

CVC plans to create 100-kilometre-long valley trail

By Jasen Obermeyer

Mono Council has been advised of long-range plans by Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) to create a new trail all the way from the Credit River's headwaters to Lake Ontario.

The disclosure by Deborah Martin-Downs, CVC's Chief Administrative Officer, came as the conservation authority presented information on its 2018 budget at the council's Jan. 30 meeting.

Ms. Martin-Downs said the proposed Credit Valley Trail, when completed, will be a continuous 100-kilometre pathway through the Credit River Valley, from the hills of the headwaters in Orangeville to Lake Ontario in Port Credit.

Council also learned that Mono's contribution to the CVC will be up slightly this year, as the conservation authority undertakes a brand strategy and oversees some new initiatives.

CVC staff gave a presentation explaining the town's share of its budget, and what the conservation body is doing in the coming future.

In presenting the budget, Ms. Martin-Downs said Mono's 2018 share of both the general and shared levy, at \$12,741, is up 3.38 per cent, or \$416 from the 2017 budget of \$12,325.

Part of the presentation showed where CVC get their funding, and how much each area provides. Municipal funding provides the most at 55 per cent, Internal chargebacks/recoveries provide 28 per cent, User fees/chargebacks/revenues are at 16 per cent, while Provincial funding is just at one per cent, which has been steady since 1996.

Councillor Sharon Martin voiced displeasure on how little the provincial government provides. "I would love to see more of my provincial tax portion headed towards parks, it just makes sense. We're using them more and more."

Ms. Martin-Downs said without financial support from Mono, "we'd struggle to keep up with the demand generated by the free community access to the park. More visitors are great, and we welcome them, but we also want to maintain a standard that they can come and feel safe."

She told council the new CVC logo in 2017 "was a huge accomplishment," along with the new Island Lake amphitheater, and is continuing their new brand strategy, as research showed people didn't fully understand what CVC is or does.

She explained that part of the brand strategy is connection, and "while it's something we've always done, it's become more visible."

Ms. Martin-Downs described to council how they went out to the Headwaters region, and launched a targeted outreach campaign to communicate with 50 landowners identified as having properties with natural and ecological significance, with 19 being in Mono.

Ms. Martin-Downs stressed the budget pressure staff faces with operating in "less than ideal conditions," out of trailers that aren't adjacent to bathroom facilities. She said will "identify how best to address current challenges for our operational facilities."

Councillor Ralph Manktelow said the trail is "a fantastic idea," and when asked for a completion date, Ms. Martin-Downs said it's a long-term project, taking about 25 years to complete. She said 34 to 36 per cent of the trail is in place, but "it's not linked up" and will need to define strategic planning, to determine where to facilitate trail building to open up more of it.

Mono Council briefly discussed the approval of a consultant to undertake the town's parkland needs study.

Monteith Brown Planning Consultants was chosen do a study to see where potential recreation infrastructure building or renovating is best in the municipality. The cost will be \$28,275 plus HST.

Kim Perryman, Mono's director of recreation, said the final report would be brought to council at their last council meeting in June.