

News Release

REPORT ON RIVERSIDE SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL FISH HABITAT TECHNICAL MEETING, JULY 9

MANOTICK, July 9, 2007 — The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) has now reviewed all available fish habitat information for the proposed site for the new high school in the Riverside South community and has reached the following conclusion: **fish habitat is of some importance on and around the site but we are confident that we can accommodate protection of the sensitive fish areas and proceed with the planning for construction of the new school. There is light at the end of the culvert.**

According to the consultant's report and the experience of fish biologists from several review agencies, fish habitat is an issue in three areas of the proposed site. The RVCA, in its role as agent for the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, will be meeting this week with the Ottawa Carleton Catholic School Board and Planning staff at the City of Ottawa to discuss mitigation measures needed.

The three areas of concern are fish habitat identified at the confluence of the two tributary valleys (parking lot), fish habitat off the northern edge of the school property (soccer field), and the intermittent flow of surface water in the small valley through the site. These concerns could be addressed by relatively minor redesign of the parking lot, by protective buffers (setbacks) in the area of the soccer field and by collection and conveyance of any surface water flow in the small valley by pipe to the confluence of the two tributaries in order to maintain the volume and seasonality of flow downstream.

The Conservation Authority is taking the unusual step of reporting this decision because of the intense community interest and concern. This fish habitat review process goes on with all development applications in the Rideau Valley.

It is important to note that there are possible future fish habitat issues in other areas of the Riverside South community including several other tributaries that are identified as fish habitat and which are also scheduled for future residential development.

The process used to determine and resolve fish habitat issues in our area is under regulation by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans. There are several colleague agencies with input to these decisions and it is the responsibility of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority to make determinations based on science and experience.

Technical staff of the City of Ottawa, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Rideau Valley Conservation Authority and the consultant, Niblett Environmental Associates, were present at the meeting today.

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