



Quinte Field Naturalists

The Quinte Field Naturalists Association is affiliated with Ontario Nature, a non-profit organization sponsoring nature education, conservation and research.

2021 02 22

To: Mayor Mitch Panciuk and Councillors Allsopp, Kelly, Malette, McCaw, Thompson, Williams, Carr & Sandison

The Quinte Field Naturalists Association strongly encourages the Belleville City Council to protect Belleville's Wetlands from development. Contiguous blocks of wetlands are important to the maintenance of biodiversity, the ecological life support upon which Humans and all other species depend. While QFN is not opposed to development, the Association is in favour & supportive of only environmentally friendly development that respects the significance and value of wetlands and other natural areas.

The City of Belleville is very fortunate to have within its jurisdiction valuable wetlands and stretches of shoreline. The Belleville Marsh, part of which is located on the Bakelite property, the Bell Creek Swamp and the Blessington Creek Marsh all are rich resources that provide many benefits to the City of Belleville. Plans of the past have recognized the need to protect the shoreline and these wetlands: we encourage you to attend to the direction outlined in these insightful plans.

Belleville's wetlands are remnants of the coastal wetlands on the north shore of Lake Ontario. This property is historically important, as it is one of the few remaining pieces of this Great Lake's coastal wetland. The incorporation of a plan by the City of Belleville to preserve all of the remaining wetlands and shoreline would be a rare jewel and a statement to everyone of the proactive, 'ecosystem grounded' thinking of the City's leaders. Natural wetlands offer invaluable assets to Belleville's dwellers and visitors, alike. Wetlands are an attraction for tourism and provide a wonderful opportunity for people to relax in a peaceful setting.

In addition, wetlands supply educational benefits for people deeply interested in nature and for teachers & their students. Wetlands are storehouses of life. The mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, amphibians, insects and many other inhabitants of the wetlands comprise the great diversity of wetland species, some of which are rare. Visiting naturalists would appreciate the opportunity to study the large number of species of flora and fauna living there and many other people could learn about the wide range of life that exists in the world around them.

Wetlands have many vital ecological functions. They serve as nurseries for fish, they control pests, they protect the shore from erosion and they mitigate flood damage. The

plants growing in this habitat cleanse the water and filter out pollutants, thus serving as a natural water purifier and helping to guarantee ample fresh, clean water in the area. The plants also store carbon dioxide as carbon in their tissues. By performing as vital carbon sinks, they help to mitigate climate change and global warming. All of these actions would have notable economic benefit for the City of Belleville and would demonstrate to neighbouring municipalities the many positive outcomes of protecting wetlands, the service providers of our natural heritage.

Quinte Field Naturalists Association urges the Belleville City Council to act now before it is too late to save our valuable natural wetlands which will enrich the lives of Humans and all living things for as long that they are allowed to exist.

We trust that you will take our recommendation into account and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



George Thomson
Quinte Field Naturalists President