



NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: March 21, 2024

TIME: 4:00 pm

LOCATION: Hybrid Meeting

AGENDA

MEETING:

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MEMBERS:

Randy Barber, Bruce Buttar, Mark Lovshin, Vicki Mink, Miriam Mutton, Lance Nachoff, Tracy Richardson, Adam Pearson, Joan Stover, Willie Woo, Margaret Zwart

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 – **December 21, 2023 – attached**
4. Adoption of the Agenda

5. Business Arising from Minutes:
None.
6. Delegations:
None.
7. Presentations:
None.
8. Correspondence:
 - a) 01/24 Town of Cobourg re: Stormwater Charges
Note and file
 - b) 02/24 Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry re: O.Reg 41/24
Action required – refer to staff
9. Applications under Ontario Regulation 168/06:
Permits approved by Executive - **schedule attached**

Permit applications requiring Board of Directors discussion:
None
10. Committee Reports:
None.
11. New Business:
 - a) Ganaraska Forest Trail Modeling Public Consultation – **staff report attached**
 - b) CA Act Amendments and Ontario Regulation 41/24 – **staff report attached**
 - c) Designation of Provincial Offences Officers – **staff report attached**
 - d) 2023 Timeline Report for Section 28 Applications – **staff report attached**
12. Other Business:
None.
13. Public Question Period - **Agenda Items Only**
 - All questions are to be submitted the day before by 4:00 pm in advance of the Board of Directors meeting in order to allow staff to prepare the answers to the questions. The Chair has discretion for questions on the day of the meeting.
 - A maximum of 10 minutes will be allotted for the Question Period. More time can be allocated at the discretion of the Chair.
 - Persons wishing to ask a question must state their name and address for the record.
 - Questions will be restricted to only those items listed on the agenda.
 - Questions cannot be asked on “In Camera” items.

- Questions cannot be asked with respect to minutes of Board of Directors meetings or committee meetings.
- All persons will speak respectfully when asking the question.
- The Chair may conclude the Question Period prior to the ten (10) minute time limit, where attendees are disobeying the Rules of Order, or a decision of the Chair, or where there are no questions.

14. In Camera:
None.

15. Adjourn

GANARASKA REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

December 21, 2023 (Hybrid)

GRCA 08/23

1. Welcome, Land Acknowledgement and Call to Order

The Chair called the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA) Board of Directors special meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mark Lovshin, Chair - Township of Hamilton
Vicki Mink, Vice-Chair - Municipality of Port Hope
Randy Barber - Town of Cobourg
Bruce Buttar - Agricultural Representative
Miriam Mutton - Town of Cobourg
Lance Nachoff - Township of Cavan Monaghan
Adam Pearson - Municipality of Port Hope
Tracy Richardson - City of Kawartha Lakes
Joan Stover - Township of Alnwick/Haldimand
Willie Woo - Municipality of Clarington
Margaret Zwart - Municipality of Clarington

ALSO PRESENT: Linda Laliberte, CAO/Secretary-Treasurer
Cory Harris, Watershed Services Coordinator
Ken Thajer, Planning and Regulations Coordinator

**ABSENT WITH
REGRETS:**

ALSO ABSENT:

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

None.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

GRCA 64/23

MOVED BY: Tracy Richardson

SECONDED BY: Joan Stover

THAT the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority approve the minutes of the November 23, 2023 meeting.

CARRIED.

4. Adoption of the Agenda

GRCA 65/23

MOVED BY: Randy Baker

SECONDED BY: Adam Pearson

THAT the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority adopt the agenda.

CARRIED.

5. Delegations

None.

6. Business Arising from Minutes:

None.

7. Correspondence

04/23 Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry re: Agreement Extension Request

05/23 Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry re: Planning, Development and Permitting Fees Direction Extended

GRCA 66/23

MOVED BY: Lance Nachoff

SECONDED BY: Tracy Richardson

THAT the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority receive the correspondence to note and file.

CARRIED.

8. Applications under Ontario Regulation 168/06:

Permits approved by Executive:

GRCA 67/23

MOVED BY: Joan Stover

SECONDED BY: Adam Pearson

THAT the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority receive the permits for information.

CARRIED.

Permit Application requiring Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority Board of Directors discussion:

None.

9. Committee Reports:

None.

10. Other Business:

None.

