



Wendy Wright pointed out that the removal of on-line ponds is the last of several aquatic rehabilitation options recommended by the study. Nancy Davy pointed out that removal of dams is done with a willing landowner and that the function of the dam must be taken into consideration (e.g. flow augmentation, flood control, irrigation, etc.). Ian Rawlings clarified that the on-line pond in the Idylwild Subdivision has a stormwater management function for the existing approved development. Nancy Davy indicated that the GRCA would be reluctant to remove the recommendation to remove on-line ponds. Rick Cowsill suggested that wording be added, if the removal recommendation was not to come out. Wendy Wright suggested that wording be added to describe the process for addressing online ponds, rather than just saying that they should be removed. April Souwand suggested that the wording be changed to “take on-line ponds off-line”. An example of this is the ponds in Churchill Park that used to be on-line that were taken off-line of Moffat Creek. Ian Rawlings suggested that the wording be changed such that the offensive features of the ponds (impediment to fish passage and water quality impacts) are what should be addressed, not removal of the ponds. Erich Ritzmann also pointed out that the habitat and environmental benefits of the ponds should be recognized. It was clarified that the MGWA ponds discussion paper would be attached to the summary report. Brian Cunningham pointed out that other obstructions in the creek need to be addressed, such as the culverts on Briardean Road, when looking at aquatic improvements.

#### **4. Presentation and Discussion– Natural Heritage System Enhancement – Wendy Wright, City of Cambridge**

Wendy Wright led a discussion on the natural system enhancement areas. She confirmed with Erich Ritzmann that the enhancement areas on West Creek have been agreed to.

On East Creek, No. 6 (a hedgerow) was suggested by the MGWA to be added. Wendy Wright suggested that this be looked at during the community plan. She explained that in Southeast Galt, a lot of work was done to protect hedgerows. Ian Rawlings was concerned with the impact on private property rights.

John Vasiga spoke about an article in the paper today that reported the concern with deer crossing Highway No. 24. Erich Ritzmann suggested an overpass would be a better idea, as a way of getting wildlife across roads. Wendy Wright indicated that in terms of crossings themselves, this would have to be looked at because, now that we are planning for natural area protection, the accommodation of wildlife in the urban areas must be considered. She suggested enhancement areas could be taken off the map and wording could be put in place to describe them conceptually and show them like they are on the linkage map.

Erich Ritzmann pointed out that the north/south secondary (not primary since it does not go to the Grand River as the study indicates) linkage along Middle Creek is unrealistic, as it would make the deer travel over Kossuth Road and Fountain Street and down a large steep embankment to the Grand River. The deer from the wetland west of Fountain Street go westerly to the Grand River.

No. 8 – It was questioned if linking this isolated pocket back to the PSW is necessary. Wendy Wright indicated that in a development context, one would try to have a land use that would accommodate the enhancement area. Charlene Schiedel pointed out that the widening of Speedsville Road would reduce the wetland area. Nancy Davy pointed out that when the road is to be widened in the future, an environmental assessment would aim at reducing the impact on the wetland area. She indicated there are new construction products available which limit the amount of fill needed for side slopes. Charlene Schiedel said she is not in favour of this linkage as her house is in the enhancement area. Nancy Davy said, should it stay PSW and over 0.5 hectares, the enhancement area would stay.

No. 9 – It was agreed to move this to the south, as suggested by the MGWA, in order to use the existing corridor, as opposed to luring wildlife out across the road in a new area.

No. 10. – The MGWA was concerned that this was augmenting an area that was already more than 50 metres. Chris Gosselin emphasized that enhanced forest interior habitat is desirable. It was agreed to leave it but add wording about the ultimate size.

No. 5 – Wendy Wright indicated that when the new floodlines are available, they would be used to refine this area, if necessary (as well as No. 1 and No. 2).

No. 3 – The viability of this linkage was questioned across Fountain Street. The connection was more likely to the west to natural areas in that direction. Wendy Wright suggested removing this one and adding a linkage to the west as a suggestion for future work.

No. 4 – Wendy Wright indicated that a lot of this could come off, recognizing that the wildlife moves across Speedsville, not Maple Grove Road, but Wendy Wright thought the area in the floodline should likely remain enhancement area.

Question mark area – links a PSW and should stay.

No. 11. – It was agreed at the last meeting to adjust this to 50 metre width.

## **6. Other Business**

- a) Buffers – Update on Discussions. Wendy Wright indicated that she and Rick Cowsill have had some discussions and are looking at how to deal with the buffers. Rick Cowsill indicated he wants to bring this back to a meeting to bring closure to the issue. Wendy Wright plans to draft something up for the final report and bring this draft to the committee to discuss at the August 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. Charlene Schiedel indicated that she still has a concern with the small PSW identified on her property and will contact Ken Cornelisse directly on this.

