

South March Highlands - Ottawa City Council meeting on
November 19th, 2010

The South March Highlands (SMH) are a critical part of the Ottawa region's natural heritage, that are under constant threat of development. Most recently, the City of Ottawa has driven a highway through the southern part of the area, and a developer (KNL Developments Inc.) has plans to build residential housing on 29 hectares.

Marianne Wilkinson, the ward's councillor, will be proposing a motion at the November 19th meeting of Ottawa City Council, to trade 12 hectares of the lands subject to immediate development, for other, unspecified land. Depending upon just what the swapped land is, this could be a good way to save the SMH.

A land swap is the only action possible at the upcoming meeting, since it will be a meeting of the old Council, that cannot spend any money. The newly elected City Council will have to take further action later on if the remaining 17 hectares are to be saved.

In the meantime, City staff could proceed with the swap, and negotiate a price for the purchase of the remaining hectares. This will have the effect of keeping KNL from clear-cutting Beaver Pond Forest until the deal is completed.

The South March Highlands' biodiversity has been well documented. Clarence and Enid Frankton were instrumental in studying the area. A recent natural environment assessment of the SMH was written by Dan Brunton, and can be accessed at [http://www.klca.ca/Archives/SMH_Conservation_Forest\(May08\).pdf](http://www.klca.ca/Archives/SMH_Conservation_Forest(May08).pdf).

A recent issue of ON Nature had an article about the SMH. It can be read on Ontario Nature's website:

<http://onnaturemagazine.com/the-race-to-save-the-south-march-highlands.html>

With that background, the Conservation Committee of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club urges members to contact their existing councillors and the mayor and seek their support in protecting the South March Highlands. We will keep you informed of developments as they occur.

Your councillor's contact information is available at:

http://ottawa.ca/city_hall/mayor_council/councillors/index_en.html

The mayor's is at:

http://ottawa.ca/city_hall/mayor_council/mayor/index_en.html