11. New Business

a) Town of Cobourg Stormwater Charges

There was a discussion among the board members with regards to the stormwater charges. While the intent of the charges is understood as it relates to the Town of Cobourg's asset management plan, staff pointed out that if all watershed municipalities implemented similar charges, the GRCA would be paying around \$1,800,000.00 which amounts to approximately 50% of the 2024 preliminary budget.

GRCA 68/23

MOVED BY: Miriam Mutton

SECONDED BY: Randy Barber

THAT the Board of Directors request the Town of Cobourg grant an exemption from stormwater charges for Cobourg Conservation Area.

CARRIED.

12. Presentations

None.

13. Public Question Period

None.

14. In Camera

None.

15. Adjourn

GRCA 69/23

MOVED BY: Willie Woo

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

CARRIED.

CHAIR

CAO/SECRETARY-TREASURER

Linda Laliberte

From: Kristina Lepik <klepik@cobourg.ca>
Sent: February 23, 2024 10:55 AM
To: Linda Laliberte
Subject: Council Resolution - January 31, 2024

Good morning,

Please be advised that Council passed the following resolution at the January 31, 2024, meeting:

Correspondence from the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority regarding an exemption from stormwater charges for the Cobourg Conservation Area

WHEREAS Council has received correspondence from the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA) regarding an exemption from stormwater charges for the Cobourg Conservation Area; and



WHEREAS Cobourg Conservation Area, located at 700 William Street, Cobourg, contains natural hazard features such as floodplain and erosion hazards and these lands facilitate passive use and nature appreciation by all ages and families are able to visit a conservation area and have a nature-based experience with natural habitat and species.

NOW THEREFORE BE IS RESOLVED THAT the request from the GRCA Board of Directors regarding an exemption from stormwater charges be referred to staff to review in the Stormwater Review Report.

Kind regards,

Kristina Lepik (she/her)
Deputy Clerk/Manager, Legislative Services

The Corporation of the Town of Cobourg
Legislative Services Division
55 King Street West, Cobourg, ON, K9A 2M2
P: 905-372-4301 x 4402 | cobourg.ca



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01/24

The Town recognizes the value of public input and seeks feedback and compliments to ensure continuous improvement. We would like to invite you to participate in a short survey about your recent experience.

Linda Laliberte

From: ca.office (MNRF) <ca.office@ontario.ca>
Sent: February 16, 2024 3:49 PM
To: dheinbuck@abca.ca; Katrina Furlanetto; generalmanager@catfishcreek.ca; cdarling@cloca.com; quentin.hanchard@cvc.ca; tim.pidduck@crowealley.com; tbyrne@erca.org; Linda Laliberte; slawson@grandriver.ca; t.lanthier@greysauble.on.ca; hbasit@hrca.on.ca; Lisa.Burnside@conservationhamilton.ca; mmajchrowski@kawarthaconservation.com; elizabeth@kettlecreekconservation.on.ca; r.baldwin@lsrca.on.ca; Tammy Cook; jmaxwell@lprca.on.ca; mark.peacock@ltvca.ca; Rhonda.bateman@ltc.on.ca; pbeard@mvca.on.ca; David.Vallier@mattagamiregion.ca; smcintyre@mvc.on.ca; csharma@npca.ca; Carl.Jorgensen@ConservationSudbury.ca; chitra.gowda; dhevenor@nvca.on.ca; Janette Loveys Smith; bmcnevin@quinteconservation.ca; richard.pilon@rrca.on.ca; sommer.casgrain-robertson@rvca.ca; E.Downing@SVCA.ON.CA; cbarrett@ssmrca.ca; cbickerdike@nation.on.ca; kphillips@scrca.on.ca; jmackenzie@trca.on.ca; annettt@thamesriver.on.ca; acoleman@conservationontario.ca; bhorner@abca.ca
Cc: Keyes, Jennifer (MNRF); ca.office (MNRF)
Subject: Update: Regulation of Development for the Protection of People and Property from Natural Hazards in Ontario – Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

This message is being sent on behalf of Jennifer Keyes, Director, Resources Planning and Development Policy Branch, MNRF

Good afternoon:

I am writing to inform you of the proclamation of provisions of the *Conservation Authorities Act* (the act), as well as the approval of Ontario Regulation (O. Reg.) 41/24: Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits, and amendments to O. Reg. 686/21: Mandatory Programs and Services made under the act, all of which come into effect on April 1, 2024. This updated legislative framework and regulations will clarify and streamline regulatory requirements to focus on natural hazards and public safety and provide greater transparency in the permitting process.

