

From: Niagara Frontier Wildlife Habitat Council
Beverly Borgatti Barthel
Date: October 27, 2010
Subject: Gorge Rim Study

My name is Beverly Barthel and I'm speaking for the Niagara Frontier Wildlife Habitat Council. We support total removal of the gorge parkway.

The membership of the NFWHC supports total removal of the Robert Moses Parkway and the restoration of native and natural landscapes because of the additional wildlife habitat that would be created by doing so. The Niagara River and its shorelines have been designated a Globally Significant Important Bird Area. It was the first international designation. Resident and migrating birds have been denied this extra protection of nearly 300 acres for over half a century and it is time the beautiful potential of this area be restored. The value of ground nesting and other birds and butterflies that would be attracted to wildflowers that could be growing there are much more important than a commuter route. Its time that State Parks recognizes this and acts accordingly. The potential of this region is too precious to be covered by concrete and traffic that could easily enter and exit the city by other routes.

On a personal note, I am a resident of the Deveaux area of Niagara Falls which is adjacent to the gorge. The Parkway has always been an obstacle keeping residents from enjoying this region. We must hop a fence and traverse two lanes of traffic to get there. It is also a region that has been sadly neglected and under used by tourists who might otherwise be drawn to see its seasonal natural beauty.

The Niagara Gorge is a natural extension of the mighty Niagara Falls. For years we have neglected to see the potential of this region to encourage people to stay longer. People from all over New York State visit places just to see the fall foliage. Here we could have a naturally restored gorge with self sustaining ancient and native plants, and world class hiking and biking trails that follow the path of Native Americans and the early explorers. A trek that could take them all the way to Lewiston.

The Niagara Frontier Wildlife Habitat Council believes removal of the Robert Moses Parkway and restoration of native and natural landscapes would create a wild life habitat that would be beautiful as well as self sustaining. It would also create another seasonal attraction for visitors who wish to view the majestic beauty of the gorge and experience the rich history of the region first hand. The time is now. Thank You.

Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER supports local efforts to remove the Robert Moses Parkway on the Lower Niagara River for the following reasons:

- The Robert Moses Parkway itself is a physical detriment that generates significant negative stormwater impacts that are known to be harming the native habitat of the special ecosystem of the Lower Niagara, and....
- The Robert Moses Parkway as a system effectively creates a barrier between the community and the waterfront as it speeds commuters past and we regret that this Parkway has contributed to the decline of the cultural potential and economy of the City of Niagara Falls. This City's decline has had a ripple effect, not only upon adjacent communities, but upon the entire Niagara Region and beyond.
- The presence of the Robert Moses Parkway precludes the ability to effectively restore the accessibility and magnificence of the natural Gorge ecology.

Furthermore we maintain that the Robert Moses Parkway does not in any way resemble or function as the Olmstedian carriage road that would have gently linked the pastoral grandeur of the Falls for pedestrian and equestrian enjoyment, and that endeavoring to justify it as such falls short of the legendary vision for the region.

In light of the above we endorse the removal of the Robert Moses Parkway.

- Removal will enable ecological restoration of the unique and highly significant ecosystem of the Niagara River Environmental Corridor.
- Removal will reconnect the community to the spectacular heritage and ecosystem of the Niagara River Gorge waterfront.
- Removal will solidify the regional commitment to eco heritage tourism as a means to revitalize the local economy.
- Removal will enhance local quality of life, and...
- Removal will reestablish the historic regional arteries as vibrant business district thoroughfares.

In short to summarize:

The most effective means of maximizing the Niagara region's culture and economy is to remove the Robert Moses Parkway.

protecting the Niagara River gorge and

Because of these reasons, in 2002, Riverkeeper (formerly the Friends of the Buff Niagara Rivers endorsed the removal of the Parkway)