



Preserving the Biodiversity of Swan Lake Park

by Fred Peters

In 2026, Friends of Swan Lake Park will focus its efforts on the preservation of the birds and wildlife in the park. FOSLP's long-term goal is the development of a self-sustaining ecosystem that preserves the biodiversity of Swan Lake Park and provides direct enjoyment for all Markham residents.

Over 65% of Swan Lake Park is comprised of woodland and naturalized areas that contribute to Greensborough's canopy and support a wide range of bird and terrestrial wildlife. However, the well-documented biodiversity of Swan Lake Park is threatened by the increasing urbanization in the area and needs protection and nurturing.

Swan Lake has been described as a constructed wetland and as such hosts many plant, and animal species associated with wetlands. Ontario Nature notes that 20% of the species at risk in Ontario rely on wetland ecosystems. There are 15 bird species, two turtle species and the woodland vole that reside in Swan Lake Park that are listed as at risk under Federal regulations.

FOSLP's report, *Preserving the Biodiversity of Swan Lake Park*, submitted in June 2025 in support of our request to have the park designated as Natural Heritage Land, itemizes the diverse species found in the park and is available on FOSLP's website [Preserving-the-Biodiversity-of-Swan-Lake-Park_June-15-2025.pdf](#)

FOSLP's 2026 activities will focus on two areas:

- 1) Developing programs to help sustain birds, turtles and other species at risk by following the recommendations of the Adopt-a-Pond program sponsored by the Toronto Zoo and iNaturalist.
- 2) Developing programs to identify and remove invasive plant species and replanting with native species by following the approach of the Toronto Nature Stewards, volunteers who help manage 50 parks throughout Toronto. We require approval from Markham before we can remove any plants, so our activities this year will be to identify key species for removal and develop a pilot program for Markham's approval.

We will continue the activities of the Swan Lake Citizen Science Lab, our partnership with leading researchers from York University. The drone and water quality monitoring activity will continue and we will integrate our rehabilitation activities into the workshop programs.

Join us Earth Day Weekend

Our park activities will kick off on Earth Day weekend (April 18, 19). Join us to help identify and count wildlife. It's easy, just bring your cameras to help identify and count the birds, turtles, frogs and other wildlife.

Volunteers Needed

We have an ambitious program outlined for 2026 and need volunteers. Please sign up to volunteer. FriendsOfSwanLakePark.ca



Photo by Mai Britt



Source: Ontario Nature

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New Geese Fencing



Photo by Cindy Fowler

After rejecting the TRCA’s recommendation to increase the stoneware around the shoreline to block shore access for geese, Markham opted to install lower-cost fencing. The benefits are not clear, but as FOSLP member Kathleen Elizabeth Noel noted in her appeal to Markham not to install the fencing, it will definitely harm the nesting life of several wetland species.

Trees in our Village

by Ruth Bessant

“I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree”
Joyce Kilmer

There are over 2,500 trees in Swan Lake Village. We are recognized by the city of Markham as an urban forest, and have been mandated to have one person in charge of tree management. It takes a huge effort, and a close eye.

We are now in the final year of our second five-year contract with Advanced Tree Care (ATC). We will be going to tender this year. In the meantime, the Tree Management Committee, toward the end of May, will be doing the annual spring walkabout with Andrew, the head arborist. We wait until late spring so that we can identify any issues. If you have a concern about a tree close to your unit, please send me an email in April or early May, with the tag number on that tree, and I’ll add it to our list of trees to check. Once we have received the quotes from ATC, it is difficult to get additional work added, so be sure to let me know early. Just



for your information, last year the pruning cost for the village was over \$25,000.

Here’s a friendly reminder. PLEASE do not take things into your own hands to cut or trim branches. Our arborists have found trees in the village that have been irreparably damaged by residents trimming branches.

It won’t be much longer before we see the trees blooming and looking magnificent. Can’t wait!

Ruth Bessant
ruthbessant@gmail.com

Limerick Lafts

Cindy Knowles submitted the following limerick.

I have a dog and a cat
One’s lovely, the other a brat
When serving their food
One’s greedy, one’s screwed
The owner must settle the spat

Our limerick guru David Blinn quickly responded

One nice pet and one such a hog
Must put your mind in a fog
A simple solution
To clear the confusion
Just feed the damn cat to the dog