I would like to acknowledge the ongoing efforts of conservation authorities in implementing these much-needed changes.

Legislative proclamations

The amendments to the act that have been proclaimed to come into effect on April 1, 2024, including provisions regarding:

- Appeals of permit related fees to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT).
- Setting out the prohibited activities in the act instead of in individual conservation authority specific regulations, and enabling exceptions to the prohibitions.
- The issuance of permits by a conservation authority, including appeals to the OLT regarding permitting decisions, requests that the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry (the minister) review a conservation authority permit decision, and appeals to the OLT if a decision is not made by a conservation authority within 90-days.
- Minister's orders directing a conservation authority not to issue a permit and, and where such an order is made, enabling the minister to issue a permit in the place of a conservation authority.

- Mandatory requirement for conservation authorities to issue permits where a minister's order has been made under section 34.1 or 47 of the *Planning Act* (continues the approach currently in effect).
- Updated enforcement powers and offence provisions under the act, including updated provisions for the appointment of officers, stop work orders and increased penalties.

New regulation for the protection of people and property from natural hazards

Effective April 1, 2024, O. Reg. 41/24: Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits sets out details on: prohibited activities and areas where a conservation authority permit is required, exemptions from a permit for certain low-risk activities, the process for applying for a conservation authority permit, and service requirements for conservation authorities in reviewing permit applications. The new regulation will apply to all conservation authorities and the existing 36 conservation authority-specific regulations ("Regulation of Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses") and the regulation governing their contents (O. Reg. 97/04) will be revoked. This new regulation will ensure clear and consistent requirements for conservation authorities and permit applicants while still addressing local differences. Amendments to O. Reg. 686/21: Mandatory Programs and Services, also in effect April 1, 2024, prescribes requirements for conservation authorities to prepare an annual report that outlines statistics on permits, including reporting on their level of compliance with the requirements set out in O. Reg. 41/24.

New regulation setting out rules of conduct in Conservation Areas

Effective April 1, 2024, [O. Reg. 668/21: Rules of Conduct in Conservation Areas](#) comes into effect, and the conservation authority specific regulations will be revoked. This single regulation sets out the rules of conduct in conservation areas across the province. This new regulation generally maintains the requirements formerly set out in the individual regulations with some minor updates and re-numbering. The Ministry is also proposing amendments to Regulation 950: Proceedings Commenced by Certificate of Offence under the *Provincial Offences Act* to update the short form wordings to reflect the new regulation, and will be in contact regarding those updates in the upcoming weeks. A decision notice is now available at the Environmental Registry of Ontario, posting #019-2927: [Proposed updates to the regulation of development for the protection of people and property from natural hazards in Ontario](#).

The new and updated regulations will be published on e-laws in the coming days and a webinar will take place during the week of March 4th for conservation authorities and Conservation Ontario, for which you will be receiving an invitation shortly.

If you have any questions, please reach out to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry at ca.office@ontario.ca. I look forward to working with you to implement these changes.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Keyes

Director, Resources Planning and Development Policy Branch

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

ca.office@ontario.ca

Please Note: As part of providing [accessible customer service](#), please let me know if you have any accommodation needs or require communication supports or alternate formats.

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Ontario Regulation 168/06
Permits approved by Executive:

