

## Frequently Asked Questions

### *Navan Community Enhancement – Natural Habitat and Nature Trails*

#### **Q: Who is undertaking the proposed work?**

A: Funding, specific to the enhancement of wetland habitat, has been awarded through the Ontario Power Generation's 'Regional Biodiversity Funding Program' and through the City of Ottawa's 'Water Environment Strategy'. Additionally, SNC has secured additional fund from the City of Ottawa for the construction of a local nature trail. Between the multiple funding sources approximately \$300,000 has been secured for all the work.

SNC will be the project lead for both proposed projects, however construction will be tendered out to meet the project requirements.

#### **Q: Are you going to create swamps?**

A: No, the project site currently exists as a low-lying ecosystem of treed and thicket swamp, meadow marsh and cattail marsh. This project proposes only to enhance the existing wetland by digging small, shallow wildlife ponds which will fill with existing ground water, and hold water consistently throughout the year.

The benefits to creating wildlife ponds here includes holding surface water as it drains off the landscape, improving water quality downstream at McKinnons Creek, and enhancing habitat for birds, amphibians, and reptiles.

#### **Q: Will the wildlife ponds increase the mosquito population in Navan?**

A: The proposed excavation of wildlife ponds should not effectively increase the population of mosquitoes in Navan.

Most nuisance mosquitoes preferred breeding habitat includes seasonally wet, low lying floodplain areas, and standing water in hollow logs, birdbaths, old tires, flower pots etc. All of which presently exist within the community and around the low-lying project site. As such, the development of permanent ponds will not encourage or enhance the preferred habitat of these types of mosquitos.

Wetland enhancements such as wildlife ponds help control mosquito populations by providing a biodiverse habitat with natural predators, and by reducing flooding.

**Q: Why are you building a nature trail here?**

**A:** The local community expressed interest in creating a pathway or boardwalk within the village of Navan to celebrate Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> year in 2017. The community association received support from Councilor Blais' office and contacted SNC for support.

The City of Ottawa has procured funds specifically for the creation of a boardwalk and pathway to connect residents to their local environment.

Additional features of the trail, proposed by the Navan Community Association, include plaques to commemorate the 24 Prime Ministers of Canada, benches to recognize the founding families of Navan and signage to highlight interesting plant life/features along the path. Costs associated with these additional features along the nature trail will be covered by the Navan Community Association who will applying for additional funding.

**Q: What about public safety, is there a risk of falling into the pond and drowning?**

**A:** The depths of the proposed ponds are 0.2 to 1.2 meters. There is an element of risk when near open water. However, the existing drainage features on the site are much deeper than the proposed ponds. The ponds edges will also have gradual slopes.

We recommend that children be kept under the supervision of a parent or guardian when exploring any natural ecosystem.

The project design does not encourage access to the local ecosystem, rather the goal is to have it be viewed from the boardwalk.

**Q: I live in Navan, but I haven't heard about this project before.**

**A:** SNC has been working with Councillor Blais' office to communicate project details with the local community, beginning in June 2016. Communications to the local community were carried out through the following venues:

- Public meet and greet at the Navan Memorial Centre & Arena June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016.
- Letters to adjacent landowners sent out November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016.
- SNC staff attend Navan Community Association meeting to discuss the proposed projects on December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016.
- Prior to any heavy equipment arrival, tree trimming, or construction, the landowners on both sides of the proposed trail access were consulted on site.
- SNC staff attended a public meeting to discuss the proposed projects with the Navan community at the Navan arena on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017.
- Letters explaining the status of the project, which will direct community members to SNC's website with additional details and information are being mailed out.

***An additional public meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 PM.***

- This meeting will allow the community to further discuss the habitat enhancement and the nature trail design at the Navan Memorial Centre and Arena: 1295 Colonial Rd, Navan, ON.

As the project details and designs move ahead, SNC will communicate these with the residents of Navan through this website.

