



## The Regional Municipality of Durham

### Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee Agenda

Tuesday, January 12, 2021

7:30 PM

Council Chambers  
Regional Municipality of Durham Headquarters  
605 Rossland Road East, Whitby

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Please note: In an effort to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19, and to generally comply with the directions from the Government of Ontario, it is requested in the strongest terms that Members participate in the meeting electronically. Regional Headquarters is closed to the public, all members of the public may view the Committee meeting via live streaming, instead of attending the meeting in person. If you wish to register as a delegate regarding an agenda item, you may register in advance of the meeting by noon on the day prior to the meeting by emailing [delegations@durham.ca](mailto:delegations@durham.ca) and will be provided with the details to delegate electronically.

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**1. Election of Officers for 2021**

**2. Roll Call**

**3. Declarations of Interest**

**4. Adoption of Minutes**

- A) Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting held on December 8, 2020  
([Attachment 1](#))

**5. Discussion Items**

- A) Rural and Agricultural Economic Development Update – S. Jibb  
B) 2021 DAAC Workplan ([Attachment 2](#)) and DAAC Terms of Reference ([Attachment 3](#))

**6. Information Items**

- A) Region of Durham response to ERO Notice regarding Establishment of a Species at Risk Conservation Fund ([Attachment 4](#))  
B) [Drainage Act Regulatory Proposal \(Government of Ontario\)](#) (**Attachment 5**)

If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-372-1102 ext. 2548.

**7. Other Business**

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

February 9, 2021

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If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-372-1102 ext. 2097.

## The Regional Municipality of Durham

### MINUTES

#### DURHAM AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

December 8, 2020

A meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, December 8, 2020 in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby at 7:30 PM. Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

#### 1. Roll Call

Present: Z. Cohoon, Federation of Agriculture, Chair  
T. Barrie, Clarington  
N. Guthrie, Member at Large  
G. Highet, Regional Councillor  
B. Howsam, Member at Large  
P. MacArthur, Oshawa  
G. O'Connor, Member at Large  
F. Puterbough, Member at Large, Vice-Chair  
D. Risebrough, Member at Large  
H. Schillings, Whitby  
B. Smith, Uxbridge  
G. Taylor, Pickering  
T. Watpool, Brock, Vice-Chair  
B. Winter, Ajax, attended the meeting at 7:38 PM

**\*members of the Committee participated electronically**

Councillor Highet appeared on behalf of Councillor Bath-Hadden as the alternate for the Committee.

Absent: K. Kemp, Scugog  
K. Kennedy, Member at Large

#### Staff

Present: K. Allore-Engel, Senior Planner, Department of Planning and Economic Development  
A. Yearwood, Project Planner, Department of Planning and Economic Development  
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT  
S. Jibb, Manager, Agriculture and Rural, Department of Planning and Economic Development  
M. Scott, Project Planner, Department of Planning and Economic Development  
N. Prasad, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Adoption of Minutes**

Moved by F. Puterbough, Seconded by T. Barrie,  
That the minutes of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee  
meeting held on November 10, 2020 be adopted.

CARRIED

**4. Presentations**

The presentation from Ashley Yearwood, Project Planner, Region of Durham re: Review of the Region of Durham's Soil and Groundwater Assessment Protocol was heard at this time.

B) Review of the Region of Durham's Soil and Groundwater Assessment Protocol – Ashley Yearwood, Project Planner, Region of Durham

Ashley Yearwood, Project Planner, Region of Durham provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to the Review of the Region of Durham's Soil and Groundwater Assessment Protocol (SGAP).

Highlights of the presentation included:

- History
- What is the Region's Soil and Groundwater Assessment Protocol (SGAP)?
- Which Legislation Helps Enforce the SGAP?
- Streamlining Agricultural Development Protocols
- Next Steps

A. Yearwood stated that the SGAP reviews all subsurface and at-grade conditions of a property through a development application circulated to the Region and ensures subsurface and at-grade site conditions do not pose a threat to human health and the environment. He stated that the Environmental Protection Act helps to enforce the SGAP. He also stated that on-site and excess soil management is not reviewed by the Region but through the area municipalities. He further stated that agricultural uses are typically classified as the most sensitive land use.

