



## Innerkip comment sheet responses regarding the Woodlands Conservation Bylaw update

---

- 1) We would like the by-law to state exactly what we can and cannot do. Fence lines, even attached to woodlots, should be allowed to be removed by the landowner if he sees fit.

Finally, we would like to urge the decision-makers to remember that we own the land, and prefer to not have outside jurisdictions interfere with our landowner's rights.

- 2) By-law enforcement should be a team effort between the enforcement officer and the landowner. This is currently not the case in Oxford County. The lady in charge has created fear among landowners in this great County. It would be refreshing to see someone appointed that has followed proper training (seeing as the current person hasn't had any) and work with landowners at resolving conflicts.
- 3) Make exemptions where disease, such as emerald ash, is occurring. The 'hearsay' stories were not helpful.
- 4) What's good for all of us must be based on a longer-term view than that of the short-sighted, self-centred attendees of this meeting.

I have lived on a farm almost all of my life, but I do not believe farmers are good stewards of the land. There is more ignorance manifested here than I can address. I am appalled at the general opinion of this group that the only worthwhile tree is one that can be harvested for timber. I am not particularly a 'tree-hugger'; I plant and maintain trees with consideration. I sense a militant landowner attitude which concerns me greatly because such individuals tend to cut first. The person with the chainsaw or bulldozer always wins. This does not reflect the stewardship responsibility I accept as a landowner, and which I look to municipal government to also recognize and maintain. Centuries old 'rights' given long ago by societies living in a different place have little weight with the here and now. Does anybody here understand anything about conservation, habitat, species-at-risk?

Is there different legislation for 'tree cutting' vs 'woodlands conservation'?

- 5) Please make fence row clearing, tile maintenance and bush line maintenance exempt from the new by-law. I have a large woodlot on my property and want to be able to maintain my fields without input from the County.

- 6) First off thanks for a great meeting last night in Innerkip. I know there is a lot of hard work and planning to prepare for this type of meeting. The main points I take away from the meeting are...
- i) Lack of knowledge for the current By-Law and its specific requirements. Numerous questions were asked with little to no answer. I would hope that in the Embro meeting there is more knowledge shared and that the people in charge of driving this By-Law change know their changes inside and out.
  - ii) There is a lot of tension over the current by-law officer. I think it was a shame that she was not at the meeting and would expect her at the Thursday meeting in Embro. As the officer enforcing the by-law I would think it is mandatory that she be in attendance. The community has a very real fear of her and her practices. I have never met the by-law officer but have heard lots of stories from the community. This should not be the reputation the by-law officer has and there should be a working with farmers/landowner's mentality not the opposite which is obviously the case currently. There needs to be an immediate change in this attitude and mentality moving forward.
  - iii) There needs to be a much clearer picture painted of the changes Oxford County is proposing. An example was that the distance from a bush line to a bush has been increased from 20M to 30M this is something that was not disclosed to the group. The bush cord calculations have been reduced from 128 cubic feet to 124.9 cubic feet. These changes need to be explained as part of the public process. The non-disclosure in a public meeting is unethical this is supposed to be an open forum. This non-disclosure will probably have some repercussions down the road as people become educated on what Oxford County is proposing in the new By-Law.
  - iv) It is hard for landowners to wrap their head around the fact that they watch municipalities and cities destroy entire woodlots without having to follow any guidelines at all. This should change! The amount of farm land used up for development each year in the Woodstock area is increasing as the city continues to grow and there needs to be some additional provisions in this by-law governing city's and municipalities. They are clear cutting bushes so that they can develop the land and create tax revenue, new business' etc. Why in turn then should a farmer not be permitted to clear a fence line to increase his yields and generate more revenue from his land. The end result is the same more revenue.
  - v) The comment about Drainage is a valid one. The ability for the Municipalities to keep their drains flowing and clean by removing any and all trees without having to comply with this bylaw is a double standard. Why should farmers not be permitted to have the same ability to keep private drains flowing. I am sure that the reasoning behind the municipality and their ability to remove trees from drainage is that it would cost a ridiculous amount of money to the municipality and county if they were not allowed to remove the trees and had to use line jetting or alternative methods to keep the water flowing. So why is a landowner's private drainage any different? Should the landowner be plagued with high cost to jet drainage tiles out or just be permitted like the municipality and township to simply remove the trees affecting the drainage. If there was a by-law officer that worked with landowners and farmers there could be a simple permitting procedure to remove trees from a private drain as well. We need for there to be a level playing field when it comes to drainage maintenance whether its private or municipal.

Thanks again for taking the time to speak and educate local landowners. I would suggest that the next meeting include some sort of sound system as it seemed like a lot of people couldn't hear the conversation.