

January 28, 2014

Dear Mayor Rick Goldring and Members of the Burlington Council: Rick Craven ,  
Marianne Meed Ward , John Taylor , Jack Dennison , Paul Sharman and Blair Lancaster .

The LaSalle Park wintering habitat of the majestic Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator* Richardson) requires protection! Since 1982, much resources of money, time and effort have been expended to restore this magnificent species to the Ontario landscape. LaSalle provides the habitat for the largest collection of wintering trumpeters in the province. Regionally, the swan is listed as an “uncommon local winter resident”. Uncommon is defined as “infrequently recorded or with local distribution”. Local means the “distribution restricted to a few specific sites and habitats”. LaSalle Park is one of these few habitats!

I strongly urge council not to contribute financially to a detailed design plan for the LaSalle Park Marina expansion and breakwater. The wave break and permanent piers will interfere with the swans take-off and landing requirements. The reduced water circulation, increase in boat traffic, attraction of the breakwall to additional birds such as gulls and cormorants and the resultant increase in excrement will reduce water quality, likely lead to algal blooms (which could be toxic), worsen the habitat for plant and fish diversity, and reduce food availability for waterfowl, including the swans.

It is known that the wintering habitat of the Trumpeter Swan is extremely important! Finding suitable, available, abundant food in winter is crucial to their survival. Winter is also the time for pair bonding and mating. These activities require space, energy, food and little disturbance.

The most serious threat to trumpeter swans is the loss and the degradation of suitable wintering grounds. In Ontario, these are few and far between. Further loss and degradation of winter habitat is likely the main threat to the Trumpeter Swan, across its range. The trumpeter's habitat specificity; site fidelity; and sensitivity to disturbance and habitat alteration are very important factors to consider. There must, therefore, be no construction in the LaSalle Park Marina area from November to March when the trumpeter swans are there!

Would you want to be remembered as the council that jeopardized 31 years of dedicated work to Ontario's Trumpeter Swan Restoration program or as the council that graciously accepted their stewardship responsibilities for a magnificent species brought back from the brink of extinction?

I sincerely hope that the LaSalle Park Marina expansion and breakwater do not proceed.

Sincerely,  
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