SAAR
Environmental Limited

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Terrasan Environmental Peer Review Update

## 1. Woodlands

If determined to be “significant” based on Eco-district or municipal relative amounts of forest cover, total forest retention versus removal should be identified at this early design stage to facilitate discussions about retained natural areas and enhancement plantings where required.

The final location of natural areas to be retained should align with the observed locations of wildlife corridors across the site, in particular the active wildlife between the shoreline and near shore forest.

The proponents consultations could consider shaping the exact locations for these retained corridors with the assistance of a spring 2009 field reconnaissance helpful in tracking wildlife movement.

## 2. Wetlands

### Shoreline Wetland

We audited the shoreline of the Silver Creek Provincially Significant Wetland (PSW) during a separate delineation task during the summer of 2008 with the environmental consulting firm retained to perform this task.

We can confirm that the limits set in the summer of 2008 are an accurate representation of where shoreland terrestrial and aquatic provincial wetland is situated on and near this parcel.

Next, we spot audited portions of the upland wet ridges on the site to ensure a measure of conformity between our wetland evaluation techniques and the consultants. We can conclude that within a few metres, our

approximation and determination of provincial wetland limits is reasonably close for evaluation purposes and follows the Southern Wetland Evaluation Manual authored by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

**Terrestrial Wetland**

Wetlands supporting wildlife functions (e.g. ground nesting birds, salamanders, vegetation, amphibian vernal breeding ponds) are present within the provincial wetland in varying degrees; some support ecology, some do not.

A later summer visit was undertaken by our team in response to environmental consultant liaison on inclusion and exclusion of wetland units based on function.

We agreed that a small (<0.5 ha) sized wetland with obvious signs of prior site alteration (e.g. sod, fill) could be removed from the formal wetland limits of the map, pending the mandated review agency agreement on said wetland.

A longer wetland slough beside this unit was also evaluated for inclusion or exclusion to the provincial wetland. The extent of spring fieldwork completed is being discussed. In the event that additional field work is still required, we would consider establishing a special policy area for the wetland slough until receiving the information.

Wood frogs occupy the treed swamp in sections, and we find the appropriate sampling time, although weather dependent, usually occurs at the end of March once snow is melting away, and carries through here until mid-April at the latest.

The goal is to ensure that the current reflection of existing wetland conditions on this parcel meets the provincial evaluation methods, but also maintains the water storage functions and aquatic and terrestrial ecology the PSW is known for.

**Species at Risk**

**Herpetofauna**

Available turtle nesting habitat was documented during our joint site inspection of shoreline provincial wetlands. We confirm that the potential

nest habitat we observed falls within the provincial wetland limits and is conserved in this manner.

Final upland reconnaissance at later study stages should continue to provide additional field opportunities to document the presence/absence of rare species and in particular for this region, searches should continue during site visits for the endangered status tree species, Butternut. We are familiar with many stems of this tree growing within sunny hedgerows and forest edges similar to those available on this parcel.

Our summer audit during provincial wetland limit determination also incorporated some vegetation community work, and we confirm that a sedge located during that day is a conservation status plant known as *Carex formosa.*

We recognize that a Blanding's turtle and later a Milk Snake were observed by the Georgian Bay Islands Trust. Respectively, conservation zones should be well delineated by a 'living fence' of thorny shrubs including Hawthorn to discourage entry into the forested swamps. Restrictions on nervous landscaping, and clearing of brush piles and leaf litter should also apply to the conservation zones since snakes and salamanders as well as other wildlife like the Ovenbird make use of the moist duff to forage under, sleep under and in the case of the Ovenbird, create their ground nests amidst the cover as a foil from predators. These types of provisions can be considered for conditions to the Site Plan and printed for landowners in the form of an educational brochure which informs them of the interesting ecology along Georgian Bay.

### 3. Fish Habitat

Dip net and 'G'-Type Minnow traps should be installed in the roadside drain and shallow littoral zone for a confirmation of present day aquatic community character. We agree that information likely exists at the conservation authority and Ontario Ministry of Natural Resource levels however this is in broader context and sometimes outdated when temperature regimes and trophic structures change. So we do look forward to a discussion on how setbacks are afforded to maintain the existing water quality of surfacewater features, and where possible enhance banks with native plantings. We observed a measure of invasive weedy species on the site and along creekbanks and these areas may be good candidates for restoration.

## 4. Birds

The size of nest territories required by the interior forest birds of the site should be viewed relative to the limits of proposed development to ensure that the woodland warblers continue to be maintained post development.

## 5. Lepidoptera

Milkweed host plants are available naturally on this site, with the supported and observed Monarch Butterfly species of conservation concern. Maintaining habitat for this butterfly will also allow for conservation of other butterflies in this guild.

We recommend that host plants and nectaring plants be part of a native planting plan directed at open meadow habitat to be retained on the site for this species. We prefer to direct these plantings away from the internal road network to reduce the road kill of butterflies during migration.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on the environmental peer review at this time.

Sincerely,

Linda-Liisa Sõber

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