- b) Follow-up List – when discussing the follow-up list, the MGWA members asked if Ken Cornelisse could look again at the large wetland west of Fountain Street and answer if it is still part of the PSW and why the West Creek wetlands were not complexed with Middle Creek.
- c) List of Topics for Upcoming Meetings – Wendy Wright indicated that she plans to invite a Regional staff person to attend the next meeting to discuss the Regional Growth Management Strategy and the Countryside Line.
- d) Field Visits – Wendy Wright indicated that she has been waiting for the floodline mapping to be available, as well as to incorporate Jim Dougan’s work. She will work with Erich Ritzmann to arrange the meetings. Chris Gosselin indicated that the work to review the potential ESPAs should be added to the follow-up list and that this should be done before the Region can approve that part of the Subwatersheds Study. It was suggested that the potential ESPAs should be flagged in the study and indicated in the report that the community plan could not be approved before the ESPAs are evaluated.
- e) Wendy Wright indicated that she has scheduled a special Council meeting on September 14, 2004 for them to consider the Hespeler West Subwatersheds Study meeting. Rick Cowsill asked about the need for a public open house, prior to September 14<sup>th</sup>. The committee felt that this should be scheduled the week before September 14<sup>th</sup>. It was suggested that Thursday, September 9, 2004 would be a potential date. Potential locations are Wanner Mennonite Church or the French High School, or the Regional Police Headquarters. April Souwand will make the necessary arrangements.

Rick Cowsill motioned to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

**Next meeting – Allan Reuter Centre – 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm – Thursday, July 22, 2004**

## MAPLE GROVE WETLANDS ASSOCIATION

### PONDS DISCUSSION

The Subwatershed Study recommendation to destroy on-line ponds triggered strong opposition to the Study by the Maple Grove Wetlands Association.

In addition, this recommendation is in direct violation of other findings of the study. Specifically:

- The requirement that the Study balance ecological considerations with social, economic, and human considerations. Refer to Appendix A, Section 3; Executive Summary 3.0; Section A 1.2; Section A 1.5; Section A 2.5.2; Section C 3.1.2; Section D 1.0 .

Section 3.1.2 is particularly specific on this point:

“Removing the on-line ponds would result in a high initial cost, would require a series of significant interventions to the channel, and may cause some social or cultural impacts as some of the ponds have been in place for decades and have historical value.

In summary, the recommendation to remove on-line ponds is in direct variance to the objectives of the Study itself.

The presentation by Ken Cornelisse explained many aspects of the ecology of ponds and was very useful. However, time was too short to allow for a discussion. Our intention here is to raise some points that should have been part of such a discussion.

The Dam Removal Success Stories referred to in the presentation contains some points that need to be highlighted:

- It was prepared by American Rivers, Friends of the Earth, and Trout Unlimited rather than an unbiased US government agency.
- The average height of the dams studied was 21 ft. with 40 being over 40 ft. and 4 over 120 ft. Average length was 224 ft. The issue here is relevance.
- Main reasons for removal could generally be summarized as to restore a damaged ecosystem, safety concerns, and taxpayer expense to repair and maintain the dams.
- Detailed case histories reported relied heavily on the following reasons for removal:
  - Sport fisheries- salmon, trout, tidal smelt runs were mentioned several times as examples.
  - Structural safety hazards
  - Canoeing, recreation
  - Taxpayer costs and liability
  - Water quality
  - Create waterfowl habitat
  - Improve surrounding aesthetics

The summary paragraph states in part:

“Removal is not appropriate for all, or even most, of these (tens of thousands of smaller) dams. Far less than one percent of all dams in the United States are even under consideration for removal.”

### Comments on the Presentation

Although sediment transport is impeded by dams, erosion is not necessarily a good thing.

The sediment will eventually be deposited somewhere even if not behind a dam.

Destruction of ponds would not necessarily be a completely good thing for water quality. A pond expert examined one Middle Creek pond and determined that it contained plants vital to improving water quality.

In the case of Middle Creek ponds, all maintenance has been carried out by residents, so no burden is imposed in the taxpayers or government bodies.

There is no canoeing on Middle Creek but residents have cleared skating rinks on a pond.

It is impossible to imagine a situation where a safety hazard might exist.

Although removal of some dams might improve fish mobility, when a stream totally dries up (as middle Creek does sometimes) the wildlife has no refuge nor water if the ponds are not there.

On the other hand, at least one of these ponds is home to or often visited by a variety of wildlife; for example:

- Geese
- Ducks
- Turtles
- Crayfish
- Deer
- Minnows
- Otter
- Groundhogs
- Raccoons
- Possums
- Skunks

The removal of the pond would certainly not benefit the wildlife in the area.

At a meeting held to present the industrial development plans north of Maple Grove to area residents, Miron Docev said emphatically that the flow variations in Middle Creek would be less variable (ie less flooding, less drying up) after development due to the construction of retention ponds. This positive aspect of ponds contradicts recent statements denying the moderating influence of ponds.

Although there may have been some specific locations where dam removal helped surrounding aesthetics, it would be devastating in the case of the Middle Creek ponds in residential areas.

In summary, from an environmental standpoint, the case for pond removal has not been demonstrated as shown in the quoted Dam Removal Success Stories and also in the Watershed Study, P.C35:

“...enhancement or rehabilitation may be required... Examples may range from ... to the creation of specific habitats such as small ponds...”

In summary, The reluctance to remove the recommendation for pond removal has these implications:

- It has become a major irritant to taxpayers/ voters
- It contradicts the objectives of the Study
- Its scientific and ecological basis is shaky at best.

Ron McKittrick