

## **Township of Woolwich Environmental Enhancement Plan**

Approved by Township of Woolwich Council April 2005.

A main component of the Township Official Plan and Strategic Plan is an increased commitment by the Township to maintaining and enhancing the environment. The development and implementation of an Environmental Enhancement Plan (EEP) is necessary to achieve the Official Plan's goal of ***improving the environment over the life of the OP.***

The following goals outlined in the OP are the basic decision-making guidelines of the plan with respect to the environment. They reflect the general long-range intent of the OP and are further interpreted by the policies of the OP.

- To protect, conserve and wherever feasible, enhance and restore the natural environment within the Township for its valuable ecological functions and the enjoyment of the Township's residents.
- To provide for the management of natural resources within the Township in a manner that minimizes or avoids the undesirable short and long-term impacts on the natural environment, the quality and quantity of ground and surface water, and the quality of life for existing and future residents.

The Official Plan goals and policies are based on the following Community Values developed through a consultation process with Woolwich residents and business persons.

Environment:

We value:

- a clean, green Township of Woolwich;
- the preservation and maintenance of woodlands, wetlands, watersheds, habitats and corridors for wildlife and wild plants;
- increased quality of the environment including soil quality, air quality, water quality in rivers, streams and wells;
- environmentally-sound practices by businesses, industries, including farms, and individuals;
- opens spaces and
- minimizing motor vehicle use.

The goals and values of the Township OP are also those of the EEP. The EEP sets out how Woolwich (including the municipality and citizens) can take direct action on the OP's primary goal of ***improving the environment.***

Members of TWEEC have identified the following objectives or criteria to carry out the EEP. The objectives will guide TWEEC in determining which projects fall within their mandate. The purpose and importance of each objective along with possible projects

are also outlined. Readers should note that this list is not exhaustive. It is to be treated as a living document and may change as new ideas come forward.

## **Objectives:**

### **1. Encourage the use of native plant species wherever possible**

**Purpose and importance:** Non-native plant species can be invasive and can displace native species. Native plant species are usually favoured by wildlife.

**Possible projects:** Public education via workshops, factsheets/brochures; newspaper articles, naturalization projects; hosting work days to control invasive/nuisance species such as garlic mustard and purple loosestrife.

### **2. Increase Forest Cover:**

**Purpose and importance:** provides food and cover for fish and wildlife; soil and water resource protection; reduction in air pollution; lowers temperatures in summer and acts as a wind break in winter (especially important in settlement areas); increases connectivity between natural habitat areas.

**Possible Projects:** roadside plantings, creation of new forests.

### **3. Increase connectivity between natural habitat areas:**

**Purpose and importance:** Areas connected to one another by vegetation or structures such as treed fencerows or valley lands are normally more valuable to fish and wildlife than isolated habitats. Connections between habitats act as “corridors” which allow animals to move from one to area to another.

**Possible projects:** greenways, green corridors, natural corridor extensions, provide artificial nesting structures (bird houses) as an interim measure while natural habitat improvement activities are underway, such as tree planting, buffer establishment. Piles of stones or brush make good habitats for weasels, mink rabbits, songbirds etc. Windbreaks, shelterbelts and fencerows provide habitat and act as corridors for wildlife and can also reduce soil erosion.

### **4. Undertake pilot/demonstration projects**

**Purpose and importance:** pilot projects are experimental projects and learning tools; we can share our findings with other groups inside and outside of the Township. We will solicit expertise from other local groups (eg GRCA), individuals as appropriate.

**Possible Projects:** creating a wetland pilot project, roadside tree planting, poplar cuttings.

### **5. Encourage Involvement of Youth in Projects**

**Purpose and importance:** Our youth are our future. They will be the caretakers of the environment in Woolwich. It is importance to train/educate (through both volunteer work and paid positions, where possible) our youth to fill the role of environmental stewards.

**Possible Projects:** youth environmental projects, student crews for summer employment.

**6. Aquatic Restoration, enhancement and construction**

**Purpose and importance:** Water is key to the healthy existence of fish and wildlife and humans. Like a miner's canary, fish provide an early warning of environmental problems.

**Possible Projects:** wetland construction, bank and shoreline rehabilitation, tree planting, partnering with the Clean Waterways Group.

**7. Garbage Clean-up**

**Purpose and importance:** Improperly disposed of waste can impact our water sources and wildlife.

**Possible Projects:** assist rural/farm landowners with "dump" clean-up (possible pilot project where dumpster and some labour is provided); public education about the importance of clean-up, preventative information, information about where to dispose of waste types; project to dispose of agri-film. Also GRCA watershed clean-up day and Pitch-In Canada.

**8. Education**

**Purpose and importance:** Some environmental problems are simply a result of lack of information.

**Possible Projects:** Work shops, brochures; pilot/demonstration projects; school programs (our youth are often a way to get information to our adults/parents); website;

**9. Develop Working Partnerships:**

**Purpose and importance:** working in a vacuum can be detrimental to a group. Partnerships generate new ideas/energy and new volunteer labour and is a way to share information.

**Possible Partnerships:** Region; private landowners, GRCA, service clubs, volunteer groups/individuals, 4H.

**Other Guidelines:**

In addition to the above criteria, TWEEC will operate under the following guidelines:

- projects and initiatives will focus on public vs private land ,wherever possible.
- TWEEC projects will collaborate with/complement the Regional and Township official plans.
- TWEEC will act as a partner and resource.
- TWEEC will strive to generate new volunteer labour.