A. Yearwood provided a comparison of the current Protocol and the proposed 2021 Soil and Groundwater Assessment Protocol as it relates to the agricultural community. He advised that the consultation period ends December 29, 2020 and the Protocol will be presented to the Region's Planning and Economic development Committee on February 2, 2021.

A. Yearwood responded to questions with regards to the whether the effects of groundwater conditions on agricultural land from subdivisions are taken into consideration; the building of new agricultural buildings such as barns etc.; the use of new fill; applications when severing a house; and, why agriculture is considered the most sensitive land use.

A) Greater Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA) Action Plan – Janet Horner, Executive Director, GHFFA

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Janet Horner, Executive Director, Greater Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA), provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to the GHFFA Action Plan.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- The Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance
- The Golden Horseshoe: At a Glance
- Methods
  - A New Action Plan
  - Interviews
- Key Findings
  - Summit
  - Securing the Region's Agricultural System for Long-term Viability
  - Agri-food Cluster Growth and Resilience
- Action Plan
  - Food, Farming & Sustainability
  - The Vision
  - By the Numbers
  - Goals A, B and C

J. Horner stated that the GHFFA is a not-for-profit partnership among municipalities, agricultural groups, educational institutions, and provincial ministries that co-ordinates projects and efforts to support the agri-food sector in the Golden Horseshoe. She advised that in 2012, the Alliance produced an Action Plan to set goals and guide activities over a 10-year period.

J. Horner stated that in 2019, the Alliance recognized the need for a new Action Plan and advised that the new plan will build off the successes of the previous action plan and respond to recent trends. She also stated that the new plan will address changes in economic, social, and environmental trends since the first Action Plan to support and strengthen the Golden Horseshoe agri-food sector.

J. Horner provided an overview of the key findings with regards to: agri-food cluster food and resilience; securing the Region's agricultural system for long term viability; and food, farming and sustainability.

With regards to the Action Plan, she stated that there is one vision, three goals, eight objectives, 40 actions and 33 alliance led actions. She advised that the long-term vision is that the Golden Horseshoe be globally renowned as a vibrant and sustainable agri-food cluster, characterized by profitable farming operations of all sizes, a thriving hub of food processing and food retail, extensive research capacity, and innovative technology. She stated that the three goals of the action plan are as follows and provided objectives and action items with regards to each specific goal:

- Goal A: The GHFFA is recognized as the leading organization with expertise on food and farming issues and opportunities in the Golden Horseshoe Region of Ontario;
- Goal B: Establish the Golden Horseshoe as Canada's leading innovative agriculture and agri-food cluster; and
- Goal C: Enable the agri-food cluster to support sustainability outcomes.

J. Horner responded to questions regarding the Bill 6 legislation and what DAAC and farming organizations can do to counteract the Bill.

B) Review of the Region of Durham's Soil and Groundwater Assessment Protocol – Ashley Yearwood, Project Planner, Region of Durham

This Item was considered earlier in the meeting. See Item 4.B) on pages 2 and 3 of these minutes.

**5. Discussion Items**

A) Rural and Agricultural Economic Development Update

S. Jibb advised of the following:

- Staff has partnered with Farm Credit Canada and is working on a succession planning workshop to be held on December 17<sup>th</sup> at 12 PM;
- Staff has partnered with Durham Farm Fresh to do a specialty crops workshop;
- Staff is planning on hosting a mental health workshop with the Durham Region Federation of Agriculture in February 2021;
- Staff is starting an initiative around careers and agriculture. Staff has reached out to the Durham District School Board and is looking into the development of videos highlighting different career options in the agriculture sector to be presented to Grade 10 students; and

- Staff is supporting Durham Farm Fresh and Durham Farm Connections on their Annual General Meeting. Durham Farm Connections has a survey to provide input on their branding, committee members are encouraged to provide input.

B) 2020 DAAC Workplan and DAAC Terms of Reference

The 2020 DAAC Workplan and Terms of Reference were provided as Attachments #2 and #3 to the Agenda.