Date: March 21, 2024

Permit No.	Date	Address	Municipality/ Township	Description of Works
2265-01/24	Jan.8/24	County Road 45, Baltimore (East side of Baltimore Creek, south of McDougall Road) Pt.Lt.7, Conc.3	Hamilton	Repairing, replacing and extending erosion protection along the east bank of Baltimore Creek.
2317-02/24	Feb.23/24	631 Mill Street South, Newcastle Pt.Lt.28, BF Conc.	Clarington	Constructing a new single family dwelling and septic system.
2320-12/23	Dec.19/23	67 East House Crescent, Cobourg Pt.Lt.11, Conc.B	Cobourg	Installing temporary erosion protection works along Lake Ontario shoreline.
2323-12/23	Dec.19/23	3393 Morgans Road, Newcastle Pt.Lt.16, Conc.3	Clarington	Reconstructing an addition to an existing dwelling.
2325-12/23	Dec.21/23	1716 Stephenson Road, Newcastle Pt.Lt.23, Conc.1	Clarington	Site grading to facilitate a water retention feature.
2326-01/24	Jan.26/24	1 Wheelhouse Dr., Unit 1, Newcastle Shoreline in front of Wheelhouse Community Centre Pt.Lt.35, Conc.1	Clarington	Phase 9 – Repairing and reconstructing existing interim shore protection.
2327-01/24	Jan.9/24	994 Ontario Street, Cobourg Pt.Lt.18, Conc.1	Cobourg	Development in a regulated area to facilitate a change of use in an existing house for the purpose of creating a new basement apartment. No expansion to the dwelling is proposed.
2329-01/24	Jan.15/24	202 Second Street, Cobourg Pt.Lt.17, Conc.B	Cobourg	Placement of a temporary, non- habitable storage facility.
2331-01/24	Jan16/24	5503 Dunn Road, Newtonville Pt.Lt.32, Conc.5	Port Hope	Construction of an agricultural storage building.
2332-01/24	Jan.31/24	TNPI right-of-way (ROW) East of Meyers Rd, south to Northumberland Heights Rd., Baltimore Pt.Lt.35, Conc.4 (A/H) Pt.Lts.1-3, Conc.3 (HAM)	Alnwick/Haldimand Hamilton	Interference with a wetland to facilitate vegetation clearing along the existing pipeline right-of-way

Ontario Regulation 168/06
Permits approved by Executive:

Date: March 21, 2024

Permit No.	Date	Address	Municipality/ Township	Description of Works
2333-02/24	Feb.1/24	2097 Brownsville Road, Newcastle Pt.Lt.18, Conc.2	Clarington	Constructing an additional dwelling unit and septic system.
2334-03/24	Mar.1/24	3041 Stu Black Road, Cobourg Pt.Lt.26, Conc.3	Hamilton	Constructing a new single family dwelling and septic system.
2335-02/24	Feb.8/24	5432 Winfield Drive, Port Hope Pt.Lt.27, Conc.5	Port Hope	Constructing a new single family dwelling and septic system.
2336-01/24	Jan.23/24	216 Water Street, Cobourg	Cobourg	Constructing a 2 nd storey addition to an existing dwelling.
2337-02/24	Feb.1/24	5274 County Road 28 Port Hope Pt.Lt.1, Conc.5	Port Hope	Constructing a detached garage.
2338-02/24	Feb.1/24	220-240 Peter Street, Port Hope Pt.Lt.1, Conc.1	Port Hope	Constructing a fabric storage structure.
2339-02/24	Feb.15/24	363 Lakeshore Drive Cobourg Pt.LT.14, Conc.B	Cobourg	Landscaping works and associated grading.
2341-02/24	Feb.15/24	573 Westwood Drive, Cobourg Pt.Lt.22, Conc.A	Cobourg	Constructing a new detached garage.
2342-02/24	Feb.27/24	1 Eldorado Place, Port Hope (north of Building 27 Footprint) Pt.Lts.6&7, BF Conc.	Port Hope	Grading and fill work associated with the construction of an outdoor storage area.
2347-03/24	Mar.8/24	103 Third Street, Cobourg Pt.Lt.17, Conc.B	Cobourg	Construction of a non-habitable structure for existing fuel dock coverage.

STAFF REPORT – March 21, 2024

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors

RE: Ganaraska Forest Trail Modeling Public Consultation Report

By December 31, 2024, a Conservation Lands Strategy must be completed, as required by provincial legislation Ontario Regulation 686/21. The Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA), as part of the Conservation Land Strategy development process, will be undertaking steps to create a GIS-based model to help determine recreational trail locations in the Ganaraska Forest. The Strategy will undergo public consultation, which includes consultation on the environmental and trail user criteria that will be used by the GIS model.

Once created, this multi-criteria, weighted model will be used to run scenarios to recommend and refine recreational trail locations, based on environmental factors, as well as user preferences for trail attributes. This model can also be used to inform trail locations within the nine conservation areas the GRCA owns.

The GRCA conducted public consultation over 16 days from February 21 to March 7 to seek feedback on the environmental and trail user criteria that will be used by the GIS model. **Attached to this staff report is the Ganaraska Forest Trail modeling Public Consolation Report.**

An online survey was available during the 16 days, and two open houses were held: February 27th from 3:00 to 7:00 pm at the Ganaraska Forest Center and February 28th from 3:00 to 5:30 pm at the GRCA Administration Office.

