

ONTARIO PROPERTY AND ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS ALLIANCE

Unit A, 135 Church Street, North, Mount Forest, Ontario, N0G 2L2

Phone: 519-323-2308 / Fax: 519-323-0289 / E-Mail: opera@bmts.com / Web Page: www.bmts.com/~opera/

COSSARO NOTES

How a self-serving Committee is authorized under the Species at Risk Act (SARA) to make laws in secret, often originating with covert "observations" on private property. Thus are the lives & freehold of Ontario citizens being manipulated & marginalized in the name of protecting allegedly endangered wildlife, an otherwise commendable undertaking compromised by the biased opinions & questionable procedures of an unelected Committee.

May, 2010

The Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario (COSSARO) is meeting June 1-3 to evaluate more plants, animals, birds, etc. claimed to be endangered, threatened or extinct, hence candidates for addition to the Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC) database & resulting increase in Species at Risk Act enforcement.

Changing Land Use and Value: Three COSSARO forms summarized below illustrate just one of many processes currently in vogue to restrict use & so decrease value of private land, agricultural, commercial and residential, across Ontario without owner notice, compensation or right of appeal.

1. Form for Submitting Information to COSSARO:

This is a species sighting report solicited from any source, qualified or otherwise, that provides material for possible future inclusion on the NHIC database without advance knowledge or consent of affected landowners. That database, installed in 1996 at Peterborough, uses an unpublished template provided by The Nature Conservancy (a powerful U.S.-based environmental activist regularly awarded substantial subsidies from the Ontario government) and is administered by MNR partnership with several ENGOs (read professional lobbyists).

2. List of Species to be Assessed:

This is an interim list of 25 allegedly endangered species as recommended by various individuals and/or organizations, whether amateur or professional, that COSSARO will be evaluating between June 1 and June 3rd for possible NHIC inclusion with relevant habitat designation.

3. Observer Form: This is an attendance application required 7 days prior to the COSSARO June meeting from any member of the public with prescribed qualifications who wishes to observe the proceedings and has an acceptable endangered species nomination to make there. This application must be approved by the COSSARO Chairperson in advance and, if so approved, binds the attendee to limited participation, "necessary" secrecy and in-camera Committee sessions where dictated.

On that construct, the upcoming meeting of an unelected Committee will decide which **additional** species are to be declared endangered and their protected habitat designated. Under the Species at Risk Act (written by 5 ENGOs with presumed connections to COSSARO), those decisions will become law to be enforced as such across Ontario.

The identification & protection of endangered wildlife is a worthwhile initiative that's widely supported. But the process by which it's being imposed in Ontario by a quasi-legal Committee that operates in-camera and prescribes how and when members of the public may be permitted, under tight conditions, to attend is an outrageous violation of taxpayer rights. Accordingly, the "Form for Submitting Information to COSSARO" should surely indicate whether or not a species sighting occurred on private property, the "observer" realized he or she was on private property when the sighting occurred and the affected landowner was advised of that sighting at the time. In addition, all landowners, especially rural landowners, might be well advised to post legally enforceable "No Trespassing" symbols (painted circles in solid red) on fence posts or other visible surfaces along the perimeter of their respective properties and deny government officials and casual wildlife observers even occasional permission to enter thereon.