M. Scott requested that members review the Workplan and Terms of Reference and provide comments to him prior to the next meeting. He advised that any comments and/or amendments will be discussed then.

C) COVID-19 Update: Virtual Meetings

M. Scott advised that Regional headquarters will be closed to the public until March 2021 and meetings will continue to be held virtually.

**6. Information Items**

A) Mayor Bath-Hadden Leave of Absence

M. Scott advised that Councillor Bath-Hadden will be on a medical leave of absence. The committee was advised that Councillor Highet is the Council appointed alternate member for the committee.

B) 2020-P-24 Envision Durham – Framework for a New Regional Official Plan

Report #2020-P-24 re: Envision Durham – Framework for a New Regional Official Plan, was provided as Attachment #4 to the Agenda and received for information.

C) 2020-P-19 Review of the Region of Durham's Soil and Groundwater Assessment Protocol

Report #2020-P-19 re: Review of the Region of Durham's Soil and Groundwater Assessment Protocol, was provided as Attachment #5 to the Agenda and received for information.

**7. Other Business**

A) DAAC Farm Tour 2021

K. Allore advised that the 2021 DAAC Farm Tour may be held virtually.

B) Permission to show 2020 DAAC Farm Tour Video

M. Scott requested permission to provide the 2020 DAAC Farm Tour Video to Marlene Werry of Durham College. The request was approved by T. Watpool, H. Schillings and Z. Cohoon.

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, January 12, 2021 starting at 7:30 PM.

**9. Adjournment**

Moved by D. Risebrough, Seconded by F. Puterbough,  
That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

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Z. Cohoon, Chair, Durham  
Agricultural Advisory Committee

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N. Prasad, Committee Clerk





## **DURHAM AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (DAAC) 2021 WORKPLAN**

### **1. Advice on Policy Development and Implementation**

#### **a. Provide advice on:**

- Proposed amendments to the Durham Region Official Plan.
- Agricultural and rural related planning matters, with a view to:
  - sustaining the viability of farming;
  - protecting and preserving agricultural land as a first priority; and
  - ensuring adequate separation between agricultural land uses and activities and urban residential areas.
- Envision Durham Regional Official Plan Update – Municipal Comprehensive Review.
- Implementation of the Regional Broadband Strategy.
- Durham Community Climate Adaptation Plan—ongoing implementation of the Agricultural Sector Climate Adaptation Strategy.
- Regional Cycling Plan Update.
- Durham Agricultural Strategy Update.
- Vibrant North Durham Plan Update.
- Local Food Business Retention & Expansion Action Plan.

### **2. Communicate/Outreach/Educate**

#### **a. Host the 2021 Virtual Farm Tour that will:**

- assist Local and Regional Councillors, Provincial and Federal government officials as well as Conservation Authorities (including staff), to understand the concerns, opportunities and challenges of the agricultural community;
- reach key industry stakeholders whose mandate may impact the agricultural community;
- assist the educational sector (institutions, boards/superintendents), to understand the opportunities and challenges of the agricultural industry and community;
- emphasize the benefits of the agricultural industry to the Regional economy and the need for succession farming in the industry.

- #### **b. Continue to work with Regional Departments including Planning and Economic Development, Works, Finance and Police Services where necessary to ensure agricultural interests are considered.**

- c. Encourage participation of the Durham agricultural youth organizations.
- d. Investigate other outreach opportunities as they arise.
- e. Municipal representatives on the Committee will continue to dialogue with their respective municipalities including presentations to area municipal Councils on matters of interest where appropriate.
- f. Continue to establish a working relationship with the Durham Environmental Advisory Committee and other Regional Committees.

### **3. Economic Development and Tourism**

- a. Continue to promote the agricultural sector and development of related industries in the Region.
- b. Assist in the update and implementation of the Region of Durham Agricultural Strategy Action Plan.
- c. Continue to promote the development of research and implementation strategies to assist Durham's agricultural/farming sector in achieving higher profitability, thereby ensuring its survival and long-term sustainability.
- d. Participate in the implementation of the Local Food Business Retention & Expansion project.

