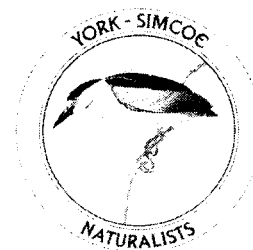
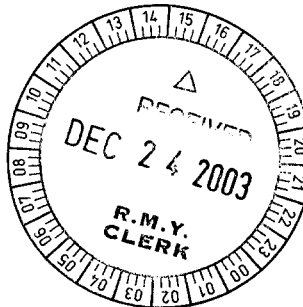


Box 1464
Bradford, Ontario
L3Z 2B7



December 22, 2003

In reply to: Application for a minor exception to the Regional Tree By-law by Mr. Owen Ronald Huisman

Mrs. Elma Stevenson
The Regional Municipality of York
17250 Young St.
Newmarket, Ontario
L3Y 6Z1

REGION OF YORK
CLERK'S OFFICE

FILE No. *PO6*

Attention: Ian Buchanan, E. Stevenson, Denis Kelly

To Whom It May Concern:

Before we begin, we would first like to introduce who we are. It is important to appreciate the goals our club has and the resources of our members.

In January of 1999, a small group of people gathered at the Scanlon Creek Conservation Area to discuss the possibility of forming a local natural history club. The reason for considering such a group was twofold: First, to provide a group where residents (of York Region and Simcoe County) that had a special interest in passive outdoor recreation and natural history study could get together and share their ideas, expertise, community projects, and local natural history; secondly, to create an environmental voice to constructively influence municipal planning. The result of the evening's discussion was the formation of the YORK-SIMCOE NATURALISTS. The operation and activities of the YORK-SIMCOE NATURALISTS are determined and administered by a Board of Directors consisting of elected and appointed members. The YORK-SIMCOE NATURALISTS are also a federated member of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists.

The club provides members, and attending public, monthly meetings with guest speakers, regular outing postings, an extensive resource library, monthly newsletter, and we involve our members in various special projects; such as, owl banding, Baillie Bird-a-thon, and Pitch-In Canada.

The Club feels that the above woodland tract is unique to the Holland Marsh Eco-Environmental system for three main reasons:

- It is the only and largest mature stand of deciduous woodland remaining within the Holland Marsh.
- It provides important marsh habitat for a wide and diverse group of species.
- It is in an inaccessible location flanked by the east canal on its western side and a very wide and deep drainage ditch on the Graham Sideroad. Consequently, it has been shielded from human activity and presumed pristine in nature.

The York Simcoe Naturalists Club has long recognized the unique nature of this woodland area and has monitored (by observation) this area on a year round basis for over six years. Observers have recorded the following:

Animals: White-Tailed deer, Coyote, Red Fox, Skunk, Raccoon, black and grey Squirrels and an assortment of small mammals. There are also beaver, otter, and muskrat along the woods canal bank.

Birds: year-round occupations of Red Tailed hawk, Sharp Shinned hawk, Screech Owl, Kestrel, and on one occasion a Merlin. The wood is home to a variety of Ontario songbirds with a few unusual sitings

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including a Rose-Breasted Grosbeak and a Bohemian Waxwing. The wood serves as a migratory assembly point (spring and fall) for a variety of Blackbirds, several species of Warblers and waterfowl. As a nesting point on a regular basis, it hosts up to three nesting pairs of Canada Geese and two pairs of Mallard ducks. Late summer sees the arrival of Great Blue Heron, Blue Heron, the occasional tree Heron and American Bittern.

Amphibians: four species of frogs, the American Toad, three species of snakes (including the green snake) are found along with the painted turtle, box turtle and snapping turtle.

Fish: A variety of common Ontario fish occupy and spawn in the canal, adjacent to the woodland, feeding on the nutrients released by the woodland environment. As a point of interest, studies in British Columbia have shown that clear-cutting forest to the water's edge can reduce fish spawning by 45%.

Plants: the nature and composition of the woodland floor is unknown; however, distant observation has shown that a large section of the wood is host to the White Trillium, a plant protected by Provincial law.

Recreation: This locality is frequented by canoeists, birdwatchers and fishermen.

As we hope you can see, this woodland plays a major role in sustaining a variety of species common to the province of Ontario. The destruction of this woodland, partial or total, would be devastating to wildlife dependant on this habitat. It would constitute a major act of civic irresponsibility at a time when environmental awareness and need for protection of natural habitat in our communities has never been higher.

In community after community, the issue that arises is invariably over the destruction of natural habitat, with the cutting of trees foremost. People in the community love trees for their beauty, the wildlife they attract and the role they play in providing clean air. On this note, it is important to address the feelings of the residents who presently live near this woodland area. Today they have woods, tomorrow stumps, their environment altered, quality of life compromised along with the value of their homes.

The York-Simcoe Naturalists Club strongly opposes the application of minor severance to clear-cut. We feel that the interests and common good of the community would be poorly served together with the environment we are all trying so hard to protect.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. We hope that you will consider the points we have brought forward and please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Respectfully yours,



The York Simcoe Naturalists

Executive Committee and Board of Directors

(Janelle Teale, Tim Laye, John German, Cathryn Rees, Sharon Hamilton, Sheila Browne, Susan Krussi)

