



CPAWS Ottawa Valley Chapter
250 City Centre Avenue
Suite 601
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 6K7
(613) 232-7297
www.cpaws-ov-vo.org

February 1, 2011

Jim Watson,
Mayor
City of Ottawa
110 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1J1

RE: Beaver Ponds Forest Development Project

Mayor Watson,

On behalf of the 3000 members and supporters of the Ottawa Valley Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), I am writing to urge you and the new Council of the City of Ottawa to take the required steps to halt the forest clearing operations currently taking place in the Beaver Pond Forest and to permanently protect the South March Highlands, including the Beaver Pond Forest area, from urban development.

The South March Highlands is among the richest and most biodiverse landscapes in eastern Ontario and the only area where the Canadian Shield is represented within the city of Ottawa. This area is home to countless species at risk, it forms the headwaters of a number of streams and has the potential to become a destination of choice for outdoor recreation. In fact, as early as 1980's, CPAWS identified the need to protect this area for future generations, and the Beaver Pond Forest was selected as a provincially significant candidate Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) several years ago. The proximity of the South March Highlands to the National Capital Greenbelt makes the area even more valuable, as it will provide species inside the Greenbelt with a connection to the broader landscape. Finally, the South March Highlands and the Beaver Pond Forest have been shown to contain some of the oldest archeological sites in the region and further study of the archeological potential of the area is required before development can occur.

It has been shown that Ottawans value their parks and green space, as it contributes to the high quality of life enjoyed by residents of the area. Moreover, the inner city is laced with brownfields, undeveloped lands (LeBreton Flats and Bayview yards) and examples of poor planning (one floor LCBO outlet at the intersection of Rideau Street and King Edward Avenue as one example). With a little creativity and vision, we can manage Ottawa's housing needs for the future without destroying the very landscape that attracts so many people to Ottawa.

Please ensure that an immediate halt is called to the clearing operations currently underway in the Beaver Ponds Forest, and that steps are taken to

- (a) conduct a comprehensive ecological study of the Beaver Pond Forest as part of a larger study of the South March Highlands as a whole,
- (b) conduct a comprehensive archaeological study of the area to replace the inadequate study that has been prepared to date, and
- (c) develop a plan to preserve the Beaver Pond Forest as part of a larger natural area in the South March Highlands.

In closing, I urge you and the City Council to do all that you can to protect this remarkable area from development.

Sincerely,

John McDonnell

John McDonnell,
Executive Director

CC:

Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario
Michael Chan, Ontario Minister of Tourism and Culture
Norm Sterling, MPP
Yasir Naqvi, MPP
Bob Chiarelli, MPP
Andrea Prazmowski, Coalition to Protect the South March Highlands