

Day Two - Track Two

Thursday, March 22nd, 2018

11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Towards Achieving Overall Benefit for Species at Risk Related to a Mega Transportation Corridor

Presenters: Darlene Proudfoot and April Currie, Ministry of Transportation

Biography



Darlene Proudfoot is a Senior Environmental Planner in the Major Projects Office of the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, an office that is on the cutting edge of delivering highway transportation infrastructure using the Province's Alternative Financing and Procurement model. Darlene manages the environmental component of transportation projects in the most efficient, innovative and flexible way. In her over 30 years of working on provincial and municipal Environmental Assessments for transportation facilities, she endeavours to find creative means to engage stakeholders to achieve positive outcomes. Darlene led the environmental component of the Highway 407 East project from the preliminary and detail design stages through to construction and operation of the facility. She was an integral part of the fisheries team that developed the mitigation measures, compensation and overall benefit activities related to the Redside Dace Permit issued under the Ontario Endangered Species Act and continues to be involved in the post-construction monitoring of the Redside Dace works.



April Currie is currently employed with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation. For the last five years April has been working in the Environmental Policy Office as a Senior Policy Analyst on the fisheries and wetlands, monitoring developments in provincial and federal policy and legislation. Prior to that April worked in the Central Region Provincial Highways Management Program as a Senior Planner of Fisheries and Wetlands overseeing the fisheries portfolio for the major capital construction program using her advanced expertise and in depth

knowledge of fish habitat restoration and enhancement techniques in developing innovative and cost effective solutions to avoid, mitigate and if required compensate for the loss of fisheries habitat. April has over 20 years of experience working on many multi-disciplinary engineering, environmental projects related to planning, permitting and construction.

Abstract

In the spring of 2016, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) opened Phase 1 of Highway 407 East to the public, 32 km of new highway in the Region of Durham. The highway corridor crosses Redside Dace (RSD) watercourses and the corridor alignment was such that no RSD watercourses could be avoided. RSD are regulated as Endangered and are protected under the Ontario Endangered Species Act (ESA). The ESA prohibits the harm and harassment of protected species and damage or destruction to their habitat and it was determined a s.17(2) (c) permit would be required for this project. The permitting process took several years and an extensive overall benefit plan was developed as part of the permit conditions. Achieving an overall benefit plan involved the removal of multiple perched culverts and in-stream barriers for improved fish passage, channel realignments with bioengineering structures, wetland and floodplain restoration, and range expansion of RSD habitat. In addition, MTO partnered with two local conservation authorities to help meet the fisheries objectives. A case study will be presented, focussing on Lynde Creek to demonstrate how a stream realignment, creation of a new wetland and the reconstruction of the floodplain successfully achieved overall benefit of an ESA permit for Highway 407 East.

Learning Objectives

1. This project was under the Province's Alternative Finance Procurement process and there was a huge learning curve required by all agencies to understand and achieve the desired outcomes;
2. The RSD permit was issued in Preliminary Design, resulting in a conditional permit. Future RSD permits should be issued during Detail Design and clear direction is to be given by all parties; and
3. Expect the unexpected. Groundwater and aquifers caused challenges during construction and enhanced mitigation and inspection was required.