

Solve beaver overpopulation: SNC report

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WILLIAMSBURG — After years of research work dedicated to Hosaic Creek, a report has finally been released by the Hosaic Creek Committee, co-ordinated by South Nation Conservation (SNC).

The document details the needs for addressing flooding and land drainage issues, maintaining and improving surface water quality, protecting and enhancing natural heritage features, and promoting stewardship opportunities.

But, most importantly, it calls for a solution to end the overpopulation of beavers in the area.

SNC employees Jennifer Boyer, senior planner, and Sandra Mancini, director of planning and engineering, provided Township of South Dundas council members with a

copy of the report at the most recent meeting on Tues., April 20.

In the audience were residents of the Hosaic Creek area, including Trevor Tolley, who initially brought his concerns about the watershed to council in 2007. At the time, Tolley expressed his concerns about the water levels in the creek, and the loss of agriculture and forestry land, including extensive loss on his own property.

During the meeting, Tolley again stated that he had lost a lot of land because of continued flooding of the Hosaic Creek.

The cause of the water overflow stems from persistent beaver dams that are causing the creek to back up onto the property's of area homeowners. South Dundas has hired trappers in the past to relocate the beavers from the area; however, the population continues to grow exponentially, according to SNC.

"It's pointless moving the dams," said Tolley, adding that beavers continue to build new ones. "We have to face it, we need to eliminate the beavers."

However, both SNC employees agreed that this project will continue into the foreseeable future.

"There's still work to be done," said Boyer, prior to the end of the presentation. Boyer added that the project will continue this year, with the development of a beaver plan, continuation of beaver dam removal, further monitoring of the area, collection of new data, and securing more funding or grants. "A plan's no good if it sits on the shelf."

Following the slideshow presentation, Mayor Robert Gillard aired his frustration with what he believes is a "lack of action."

"For 30 years that creek has been a problem," he said. "[It] needs

proper drainage, [because] the water has moved extensively."

Boyer interjected and said that it is SNC's hope to develop a long-term evaluation for the area this year, while Mancini stressed the need for the beaver management plan.

"It takes time," said Mancini. South Dundas manager of planning and enforcement Donald J.W. Lewis, who has been supportive of the work, added that the research that has been completed is beneficial.

"[South Dundas] had no data on this issue," he said. "We have a lot now, [but] we need money for immediate response."

Deputy-Mayor Steven Byvelds said the key to successful implementation of positive change is "getting all players on the same page."

"[It's] nature versus humans," he said. "Unfortunately, they [beavers] need to be eliminated."