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Regional Municipality of Peel
Office of the Regional Chair

MAR 8 2011

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708 Nautalex Court,
Mississauga, Ontario.
L5H 1A7

February 28, 2011.

Regional Chair Emil Kolb and Members of Council,
Region of Peel,
10 Peel Centre Drive,
Brampton, Ontario.
L5T 4B9

Dear Mr. Kolb and Members of Council,

Conservation Halton update

As one of your current citizen appointees to Conservation Halton, I should like to provide you with an update on some of its activities. A similar letter will be sent to the City of Mississauga.

At this year's inaugural meeting of Conservation Halton held February 24, 2011 John Vice was elected Chair of the Conservation Authority. John is a citizen appointee from the City of Burlington, was the former Vice-Chair and has been a member of the board for a number of years. Keith Bird was elected Vice-Chair. Keith is a long time Oakville and Region of Halton councillor who first joined the Conservation Halton board over 30 years ago.

Five new members have joined the board and at the moment Conservation Halton is waiting to receive confirmation of three more members – one from Hamilton and two from Peel. The final total is 18 members.

The United Nations declared 2010 to be the International Year of Biodiversity and 2011 to be the International Year of Forests. Conservation Halton is able to promote these initiatives through its programmes and communications. For example, in 2010 messaging and events included a significant focus on reducing the impact of invasive species, protecting species at risk and preserving and enhancing natural habitats. 59,000 trees were planted last year – on public and private lands. Forest cover in Conservation Halton's watershed is currently 25%. The target is 30%. "Celebrating Forests for People" is the theme adopted for 2011 communications and marketing. There will be a number of special events as well as more tree planting.

Conservation Halton has a number of conservation areas offering a wide variety of active and passive recreation. There were close to 750,000 visitors to the parks in 2010. A number of special programmes and events are provided such as Christmas Town, maple syrup season, Fall into Nature, mountain bike races as well as the birds

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of prey at Mountsberg and Crawford Lake's 15th century Iroquoian village. As you are aware, development in the watershed is growing at a significant pace with more and more members of the public looking for recreational opportunities. The challenge will be to accommodate the number of visitors without compromising the natural heritage.

In December 2010 the master plan for the new Glenorchy Conservation Area in Oakville was completed and approved by the Ontario Realty Corporation. In 2011 master plans for Crawford Lake, Hilton Falls, Mount Nemo and Rattlesnake Point should be finished. These plans will help guide future improvements, protection of significant natural areas and address the need for investment in infrastructure.

The planning, engineering and ecology staff work hard to preserve and protect the watershed's natural environment through their review of permit and planning applications as well as extensive long-term monitoring. This is an increasing challenge given the significant new development in the watershed. In 2010 350 permit applications and over 900 planning applications were received.

The Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship programme continues to encourage more private landowners to increase and/or improve the natural features on their lands. In addition, Conservation Halton leads the implementation of the Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan.

Conservation Halton provides excellent education programmes, particularly for children. and is a significant partner in the annual Halton Children's Water Festival which was attended by over 4,200 students last September.

Last December the Board approved a total expenditure budget for 2011 of \$21,868,672 subject to confirmation by the watershed municipalities. I understand the final presentation (to Hamilton) took place last week but we have yet to hear from them.

Staff at Conservation Halton do a first rate job of carrying out their responsibilities whatever their job description. It is an excellent organization worthy of your support and a great asset to its watershed. If you have an opportunity to visit one of the conservation areas, it will be time well spent. www.conservationhalton.on.ca is a source of information on what is available.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity of serving as one of your representatives at Conservation Halton . I consider it to be an honour and a privilege.

Yours sincerely,

Jean H. Williams