

Beavers chew their way along Sixteen Mile Creek

By Julie Slack
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

There's plenty of beaver activity in Milton along the Sixteen Mile Creek, but officials say it's not a reason to be concerned.

Residents who live near the Laurier Avenue bridge over Sixteen Mile Creek may have noticed some trees felled, courtesy of the chomping beavers that reside in the area.

Conservation Halton (CH), which acts in an advisory capacity to the Town of Milton, provides guidance to landowners regarding beaver dams or debris accumulation along the creek, made it clear in a memo to Town of Milton officials that they are regulators only.

"I want to clarify that regulating a creek does not mean we own it, nor are we responsible for its ongoing maintenance," said Hassaan Basit,

general manager at CH, in a memo to Town staff.

The area near the Laurier Avenue bridge "is not the property of CH or our responsibility to maintain. However, we are, and have always been, readily willing, able and happy to provide advice to the landowner for beaver dam and/or debris removal, as required."

He went on to note that CH's manager of engineering visited the site recently and was not able to locate a beaver dam or any debris upstream or downstream of the bridge. He did find beaver activity with felled trees along the channel banks and the remnants of a beaver dam under the bridge at Derry Road.

Councillor Colin Best told the *Champion* that beaver dams have existed along Sixteen Mile Creek in town for years without issues.

"There has been a beaver dam on



Beavers have been busy along the Sixteen Mile Creek near the Laurier Avenue bridge in Milton. *Justin Greaves / Canadian Champion*

the creek north of the mill pond for decades with no problems," he said, noting aerial photographs clearly show their existence.

Basit confirmed that analysis, noting that trees and other natural debris falling into creeks is common and may not always pose a flood

risk.

"This natural debris can play an important role in natural flood management and introduces important nutrients into the system, supporting its ecological diversity," he stated.

Beavers also help regenerate wet-

lands and forests and create habitat for other species, including wood duck, mink, otter and various types of fish.

CH also said that beavers can't be successfully relocated and beaver dam removal is a short-term solution because the beavers re-establish the dam. Landowners have the option of trapping them and removing the blockage or dam. In that case CH can act as an advisor.

Also, it doesn't seem that any group or organization actually counts beavers or beaver populations, including the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF).

Nearby, in Mississauga, beavers have been busy along the Credit River as well, but its conservation authority — Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) — isn't concerned that the numbers are over-active.

John Clayton, aquatic biologist

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