

Relaxation of tree bylaw proposed

By WES KELLER
Freelance Reporter

If a committee recommendation is accepted by the council, Dufferin County's tree conservation bylaw will not limit woodlot owners to six bush cords of firewood annually for their own use.

county council by several landowners who said they burn on average 10 bush cords yearly to heat their homes, the museum committee voted to remove the six-cord limit from the draft bylaw.

"They would now be able to use six or 16, as long as it's for their own use," said committee chairman John Oosterhof.

He said "own use" would not restrict the owner to firewood.

"They might want to take a log to the planning mill to replace barn board," he said as an example of other personal uses.

Woodlot owners would not require permits to cut trees for their own use. Permit fees for commercial harvesting and clearing would be \$50 and \$250 respectively.

The schedule of penalties for violators would remain unchanged from the draft.

For commercial harvesting, trees to be felled would have to be designated and marked by a forestry professional. Locations that have obtained permits would be posted on the county's Website.

The revised bylaw would define its purpose: "the forest conservation by-law is intended to encourage sustainable forest management practices and discourage over-harvesting; and it is recognized that most landowners are excellent stewards of their properties and have the right to make decisions regarding the use and management of

their forests."

The county has jurisdiction over woodlots of one hectare (2.5 acres) or more. Smaller woodlots are subject to local municipal bylaws.

Mr. Oosterhof said the county has had a forestry bylaw since 1947, and landowners had generally demonstrated good stewardship over more than 60 years.

The problems might have begun when The Highland Companies began cutting trees, ostensibly to enhance farming operations, and a Melancton resident complained that the county was exempting agriculture from bylaw control although there was no such exemption in the bylaw.

The complaints were presumably based in part on a belief that Highland was removing trees in preparation for a quarry.

They escalated into allegations of clear-cutting or hewing a swath through woodlots of greater than one hectare, and county council came under fire for not prosecuting on the strength of information provided by North Dufferin Agricultural and Community Taskforce.



Photo/DAN PELTON

DEAD MAN DANCING: Eddie Rivera, a 2007 Dancing with the Stars challenger, was in the spirit of the Halloween season Tuesday night at the Orangeville Women's Health Club, leading his charges through the steps from the Michael Jackson video Thriller.

NVCA to award Conservation Champions next Tuesday, local publisher 'tireless'

The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority will host its third annual Conservation Champion awards next Tuesday, November 3.

Among this year's winners is Bruce Haire, Editor Emeritus of the New Tecumseth Times, a tireless supporter of the New Tecumseth Streams Committee and South Simcoe Streams Network.

In a press release, NVCA said Bruce "has been instrumental in getting the stewardship message to the community, as well as providing input to these groups and the Tottenham Conservation Area Committee."

Other winners include William Brook and Troy Wilson, first-year members of the South Simcoe Streams Network (SSSN), the Bass Lake Ratepayers Association, and Young Conservation Champion Kyle Pearson, a Grade 7 Student at St. Mary's School in Collingwood, who is the youngest active member of the Blue Mountain Watershed Trust Foundation (BMWTF) after a project he completed in sixth grade led him to join the group.

Kyle had to do a project which analyzed a local issue and he chose the Silver Creek wetland.



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