

To: Impact Assessment Agency of Canada

Date: April 12, 2021

From: Bill Thomson
Chair, Kossuth Bog Foundation

WATERLOO AIRPORT RUNWAY PROJECT

RUNWAY 14-32 EXTENSION PROJECT DESCRIPTION

While sitting at my desk pondering how to begin my response to the airport expansion plans for IAAC, a discussion I had with Dr. Robert Dorney in 1974 while sitting on a fallen log in the forest adjacent to the Kossuth Bog, came to mind. He was a prominent environmentalist friend and we were engaged in the research and recording of significant Environmentally Sensitive Areas throughout the Region. While sitting on that log he pointed out the natural beauty of our surroundings and how to distinguish the different voices of songbirds, the buzz of pollinators, the breezes passing through tree leaves and all the while telling me their names for my education. I was swept up with his embracing of our natural surroundings which, has remained with me ever since. I have been back to that log several times since and the life that is underway in that forest and Bog has directed me to make sure it never is harmed.

One of the many important issues that has forced me take up the pen with this response, is the fact that our friends, the trees, the birds, the wetlands, the aquatic life, the small bushes and plants and the forest itself, never get the opportunity to state their concerns, their contributions to the environment, to the well being of those that visit them and even to those who wish to harm their homes. So, I decided to be their spokesperson and to do so I went to their homes to listen to them in person.

WHO WILL SPEAK FOR US?

I WILL

We are the thousands of trees living in your forest, some of us for over 250 years. We are the home of birds of all sizes, colours and species living in harmony with all who make your forest home. We watch over them as they bring up their families, teach them to fly and how to look after themselves. Twice a year we welcome our migratory flocks who stay for awhile to rest, restore their energy and visit with friends on their way north in the Spring and south in the Fall.

Did you know that we absorb, depending on who we are, up to 1400 pounds of CO2 a year which not only creates clean air for all of you to breathe, but, we also contribute to the lowering of green house gas. We also intercept, again depending on who we are, up to 28,000 litres of water run off each year. It feeds our roots as well as the roots of friends. It also replenishes our nearby wetlands and local rural wells.

When you visit our forest in the hottest days of summer, our shade reduces heat related health issues which brings visitors back again and again. Some of you, while wandering among us and who might be carrying some stress, a sadness of a lost family member, discover they are able to boost their mental and physical well being by sitting quietly, breathing in our clean fresh air, listening to the leaves, bird song, the hum of pollinators and the whir of a passing hummer. The visitors keep coming back for another clean air tranquil treatment and leave in better spirits and well being.

Did you know that Regional Council, through their approved Airport Master Plan, intend to clear cut over 12 hectares of your forest, so a large passenger jet aircraft can use the extension of the N/S 14-32 runway to land at a 3-degree glide?

Oh No!

We cannot afford to have thousands of our precious mature trees ripped out of the only home they have ever known. Think also of the hundreds of different kinds of our feathered friends, who have lived in these trees for generations bringing up their young and serenading your friends when they visit us. Think of our migrating friends who, in some cases, just make it to their favourite tree to rest and restore their strength before leaving for their planned destination. Think of their confusion. Think of the loss of lowering green house gasses and supplementing our wetlands. Will you stick up for us?

Yes, and I will tell them of your fright, of your loss and of the stress your feathered friends and the wildlife who call this forest home as well.

I will remind the perpetrators of this injustice, of their failure to take into account your legitimate concerns and instead of spending millions and millions of taxpayer's money on a unproven runway extension, they should consider not just the environment but the ripping up of a significant forest and the damage to its dwellers. Is the economy of this Region dependant on an extension to a runway? Not likely. This is what Regional Council must take under advisement and decide who is more important.

Will you tell them of the noise these large planes will make as they fly low over our homes? Will you tell them of our high soaring eagles and hawks who can be hit by the low flying jets landing from the south?

You bet!

You have seen and heard us singing in the forest. We build our homes in its trees and some of us in the grasses at the foot of our larger ones. Our numbers reach into the thousands and we represent many species, colours and sizes and we live in harmony with each other and our environment, where we build our nests and bring up our young. Visitors who come to the forest like you and your friends, can renew your well being and life's outlook when you see us fly near you and listen to our resident choirs. Some of us were part of the migrating flocks who fell in love with your forest and stayed, found a mate, built a home, and brought up a family. Tearing down thousands of our homes and the places where we live and contributed over centuries to the significant environment your forest has become, will devastate us and the stress could very well cause death. Will the writers of this plan care?

I will make sure they hear your voices and know I also share your concerns.

