

Dundas Valley 50 Year Vision and Strategy

Hamilton Conservation Authority Project Update



Before: Sulphur Springs Parking Lot September, 2014

Sulphur Springs Parking Lot Restoration

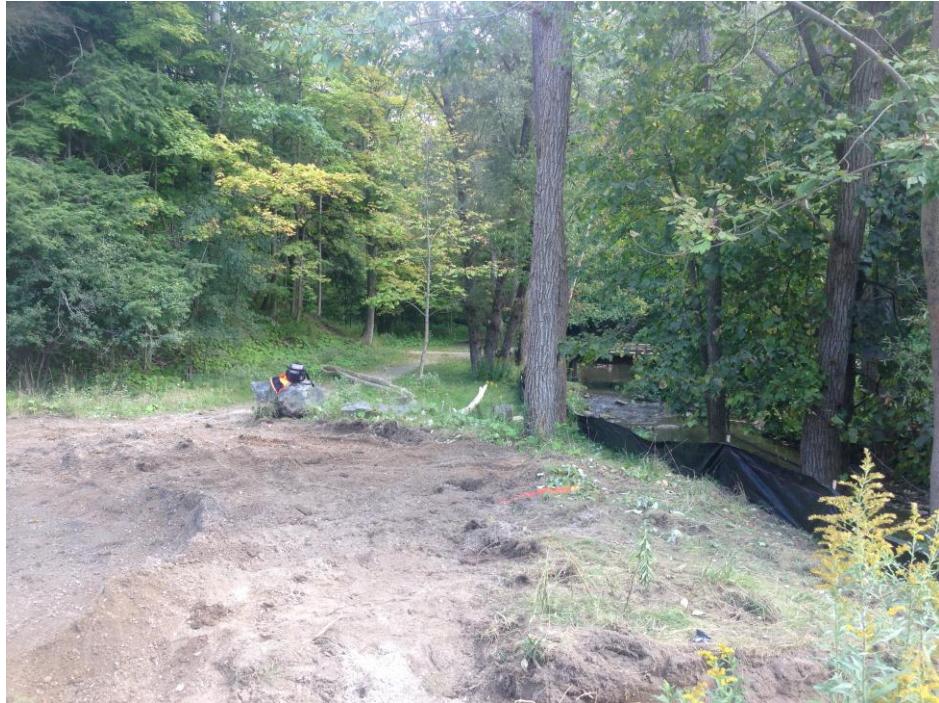
November 5th, 2014

Summary:

The Hamilton Conservation Authority has recently undertaken a restoration project on Sulphur Springs Road along Sulphur Creek; removing the parking lot and barriers and returning it to a more natural state.

The Sulphur Springs parking lot was used to provide access to the Main Loop Trail, however, posed as an issue to both the natural integrity of the area, as well as

