



# The Corporation of the Township of Huron-Kinloss

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## Staff Report

**Report Title: Tree Preservation By-law**

**Date: Jul. 3, 2024**

**Report Number: CS-2024-07-27**

**Department: Community Services**

**File Number: C11 CS 24**

**Prepared By: Mike Fair**

**Attachments: None**

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### **Recommendation:**

THAT the Township of Huron-Kinloss Committee of the Whole hereby receives Report CS-2024-07-27 prepared by Mike Fair, Director of Community Services;

AND FURTHER that the current tree preservation by-law be affirmed and Staff be directed to review the by-law periodically and propose changes as required.

### **Background:**

On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, a delegation to Council requested Council to establish a committee to consider expansion of the current tree preservation by-law or create a new by-law, similar to the one recently enacted in Kincardine, specifically to protect native trees within the area known as the 'Huron Fringe' or near shore of Lake Huron.

### **Discussion/Analysis/Overview:**

The Township of Huron-Kinloss current [tree preservation By-law](#) and [map](#) provide the current by-law information used since 2011 for the protection of trees on the Algonquin Bluff near the lakeshore.

#### What we do now:

Community Service staff have issued over 125 permits in the last ten years and receive over fifty calls annually regarding the tree cutting by-law and related education of residents regarding the by-law. Staff have issued five permits in 2024. Each permit requires an estimated two to three hours of staff time on average to complete, from initial call, site visit, and issuing permit if qualified for a permit.

The Pine River Watershed Initiative Network PRWIN organization which is supported in part by the Township of Huron-Kinloss has planted over 250 000 trees since the organization was established.

The Township of Huron-Kinloss has removed over 5 000 ash trees due to the emerald ash borer from high-risk areas adjacent to parks, trails, homes, and other infrastructure over the last ten years.

The Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority SVCA regulations apply to any development in regulated areas including the shoreline and Environmentally Protected areas.

Bruce County regulations apply to lots over one hectare.

#### Implications to expanding the existing by-law

Selective Preservation: Not all trees provide equal benefits; preserving less beneficial species might prevent planting new, more beneficial ones.

Treed Lots: Treed lots work well for migratory or nesting birds, cooling the planet, removing GHG from the atmosphere, but if isolated within residential areas create ecosystems that don't have access to corridors for movement and migration, recommended for healthy wildlife habitat.

Undeveloped vs Developed lots: There is a difference between undeveloped and development ready lots. Much of the undeveloped lands within the Huron Fringe are designated as Environmentally Protected (EP) or Open Space (OS) and would require site specific planning process and development approvals. Through these processes environmental impact studies and/or tree preservation/retention plans are used to support decision making. Development ready lots are appropriately zoned, and a building permit can be issued. These types of properties are intended to be developed in accordance with existing regulations.

#### Alternative Approaches

Education Campaigns: Raise awareness about the importance of trees and best practices for their care and importance of quality native trees.

Collaborative Residential Planning: Integrate tree preservation into broader residential planning for balanced development and conservation.

Neighbouring Municipal Tree By-laws are being implemented this fall: The delegation recommended that we adopt a similar by-law to that of a neighbouring municipality. It may prove prudent to wait and see the outcomes of the new by-law being implemented to avoid any pitfalls down the road. Staff propose to monitor their implementation closely for potential challenges or cost sharing opportunities if we want to consider a by-law in the future.

Official Plan: The Township of Huron-Kinloss will be updating the Official Plan and Zoning By-law in the next 1-3 years. Through this process it would be appropriate to investigate strengthening native tree protection and/or recognize the Huron Fringe. This may be an opportunity to determine during the next review if there is any need to update our existing by-law at that time.

#### Conclusion:

Existing protections by the current by-law, the SVCA, and the County of Bruce combined with the limited developed shoreline lots, already provide substantial safeguards. Alternative strategies such as education campaigns, and integrated residential planning can balance tree conservation with residential development

more effectively. Staff does not recommend expanding the borders of the existing tree preservation by-law, however, propose the by-law be reviewed periodically as required.

**Financial Impacts:**

The current by-law already has financial implications regarding enforcement, and compliance. Increasing enforcement and compliance will increase costs to the program.

**Performance Measurement:**

Staff have issued five permits in 2024.

**Strategic Area:**

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Embrace a thriving rural lifestyle | <input type="checkbox"/> Enhance Municipal Service Delivery    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for Inclusive Growth                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure Financial Stability |

**Strategic Goal: Protect, promote and restore our natural environment**

**Respectfully Submitted By:**

Mike Fair, Director of Community Services

**Report Approved By:**

Jodi MacArthur, Chief Administrative Officer