

Here are the highlights from the regular Lanark County Council meeting held Wednesday, June 9.

Community Safety Zones Approved: Council has passed a by-law authorizing community safety zones in three areas near schools on county roads.

The new zones are located as follows:

- County Road 17 (Martin Street North) at Almonte District High School between Wilkinson and Brookdale streets
- County Road 18 (Port Elmsley Road) at North Elmsley Public School from 815 metres west of County Road 43 to 500 metres west of same
- County Road 23 (Rosedale Road South) at Montague Public School from 340 metres south of Roger Stevens Drive to 60 metres south of same

At a public works committee meeting last month, Public Works Manager Sean Derouin reported a review of existing community safety zones determined there were three locations with a school located on a county road with no zone in place, and all three met the criteria for establishing one. "With consistent police enforcement, the community safety zones should reduce speeding near the public schools and improve public safety," Derouin said. Set fines for speeding infractions are increased in community safety zones, and they will be in effect 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday.

For more information, contact Sean Derouin, Public Works Manager, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 3194.

Gypsy Moth Update Provided: Climate Environmental Coordinator Michelle Vala updated councillors at the recent public works committee meeting regarding the infestation of gypsy moths in parts of Lanark County.

Vala explained egg mass survey results provided by the province indicated areas of predicted moderate to severe defoliation in parts of the county. Some areas in western Lanark County are seeing the worst of the infestation.

The county is providing education and awareness with information on websites, social media, media releases, fact sheets and outreach. This includes information about how landowners can reduce infestations by destroying egg masses, banding trees with burlap, eradicating caterpillars and biological control methods.

Details can be found on Lanark County's Climate Action page on Facebook or at <https://www.lanarkcounty.ca/en/environmental-initiatives/invasive-species.aspx>. For more information, contact Michelle Vala, Climate Environmental Coordinator, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 3114.

Program to Phase Out Water Bottles Outlined: Council has accepted a report outlining a program to phase out the sale of bottled water at municipal facilities throughout Lanark County.

At the recent public works committee meeting, Climate Environmental Coordinator Michelle Vala explained the program aligns with the Blue Communities Project, which encourages municipalities to "support the idea of a water commons framework by passing resolutions that recognize water and

sanitation as human rights, ban or phase out the sale of bottled water in municipal facilities and at municipal events, and promote publicly financed, owned and operated water and wastewater services.”

Vala said the proposed plan would start with discussions with the Climate Action Committee once it is formed, which would include representatives from each local municipality and Smiths Falls. Once the committee develops strategies, they would be taken to the local municipalities for discussion and feedback, followed by finalization and implementation of the plan to phase out the sale of bottled water in municipalities and at municipal events.

Warden Christa Lowry (Mississippi Mills Mayor) brought the project idea forward for consideration. “This is an opportunity for municipalities to try to make a difference.”

The report is being circulated to all local municipal clerks. For more information, contact Michelle Vala, Climate Environmental Coordinator, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 3114.

Vegetation Management Activities and CWF Partnership Highlighted: Council accepted a report by Climate Environmental Coordinator Michelle Vala at the recent public works committee meeting regarding the county’s 2021 Vegetation Management Plan activities, restoration projects and the partnership between the county and the Canadian Wildlife Federation (CWF).

The county began efforts to control wild parsnip in 2015, when it was declared a noxious weed in Ontario. In 2016, the Integrated Pest Management Vegetation Management Plan for Lanark County was adopted, which is a long-term multi-faceted approach to managing vegetation in order to maintain safe roadsides.

Vala explained a variety of control measures have been implemented over the years, with spraying declining and hand pulling and other measures increasing. This year hand pulling of wild parsnip will take place on 270 kilometres of county roads, a 25 per cent increase from 2020. No boom spraying was conducted last year or this year, and some targeted spot spraying is planned starting this month.

Efforts to control phragmites, another invasive weed, are also underway. Vala highlighted education and awareness through brochures, signage at each phragmites cell, presentations, and webinars to stakeholders. Cells are monitored and control efforts include mowing throughout the year, spading by hand and herbicide use at dry sites in the fall.

The county is also hydroseeding construction projects with a custom wildflower mix to promote pollinator-friendly plants and prevent the growth of invasive plants. Over three years 30 km have been hydroseeded. More pollinator habitat is being created on county property where a three-acre field is being converted from mowed grass.

A pilot project in 2019 with the Canadian Wildlife Federation tested whether creating native meadows along roadsides could successfully control wild parsnip, restore Monarch butterfly habitat and reduce management costs. Vala said the project determined wild parsnip must be under control first. A new

pilot project this year with CWF aims to restore pollinator habitat on a stretch of County Road 21 (Elm Grove Road) following wild parsnip control.

A new collaboration agreement with CWF aims to restore and improve pollinator habitat on rights-of-ways managed by the county until Dec. 31, 2023. As part of the agreement, the county is to participate in the Rights-of-Way Eastern Ontario Habitat Network, provide training and resources for other managers, provide in-kind support in restoration planning and projects, and continue controlling invasive plants on roadsides throughout the Vegetation Management Plan. CWF provides restoration expertise, coordinates the network and training opportunities, and provides funds for projects if needed.

Carolyn Callaghan of CWF explained the rights-of-way project (e.g., roadsides, pipeline and hydro corridors, along trails, etc.) offers an opportunity to provide landscape-scale habitat that promotes native habitat for wild pollinators, flood attenuation and reduced roadway runoff, natural snow fencing, lower maintenance costs and carbon sequestering. The project will cover 7.3 square kilometres and is funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Hydro One is another partner and discussions are taking place with townships. "There could be as much as 233km sq of potential habitat restoration considering county and township roads, which shows the effect of connected habitats on a larger scale," she said.

"These projects and partnerships are part of a long-term plan that not only helps to maintain safe roadways, but also shows environmental responsibility and creates natural habitats to help vulnerable species flourish," added Warden Christa Lowry (Mississippi Mills Mayor). "I commend staff and council for the leadership shown with this plan."

For more information, contact Michelle Vala, Climate Environmental Coordinator, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 3114.

Upcoming Meetings: County Council, Wednesday, June 23, 5 p.m.; Public Works, June 23 (following County Council); Economic Development, June 23 (following Public Works), Special County Council (following Economic Development). **Please note there are no regular meetings scheduled in July.** **County Council, Wednesday, Aug. 11, 5 p.m.;** Community Services, Aug. 11 (following County Council); Corporate Services, June 9 (following Community Services). Watch for details about public access to meetings on agendas and through online notifications. For more information, contact 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502. Like "LanarkCounty1" on Facebook and follow "@LanarkCounty1" on Twitter!