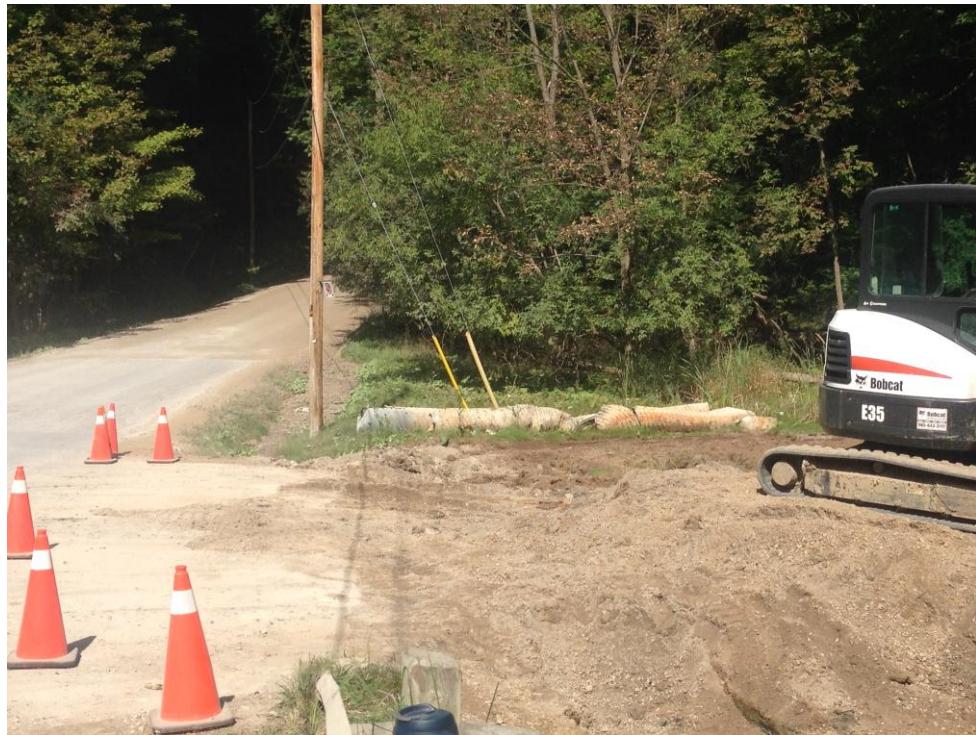
people's safety. Alternatively people can access the trails through the Dundas Valley Conservation Area, along Governors Road, or at the Hermitage Gatehouse Parking on Sulphur Springs Road. Both access points offer various other amenities and provide a much more suitable and accessible avenue for a variety of passive recreational options.



Digging out parking gravel



Silt Fence Installation



Culvert Removed



Ditching and Erosion Control

The project underwent several steps in order to mitigate runoff and to allow sufficient time for the surface to settle in preparation for planting. In this time straw and grass seed was spread over the surface to decrease the amount of erosion on the site before the planting of trees could be conducted.

Planting



View from Pedestrian Bridge



View from Road's Edge

Strategic Directives:

Protect Rare and Endangered Species

Similar to other naturalization projects; protecting rare and endangered species can be achieved through reclaiming or naturalizing green spaces where possible. Returning land to its intended use provides opportunity for rare and sensitive species to maintain or strengthen their presence. In order to protect rare and endangered species within the Dundas Valley, one must look to opportunities to reclaim green space or naturalize areas.

Protect and Enhance the Connectivity of Ecosystems

Although not a large segment of land, returning this property to its natural state will add to the total amount of land being conserved for the connectivity of ecosystems.

Effectively this project is built on expanding the area of naturally protected land within the Dundas Valley.

Protect and Enhance the Health of Streams, Watercourses, and Waterfalls

The proximity of the parking lot and adjoining Sulphur Springs Road meant that surface water run-off would carry with it automotive and road contaminants that could be detrimental to the adjacent stream and associated wildlife. Ending its usage in such close proximity to the stream, and adding natural erosion control and filtration through plant life will increase the health of the stream, and the ecosystem as a whole.

Support the Development of the Cities' Special Character Road

Among the strategic directives that fall outside the typical mandate of the Hamilton Conservation Authority is the development of the Cities' Special Character Roads. Sulphur Springs is a particularly scenic and unique road way that is both arterial, and environmentally sensitive. This road requires significant maintenance, and faces ongoing congestion concerns. The future of this road way is difficult to measure; however, the Hamilton Conservation Authority is decreasing the usage of this road way by eliminating the parking here, which also dramatically increases the safety of this area. Individuals using this roadway are reminded to obey posted signage and to use caution.



Larger Trees including White Birch and Red Oak



After: Silver Maple and Dogwood Species

The area is visually and environmentally more appealing along the road, as the tree species mature and fill in this area's overall appearance will continue to change soon becoming a continuation of the natural forest floor.

Conclusions:

In order for the natural areas of the Dundas Valley area to be preserved and enhanced projects that optimize the natural environment are undertaken and promoted where possible. Although this land is small in size its proximity to the creek and road way makes it a particularly important project. While this parking lot was used by people wishing to access and enjoy the Dundas Valley Conservation Area; the Hamilton Conservation Authority feels that projects such as these go a long way to preserving and enhancing the Dundas Valley; and are central to the *Dundas Valley 50 Year Vision and Strategy*.

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with support from:



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