

**North Gwillimbury
Forest Alliance**



**environmental
defence**
INSPIRING CHANGE



**David
Suzuki
Foundation**

SOLUTIONS ARE IN OUR NATURE

Sept. 14, 2016

The Honourable Bill Mauro
Minister of Municipal Affairs
777 Bay Street
Toronto M5G 2E5

And

The Honourable Kathryn McGarry
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
Room 6630, Whitney Block
99 Wellesley Street West
Toronto M7A 1W3

Dear Minister Mauro and Minister McGarry:

**Re: Town of Georgina's Official Plan and the Protection of the Paradise Beach-Island Grove
Provincially Significant Wetland**

As you know, the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) prohibits development on Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSW) in southern Ontario. And Section 26 of the Planning Act requires that all municipal Official Plans be consistent with the PPS.

Nevertheless, the Town of Georgina's new Official Plan has failed to prohibit development on the 500 acre Maple Lake Estate (MLE) property in the North Gwillimbury Forest despite the fact that the majority of this property is located on the Paradise Beach-Island Grove PSW and 80% of it is undevelopable as a result.

The 1,073 unit MLE mobile home development received planning approvals in 1988, but has remained dormant for over 25 years. We think you will agree that a great deal has changed in our approach to planning and our appreciation of the value of wetlands in the last quarter century.

If the MLE development proceeds it will destroy the Paradise Beach-Island Grove PSW and split the North Gwillimbury Forest – one of the ten largest remaining forests in the Lake Simcoe watershed -- in two. The Town of Georgina has already lost 50% of its original large wetlands. As a consequence, it cannot afford to also lose the Paradise Beach-Island Grove PSW.

The Town of Georgina’s Director of Planning has justified the Official Plan’s failure to comply with the PPS by noting that the Town has not received any objections to this omission from the Government of Ontario. But it is also clear that the Plan does not meet the letter and the spirit of provincial policy.

The Town’s Official Plan has now been sent to the Region of York for approval and/or amendment. The Region is expected to make its decision on this matter in October 2016.

Therefore, we are writing to request that Ministry of Municipal Affairs and/or the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry inform the Region of York that it must comply with the PPS by amending Georgina’s Official Plan to prohibit development on the MLE property that is located on the Paradise Beach-Island Grove PSW in the North Gwillimbury Forest.

Yours truly,



Jack Gibbons
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North Gwillimbury
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