**Q: Navan is a quiet neighborhood; won't the proposed projects create an influx of traffic and parked cars on the quiet streets of our neighborhood?**

**A:** This project will primarily be for the enjoyment of the Navan community and its residents.

A similar project undertaken by SNC saw the construction of a boardwalk in the Provincially Significant Leitrim Wetland within the Findlay Creek Village Community in 2011. There is no parking available for visitors to access the wetland. The Leitrim Wetland saw 17,000 local visitors in 2014 and over 18,000 in 2015 yet there has not been any significant influx of parked vehicles or traffic on the streets in this community. The boardwalk is mainly accessed by pedestrian traffic living in the neighborhood.

The Navan project is much smaller in size and the impact on the neighborhood should be minimal. An increase in local foot traffic is expected as this project is for the local community.

**Q: Why is the proposed access for the ponds and nature trail between two private residences off Birchtree Crescent in Navan? Could access come from the existing Prescott-Russel recreational trail?**

**A:** The access route on Birchtree Crescent is owned by the City of Ottawa. Access off the existing Prescott Russell Recreational Trail was considered, though the City does not hold a long-term lease for the route.

Access off the existing trail is preferred. SNC and the City of Ottawa are exploring alternative options for access.

**Q: Are both the proposed habitat enhancement and nature trail part of one project, or can one go ahead without the other?**

**A:** The two proposed projects are not dependent on each other to move forward.

However, there are benefits to having both projects at one site. The proposed trail will provide controlled access to enhanced wetland habitat, promote biodiversity, and will create a unique place for community members and families to get outdoors and learn more about the local environment.

**Q: Will you be bringing in or removing any animals into the site?**

**A:** No, we will not be bringing in any new animals to the site, nor will we be removing any. Only new plant material will be brought in. The proposed wildlife ponds will naturally draw new species to the site over time, such as turtles, frogs, waterfowl, and wetland plants.

There is currently beaver activity in the project area. The proposed enhancements should provide the beaver with preferred habitat to protect the existing stand of maple trees on the property.

**Q: There are beavers destroying the trees and causing water to back up in the area.**

**A:** Beavers are not a barrier to the completion of the wildlife ponds or the nature trail. SNC does not control or manage beaver activity and the project site is on City owned property.

Beavers are a keystone species and having beavers on-site aligns with enhancement efforts, especially for waterfowl as many species of waterfowl depend on beaver habitat for pairing and nesting.

Should the project proceed, trees will be wrapped in protective fencing and willow tree species will be planted on site to encourage beavers away from protected maples. Additionally, we anticipate these ponds will provide an abundance of spring and summer food sources for beavers, such as water lily, duckweed, wetland grasses and sedges.

**Q: What will happen to the species that live there now? What if there are rare species?**

**A:** In August 2016 SNC staff undertook a site inventory of the existing flora and fauna; this inventory did not reveal any rare or at-risk species. Ontario's Natural Heritage Information Centre database and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry were consulted for the presence of species in the nearby area.

Although, rare species exist near Navan, the proposed project site is not home to any species at risk. SNC staff will be onsite during the construction of both projects and will be monitoring for species to ensure species are not impacted by the construction. Construction work will be scheduled outside nesting and migratory timelines.

**Q: Why are you proposing to dig in Leda clay?**

**A:** Parts of Eastern Ontario are located on Leda clay. Part of SNC's site assessment prior to construction included the review of natural hazard mapping specific to Leda clay and the proposed project site is not located within the hazard mapping zone. The City of Ottawa Slope Stability guidelines confirm that a geotechnical assessment is not required, confirmed by high resolution topographic data and site assessment.

This project site is suitable and preferred for the work proposed by this project.

**Q: Navan needs sidewalks why are you spending this money to create ponds and boardwalk?**

**A:** SNC has secured funding specific to wetland enhancement within the SNC jurisdiction. The Navan area was considered due to correspondence with Navan residents in 2009 and 2010 regarding the loss of wetland and pond habitat in the community. The grant obtained for the proposed ponds and trail are specific to the enhancement of wetland habitat and biodiversity. Should the community decide they do not want the habitat enhancement, the funds will be returned to the supporting agencies.