

# 'Green' building underway



Work has begun in the Hollidge Tract on a new forest stewardship and education centre. The building is expected to cost \$2.5 million and should be completed in 2014.

BY SANDRA BOLAN  
sbolan@yrmg.com

The region is constructing a new forest stewardship and education centre in the Hollidge Tract that itself will provide visitors a lesson in how to build with environmental sustainability in mind.

The Hollidge Tract closed to visitors Oct. 17 to prepare the site for construction.

It is expected to re-open next fall.

"I have a date in mind, but we'll see what the winter brings," said Ian Buchanan, manager of natural heritage and forestry for York Region.

The new facility is expected to cost \$2.5 million, however, Mr. Buchanan noted it has yet to be

sent out for tender. But "we're confident we'll come in on budget."

The new 3,897-square-foot facility will be built to LEED platinum standards. The region requires a minimum of silver on all new buildings, according to Mr. Buchanan.

The region is also seeking Living Building Challenge certification, which consists of seven petals — beauty, energy use, equity, health, materials, the site and water use.

There are currently only four projects in the United States with Living Building Challenge certification, according to its website.

Part of why there are so few is the program began in 2006 and 12 months of occupancy and operation is required before certification can be obtained.

The plan is for the forest facility

to be net zero for water as it will rely on an on-site well, catch storm water and utilize low-flow toilets.

It will also be net zero energy rated, which Mr. Buchanan admitted will be more challenging to achieve and require high efficiency technologies along with solar panels.

The building will be connected to a power line for security and emergencies, he said.

Some of the construction materials will include cross-laminated timber and douglas firs, reclaimed from old Toronto buildings. Other trees harvested from the Hwy. 48 forest will also be utilized in the facility. Logs from any downed or harvested trees, due to construction, will be transformed into benches.

"We're pretty proud we're going to be able to use some of the trees on-site and for supporting elements," Mr. Buchanan said.

Once constructed, the building will be utilized as an education centre, complete with a boardroom for about 25 people, a large classroom and meeting area for education/environmental programming.

It will be wheelchair accessible and only open when the region is hosting educational programming or other events.

Council approved the project last week.

"This is only going to be a benefit to our forest," said Mayor Wayne Emmerson during the Oct. 15 council meeting.

However, one area resident is not in favour of the project.

"They've gone away from a natural pristine forest," John Gibb, who lives right around the forest, told councillors last week.

"I just don't want the thing to turn into a theme park," he said.

The Hollidge Tract was the first property acquired by York County in 1924. Five years later, the current building, which will be demolished, was constructed.

"It's basically outlived its purpose," Mr. Buchanan said, noting it needs a new roof, the siding is wearing and the plumbing is aging.

It was thought portions of the original building could be salvaged and utilized in the new facility, however, the red pine panelling is too dry, according to Mr. Buchanan.

## WAREHOUSE SALE

shoes starting at **\$9.97**

UP TO  
**60% OFF**  
ORIGINAL PRICES



October 26 -27  
10am - 4pm

548 Gordon Baker Rd.  
Toronto M2H 3B4

Reward vouchers and thank you certificates not accepted.

save.ca

• DISCOVER •

**SAVE \$1**

when you purchase any  
MAJESTA® e-z flush™  
product



The Perfect Balance of  
Softness and Flushability

Get your coupon at [www.save.ca](http://www.save.ca)

facebook.com/savedotca

a division of metroland