



# NOTICE OF MEETING

**DATE:** November 2, 2023

**TIME:** 7:00 pm

**LOCATION:** Hybrid In Person/Zoom Meeting

## AGENDA

**MEETING:**

**GANARASKA FOREST  
RECREATIONAL USERS  
COMMITTEE**

**MEMBERS:**

Mark Gardiner, Matthew Robbins,  
Jim Pearson, Jennifer Jackman,  
Garry Niece, Randy Cunningham,  
Lisa Thompson, Amber Panchyshyn,  
Alex Schmidt, Carolyn Richards,  
Peter Wood, Steve Brownell,  
Maureen McDonald, Marven  
Whidden, Lance Nachoff

1. Welcome, Land Acknowledgement and Call to Order

Land Acknowledgement

The Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority respectfully acknowledges that the land on which we gather is situated within the traditional and treaty territory of the Mississauga's and Chippewa's of the Anishinabek, known today as the Williams Treaties First Nations. Our work on these lands acknowledges their resilience and their longstanding contribution to the area. We are thankful for the opportunity to live, learn and share with mutual respect and appreciation.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest
3. Minutes of Last Meeting – September 7, 2023 - **attached**

4. Adoption of the Agenda
5. Delegations:  
None
6. Presentation:  
None
7. Business Arising from Minutes:  
None
8. Correspondence:  
None
9. New Business:
  - a) Digital Ganaraska Forest Trail Map – **Staff report attached**
  - b) Ganaraska Forest Signage Update – **Staff report attached**
  - c) Environmental Concerns – **Staff report attached**
10. Adjourn

**MINUTES OF THE GANARASKA FOREST  
RECREATIONAL USERS COMMITTEE**

**September 7, 2023**

**RUC 3/23**

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1. Welcome and Call to Order

The Chair called the Ganaraska Recreational Users Committee (RUC) meeting to order at 7:04 pm and welcomed those present.

**MEMBER PRESENT:** Mark Gardiner, Chair  
Matthew Robbins, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters  
Jim Pearson, Ontario Trail Riders Association  
Jennifer Jackman, Ontario Nature  
Garry Niece, Hike Ontario  
Lisa Thompson, Ontario Federation of Trail Riders  
Amber Panchyshyn, Orienteering Ontario  
Carolyn Richards, Ontario Federation of ATV Clubs  
Steve Brownell, Municipality of Port Hope  
Marven Whidden, Municipality of Clarington

**ALSO PRESENT:** Ed Van Osch, GRCA Forest Recreation Technician  
Pam Lancaster, GRCA Conservation Lands Coordinator

**ABSENT WITH REGRETS:** Randy Cunningham, Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs  
Lance Nachoff, GRCA Board of Director

**ALSO ABSENT:** Pam Julian, Ontario Cycling  
Peter Wood, Ontario Federation of 4X4 Clubs  
Maureen McDonald, Township of Cavan Monaghan  
Cross Country Ski Ontario (position unfilled)  
City of Kawartha Lakes (position unfilled)

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

**RUC 14/23**

**MOVED BY:** Marven Whidden

**SECONDED BY:** Gary Niece

**THAT** the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee approve the minutes of the June 1, 2023 meeting.

**CARRIED.**

4. Adoption of Agenda

**RUC 15/23**

**MOVED BY:** Jennifer Jackman

**SECONDED BY:** Marven Whidden

**THAT** the Ganaraska Forest Recreational User Committee approve the agenda.

**CARRIED.**

5. Delegations

None

6. Presentations

None

7. Business Arising from the Minutes

None

8. Correspondence

None

9. New Business

**a) Snowshoe and Cross Country Ski Trail Update**

Ed Van Osch, Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA) Forest Recreation Technician provided an update on trail reroute construction in the Central Forest and confirmed that GRCA anticipate these reroutes to be opened to the public and the Ganaraska Forest Trail digital map will be updated to represent these changes prior to the winter operating season.

**RUC 16/23**

**MOVED BY:** Lisa Thompson

**SECONDED BY:** Amber Panchyshyn

**THAT** the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receives the Snowshoe and Cross Country Ski Trail Update Staff Report for information.

