".

We concur with this assessment.

### **Conclusion:**

Although you state you do not have to meet any level of Ontario and municipal planning competency in your comment in Town of Georgina Virtual Council Meeting appearance (2021-12-15), and did not present detailed information, and make it available to all, your contention that Canadian federal Aeronautics Act (R.S., 1985, c. A-2) is of concern to our membership. Our organization is concerned and supportive of good planning and public transparency, and this does not appear to be that.

You advise that you have natural heritage consultants on the site working. We would be concerned that any natural heritage consultant would contract to be involved in the project you propose.

To properly and professionally evaluate the site, for your proposed purpose of plan we, and any competent natural heritage organization would need to have access to the site over several seasons to evaluate and make real defensible comment on your Aerodrome proposal.

The "friendly neighbour concept" is not in evidence in your project to this point, and community support is wanting in our opinion. You sir, need to remedy this situation.

In conclusion, and as previously identified there must be numerous much better sites for this kind of facility, that should be the subject of a Provincial/Federal Feasibility study in the G.T.A. to arrive at a rigorously determined location to re-locate a closing "Buttonville Airport"!

Sincerely,

Paul Harpley,

Paul Harpley BSc. (Hons.) M.A.

President, South Lake Simcoe Naturalists, Ontario Nature

**Director**, The Zephyr Society of Lake Simcoe, Wildlife Research Station

c.c. Scot Davidson M.P. York-Simcoe, Federal Minister of Transportation, Caroline Mulroney M.P.P. York-Simcoe, Mayor and Council, Town of Georgina, Anne Bell, Ontario Nature, The Zephyr society of Lake Simcoe Research Organization.

**References: Georgina Post articles** 

**2021-11-15** Georgina Post, <a href="https://georginapost.com/2021/11/15/new-aerodrome-proposal-flies-under-the-radar-in-pefferlaw/">https://georginapost.com/2021/11/15/new-aerodrome-proposal-flies-under-the-radar-in-pefferlaw/</a>

**2021-11-28 Georgina Post**, <a href="https://georginapost.com/2021/11/18/pefferlaw-residents-up-in-arms-over-aerodrome/">https://georginapost.com/2021/11/18/pefferlaw-residents-up-in-arms-over-aerodrome/</a>

2021-12-10 Georgina Post Newspaper (Paper edition), Pefferlaw aerodrome proposal lacks transparency, pp.3.

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