### **4. Issues of Interest**

- Federal Pickering airport lands.
- Federal Oshawa Port.
- Alternative energy (e.g. solar farms, biomass, wind).
- Farm safety.
- Provincial and federal legislation and policy affecting agriculture (e.g. species at risk, provincial land use plans).
- Commercial fill.
- Aggregate matters, including aggregate pit rehabilitation.
- Implementation of source water protections plans.
- Farmland assessment and taxation.
- Farm animal health and wellness (e.g. DRPS).
- Natural Heritage System protection and construction of new farm infrastructure.
- Minimum Distance Separation Formulae.
- Water and waste water master planning.
- Biosecurity, trespassing and vandalism.
- Municipal Class EA's.

- Regional road projects.
- Conservation Authority matters.
- Energy-from-Waste implementation and monitoring.
- Region's waste diversion programs.
- Highway 407 East construction.
- Local food strategy.
- Agricultural training and employment, through continued work with the Durham Workforce Authority (DWA), Durham College, and Ontario Tech University.
- Activities of the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance.
- Land use planning matters.
- Other matters affecting the agricultural industry (e.g. Municipal Fire Regulations, By-laws and Permits).
- COVID-19 impacts and recovery.
- Rouge National Urban Park.

## **5. Meeting Schedule**

- a. DAAC has scheduled 10 regular meetings for 2021. An additional meeting may be held in August, at the call of the Chair. Resources (Planning and Clerks) will be provided to accommodate this schedule and workload.

- January 12, 2021
- February 9, 2021
- March 9, 2021
- April 13, 2021
- May 11, 2021
- June 8, 2021
- September 14, 2021
- October 12, 2021
- November 9, 2021
- December 7, 2021



## Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee (DAAC)

### Terms of Reference

Revised March 2020

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#### 1. Goal

- 1.1 To provide advice to the Region of Durham on agricultural matters and rural matters as they relate to agriculture.

#### 2. Mandate

- 2.1 The Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee (DAAC) is a volunteer Advisory Committee established by Regional Council in accordance with these Terms of Reference. Committee members are guided by these Terms of Reference.
- 2.2 The Terms of Reference provide for a balance between activities referred from the Planning and Economic Development Department or the Regional Planning and Economic Development Committee or Regional Council and an allowance for the DAAC to be proactive and advise on matters identified on its own initiative.
- 2.3 Matters may be referred to the DAAC from the Regional Planning and Economic Development Department, the Regional Planning and Economic Development Committee, or Regional Council. The DAAC may report directly to the Regional Planning and Economic Development Committee on substantive matters as determined by the Planning and Economic Development Committee. Otherwise, the DAAC shall report through the Regional Planning and Economic Development Department.

#### 3. Scope of Activities

- 3.1 The scope of the DAAC may include activities such as:
  - a) Providing advice on issues and concerns of the agricultural community;
  - b) Providing advice on the implementation of Provincial and Federal legislation, policies, and guidelines related to the agricultural industry;
  - c) Providing advice on agricultural and rural policy directions pursued by the Region. This may include providing advice on Regionally-initiated official plan amendments related to agricultural matters; on Regional agricultural matters through an official plan review; or, other policy directions pursued by the Region;

- d) Providing advice on the identification and implementation of programs which encourage public awareness and education of agricultural and related rural issues; and
- e) Providing advice on matters as they arise, at the request of the Region.

#### **4. Composition**

- 4.1 The DAAC will be comprised of sixteen members in total. Fourteen members will be private individuals who do not represent their respective employers or advocacy groups in their capacity as a DAAC member. An additional member will represent the Durham Region Federation of Agriculture. The above fifteen members shall not hold elected office (municipal, provincial or federal). Of these fifteen members, twelve will be bona fide farmers who are directly involved in the agricultural industry<sup>1</sup>; and three will be residents who are not directly involved in the agricultural industry. The final member will be a representative of the Planning and Economic Development Committee whose role is to act as liaison.
- 4.2 Membership for regular members shall correspond with the term of Regional Council. At the end of each term, members will be asked to consider their interest in remaining for an additional term. If a member chooses to resign, a replacement will be sought in accordance with Section 5. However, members shall continue to serve until their replacements are appointed by Regional Council.
- 4.3 At the discretion of the DAAC, non-attendance of three consecutive meetings will be sufficient grounds **to recommend** replacement.

