

# **Refining Policies Regarding Setbacks for Surface Water Features in the City of Ottawa**

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Initiatives related to the protection of headwater drainage features have further encouraged the City of Ottawa to review the Official Plan policies and processes related to the *protection of surface water features*. Section 4.7.3 – Erosion Prevention and Protection of Surface Water of the City’s Official Plan and Section 69 of the Zoning By-law outline minimum setbacks from lakes, rivers, streams and other water bodies, where development and site alteration is not permitted. The purpose of watercourse setbacks is to protect water quality and protect people and property from hazards associated with slopes, erosion and flooding.

The policies are used in the development review process by applicants, consultants, the City and Conservation Authorities. However, the current policies set out in the Official Plan are cumbersome and are known to have deficiencies that result in development application delays. This project would review and revise these policies and associated zoning regulations as required. This project is to undertake a legislative and policy review and to guide the framework for the protection of surface water in the City of Ottawa.

The authors here have been undertaking a study to: (1) review the City’s policy; (2) review technical literature pertaining to setbacks, corridors and buffers; (3) review surface water feature protection policies in other jurisdictions; (4) consult with local stakeholders including Conservation Authority staff, City planning and infrastructure management staff and the development industry. This presentation will communicate the highlights of those reviews, as well as preliminary conclusions regarding potential revision of the City of Ottawa’s policy for the protection of surface water features.

## **Presenter Biography**

**Jennifer Boyer, MSc, MCIP RPP** is an Environmental Planner in the Resiliency & Natural Systems Unit at the City of Ottawa. Prior to the City of Ottawa, much of Jennifer’s work in her 20-year career has been centred around environmental planning, policy and management, with former work in the environmental consulting field in Toronto; at the Ministry of Transportation; and as Senior Planner at South Nation

Conservation. She holds a Bachelor of Environmental Studies honours degree from York University; and a Master of Science in Environmental Policy & Management from the University of Hull, in the United Kingdom. With her current role in the Natural Systems unit, Jennifer brings her skills as a registered professional planner to provide natural heritage and subwatershed-related planning services to the City of Ottawa. She participates in developing and implementing natural systems policies, and strategies; and works closely with stakeholders from across the City, other agencies, and the community. Jennifer's experience broadly covers the development of subwatershed studies, Source Protection Plans, environmental management plans; and developing strategies and working groups to establish policy recommendations for action.

**Cynthia Levesque, BSc** is a Senior Environment Specialist with more than 30 years of experience in environmental policy, program delivery, research and regulation. Trained in agricultural science and environmental studies at the University of Guelph, Cynthia has followed a career path through environmental impact assessment, environmental assessment, technical science report writing and provincial and municipal environmental planning and management. She led environmental policy group at the City of Ottawa for 6 years. Cynthia has also led planning and public consultation processes for several major environmental initiatives such as the City of Ottawa Environmental Strategy and nutrient management policy, water, environmental and fisheries policy reviews, 5-year review for the National Capital Commission's Greenbelt Master Plan and municipal conservation area and urban forest management plans.

**Bruce Kilgour, PhD**, is a fisheries / aquatic ecologist, with a background in monitoring, study design and ecological inventory. He has applied his 30+ years of experience in natural environment studies to the full life-cycle of industrial and government capital projects. He has conducted Municipal Class, Provincial, and Federal process environmental assessments in support of proposed infrastructure and industrial facilities including dams, piers, roads, and other corridors. Dr. Kilgour has developed and delivered monitoring programs for pulp and paper mills, metals mines, oil sands and municipal wastewater facilities. He has worked extensively with Fisheries & Oceans Canada in development of policies and procedures for fish and fish habitat. Dr. Kilgour also assisted in the development, was a co-author and an instructor of the Ontario Stream Assessment Protocol (OSAP), developed monitoring databases, and subsequently used OSAP data to examine the influences of buffers and riparian zones on the quality (health) of stream fisheries in Ontario.

**Anthony Francis, PhD** is an ecologist with experience in both terrestrial and aquatic projects. He joined Kilgour & Associates in 2008. He has worked on diverse ecological projects including, federal screening environmental assessment, environmental impact statements, environmental effects monitoring, construction monitoring, species at risk inventories and assessments, literature reviews, environmental studies of contaminants (metals and suspended particulates), and geomatic and statistical analyses for federal and provincial ministries as well as for private industry.