

Medway Valley Heritage Forest (MVHF) Environmentally Significant Area (ESA), Conservation Master Plan (CMP) – Phase 1 (Natural Heritage Inventory & Evaluation)

Public Information Centre (PIC) Meeting #2 – January, 27.2014

Held by Dillon Consulting Limited (Dillon) and the City of London (City)

Meeting Minutes – Recorded by Jonathan Harris, Dillon

Q = Question, A = Answer, C = Comment

MVHF ESA PIC Boards were available for viewing - 18:00 – 18:40

Nine boards which depicted figures found in the final report for the MVHF Natural Heritage Inventory and Evaluation was put out for the public to view before the presentation began at 18:40. The presentation was originally meant to begin at 19:00 but was moved up due to the large crowd.

MVHF ESA PIC #2 Presentation – 18:40 – 19:10

The presentation for the MVHF ESA PIC #2 began at 18:40 with introduction to the project and brief explanation of the Conservation Master Plan process by Linda McDougall, Ecologist Planner with the City. The core MVHF ESA PIC #2 presentation was given by Jennifer Petruniak (Dillon) and summarized the final report submitted to the City in December 2013. The presentation also expanded on some of the methodology and results found in the final report such as how the City Environmental Management Guidelines were applied to the revision of the ESA boundary.

MVHF ESA – 19:00 – 19:15

After the presentation concluded, Andrew Macpherson (Manager of Environmental and Parks Planning) thanked the audience for their attendance and encouraged their input into the Conservation Master Plan Process. At this time, Councillor Matt Brown (Ward 7) also gave his thanks to the audience.

MVHF ESA Q&A Period – 19:15 – 20:00

Below are questions, answers and comments that came up during the question period that followed the presentation.

Q – Where to submit detailed questions or observations?
A – The City has provided comment sheets for the public to provide detailed questions, comments, concerns and any additional information (i.e. observations) (A.Macpherson, L. McDougall, J.Petruniak)
Q – The City is not considering separating the north and south into two separate ESA's?
A – No, the ESA will not be separated (L.McDougall)
Q – What is the City's responsibility when it comes to Species at Risk and associated habitat? Are they obligated to take action?
A – Responsibility of Species at Risk and any associated habitat is outside of City jurisdiction and there are no requirements for the City to report Species at Risk occurrences to the controlling government agency (MNR). If the City is planning to develop in Species at Risk habitat or impact Species at Risk, then

it is their responsibility to notify the MNR and obtain any necessary permits. (J.Petruniak)
Q – I have concerns about the noted encroachment into the ESA that was noted in the report. Is there any actions being taken?
A – Collectively, there are approximately 1200 homes that have some encroachment into London ESAs; Upper Thames River Conservation Authority is trying to deal with the minor encroachment (e.g. mowing, sheds); higher impacts (i.e. clearing) through their by-law officers; trying to look for a balance regarding encroachment (A.Macpherson)
Q – What was the type of salamander observed during the studies?
A – The historic population of Red-backed Salamander (<i>Plethodon cinereus</i>) continues to be observed in Snake Creek Valley (J. Petruniak)
Comment – I am looking for the City to acknowledge keystone species and would like to see an approach to include all species and other natural areas (i.e. dead space), not just Species at Risk
Q – What is the purpose of compartmentalization of the ESA (development of management zones)?
A – The purpose of the evaluation is not to compartmentalize the ESA but use the criteria to strengthen the ESA designation. The City wants to preserve the ESA and using the management zones we can find the balance between enjoyment of the ESA and protection of highly sensitive species/areas. (J. Petruniak)
Q – Where can the final report document be found online?
A – If you send an email to Linda McDougall, she can forward the link to the report which is available on the City's website. (L. McDougall)
Q – Could we protect beavers in order to create wetlands within the ESA?
A – Can be considered though populations of beavers within the urban environment can lead to flooding situations and therefore should be managed to prevent destruction of property downstream. (J. Petruniak)
Q – I have concerns about the planting of native species. Due to the high abundance of deer within the ESA would restoration efforts be redundant?
A – This concern will be brought forward during Phase II. (L. McDougall)
Q – I am curious about how the City plans to preserve the species we already have. I have seen a lot of chopping of trees within the ESA. Is there a plan to save trees?
A – Removal of trees within the ESA was likely because of risk management techniques used in the past. Going forward, a new policy will remove far less trees because the focus will be on those that pose a hazard to the public (i.e. along trails) (A.Macpherson)
Q – Has the revision to the ESA boundary been passed?
A – No, the revisions and management zones are still up for public consultation. What is being presented is not the finalized boundary, only a recommendation. Finalization of the boundary will occur after public consultation. (A.Macpherson, L. McDougall)
Comment – When planning the next public meeting, please don't have it during July which could lead to a drop in attendance because of people on holidays etc.
Q – Is there a schedule in mind for the boundary revisions & management zones to be adopted by council?
A – A schedule won't be drawn until after the comment period ends (March 10, 2014). We anticipate May or June before an official OP amendment. (A.Macpherson)
Q – How will these results affect building applications that are in now?
A – Those building applications that have been submitted would have been based on the information that was available on hand. The new ESA boundary will not affect current applications (A.Macpherson)
Q – Are we not concerned about bridges/cycle paths anymore? Is everything protected now?
A – Now that new standards (<i>Planning and Design Standards for Trails in ESAs</i> , 2012) are in place, any

