



Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital  
Alliance pour les espaces verts de la capitale du Canada

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## Community demands that cut forest be fully restored

Ottawa, July 2, 2014

*For immediate release*

The Greenspace Alliance joins Councillors Wilkinson and El-Chantiry in decrying what happened in the week following May 26 in Kanata North when part of a woodlot on the property of Metcalfe Realty was clear-cut and shredded. A significant number of trees along the CN rail line were also cut in the same area, including as least one mature Butternut (*Juglans cinerea*) which is on both the federal and provincial Endangered Species lists. (CN reportedly denies being the culprit.)

"This is the third 'tree massacre' in Ottawa in recent times," said Erwin Dreesen, co-chair of the Alliance, "and this one is particularly egregious because it is in clear violation of the City's by-law on tree protection, and took place during the bird nesting season as well." Remedies for the tree by-law infraction may range from fines to allowing the forest to regenerate and/or engaging in reforestation.

A look at the attached aerial photograph easily suggests a motivation for the clear cutting. "Across the railway is another woodlot," said Judy Makin, former President of the local community association and member of the Public Advisory Committee for the development of a Community Design Plan for these urban expansion lands. "There is a large wooded area of about 10 hectares on this property, connected to the larger woodlot across the tracks. It would seem that the landowner wished to eliminate the connectivity between the two woodlots. Thanks to the Stop Work Order, the attempt failed."

The Alliance applauds the City for moving swiftly to issue a Stop Work Order and lay charges to be heard in Provincial Court and hopes that the maximum fine will be levied to send a clear message that this type of unauthorized action by developers and others will not be tolerated. "From attending meetings for the Community Design Plan, I knew this wooded area was to be evaluated to see if it should be considered part of the City's natural heritage system," said Paul Johanis, who lives close to the property and was the first to hear chainsaws in action. "It would seem the owners set out to alter the existing conditions before this evaluation could take place, which does not seem like fair dealing to me."

Members of the Public Advisory Committee have decided that at the next PAC meeting, now re-scheduled for later in July, there will be only one item on the agenda: Restoration of the forest. "Trust in the developer's honest dealing has been destroyed," said Ms. Makin "This illegal act has to be dealt with first and consideration of the community design plan must be put on hold."

Earlier, members of the local March Rural Community Association had expressed dissatisfaction with a report produced by the developers' consultant. "He didn't see anything significant in the woodlot" said Ms. Makin. "We have evidence to the contrary, including very significant cedars and evidence that it is wildlife habitat and a deer yard in winter as well as being an important ecological link between the South March Highlands and the Shirleys Bay Wetlands."

"The landowner should now lose the benefit of the doubt," said Mr. Dreessen. "The timing and location of the tree cutting suggest a deliberate attempt to affect the City's evaluation. It should now be taken as given that these woodlots are part of Ottawa's natural heritage and need to be preserved, as the law requires."

Added Donna DuBreuil, President of the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre: "Developers should embrace the presence of such remnants of natural areas on their property. New houses need access to established forests and greenspace. Woodlots such as these enhance the attractiveness of the future subdivisions. It is short-sighted to want to get rid of them and believe that planting saplings and having mini-neighbourhood parks is all a new community needs."

The Greenspace Alliance was founded in 1997, works to preserve and enhance green spaces in the National Capital area, and engages with all levels of government. It believes that urban greenness is essential for a community's quality of life, contributing to personal, social, economic, cultural and spiritual well-being, and connecting us with the natural and cultural history of our region.

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#### Attachments

- [Aerial photo of the cut in the forest connecting woodlots S20 and S23, taken on 29 June, 2014.](#)
- [Photo of cut butternut along the CN railway, taken on 22 June 2014.](#)
- [Annotated map of the area, indicating the various natural heritage features and the area of cuts.](#)

High-resolution versions of the photographs are available on request.

#### Background

Councillor Wilkinson spoke to the Ottawa Citizen on June 19, 2014 -

<http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/trees-under-heritage-assessment-chopped-without-permit-in-kanata-north>

Councillor El-Chantiry spoke to the Kanata Kourier on June 26, 2014 -

<http://www.ottawacommunitynews.com/news-story/4587273-city-to-charge-metcalf-realty-after-illegal-tree-clearing/>

CN's denial of culpability for the cut along the railway was conveyed to Judy Makin by Councillor Wilkinson.

Further background is available on the Greenspace Alliance web site at <http://www.greenspace-alliance.ca/Metcalf>:

- ["The Case for Saving Natural Areas"](#) by Donna DuBreuil and Judy Makin
- [Briefing note from the Office of the Mayor, June 13, 2014](#)
- [Memo from John Moser to Mayor and Councillors, June 18, 2014](#)
- Additional photographs & maps
- [What happened in 2002/03](#) (Trillium Woods massacre)