

18 October 2012

Mr. Andrew Sorensen,  
Environmental Planning Coordinator  
Grey Sauble Conservation  
237897 Inglis Falls Road  
R.R. #4  
Owen Sound, ON  
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***By E-mail***

Mr. Sorensen,

**Re: Blue Trails - Eden Oak: North Parcel Environmental Constraints**

Development has been proposed for a 17.09 Ha property known as Part Lot 20, Concession 2, Town of the Blue Mountains. The development proponent is Eden Oak, and the property is hereafter referred to as the "Eden Oak Property".

An Environmental Impact Study (EIS) report was prepared for the Eden Oak Property in 2004 by Ages Consultants limited, and submitted in support of the 2007 draft-approved plan (Registered Plan 529). In 2011, at the request of the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSCA), an EIS update was completed in support of the development application. The EIS update provided focused assessment of site hydrological characteristics, characteristics of existing vegetation cover, avian community characteristics, and the presence and condition of Butternut trees, which are a species at risk (SAR). This EIS document was further revised in April 2012 to account for relatively recent additions of bird species (Eastern Meadowlark and Barn Swallow) to the provincial SAR list.

The application now includes a 0.24-ha parcel of land north of Old Lakeshore Road, legally referred to as Part 2, Lot 174, Plan 529, Plan 16R-8571. The attached aerial image<sup>1</sup> depicts the combined Eden Oak Property, including the north parcel. The north lot has not been included in any of the past environmental reports. The purpose of this letter report is provide a review of environmental conditions on this north parcel, and to identify any environmental constraints that need to be considered in the planning and approval process. The issues of current focus are consistent with those of the recent assessments of the larger parcel.

Surveillance of the north parcel was conducted on 20 September 2012. The entire perimeter and interior of the parcel was walked, noting the nature of vegetation communities, the presence of individual plant species, the presence of any hydrological features, and evidence of wildlife presence.

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<sup>1</sup> Aerial image courtesy of County of Grey GIS website (Aerial Photo 2010)

**Reference: Eden Oak – North Parcel Environmental Constraints**

In regard to hydrology, this parcel of land is located within the watershed for Stream # 7. The parcel itself is devoid of any surface water features. A shallow vegetated swale runs along the northern property boundary, between that boundary and the adjacent Georgian Trail. This ditch appears to convey occasional stormwater runoff from the trailway, and possibly from the parcel itself. Overall, the parcel in question is devoid of hydrological features and there are no related constraints to consider.

The existing vegetation within the parcel is predominantly herbaceous, with isolated specimens or clusters of woody vegetation scattered throughout. Following the Ecological Land Classification (ELC) system of Lee et al<sup>2</sup>, the entire parcel would be described as a Mineral Cultural Meadow ecosite (i.e., tree and shrub cover less than 25%). The herbaceous cover is well established, consisting of a mix of various grasses and a variety of common dicot species, including a number of non-native species typical of disturbed sites. A tabular summary of herbaceous and woody plant species recorded within the bounds of the north parcel is attached. The woody vegetation included five mature specimens of Red Ash (30 to 50 cm DBH) within the interior portion of the parcel, and single specimens of Eastern White Cedar (51 cm DBH) and Scotch Pine (35 cm DBH). Numerous Lilacs are scattered along the northern perimeter of the parcel.

The only plant of possible concern is a single mulberry tree in the southwest corner of the property. This tree is large with multiple trunks (up to 51 cm DBH) and a wide, spreading crown measuring ~14 m across. This specimen appears to be a Red Mulberry (*Morus rubra*), although it could be a hybridized specimen. Red Mulberry is listed Provincially as *Endangered*. There are other Red Mulberry in the area, including a small (13 cm DBH) specimen in the southwest wooded block within the main (south) part of the Eden Oak property. There are also two larger specimens within tree-lines on the nearby Oelbaum property. The Craigleith area is well north of the natural range of Red Mulberry in Ontario, and specimens in the area are likely planted or escaped. Regardless of its origin, the Red Mulberry specimen in the north parcel should be afforded protection as part of the pending Tree Preservation Plan.