#### **5. Membership Selection**

- 5.1 For regular members, the Regional Planning and Economic Development Department will place a newspaper advertisement and/or issue a public service announcement to media within each area municipality requesting expressions of interest from individuals willing to volunteer for appointment to the DAAC. Interested individuals will be required to provide a brief resume and statement of interest. Responses from the advertisement will be forwarded to each respective area municipality with a request that the local Council nominate one representative from the applicants who are bona fide farmers directly involved in the agricultural industry<sup>2</sup>. The Regional Planning and Economic Development Department, from the remaining resumes received, will nominate three additional members at large who are bona fide farmers; and three members at

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Where an interested bona fide farmer cannot be found to represent an area municipality, as an exception, a non-farm rural resident may be substituted.

<sup>2</sup> Same note as above.

large who are not directly involved in the agricultural industry, to bring the regular member complement to fourteen.

- 5.2 The Regional Planning and Economic Development Department will formally request the Durham Region Federation of Agriculture (DRFA) to nominate one person to represent the DRFA.
- 5.3 The Regional Planning and Economic Development Committee will recommend individuals for appointment to the DAAC by Regional Council.
- 5.4 Regional Council shall appoint a representative and an alternate to the DAAC from the members of the Planning and Economic Development Committee.
- 5.5 In nominating members to the DAAC, excluding the representative of the Planning and Economic Development Committee, regard shall be given to achieving a diversity of members engaged in varied disciplines of the agricultural industry and members living in the rural community with knowledge of agricultural and related rural issues. Availability to attend meetings will also be considered. All residents of Durham Region are eligible for membership.
- 5.6 In the case of a regular member vacancy, the approach described in Sections 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 will generally be followed.
- 5.7 An elaboration of the selection criteria is provided in Appendix 1.

## **6. Officers**

- 6.1 A chair and two vice-chairs (first and second) will be elected annually by the membership of the DAAC. The Planning and Economic Development Committee representative will chair the inaugural DAAC meeting.

## **7. Support Services**

- 7.1 The Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development or designate, shall serve as staff liaison to the DAAC. The liaison will provide administrative, procedural and technical support to the DAAC.
- 7.2 The liaison will co-ordinate all requests for advice from the DAAC, through meeting agendas and addenda to meeting agendas. DAAC responses to such requests shall be co-ordinated by the liaison to the Planning and Economic Development Department.
- 7.3 The Region will provide secretarial and other support services. Regional Council will provide a budget to cover the operational expenses of the DAAC, and this budget will be administered by the Planning and Economic Development Department.

## **8. Meetings**

- 8.1 Regularly scheduled meetings of DAAC will be held at the Durham Regional Headquarters, unless otherwise stated. The DAAC, will establish a meeting schedule taking into account the business needs and the schedule of Council and the Planning and Economic Development Committee. The Planning and Economic Development Committee will be provided with a schedule of DAAC meetings each December for the following year. Special meetings may be held at the call of the Chair. The Planning and Economic Development Committee is to be kept informed of such meetings.
- 8.2 All meetings will be open to the public. As a formal advisory Committee to the Region, the DAAC is subject to the Regional Procedural By-law, unless otherwise specified in the Terms of Reference.
- 8.3 Quorum shall consist of a majority of the sitting members.

## **9. Delegations of Committee Meetings**

- 9.1 Any person(s) wishing to appear before the DAAC as a delegate must submit a request to [delegations@durham.ca](mailto:delegations@durham.ca), advising of the topic or item to which they wish to speak, which will then be forwarded to the staff liaison in the Regional Planning and Economic Development Department. All requests for delegations must be received at least one week prior to the meeting to ensure that the delegation is included on the agenda. Any person wishing to address the DAAC as a delegate, who has not previously arranged to do so, may be granted permission to do so only by Committee resolution.

