

# Ecologically sensitive Carlton Creek under attack again

BY MIKE ADLER  
Staff Writer

One of Markham's most valued natural areas, defended by the town council last month against a development proposal, now faces damage from another source — York Region.

The region is applying to widen the rural two-lane stretch of Warden Avenue between Apple Creek Boulevard and Major Mackenzie Drive to five lanes, in order to carry future traffic through the town.

The widening would cut trees in the Warden Hemlock Woods, a woodlot the town considers its best local example of a mature mixed coniferous-deciduous forest.

Warden runs through the woods and over crossings of the Rouge River tributaries Berczy Creek and Carlton Creek.

The stream restoration group Ontario Streams says Carlton Creek is home to the reddsace, an endangered minnow found in only six

Ontario locations, and the stream "may provide the best remaining cold-water habitat in the urban GTA."

But the region said the roadwork — part of a set of Warden widenings submitted for environmental approval — is needed to carry future traffic through the town.

*Widening Warden could affect water quality, quantity and temperature in the creek.*

The forest is on a glacial deposit which is a steady source of cold water for Carlton Creek. "It's actually the key area for making Carlton Creek a cold-water system," said Ken Dion, a scientist who studied the creek for two years.

Widening Warden could affect water quality, quantity and temperature in the creek and could seriously impair attempts to improve the health of the stream, Dion said in an interview.

The former Ontario Streams employee spoke last month against a builder's plan for a subdivision beside the forest. It would be served by a bridge

over Carlton Creek.

That proposal was defeated. But this week, a town committee heard 2,400 square metres of the woodlot would be permanently lost to the widening, proposed for 2007, and 8,000 square metres will be within the construction zone.

However, the region promised to replant graded slopes and stream banks with native species.

Save The Rouge Valley System will be opposing the widening, the group's president Glenn De Baeremaeker said this week.

Ward 6 Councillor Dan Horchik said residents of nearby estate subdivisions are disappointed by the proposal because of its environmental impact. Horchik said the region should first see whether scheduled widenings of Kennedy Road and McCowan Road remove the need to widen Warden.

The region holds a hearing on its proposed Warden works — including widening the road to seven lanes between Steeles Avenue and Hwy. 407 next year and to Apple Creek in 2004 — on Wednesday, May 30 in Newmarket.

Ontario's environment ministry will accept comments on the region's assessment for the projects until June 15.

## CORRECTION

A story published Saturday, May 19, about Markham Main Street misidentified Ruth Burkholder. Burkholder is the president and chief executive officer of the Markham Board of Trade. The Economist & Sun regrets the error.

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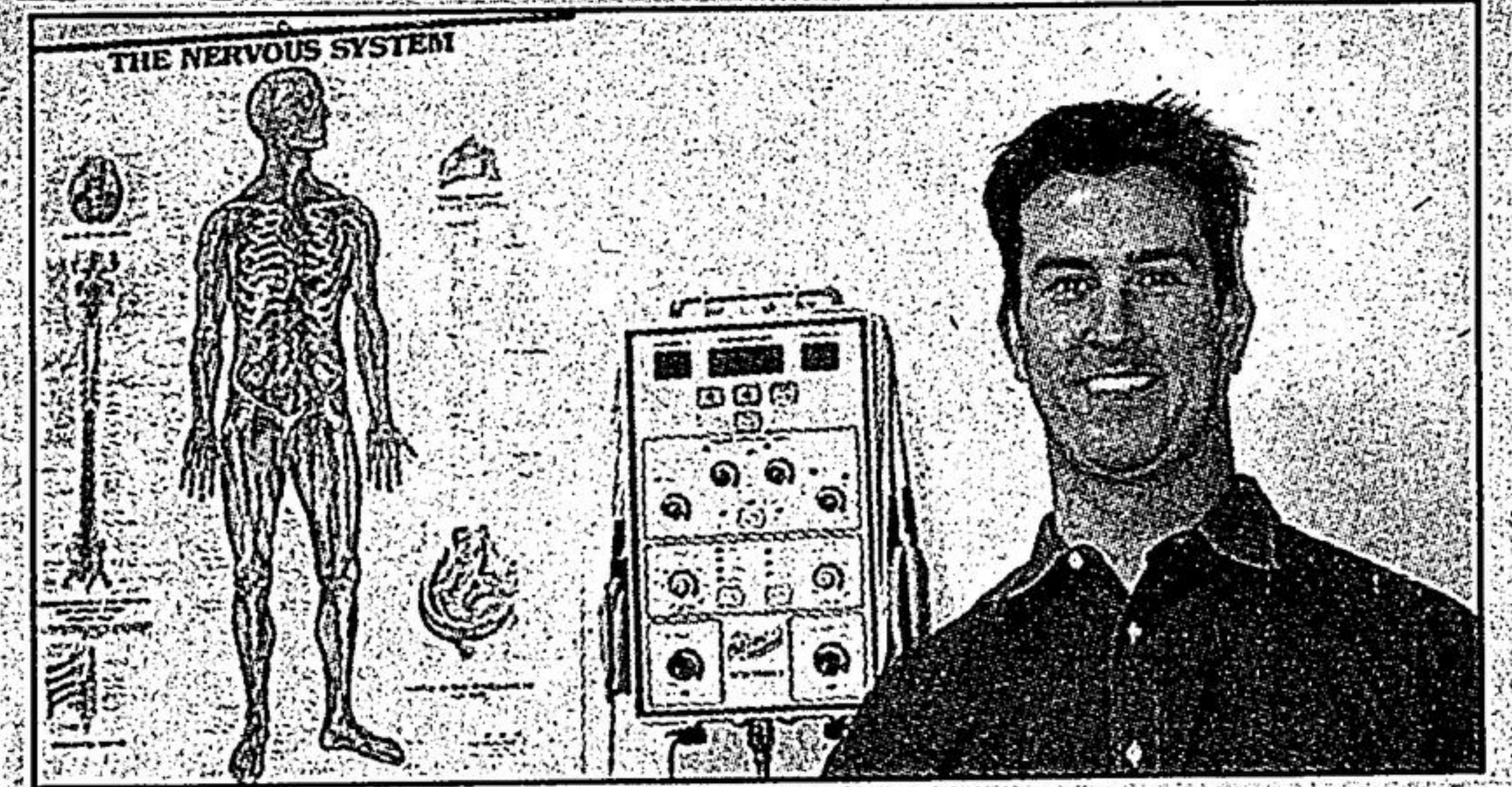
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