During site surveillance, a few common bird species (Blue Jay, Chickadee, Song Sparrow, Crow) were directly observed within or in close proximity to the property in question. Past presence of Sapsuckers was evidenced by distinctive hole patterns on the trunk of the Scotch Pine specimen. Overall, the site offers conditions that would support nesting or foraging of a number of open country bird species. The presence of established cover of mixed grass and herbs has the general theoretical potential to provide nesting habitat for grassland birds that have been listed as SAR, including Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark. Conditions conducive to nesting of the Barn Swallow (i.e. ledges, farm buildings, sheds) are absent from the property. In the

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<sup>2</sup> Lee, H.T., W.D. Bakowsky, J. Riley, J. Bowles, M. Puddister, P. Uhlig and S. McMurray. 1998. Ecological Land Classification for Southern Ontario: First Approximation and Its Application. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Southcentral Science Section, Science Development and Transfer Branch. SCSS Field Guide FG-02.

**Reference: Eden Oak – North Parcel Environmental Constraints**

recent assessment of breeding potential of these three species in the main portion of the Eden Oak Property, it was noted that there are only isolated records of their presence in the general vicinity of the property, with no firm breeding evidence. In general, the relatively small size of the north parcel and its proximity to roadways and non-grassland habitat significantly reduce its suitability for breeding or foraging habitat for Bobolinks, Barn Swallows and Meadowlarks. Overall, there is no current evidence to suggest that these species have been present at the north parcel, particularly for breeding purposes, and the conditions are such that there is little expectation of their future presence.

In summary, the current review of the north parcel of the Eden Oak Property indicates that there are no environmental constraints related to hydrology or avian SAR. The presence of what appears to be a mature specimen of Red Mulberry (Provincially *Endangered*) constitutes the only feature of the site that would require mitigating measures going forward. Because this specimen is located in the extreme southwest corner of the property, it could be readily subject to protection as part of a Tree Preservation Plan.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this environmental review, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neil Morris". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Neil" being more prominent than the last name "Morris".

Neil Morris, Consulting Ecologist  
2480 Olde Baseline Rd.  
Caledon, Ontario  
L7C 0J3

cc: Andrew Pascuzzo, Planner, D.C. Slade Consultants

**Table 1: Plant Species Summary – Eden Oak North Parcel**

<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Provincial Status</b>	<b>Origin</b>	<b>Typical habitat/occurrence</b>
Birdfoot Trefoil	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	NA	non-native	roadsides and waste areas
Bull Thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	NA	non-native	roadsides, fields
Canada Goldenrod	<i>Solidago canadensis</i>	S5	Native	roadsides, thickets and clearings
Chicory	<i>Chicorium intybus</i>	NA	non-native	roadsides and waste areas
Colt's Foot	<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	NA	non-native	roadsides and waste areas
Common Burdock	<i>Arctium minus</i>	NA	non-native	roadsides and waste areas
Common Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	NA	non-native	fields and meadows
Common Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	NA	non-native	lawns, fields, roadsides
Common Ragweed	<i>Ambrosia artemisiifolia</i>	S5	Native	roadsides, fields
Common Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	NA	non-native	roadsides, fields, waste places
Eastern White Cedar	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	S5	Native	usually in association with limestone
Garlic mustard	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	NA	non-native	open soil (disturbed areas, forest)
Great Mullein	<i>Verbascum thapsis</i>	NA	non-Native	disturbed sites
Lilac	<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>	NA	non-native	ornamental
Milkweed	<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	S5	native	open, disturbed sites
Norway Maple	<i>Acer platanoides</i>	NA	non-native	ornamental
Oxeye Daisy	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	NA	non-native	fields and meadows, disturbed sites
Philadelphia Fleabane	<i>Erigeron philadelphicus</i>	S5	Native	fields, open woods
Red Ash	<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>	S5	Native	shores and banks, open areas
Red Mulberry	<i>Morus rubra</i>	S2	Native	among other hardwoods on deep moist soils
Reed Canary Grass	<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>	S5	non-native	abundant in old pasture blocks
Scotch Pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	NA	non-native	plantations, disturbed sites
Scotch Thistle	<i>Onopordum acanthium</i>	NA	non-native	roadsides, waste areas
Self-heal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	S5	non-native	roadsides and waste areas
Spearmint	<i>Mentha spicata</i>	NA	non-native	wet meadows
Teasel	<i>Dipsacus sylvestris</i>	NA	non-native	roadsides and waste areas
viper's bugloss	<i>Echium vulgare</i>	NA	non-Native	meadows and open woods
Wild Carrot	<i>Daucus carota</i>	NA	non-native	roadsides, fields and waste areas
Wild Grape	<i>Vitis riparia</i>	S5	Native	woodland openings and edges