## **10. Minutes and Agenda**

- 10.1 The minutes of each DAAC meeting will be amended as necessary and approved at the following meeting. The unapproved minutes will be circulated to members of Council as part of the Council Information Package (CIP) prepared by the Clerk. When approved, any amendments will be forwarded to the Planning and Economic Development Committee. The DAAC agendas will be prepared by the staff liaison and the DAAC chair or vice-chair with input from other DAAC members. Agendas will be distributed the week prior to the meeting.

## **11. Committee Resolutions**

- 11.1 The DAAC will seek to achieve consensus on decisions. Recommendations are "carried" if supported by a majority, unless otherwise specified in these Terms of Reference or Regional Council Rules of Procedure. Only resolutions as they appear in the adopted Minutes may be considered as officially representing the position of the DAAC.

**12. Annual Reports and Workplan**

- 12.1 An annual report summarizing the activities completed in the previous year shall be prepared by the DAAC. The annual report shall be forwarded to the Planning and Economic Development Committee.
- 12.2 An annual workplan with an estimate of the resources necessary and any suggested revisions to the Terms of Reference for the coming year shall also be prepared by the DAAC for consideration and approval by the Planning and Economic Development Committee and Council.
- 12.3 An annual review of the DAAC by the Planning and Economic Development Committee will be completed to examine the effectiveness of the Committee and to ensure continued improvements.



## **Appendix 1: Membership Eligibility Criteria**

To facilitate the nomination and appointment of new members to the DAAC, the following criteria will be considered. The aim is to achieve a diversity of members engaged in varied disciplines of the agricultural industry and community representation with knowledge of agricultural and related rural issues.

### 1. Residency

Members should reside in Durham Region<sup>3</sup>.

### 2. Agricultural Expertise and Knowledge

Applicants engaged in the agricultural industry having the following attributes would be considered as an asset:

- Demonstrated knowledge of agricultural and rural land use issues;
- Relevant farm experience;
- Involvement with activities of the agricultural community;
- Technical training in an agriculture-based field; and
- Knowledge of properties and farm operations within Durham.

### 3. Rural Experience

For applicants from the non-farm rural community consideration will be given to the duration of residency in the community and the individual's level of knowledge of agricultural related rural issues. The relevance of their interests to the mandate of the DAAC will also be an important consideration.

### 4. Availability

It is important that an applicant be able to attend as many DAAC meetings as possible and undertake work outside of the regular monthly meetings. An applicant should be able to be contacted or reached during the day in order for meetings to be arranged.

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<sup>3</sup> Note: Where person who resides in Durham cannot be found, a farmer who owns land in Durham Region may be substituted.

Sent Via Email: ESAREg@ontario.ca



December 18, 2020

Public Input Coordinator  
Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks  
Species at Risk Branch  
300 Water Street  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor, North Tower  
Peterborough, ON K9J 85M

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**Sandra Austin**  
Director, Strategic Initiatives

**RE: Environmental Registry of Ontario Number 019-2636 A  
proposal under the Endangered Species Act to enable use of  
the Species at Risk Conservation Fund**

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Please find below a submission from staff of Durham Region in response to the proposal under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to enable use of the Species at Risk Conservation Fund and to streamline authorizations for certain activities that impact species at risk.

**Species at Risk Conservation Fund and Eligible Species**

It is our understanding that municipalities, businesses, and individuals authorized under the ESA will still be required to avoid and minimize impacts on species at risk and their habitats. In addition, the proposal in ERO#019-2636 will offer an alternative to proponents completing beneficial on-the-ground actions themselves for species at risk. Instead, proponents can choose to pay a species conservation charge to an Agency (the Species at Risk Conservation Trust) in relation to certain eligible species. Funds collected by the Agency would be invested in strategic, large-scale and coordinated protection and recovery actions for the conservation fund species.

