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For Immediate Release

York Region completes Significant Woodlands Study

Significant woodlands tool to assist in protecting Regional forests

NEWMARKET – The Regional Municipality of York’s strong commitment to the protection of woodlands and forest cover continues, as York Regional Council today adopted a report identifying significant woodlands across the Region. The York Region Significant Woodlands Study is a valuable tool that will help with the protection of green spaces.

The study adoption coincided with a cheque presentation to the Region’s Transportation and Works Committee by Cristel von Richter, a member of the Regional Forest Advisory Team (RFAT), who presented a cheque for \$1,000 toward the Region’s acquisition of a strategic Natural Core property on the Oak Ridges Moraine to connect the Hall and Patterson Tracts of the York Regional Forest.

“A better understanding of significant woodlands will help to ensure better protection of York Region’s natural heritage features,” said Regional Chair and CEO Bill Fisch. “The identification of critical forested areas will serve as a great tool to help focus our property securement strategy and give us an enhanced capability to approve or deny tree harvesting requests.”

The study defines significant woodlands as:

- Any woodland that supports a species designated by the Province or the Country as being significant (threatened or endangered)
- Any woodland that is within 30 metres of a watercourse, surface water feature or evaluated wetland
- Any woodland over two hectares that
 - is within 100 metres of a significant feature
 - occurs within with Regional Greenlands System
- Any woodland south of the Oak Ridges Moraine (ORM) that is greater than or equal to four hectares in size
- Any woodland north of the ORM that is greater than or equal to 10 hectares in size
- Any woodland that occurs on the ORM will be evaluated for significance based on the requirements of the ORM Conservation Plan and associated guidelines



Transportation and Works Committee Chair Bill O’Donnell and York Regional Chair and CEO Bill Fisch accept a cheque from RFAT representative Cristel von Richter to assist with the acquisition of a property connecting sections of the York Regional Forest.

The study has verified that 22.5 per cent of York Region’s land base has forest cover and that 97 per cent of woodland cover is significant. While the Region’s growing population has spurred much development over the past number of years, the amount of significant forest coverage has remained virtually unchanged, due in part to reforestation efforts of the Region and other environmental organizations.

“This Significant Woodlands Study clearly shows that the Region remains on the right track with respect to balancing development and conservation,” said Town of Markham Regional Councillor Bill O’Donnell, Chair of the Region’s Transportation and Works Committee. “Having access to such comprehensive data will be tremendously advantageous in our efforts for the preservation and expansion of our green spaces.”

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York Region has enjoyed a number of successes on the property securement front over the last few years, working with the Nature Conservancy of Canada, the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust and other partners to protect 235 hectares through the securement of numerous properties, including:

- The Newmarket Woodlot
- The Brownhill Tract expansion of the York Regional Forest
- The MacMillan Nature Reserve
- The Hall Tract expansion of the York Regional Forest
- Various Happy Valley Properties
- Settlers Park Expansion in Markham
- Jefferson Forest
- Bakers Sugar Bush

With the further acquisition of the Natural Core property, in partnership with the Town of Whitchurch Stouffville, York Region is creating a continuously connected 380-hectare system, joining the Hall, Patterson and Eldred King Tracts.

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For more information on the Regional Municipality of York and the services our Region offers, please visit our Web site at: www.york.ca

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