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Advocacy group calls for an end to trapping in Hamilton

At-risk snapping turtle not the only victim of beaver traps if practice continues

HAMILTON - The trapping of an at-risk snapping turtle at Fifty Point Conservation Area has led to the Hamilton Conservation Authority to suspend trapping practices, but a wildlife advocacy group is calling on them – and the City of Hamilton – to ban leg-hold, body-gripping and snare traps entirely.

The Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals (APFA) has extensive experience working with municipalities on beaver co-existence projects and knows that non-lethal measures are available – and work.

“Trapping has long been the response when concerns about flooding or tree damage are raised,” said Michael Howie, spokesperson for APFA in Hamilton. “But that does not mean it needs to continue. In fact, we have seen time and time again the principles of co-existence succeeding in a variety of settings – rural, suburban and urban – and believe that it is the wildlife management tool of the future.”

APFA is offering to volunteer their time and expertise to both the HCA and City of Hamilton to develop and implement a co-existence model, which would include flow devices, exclusion fencing and tree protection.

“The ecological benefits of beavers is enormous,” Howie said. “By utilizing some simple, cost-effective tools like flow devices, we can ensure that beaver families stay together and continue to provide these benefits, without causing harm to infrastructure.”

APFA’s team will be touring Ontario municipalities in May, 2014, to teach volunteers and municipalities how to build flow devices. Hamilton would be a welcome partner.

“Trapping is a cruel, inefficient means of managing ecosystems,” Howie added. “We are willing and able to help the HCA and City of Hamilton learn how to build and implement systems that will protect wildlife and human infrastructure. Trapping is the way of the past. We’re interested in working with municipalities to move forward.”