

UPCOMING DATES

NOVEMBER 19

Halton Region Council, 9:30 a.m.

Heritage Vaughan, 7:00 p.m.

NOVEMBER 20

Burlington Council, 6:30 p.m.

NOVEMBER 24

Mississauga Council, 9:00 a.m.

Barrie Council, 7:00 p.m.

NOVEMBER 25

Aurora Council, 7:00 p.m.

Markham Council, 7:00 p.m.

Heritage Oakville, 9:30 a.m.

NOVEMBER 26

Mississauga Council, 9:00 a.m.

NOVEMBER 27

Heritage Oshawa, 6:30 p.m.

DECEMBER 1

Barrie Inaugural Council, 7:00 p.m.

King Inaugural Council, 6:00 p.m.

Richmond Hill Inaugural Council, 7:30 p.m.

Newmarket Inaugural Council, 7:00 p.m.

Vaughan Inaugural Council, 7:00 p.m.

East Gwillimbury Inaugural Council, 7:00 p.m.

Oakville Inaugural Council, 7:00 p.m.

Brampton Inaugural Council, 8:00 p.m.

Caledon Inaugural Council, 7:00 p.m.

Burlington Inaugural Council, 6:30 p.m.



Cootes to Escarpment park system

ENGAGING NEIGHBOURING LANDOWNERS

By Leah Wong

The organizations working to protect the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System have launched a landowner outreach program to improve stewardship on private land within the system.

Located in the Hamilton-Burlington area, the system comprises almost 1,900 hectares of natural lands located within the greenbelt. Though the park system is largely comprised of properties owned by the system's nine-partner agencies, there are pockets of privately-owned land in between. Private owners include homeowners, companies and other agencies.

"We'd like to work with those owners to help them if they're interested in doing ecological stewardship activities on their properties, or they're interested in exploring options for permanent protection of their land," said Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System coordinator **Deborah Herbert**. These activities could include planting native plants or removing invasive species.

Private owners' involvement is strictly voluntary. They also may either donate or

sell their land to a conservation authority or have a conservation easement put in place to protect future development on the site.

The engagement of private owners is a two-year program that is funded by the **Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation**. The organization is working through the Hamilton/Halton Watershed Stewardship Program, which is an existing landowner contact program that's been in place for 20 years. It will be meeting with groups of neighbouring landowners to talk about opportunities for stewardship and give advice about what can be done on their properties.

For owners that want to hold onto their property, but would like to work with the organization to better protect the natural heritage. A stewardship technician has been retained to work with owners on enhancing and conserving the ecosystem.

"It's really a wide range of activities that can be done," said Herbert. "[Our stewardship technician] is an expert on those options and

CONTINUED PAGE 4 ➤

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SMART THINKING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

One of the clearest impacts of information and communications technology, said Bell, is how it has fundamentally changed how offices operate. Bell noted that for years, the common equation for office space was the requirement for 200sq.ft. per employee. In 2012, commercial real estate services firm **Jones Lang LaSalle** predicted that by 2014 50sq. ft. per employee would be sufficient. The space that was so valuable five years ago, said Bell, is no longer needed.

“Why did this possibly happen? Well, because employees aren’t spending their time in the office... They are working with customers and suppliers; they are working from home, using mobile tools of the information age—the laptop, the tablet the mobile phone—to cut the physical tether to the office. They stay connected, they stay accessible, they stay accountable to the companies they work with through broadband.”

So how can cities seek to take advantage of broadband infrastructure? For starters, Bell said there is a wealth of information out there waiting to be collected, such as

traffic flows, water main leakages, and even how much salt municipalities put on their roads in winter.

“All these things, if you measure them, you’ll be able to manage them. Up until now we’ve mostly just been estimating. One of the most remarkable things I ever learned was for most of the history of electric generation municipalities have never been able to measure how much they’re producing and how much they actually need... They really don’t know what’s going on inside their network.”

Aside from putting in broadband infrastructure—which Bell compares to roads and highways—municipalities need to ensure that their least capable citizens aren’t left behind, which Bell calls “digital inclusion.”

“The more successful we are at creating a high tech economy, the more people we’re going to leave out. Intelligent communities work really hard to bring more people into this economy, and they do it for moral reasons. But they also do it for self-interest. We spend a lot of money on dealing with the ills of those who are left out.” [nru](#)

ENGAGING LANDOWNERS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

can work with landowners.”

The ecopark group is also working on the preparation of joint management plans for five core areas of the park system—Clappison-Grindstone, Waterdown-Sassagras Woods, Cootes Paradise, Borer’s Falls-Rock Chapel and the Lower Grindstone heritage lands. The plans will be developed using the Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System Planning Manual.

“So many of our properties are in the Niagara Escarpment planning area and they’ll need NEPOSS plans anyways,” said Herbert. “We thought using the NEPOSS planning manual for our plans would be in support of that.”

These plans will look at infrastructure, protection and conservation of natural and cultural heritage, as well as access for education, research and recreation. The ecopark

group completed the first of its plans for the Burlington Heights heritage lands earlier this year. The other plans will be worked on over the next five years, starting with plans for the Waterdown-Sassagras Woods and Clappison Grindstone heritage lands at the eastern part of the park system.

When the management plans are in place, the five partner agencies (**Royal Botanical Gardens, Conservation Halton, Hamilton Conservation Authority, City of Hamilton and City of Burlington**) which own property within the system, will be in charge of implementing the plans.

“The management plans will create a holistic framework for managing these properties as a coherent whole,” said Herbert. “They will be important and useful guides in the future for more site-specific planning.” [nru](#)