

Conservation Halton board approves new Greenlands Strategy

By FANNIE SUNSHINE
The Champion

To better protect environmentally and ecologically-sensitive lands and natural ecosystems within the Conservation Halton watershed, the Greenlands Strategy plan was approved by the board of directors during Thursday's meeting.

The strategy plan will identify a number of issues, including lands currently owned and managed by Conservation Halton — forests, wetlands and valley lands. It will also include regulated lands that aren't publicly owned, such as wetlands and valley lands and lands that need environmental protection.

The goals of the Greenlands Strategy is to determine the natural heritage system for the watershed of Conservation Halton and the extent these lands should be in public ownership or protected through other methods, to identify and protect environmentally and ecologically sensitive lands through land acquisition, to protect or recreate historical natural ecosystems and to ensure Conservation Halton lands are managed appropriately.

"Once we establish the land that needs to be protected, we will indicate the best way to protect them," said Theresa Maguire-Garber, CAO/secretary-treasurer of

Conservation Halton.

"We have one year of work to identify what's out there and the best way to protect it."

Board member Andrea Bradford said she wasn't supporting the proposal as presented.

"The goals don't convince me of where this is going and why. Just by buying wetlands doesn't guarantee protection. Staff should take an in-depth look into this."

Ms Maguire-Garber said once a report is brought back to the board outlining the areas needed to be addressed, the next step would be to figure out the best way to protect the lands.

Board member Keith Bird said the Greenlands Strategy plan would lay the road map for pieces of land that should be protected.

"If we don't do it, some other group will. I want to start this now."

The process of identifying current greenlands within the watershed and the consulting fees for the Greenlands Strategy will have a cost impact of \$60,000 in the 2002 budget.

By March, 2003, a map identifying wetland location is expected to be presented to the board of directors.

By November of that year, a presentation of the Greenlands Strategy to the board of directors is expected for implementation and approval.

Security increased at water facilities

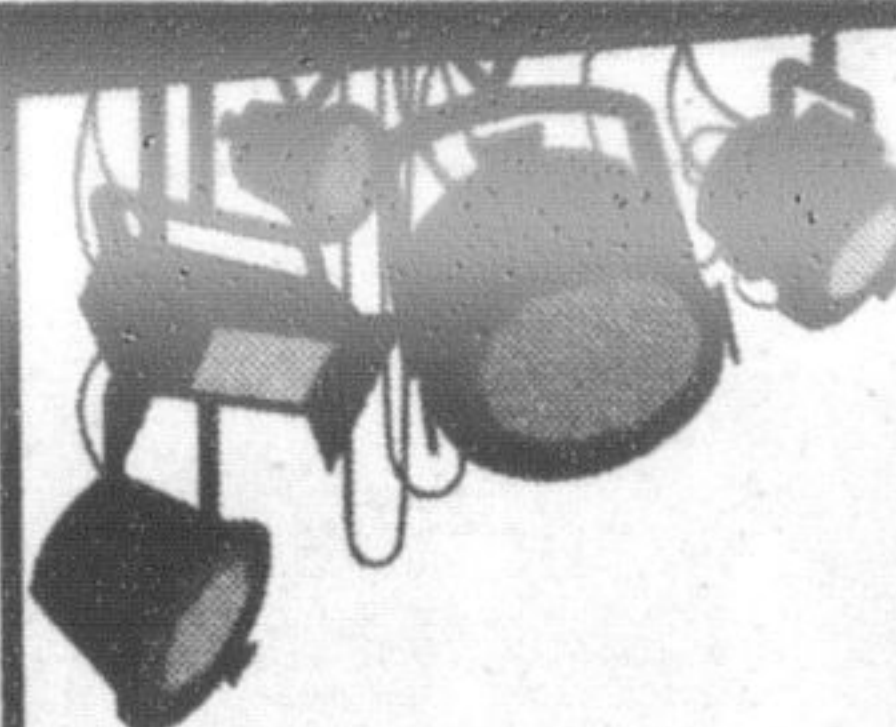
Halton Region is taking precautionary steps to ensure the local water supply doesn't come under attack.

Additional security measures are being implemented at water supply facilities to safeguard against any attempt at tampering with the supply. There have been no such attempts made to date.

"Security at our water supply facilities has always been a top priority and we have increased our vigilance in light of recent circumstances," said Patrick Murphy, the Region's commissioner of planning and public works.

"But the measures are strictly precautionary. Halton's water is as clean and safe to drink as always."

Police monitoring of water facilities has been increased, as well as the monitoring of visitors to the facilities. Physical security measures have also seen improvements.



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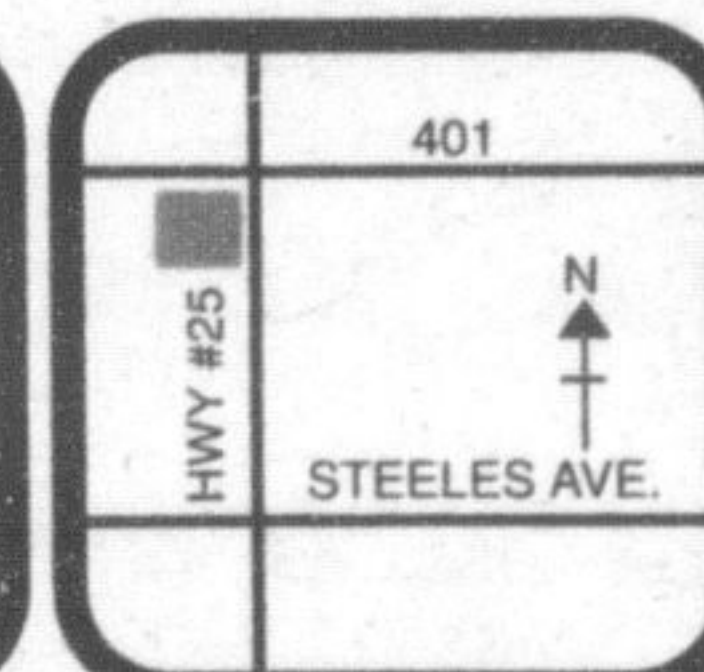


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