



ANIMAL
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*Animal
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Through
Education &
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Bulletin Sifton Bog Deer

Impacts by deer, a native species, are "natural".

Other impacts are not so "natural".

Although the Conservation Authority suggests that they are a threat, deer are native to Ontario and their impacts on the Sifton Bog are therefore "natural". In fact, the bog faces numerous and serious man-made threats which have greater and longer lasting impacts the health of the Bog than the deer. The human-induced threats are as following threats:

- **Changes to bog hydrology:** These changes include reduction in water levels from lack of rainfall and global warming, contaminated runoff from surrounding roads and developments including salts, nutrients, car oils and pesticides. As the Conservation Plan states, "Global change models predict a hotter and drier climate in the Great Lakes area, resulting in a net loss of water to the bog mound. If the water falls below the acrotelm, peat development will be negatively affected."
- **Invasive alien plant species and other bog invaders:** The presence of non-native species such as Glossy Buckthorn, Common Buckthorn, Tartarian Honeysuckle, Purple Loosestrife, Goutweed, Garlic Mustard, Common Cattail and Three-way Sedge are all invasive species found in the Sifton Bog, with the Buckthorn presenting the greatest problem
- **Human use effects (trails and vegetation and wildlife disturbance):** Negative impacts from human use includes:
 - soil compaction in the immediate area of the trail and access points,
 - introduction of non-native plant species carried on shoes and clothing,
 - excessive widening of trails, especially in wet areas as people avoid getting wet feet,
 - soil erosion, especially on sloping land,
 - too dense a network of trails that fragments the habitat and opens up the canopy,

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- tree cutting (of tree hazards) for human safety, and
 - disturbance to wildlife because of constant human presence.
- **Dogs:** Domestic dogs frequently accompany recreationists to protected areas. Despite by-laws prohibiting dogs off leash, dogs are often allowed to run loose under “voice and sight control.” Many people consider dogs to be a major component of impacts to wildlife, particularly when they are present in high densities.
 - **Effects of adjacent land use and disturbance processes on bog succession:** The bog is now surrounded by commercial and residential development, bringing problems with pollution, access pressures and the introduction of alien species that invade the bog and surrounding area. Although the newer developments provide some set-back between the property lines and the natural areas and storm water management in this area is addressed, the map provided in Figure 18 on page 70 of the Master Plan demonstrates how little of this buffer actually exists around the entire perimeter of the bog
 - **Introduced Goldfish in Redmond’s Pond:** Goldfish, which are non-native to North America were discovered in Redmond’s Pond in the summer of 2006 and were most likely were dumped into the pond by someone. Goldfish alter the aquatic ecosystem by increasing turbidity, and uprooting and eating aquatic plants resulting in a resulting in changes to the pond.
 - **West Nile Virus mosquito control program:** Identified areas of standing water are treated with bacterial biological agents that are absorbed by the mosquito larvae. The mosquito larvae fail to mature, and die. Two sites in or near the Sifton Bog ESA are treated, including the Silver Maple swamp near the Oxford Street entrance and another site along Old Hyde Park Road, probably a catch-basin. The conflict in this approach is that mosquitoes and their larvae are part of the food chain and are eaten by birds and other bog species. The Master Plan provides no studies on the impact of the mosquito control programme on the species dependent on them for food or the impact of other species in the food chain.
 - **Effects of fire:** Fire is a natural occurrence in many ecosystems, but can be very damaging to a bog, which is not fire-tolerant. A carelessly tossed cigarette, unauthorized fire, or lightning may ignite dry peat during a dry summer. Contingency planning is needed to direct firefighting in the case of a fire in the Sifton Bog.

(The above material was taken from the Sifton Bog ESA Conservation Master Plan 2009-2019 –pgs 53 - 74)