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48 PAGES "Using Communication to Build Better Communities"



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Old friends

Old friends reunite in Victoria Park under a shady tree to sip some lemonade and reminisce following the VE-Day parade downtown Sunday. From left are James Gilbert (Royal Canadian Air Force), his brother George and long-time friend Hugh Lamb (infantry). See more VE-Day coverage on pages 7 and 11.

Halton forest plan is up for approval

By MELANIE HENNESSEY

The Champion

A blueprint for managing the Halton Regional Forests that span across Milton and Halton Hills will go before regional council for consideration tomorrow.

The planning and public works committee endorsed the Halton Regional Forest Management Plan and a long list of related recommendations at its meeting Wednesday.

David Puttock from Silv-Econ Ltd, the resource management consultant firm that helped prepare the plan, outlined the document's primary goals at the meeting — to conserve natural heritage features and functions of the forest, provide opportunities for recreation, education and research where compatible and have efficient and effective forest administration and management.

"The Halton Regional Forest is really a jewel in southern Ontario," he said, noting the plan will maintain and enhance it.

The committee also heard from Michael Badyk, who uses the Halton Regional Forests for mountain biking.

He noted he's pleased that no trails in the forests will be closed without stakeholder consultation. But he also voiced his dissatisfaction with the plan not having a trails inventory.

"I still firmly believe this is something that should've appeared in the final draft report," he said.

The committee went on to support a motion with eight recommendations, including that:

- Council endorse the Halton Regional Forest Management Plan as the blueprint for managing the Regional Forests.

- Staff be directed to report back on the terms of reference and the establishment of a Halton Regional Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee and on guidelines/recommendations for use and development of the forests.

- The Conservation Halton board be advised that the Region intends to co-ordi-

"The Halton Regional Forest is really a jewel in southern Ontario."

DAVID PUTTOCK

nate with Conservation Halton as an adjacent landowner in developing the detailed planning for the individual forest tracts.

- Regional staff initiate improvements to the health of the Halton Forests this year by retaining the services of a professional forester through a competitive bid process.

The forest is broken down into 14 tracts that cover 1,645 acres. Prior to 1995, the area was known as the Agreement Forests and managed by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Partnered with the management plan is a 10-year capital plan, covering 2005 to 2014, and a five-year operating plan, spanning from 2005 to 2009.

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at mhennessey@miltoncanadianchampion.com.



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