During 2024, results of the public consultation will be reviewed in detailed and considered as they relate to the development of modeling criteria. Comments that are not related to modeling will be considered where applicable during the development of the Conservation Lands Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority receives the Ganaraska Forest Trail Modeling Public Consultation Report, and staff report for information.

Prepared by:



**Pam Lancaster, B.Sc.
Conservation Lands Coordinator**

Recommended by:



**Linda J. Laliberte, CPA, CGA
CAO / Secretary-Treasurer**



Ganaraska Forest Trail Modeling Public Consultation Report, March 2024

Background

By December 31, 2024, a Conservation Lands Strategy must be completed, as required by provincial legislation Ontario Regulation 686/21. The Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA), as part of the Conservation Land Strategy development process, will be undertaking steps to create a GIS-based model to help determine recreational trail locations in the Ganaraska Forest. The Strategy will undergo public consultation, which includes consultation on the environmental and trail user criteria that will be used by the GIS model.

Once created, this multi-criteria, weighted model will be used to run scenarios to recommend and refine recreational trail locations, based on environmental factors, as well as user preferences for trail attributes. This model can also be used to inform trail locations within the nine other conservation areas the GRCA owns.

The first scenario (Phase 1) that will be run in 2024, will be in the Central Ganaraska Forest, to support multi-use, non-motorized activities.

Phase 2, which will begin in 2025, will involve trail design and development to support a tread-width of 1 meter and a total trail-width of 3 metres. The trail will start and end at defined parking lots and will have limited interaction with existing trails. Consideration will be given to multiple loops of various lengths. Future model scenarios will be carried out in the West and East Ganaraska Forest to support multi-use motorized activities.

Model Criteria

The following environmental factors and user preferences for trail attributes criteria were selected and defined to be used by the model to determine recreational trail locations on GRCA lands.

- Wetlands
- Watercourses (intermittent and permanent)
- Ponds and vernal pools
- Forest stands designated to be managed for old-growth condition and/or features
- Tall grass prairie

- Interior forest environment
- Species at risk
- Topography (informed by LiDAR data)
- Looped trails and trail length
- Distance from other trails and neighbouring land uses
- Desirable features / experiences
 - Views from heights of land
 - Hardwood forests
 - Pine plantations
 - Mixed forests
 - Meadows
 - Water features (the ability to see them from a distance)

Natural feature criteria were identified through scientific methodologies and GRCA management documents including the GRCA Ganaraska Forest Management Plan, GRCA Natural Heritage Strategy, Ganaraska River Watershed Plan and published journal articles. Trail user criteria was identified in collaboration with the GRCA Recreational Users Committee in December 2023/January 2024.

Public Consultation on Model Criteria

The GRCA conducted public consultation over 16 days from February 21 to March 7 to seek feedback on the environmental and trail user criteria that will be used by the GIS model.

An online survey was available during the 16 days, and two open houses were held: February 27th from 3:00 to 7:00 pm at the Ganaraska Forest Center and February 28th from 3:00 to 5:30 pm at the GRCA Administration Office.

In order to promote the public consultation opportunities, the GRCA communicated in the following ways:

- Facebook Posts (9,100 Followers, 8,619 likes)
 - February 16: Notice of Upcoming Public Open Houses (858 Reach; 912 Impressions)
 - February 21: Notice of Upcoming Public Open Houses with Survey Link (4,259 Reach; 4,453 Impressions)
 - February 26: Multi-Use Activities Not At Risk in the Ganaraska Forest (764 Reach; 824 Impressions)
 - February 27: Reminder of Public Open House #1 (870 Reach; 895 Impressions)
 - February 28: Reminder of Public Open House #2 (407 Reach; 430 Impressions)
 - February 29 and March 1: Trail Modelling & Development - Complete the Trails Survey until March 7th, 2024 (1,709 Reach; 912 Impressions)

- Instagram (358 Followers) and LinkedIn (269 Followers) was used between February 21 and March 1 and received the same posts as Facebook.
- X/Twitter (1,079 Followers) on February 29
- Constant Contact (email newsletter) was sent to individuals who signed up through the online store (membership and day pass purchases), the media, the GRCA Board of Directors, and the GRCA Recreational Users Committee.
 - February 21: Notice of Upcoming Public Open Houses & Survey (2,905 sent; 1,711 opens; 61.4% open rate)
 - February 22: Notice of Upcoming Public Open Houses & Survey: Update (1,455 sent; 870 opens; 62.4% open rate)
 - February 26: Multi-Use Activities Not At Risk in the Ganaraska Forest: With your input, new and expanded trail networks will be created in the Forest. (1,457 sent; 984 opens; 70.3% open rate)

The GRCA website (grca.on.ca) was updated to host a “Trail Modelling & Development” project page, which contained information on the project, open houses and a link to the survey. Based on website analytics, the project page was visited 805 times between February 13th and March 15th, the survey page was visited 477 times.