**CARRIED.**

**b) Volunteer Program Update**

Ed Van Osch, GRCA Forest Recreation Technician explained how the volunteer program functions and provided an updated on the success of the volunteer efforts. Pam Lancaster, GRCA Conservation Lands Coordinator, informed the RUC that volunteers have been given access to GRCA Quick Capture App which allows them to report trail blockages and locations directly to GRCA staff. She further requested that the general public report trail blockage locations via [volunteer@grca.on.ca](mailto:volunteer@grca.on.ca).

**RUC 17/23****MOVED BY:**

Gary Niece

**SECONDED BY:**

Jennifer Jackman

**THAT** the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receives the Volunteer Program Update for information.

**CARRIED.****c) Environmental Concerns**

Jennifer Jackman, Ontario Nature RUC representative inquired as to the possibility of GRCA collecting data representative of wildlife species. Pam Lancaster, GRCA Conservation Lands Coordinator stated that GRCA currently has data on localized habitat and is continuing to collect ecosystem data. Additionally, staff plan to incorporate citizen science into Ganaraska Forest monitoring and data collection in the future.

Jim Pearson, Ontario Trail Riders Association (OTRA) RUC representative announced that OTRA recently contributed a \$3510.00 sign and trail improvement donation to the GRCA. A discussion was held regarding specific areas with deficient signage and where specific signage would help with Forest User navigation. Pam Lancaster GRCA, Conservation Lands Coordinator indicated that GRCA signage protocol is under development and will be incorporated into a future Strategy which is slated for public consultation in 2024.

Steve Brownell, Municipality of Port Hope RUC representative inquired about GRCA forest fire response planning and suggested that details of this plan be distributed to the community at large. Pam Lancaster, GRCA Conservation Lands Coordinator informed the RUC that responses to fire within the Ganaraska Forest would be carried out by local municipal fire departments. To support this response, GRCA has representation on the Ganaraska Forest Fire Committee, in which all local municipalities Emergency Management Services (EMS) representatives meet with GRCA Staff biannually to discuss emergency response and share information. Additionally, during emergency response situations, GRCA Staff occasionally are able to assist EMS as property guides/experts and help facilitate access to the Ganaraska Forest.

**RUC 18/23****MOVED BY:**

Marven Whidden

**SECONDED BY:**

Carolyn Richards

**THAT** the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receive the Environmental Concerns Staff Report for information.

**CARRIED.**

**FURTHERMORE** GRCA is requesting that Recreational Users Committee continue to gather and share Users environmental concerns with GRCA Recreation Technician.

10. Other Business

None

11. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 pm.

**RUC 19/23**

**MOVED BY:** Marven Whidden

**SECONDED BY:** Jennifer Jackman

**THAT** the meeting adjourn.

**CARRIED.**

The next meeting of the Ganaraska Forest Recreational User Committee is Thursday, November 2, 2023 at 7:00 pm.

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**Chair**



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**Forest Recreation Technician**

## **STAFF REPORT – November 2, 2023**

**To: Chair and Members of the Recreational Users Committee**

**RE: Digital Ganaraska Forest Trail Map**

The digital Ganaraska Forest Trail Map has been in implementation for over a year. The map can be viewed in a web browser or can be downloaded onto a mobile device, where a Forest user can track their location on the downloaded (offline) map without needing mobile data.

Unfortunately, enforcement officers and staff are encountering many Forest users that are unaware of the digital trail maps, with some Forest users navigating with discontinued Ganaraska Forest physical mapping or third-party mapping platforms. Discontinued paper maps and third-party mapping platforms do not accurately represent the trail system that is authorized for public use within the Ganaraska Forest and often lead Forest users into unauthorized areas and/or onto private lands.

At the time of purchasing a Ganaraska Forest Day Pass or Membership, all customers are directed to download and utilize the Ganaraska Forest Trail web application. Additionally, all Forest Members that have signed up for email correspondence have received email notifications, creating awareness of the web application.

One of the benefits of a digital trail map is the ability for staff to quickly communicate with Forest users on area or trail closures and re-routes. The mapping system supports Forest user's personal safety so that hazardous situations can be avoided, such as logging operations/work zones, or trail re-routes around temporarily closed trails for reasons such as erosion.