The proposed eligible conservation fund species include:

- Butternut
- Barn Swallow
- Bobolink
- Eastern Meadowlark
- Eastern Whip-poor-will
- Populations of Blanding's Turtle within the Canadian Shield physiographic region – \*Note: Durham Region is located outside the Canadian Shield therefore, a regional designation should be removed and replaced with a blanket Provincial designation, like the other species noted.

If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact  
C. Drimmie at 1-800-372-1102, ext. 2029



## **Road Construction Projects**

In concept, the option to pay a charge into the Species at Risk Conservation Fund would provide the Region, as a proponent of infrastructure projects, with cost certainty, shorter authorization timelines, and reduced time to fulfill authorization requirements. With this approach, beneficial actions will still be completed utilizing the expertise of the new provincial Agency to determine the best method to both protect and recover eligible species on a *province-wide scale*. The large scale at which the beneficial actions would occur is a concern as Durham Region would not want to see reduced environmental protections for species at risk at the local level.

The Species at Risk Conservation Fund could be a positive and useful tool, if developed and managed in a fair, equitable, and sustainable approach. In the case of Regional infrastructure, avoidance of impacts is not always feasible. One example is when an existing road is being improved to meet current safety or capacity needs. Mitigation and occasionally compensation are required to allow the road project to proceed. Compensation within our road right-of-way projects often involves time-consuming negotiations with private landowners and agencies that make it challenging to deliver public infrastructure in a timely manner. In addition, impacts generally are relatively minor; however, the approvals and permitting, plus any development of individual on-site or near-site measures, can be very costly relative to the overall benefit achieved.

For linear infrastructure projects within road right-of-way, the Species at Risk Conservation Fund may facilitate faster project delivery, allowing deficiencies to be addressed quicker, saving users from the risks and hazards of the deficiencies. However, we do suggest that the potential use of the Species at Risk Conservation Fund should be focused on compensation that would be required beyond the road right-of-way and not replace local enhancements that can cost effectively be established at the project site.

## **Beneficial Actions for Species at Risk in Durham Region**

One of the key disadvantages with the proposed Species at Risk Conservation Fund is that it could lead to a net loss of habitat in Durham Region if the funds are directed away from the areas of impact that contributed the funding (i.e. local funds allocated outside of Durham Region's municipalities). We would urge the Province to use the funds generated in the Region for beneficial actions within our boundaries to help meet our Strategic Plan objectives of protecting, preserving, and restoring the natural environment. If the Agency uses funds outside of the Region, it could reduce local preservation and protection of species at risk – this should not be permitted to happen.

If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact  
C. Drimmie at 1-800-372-1102, ext. 2029

Some outstanding questions that we have include:

- What will be the status of the areas that are remediated? Will they be monitored and evaluated to ensure a sustainable and viable site? What would happen if the remediation area was not viable?
- Will the remediated sites be regarded as protected lands or will they also be subject to potential development?
- How will a baseline be established for each of the six species and at what geographic scale?
- How and when will the cumulative impact of the alternative approach to species loss/recovery be monitored and evaluated? What is the plan should the inventory decline?
- How will Regional-scale benefits and losses be assessed? This is a key concern in areas of rapid urbanization like Durham Region.
- Would stakeholders such as conservation authorities and municipalities be able to partner with the Agency and access funds if they deliver environmental projects that produce overall benefits to conservation fund species in an impacted area?

These are important considerations that should be integrated into the proposal for an alternate approach through the provincial Agency. Durham Region recognizes that some past practices have been unsuccessful in protecting the natural environment and that future practices should give greater consideration to the preservation and restoration of the natural environment, especially as it relates to species at risk. However, compensatory actions need to also protect and retain species diversity within our Region.

Durham Region staff appreciate the opportunity to comment. We respectfully recommend that a longer review period be considered to enable meaningful consultation and local Council engagement on these significant changes to provincial policy and processes.

Respectfully submitted,



Sandra Austin  
Director, Strategic Initiatives

cc. Elaine Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer, Region of Durham  
Brian Bridgeman, Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, Region of Durham  
Susan Siopis, Commissioner of Works, Region of Durham

If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact  
C. Drimmie at 1-800-372-1102, ext. 2029