Engagement during Public Consultation

The open houses consisted of display boards that communicated the purpose of the project and the model criteria, and was the same information provided on the GRCA website. The only additional information was images of natural feature criteria and a snapshot of responses received from February 21st to 26th. Staff were on hand to answer questions and provide support to access the online survey. 56 people attended the February 27th open house and 12 people on February 28th.

A total of 336 online surveys were submitted between February 21st and March 7th.

Results of the Survey

Demographics

A total of 336 online surveys were submitted from individuals across Ontario (Figure 1).

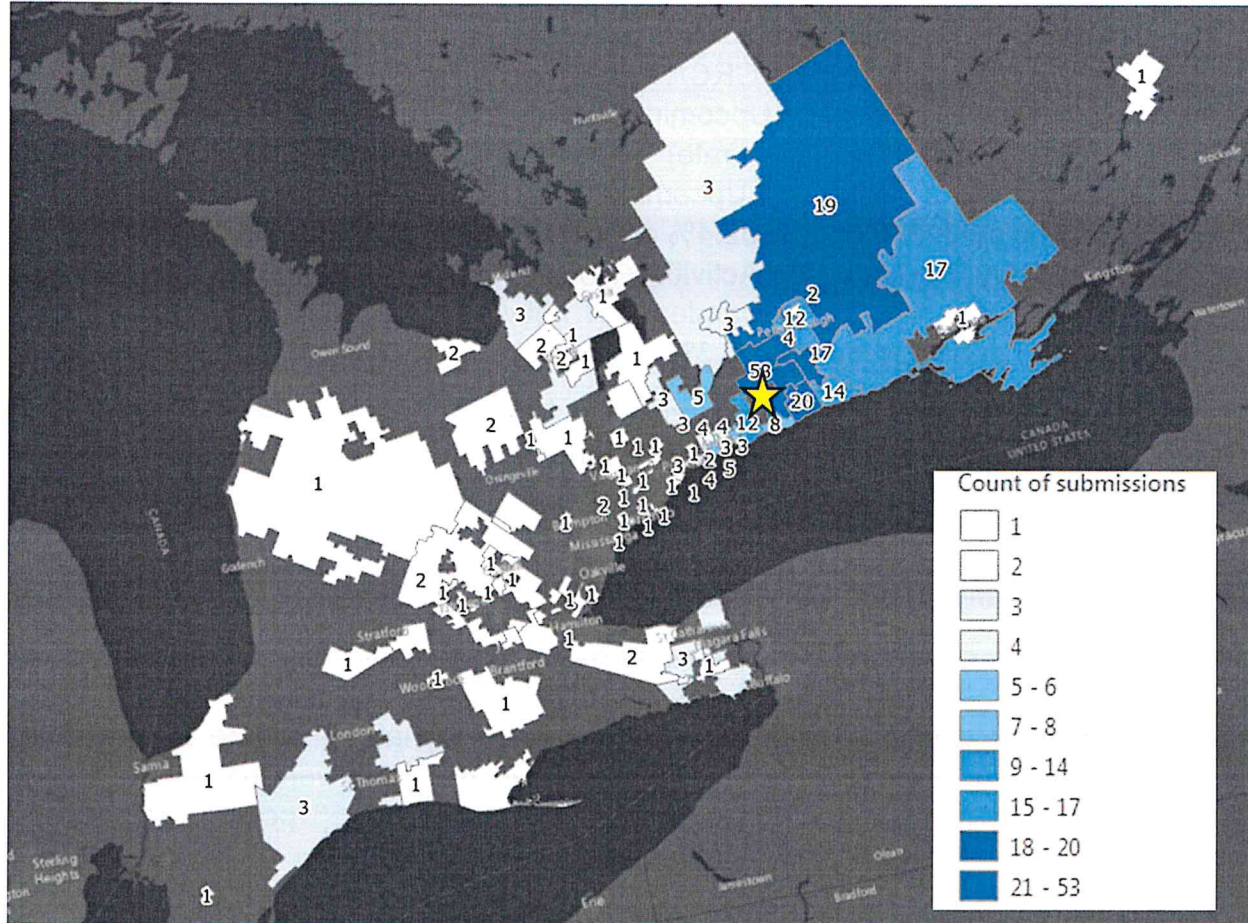


Figure 1: Count of submission by Postal Code

Of the 336 respondents, 179 indicated that they used trails for multiple uses and 157 indicated that they used the trails for one recreational use. The following represents the types of recreational uses that respondents undertake in the Ganaraska Forest.