Within your forest are several at-risk friends such as the Bobolink and the Eastern Meadowlark who serenades us with such a lovely morning song. Have you heard them?

Yes, I have, and we cannot lose anymore of them.

That Wood Thrush over there is also at risk but so far is safe in our forest with our friendly guardians. Some of our residents fear loud noises from high flying raptors looking for a meal and take a low flying large plane as a raptor, and many are considering leaving if such a situation happens.

Then there are our Hummers who amaze visitors with their speed and dipping their large beaks deep into flowers for food, while hovering in place. There are flying insects that will lose their homes and sources of sustenance as the trees that sustain them are ripped out of the ground disturbing the soil to such an extent, that years will go by before it recovers for those dwellers who depend on it for more than just a home.

The regional plan, and interviews with at least one Regional Councillor, who may speak for others, states, that the forest once it has been clear cut, will be replaced elsewhere.

You must be kidding!

I certainly am not, but this process is so ridiculous that it is not worthy of our time. But just in case, we are armed with Councils' own environmental official plan policies which we will fight hard to rid ourselves of such a stupid idea.

Thank you for listening to our voices and informing all who really care, when you are able.

We are the Provincial Designated Kossuth Wetland Complex and we underlie most of your property, parts of your forest and all the Kossuth Bog. We also underlie the land over which the Regional Council wishes to dig up and move some place else, to extend runway 14-32 south. We also underlie part of the proposed extension of the runway to the north, which will also be moved. The hole left will be filled with a foreign soil which will adversely affect what remains of our wetland in place. When separated, the flow of the ground water, forming a major part of

the significant wetland, will be seriously affected as well. To say we are worried does not come close to how we feel.

Do you realize that the frogs, the Blanding Turtle, and other aquatic creatures rely on our wetlands? Besides these dwellers there is the flora and fauna that also depend on us for their existence and reproduction throughout our area. Then there is the Kossuth Bog, that despite being seriously harmed when a farmer in the late 40's decided to drain "the swamp" to expand his land for agricultural purposes, dug a series of deep ditches, that slowly lowered the ground table, affecting our wetland, only to find he could not completely drain it, so abandoned his work.

A Kossuth Bog Restoration Committee answering to the Kossuth Bog Foundation, which I chair, has a draft restoration plan which we plan to implement when able.

Do you realize how important our connections are between larger wetland areas? Plants and small aquatic and wildlife folk use these connections for bridging the gap for foraging and visiting other parts of the wetland.

Will you speak for us and tell those responsible for the illegal damage they will do if they try to replace a wetland?

Yes, I will.

I am not sure you are aware that 80% of pre settlement wetlands have been lost in Southern Ontario as urban sprawl took them over. In our case policies in the Official Plan approved in Dec. 1975 halted sprawl, replacing it with local responsibilities to increase densities and intensify development along major transportation routes and in and around downtowns, major shopping areas and some expressways.

Interchanges, which slowed outward growth. When growth finally reaches the legal boundaries of the cities no further outward growth into the Townships will be permitted. However, there is still one major issue that has raised its ugly head in several areas in our Province. It is called MZOs which is a Provincial "get around local zoning and land restrictions", to permit development against the wishes of a municipal council and citizens. Both concern the possible loss of major wetland areas, but the Province tells objectors there will be "no-let-loss" as we will replace that which disappears and relocate it to another place which they call "off-set". However, a policy in the Regional Official Plan will not permit a wetland MZO. I will watch this one closely for you my friends, but rumours indicate that this threat could be tried for this runway project.

I thank you for being so forthright with me and I assure you I have listened and will pass your concerns and my agreement to them, to Regional Council, who must listen to your voices.

I should also make you aware that you have a great many individuals, charitable and non-profit organizations behind you, that are already supporting the loss of forests and wetlands across

this Province and once your voice is heard, I am sure more will join the chorus and support you. My fellow Board Members of the Cambridge Butterfly Conservatory Inc. are submitting a report to the Federal Assessment Hearing that is firmly on your side. Doug Wilson the President of our Conservatory is the author of that report. We have heard from many supporters of the environment, its trees and wetlands, birds and aquatic life and I am sure they will be there when it counts.

Our forest stands as it did 250 years ago because of the choices by those who owned and cherished it right up to the present, which includes the Schofield Family and the share holders of the Butterfly Conservatory.

For those who may read this piece and share the voices of my friends, I implore you to take a good look at all sides of this issue and if you can agree with me and my friends of the forest, then please take up their cause. Their life and future are now in your hands.

Bill Thomson

Chair of The Kossuth Bog Foundation.

April 12, 2021