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February 21, 2006

File No.: 2006 York Region Forest By-Law, Gokkurt
IMS No.: NFSX7C1

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Mr. Ian D. Buchanan
Manager of Natural Heritage and Forestry Services
Transportation and Works Department
The Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street, P.O. Box 147
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1

Dear Mr. Buchanan:

**Re: Forest Conservation By-law Exemption
Gokkurt Property
23141 Park Rd., Town of Georgina**

The Conservation Authority has reviewed the application for tree removal on the property located at 23141 Park Rd., Town of Georgina and note that the subject property has the following designations:

- Within the Natural Heritage System of the Greenbelt Plan
- The Town of Georgina Official Plan identifies the forested areas of this property as Core Conservation Land and Water (EPA1), with an area of Connecting Link (EPA3)
- Fill Regulated
- A tributary of the Zephyr Creek traverses the western portion of the property, where there also appears to be an on-line pond
- Situated between two provincially significant wetlands; the Black River Wetland Complex #1 is located west of Park Road; and the Zephyr-Egypt wetland north of Old Shiloah Road

Given the above designations, the following comments are offered:

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***Watershed
for Life***

1. The York Region Official Plan notes the property as within the Rural Policy Area, and as such, the Rural Area Policies of the Greenbelt Plan apply. The subject property is also within the Natural Heritage System. Therefore, the Plan allows for new and existing agricultural practices to occur (s. 3.1.4.2, 3.2.2.1), while new buildings or structures are not permitted within key natural heritage features or key hydrologic features (s. 3.2.2.2).
2. It is the Region's goal to achieve 25 % forest cover region wide from approximately 19% currently. This proposal will result in the loss of approximately 7 hectares of forest.
3. While the subject property is not within the York Region Greenlands System, it is situated in close proximity to the Greenlands System and provides a predominantly deciduous forest (and likely wetland), as well as riparian habitat.



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IMS No.: NFSX7C1

Mr. Ian D. Buchanan

The Regional Municipality of York

Page 2 of 3

4. The subject property is situated within a Core Conservation Land and Water area (EPA1) of the Greenlands System identified through the Town of Georgina Official Plan. Section 3.6.1.2 identifies permitted uses within the EPA1 as including 'existing agricultural uses'. Furthermore, section 3.6.3.3 states, *"No new agricultural operations shall be established in Environmental Protection Area 1. Existing agricultural operations are permitted within the Environmental Protection Area 1 and it is not the intent of this Plan to limit the ability of these agricultural operations to continue. Expansions to existing agricultural operations in the Environmental Protection Area 1 may be permitted subject to an amendment to the Zoning By-law and an exception to a Tree By-law approved in accordance with the Forestry and/or Municipal Act, where applicable, and an Environmental Impact Statement prepared in accordance with Section 6.3, demonstrating that there is no negative impact on the natural features or the ecological functions for which the area is identified. Expansions of existing agricultural operations within the Environmental Protection Area 1 that would have a negative impact on the natural features or the ecological functions for which the area is identified shall not be permitted."*
5. The entire property is fill regulated. As such, any activity that involves the placement of fill, removal of fill or alteration of the grades will require a permit from the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA).
6. The tributary on the subject property is considered as warm water. It is Authority policy to maintain an undisturbed 15m vegetative buffer strip running along both sides of warm water watercourses. Furthermore, it is noted that the Region has a target of 100% buffering of all watercourses.
7. The *State of the Watershed Report: The Black River Subwatershed* (LSRCA 2003) identifies the following issues of concern within the catchment of the subject property:
 - lack of stream cover
 - lack of forest cover
 - agricultural inputs
 - streambank erosion

This application may further the loss of stream cover, which can lead to streambank erosion and an increase in agricultural inputs. It would also result in a reduction of forest cover.



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Page 3 of 3

8. Given the relatively flat topography of the property, its location between two provincially significant wetlands and that the applicant has noted that the soils are 'organic', it is possible that some of the woodland is actually a swamp community. Furthermore, the smaller southerly unit appears from the orthophoto to contain woodland ponds, which could be valuable for amphibian breeding.

The Conservation Authority does not generally support the conversion of wetland to agricultural lands. As such, it is recommended that a site visit be conducted during the spring or summer to determine whether or not the woodland contains wetland and/or any species of concern. A scoped Environmental Impact Study may be required by the Town of Georgina Official Plan (s. 3.6.3.3).

If this application is approved, it is requested that a 15 metre undisturbed vegetative buffer along both sides of the watercourse be retained. Where there is currently no vegetative buffer, one should be established

I trust this meets your information requirements. Please advise us of your decision on this matter.

Please reference the above file numbers in any future correspondence.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kim Baker".

Kim Baker, B.Sc.
Natural Heritage Biologist

KB/ph

c. J. Hosick, Manager, Planning, Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority