

Letter to the editor ? How CVC is listening to Belfountain residents

I read with interest the letter to the editor dated Nov. 18 from Stephen Reave.

I felt it important to respond so your readers can understand the very public process we've been engaged in with the Belfountain community since 2014.

There are two concurrent public processes underway ? a management plan process for the Belfountain Complex and an environmental assessment process for the Belfountain Conservation Area dam and headpond. Since 2014, neighbours from the Belfountain Community Organization (BCO) and Belfountain Heritage Society have sat with local, regional and provincial government officials and fisheries groups, as well as members from Headwaters Communities in Action and Ontario Heritage Trust as part of the stakeholder advisory committee helping to inform decisions within these two processes.

At eight meetings since March 2014, the stakeholder advisory committee has met to share ideas and expertise, to help resolve issues and challenges, and to develop solutions and guide decisions for the Belfountain Complex. On two separate occasions, we met with the BCO to share details about the process, receive feedback and discuss concerns. We understand that members of the BCO who sit on our advisory committee keep their members informed about actions from the advisory committee.

In December 2014 and September 2015, we held open houses in the community regarding the environmental assessment and management plan. Nearly 60 people attended these meetings, shared opinions and commented as they heard our presentations, toured displays, and received information. We had another 70 personal conversations with residents and visitors over four days in the conservation area during and following this year's annual Belfountain Salamander Festival.

Notices to our public meetings are posted on community mail boxes, advertised in your newspaper and shared on social media. Newsletters, summaries of consultations, and information reports are widely circulated. All our documents and information pieces are shared on our website at www.creditvalleyca.ca/bcmp

For two years, CVC has honestly and openly asked for Belfountain residents' questions and feedback during these public processes about future plans for the Belfountain Complex. I have personally presented to groups and met in small settings to impress upon the community how important their input is to us. We are encouraged by the diverse perspectives we've received to date, and look forward to more collaboration and consultation.

We have heard loud and clear the issues that face the community with the popularity of the park and the other unique amenities of the area. If we do nothing, the problems will continue. The preferred options from both the master plan and the environmental assessment will be those that best address a number of environmental, technical and cultural criteria. It is not an easy task.

We know we cannot please everyone with the preferred solutions. No one can. I can say, though, that we will continue to provide information to show stakeholders how we arrived at the preferred option.

The next public meeting for the environmental assessment and management plan is Dec. 1, from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Caledon Ski Club. We hope to meet many of your readers there and continue the dialogue on this important cultural and environmental project.

Deborah Martin-Downs

Chief Administrative Officer

Credit Valley Conservation