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To: [Chris Humphrey](#); [Justin Speight](#); [Rocco Yeargin](#)
Cc: [Nichole Baldinger](#); [City Council](#)
Subject: Trail
Date: Monday, February 25, 2019 6:17:06 PM

To whom it may concern,

We have recently heard that the City of Green is proposing a walking trail through the woods between Shriver Rd. and Massillon Rd. In addition to the obvious problems associated with such a trail; such as unwanted foot traffic close to private homes, subjecting our children, pets (& homes) to the unwanted attention of strangers using the trail, and an invitation to more delinquency and disruption of our peace than we already face by the people who currently use these woods in an unlawful fashion, we have another concern of a more global nature with the idea of such a path.

Currently these woods provide an important ecological niche to our state (& nation's) wildlife. The formation of several vernal pools in these woods provides difficult-to-find habitat for many distinctive species. These pools are currently used by spring peepers and other wildlife to spawn. Most importantly, these pools provide a stopover for Rusty Blackbirds (and other birds) during their migrations. I have personally documented 50 or more Rusty Blackbirds on multiple occasions for Cornell University's "Rusty Blackbird spring migration blitz" studies, as they stopped in these woods for several days to feed and rest up for their journey to their breeding grounds in Canada. The actual numbers were much larger than I documented (likely several hundred), but extended so deeply into the woods I could only physically count those viewable from public areas or my own yard.

The Cornell University website states the following about Rusty Blackbirds: "The Rusty Blackbird is one of North America's most rapidly declining species. The population has plunged an estimated 85-99 percent over the past forty years and scientists are completely puzzled as to what is the cause." It is important to note that flooded woodlands, such as those provided by these vernal pools along this proposed pathway, are important to the birds' foraging during migration. Without such habitats the birds would cease to exist. The Cornell site goes on to add, "The Rusty Blackbird has undergone one of the sharpest and most mystifying recent declines of any North American songbird. The North American Breeding Bird Survey estimates that populations declined by 4.4% every year between 1966 and 2014, resulting in a cumulative decline of 89%," and "Rusty Blackbird is listed as a Common Bird in Steep Decline on the 2014 State of the Birds Report." It is also currently listed as a vulnerable (declining) species, which is a single step above endangered.

While a single walking path may not seem to be an issue to the overall environment, drainage and water flow can be drastically altered by small alterations to the land. A path could indeed alter the flow of drainage waters and their accumulation into the badly needed vernal pools. Just as importantly, increased foot traffic and pets being walked could discourage the use of the area by wildlife. As a side note, we wonder if such alterations could affect the water table in other detrimental ways, creating problems such as the flooding of neighboring yards.

In conclusion, we would like to thank you for taking the time to read this email. We are sure you will all hear from passionate members of the community who will, with good reason and justified concerns, share their apprehensions on how this project will negatively affect our community's safety. While we feel this is a waste of city funds on an unneeded and unwanted project, we also wanted to take a moment and speak for the birds, frogs and other animals that share these woods with us, and hopefully make you aware of a perhaps unconsidered side effect of this project.

Thank You,
Christopher Dyer & Noelle Dyer