

Poets Pathway proposed for Riverview Park

By Erwin Dreessen

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The Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital hopes to dedicate a 40-km "green" pathway in memory of three Confederation Poets who lived in the Ottawa area. Part of the pathway would wind through the Riverview Park community.

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The Greenspace Alliance is a three year old alliance of groups and individuals dedicated to the preservation of greenspace throughout the national capital area.

The pathway would link the three significant anchors associated with Archibald Lampman, Duncan Campbell Scott and William Wilfred Campbell: Beechwood Cemetery, McCarthy Woods and the Southern Corridor, and Britannia Park.

"The idea was born a few years ago, when the open field next to McCarthy Woods came under threat of development," said Bill Royds, vice-chair of the Alliance and an early proponent of the idea. "The landscape there is the closest we still have to what Lampman described in his famous last poem, *Winter Uplands*"

The idea was expanded to encompass a number of the "urban corridors" which were an integral part of the Gréber Plan of the 1950s. Several of these corridors overlap with the former City of Ottawa Official Plan's Greenway System and with the Regional Open Space Network (Schedule I) in the Official Plan of the former regional municipality. "Yet, several are in danger of being lost to the public interest, or to have their linkage value diminished or eliminated," said Erwin Dreessen, chair of the Alliance.

The Confederation Poets were the first to use "this country and its images, and its flora and fauna to recharge their poetry," said Michael Gnarowski, a retired Carleton University english professor and renowned Confederation Poets scholar. The group envisages a path suitable for walking, cycling, skating and wheelchairs. "But above all," said Dreessen, "it must evoke the natural world that so inspired the Poets." Plaques along the way would combine poem extracts, descriptions of historical events, and information about fauna and flora.

The plan is still in the preliminary stages, and the group has identified a number of areas where closer examination of the options is required. One such area is the section through the Riverview Park community. The path would come down along the east shore of the Rideau River, to the footbridge at Hurdman Park (where it intersects with the TransCanada Trail). Precisely how a path could be laid out taking maximum advantage of existing green spaces, to reach the north end of the Health Sciences Centre, remains to be determined.

Ideas from Riverview Park residents and volunteers for this project are most welcome. Please contact Erwin Dreessen at 739-0727, e-mail to 'gacc @ home.com' or write to P.O. Box 55085, 240 Sparks Street, Ottawa, ON, K1P 1A1. For more information about the Greenspace Alliance, visit their web site at www.flora.org/greenspace.