In addition to assisting with safe navigation, the digital Ganaraska Forest Trail Map helps create awareness of and protects the environmental aspects of the Ganaraska Forest. Authorized Ganaraska Trails and Environmentally Sensitive areas are both represented on the digital map. Forest users are prohibited from entering all Environmentally Sensitive Areas and any deviation from the authorized trail system identified on the digital map may cause negative long term affects on the localized ecosystem and possibly negatively affect the greater Ganaraska River watershed.

Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority asks that all Forest users download the Ganaraska Forest Trail web application and adhere to the open trail network represented on the map. To ensure the most recent version of the Ganaraska Forest Map is seen, staff ask that Forest users refresh/re-download the trail map each time they visit the Ganaraska Forest.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT** the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receive the Digital Ganaraska Forest Trail Map staff report for information.

**FURTHERMORE** GRCA is requesting that RUC Representatives share the Ganaraska Forest Trail Map information presented during this meeting with their respective organizations and user groups.

**Prepared by:**



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Ed Van Osch, Forest Recreation Technician



## STAFF REPORT – November 2, 2023

**To: Chair and Members of the Recreational Users Committee**

**RE: Ganaraska Forest Signage Update**

Ganaraska Forest users can expect to see changes to Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA) signage starting in fall 2023, continuing throughout 2024 and beyond.

- Signage guidelines: Staff continue to development signage guidelines and GRCA will be updating signage when and where appropriate starting in 2024.
- Update trailhead signage: All designated Ganaraska Forest parking areas welcome signage will be updated. This signage will offer users with basic property use information, educational information, and direct users to Ganaraska Forest pass purchase and mapping links. Additionally, orientation mapping will help users identify their location in relation to the greater Ganaraska Forest proper. The mapping provided on the sign will complement but not replace the digital Ganaraska Forest Trail Map or web application.
- Cross Country Ski Trail Signage Pilot Project: Staff are testing various signage designs along the Yellow Trail during the 2024 Ski Season (Jan 1- Mar 31). Results from this test will guide signage design development and placement on other Ganaraska Forest trails.
- Staff continue to assess and collect data on current signage within the Ganaraska Forest. Incorrect or misleading signage is being remove and/or replaced. Additionally, Staff noting signage location deficiencies.
- Staff continue to work with partner organizations to create and/or install signage that will support regional trail networks that utilize parts of the Ganaraska Forest.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT** the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receive the Ganaraska Forest Signage Update staff report for information.

**FURTHERMORE** GRCA is requesting that RUC Representatives share the Ganaraska Forest Signage Update information presented during this meeting with their respective organizations and user groups.

**Prepared by:**



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Ed Van Osch, Forest Recreation Technician

## **STAFF REPORT – November 2, 2023**

**To: Chair and Members of the Recreational Users Committee**

**RE: Environmental Concerns**

The Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA) has been implementing an invasive species removal project this summer/fall of 2023. Approximately 5 acres of very dense, invasive shrub are being actively managed near to the Ganaraska Forest Centre trail head. Invasive species include European Buckthorn (the majority), Autumn Olive, Honeysuckle and Burning Bush. Management was made possible through a grant received through the Invasive Species Centre - Invasive Species Action Fund.

Different sections of the 5 acres site are being treated in different ways. Some areas the shrubs are being cut and stump treated with herbicide. In others, the shrubs are receiving a basal bark application of herbicide.

In addition, invasive shrubs along approximately 500m of trail has been cut, stump treated with herbicide, and the brush chipped. Periwinkle, and invasive flowering plant, was also managed along the trailside as a follow up to a project conducted in 2022.

Due to the removal of the invasive shrubs approximately 20 regenerating Hemlock trees released from invasive competition and the habitat for Beach Leaf disease has been reduced in this compartment. Additionally, other desirable species were released from invasive competition include Black Cherry, Red Oak and Sugar Maple.

A benefit of this grant is that the GRCA was able to acquire two brush saws and a chipper, which can all be used towards future invasive species management and trail maintenance.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT** the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receive the Environmental Concerns staff report for information.

**Prepared by:**



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Ed Van Osch, Forest Recreation Technician