development of trails/bridges etc. will be based on those standards. The management zones proposed are to be considered during Phase II and will address what uses will be allowed in which zones. (L.Mcdougall, J. Petruniak)
Q – Where are the proposed bridges/paths through the Elsie Perrin Williams Estate?
A – All plans for bridges/paths are currently on hold by council because a need for a Conservation Master Plan was identified. (A.Macpherson)
Comment – Thanks to the researchers for the report
Q – How does the City plan to approach competing interests regarding the ESA?
A – Through a combination of science and use of the standards. Based on Phase II, we will develop a plan as a community. Phase II will take time to run through the proposed Management Zones and Standards with the future of the ESA guided by the standards. (A.Macpherson, L.McDougall)
Q – What about the Western/Huron lands?
A – Those landowners were contacted but did not allow access. We will send a copy of the report for their information and hope they will participate in Phase II. (A.Macpherson)
Q – How does the City plan to deal with scary predators (i.e. coyote, bear)?
A – Top predators were not considered as part of this particular study. Management of wildlife is under jurisdiction of the province (i.e. MNR). (A.Macpherson, L.McDougall)
Q – Do you have a calculation of the areas for the old ESA boundary vs. the new boundary?
A – We do not have the calculation on hand at this time but will calculate and provide for the ESA areas as well as Management Zones. (J. Petruniak, J.Harris)
Old ESA (excluding UWO/Huron College land) – 156.90 ha New ESA (excluding UWO/Huron College land) – 162.37 ha
Nature Reserve Zone (South ESA) – 18.70 ha Natural Area 1 (South ESA) – 26.07 ha Natural Area 2 (South ESA) – 40.15 ha Access Zone (South ESA) – 0.88 ha Cultural Heritage Zone (South ESA) – 4.65 ha
Comment – I am concerned about the lack of Geomorphology data and other relations to creek.
A – There is a complimentary report to the Natural Heritage Inventory and Evaluation. The Medway Creek Subwatershed Study Update (MCSSU) studies the hydrogeology, geomorphology etc. This report is scheduled to be completed by the spring of 2014. (A.Macpherson, B. Krichker)
Q – Are there plans for a SWM facility within the ESA?
A – The MCSSU is being completed to understand the existing conditions and provide a mitigation/management plan – this will require some remediation but we cannot comment at this time in regards to new infrastructure (B. Krichker)
Comment – I have concerns about looking at the ecology of hydrogeology features such as wetlands. We need to look at these features going forward for the protection of the ESA.
A – The MCSSU study is still underway. The results of that study are required before we can comment on whether any required infrastructure could impact the ESA. If significant features are identified and extra studies (i.e. hydrogeology) are required, these will be identified. (J.Petruniak)
Comment – I have concerns about a wetland feature that is behind someone’s house in the ESA. It has a population of Red-backed Salamander and appears to be groundwater fed.
Dillon gathered additional information from this individual after the public meeting.
Comment – What is the decision for the management of more common species (i.e. deer)? Why isn’t

this being considered for this part of the Conservation Master Plan process? I really want this issue to be brought forward in Phase II.

Closing statement – 20:00-20:05

At 20:00, Andrew Macpherson restated the next steps for the Conservation Master Plan process and mentioned that the City is hoping to finalize the Phase I document by the summer of 2014. Andrew outlined that the establishment of the Local Advisory Committee (LAC) is one the next big steps before moving onto Phase II and development of the Conservation Master Plan. The meeting was officially closed at 20:05. The public were encouraged to take the comment forms available and provide any additional observations/questions/comments/concerns.