- Hiking/Snowshoeing: 137
- Cross-Country Skiing: 58
- Horse Back Riding: 77
- Mountain Biking: 128
- Off Road Motorcycle; 133
- ATV/Side-by-Side: 54
- 4x4 Off Road Vehicle 14
- Hunting: 22
- Other: 144 (e.g., snowmobiling, orienteering, trail running, nature appreciation)

When asked *How Frequently Do You Visit the Ganaraska Forest?*

- Have never visited: 4
- 2 to 5 times per year: 75
- Once per year: 23
- More than 5 times per year: 234

When asked *How Long Do You Spend On Trails During A Visit?*

- Less than 2 hours: 30
- 2 to 5 hours: 232
- More than 5 hours: 74

Model Criteria Questions

Respondents were asked if they Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree and Strongly Agree on the criteria statements listed below. The ranking results will be reviewed, and all ranks will be considered when determining the final model criteria.

Natural Features

Natural features may include wetlands, woodlands, watercourses, valleys, plus other biologically and/or culturally significant features.

1. Trails must avoid wetlands

A 30-meter buffer will be applied to all wetlands. This threshold is based on the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Ganaraska Forest Management Plan.

Wetlands are defined as: lands that are seasonally or permanently covered by shallow water, as well as lands where the water table is close to or at the surface. In either case, the presence of abundant water has caused the formation of hydric soils and has favoured the dominance of either hydrophytic plants or water tolerant plants. The four major types of wetlands are swamps, marshes, bogs and fens.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
34%	23%	19%	11%	14%

2. Trails should avoid watercourses (intermittent and permanent)

A minimum 30-meter buffer will be applied. This threshold is based on the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, the Fisheries Act, the Provincial Policy Statement, and the Ganaraska Forest Management Plan. Where a watercourse cannot be avoided, an appropriately engineered trail may be developed.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
27%	19%	22%	11%	21%

3. *Trails must avoid ponds and vernal pools*

A 30-meter buffer will be applied. This threshold is based on the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Ganaraska Forest Management Plan.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
30%	23%	19%	10%	18%

4. *Trails must avoid forest stands designated to be managed for old-growth condition and/or features*

Old-growth condition or features are a condition of dynamic forest ecosystems that tend to include complex forest stand structure, relatively large dead standing trees (snags), accumulations of downed woody material, upturned stumps, root and soil mounds, accelerating tree mortality, and ecosystem functions that may operate at different rates or intensities compared with earlier stages of forest development.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
18%	13%	18%	21%	30%

5. *Trails should avoid tall grass prairie features*

However, where tall grass prairie features cannot be avoided or there is a benefit to allowing access for educational and engagement purposes, the trail may be developed but designed appropriately.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
19%	18%	22%	17%	25%

6. *Trails can occur within the interior forest environment*

However, where large areas of undisturbed forest exist, trail placement will be considered in a way that will reduce impact to that interior forest environment.

Interior Forest is defined as the habitat beyond 100-meters from the forest edge. Within the 100-meter buffer area to the interior forest, the flora and fauna that are present, are exposed to many impacts such as weather, invasive species, and predation due to their proximity to open external areas. Beyond the 100-meter area these impacts are reduced, and habitat improves.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
46%	24%	13%	5%	11%

Species and Habitats at Risk

1. Trails will avoid areas that contain species-at-risk that cannot move, or contribute to a species life cycle (e.g., a den site). Where a setback is defined for that species or habitat, a trail will not be developed within that setback.
2. If required, temporary trail closures and trail detours will occur where a species-at-risk is present but only for a particular length of time.

Criteria	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	38%	26%	19%	8%	9%
2	44%	24%	17%	8%	7%

Topography

Trails may be allowed in areas with a slope of 10% and below.

Where slopes greater than 10% exist, additional trail engineering may be required (e.g. switch-back). A 10% slope has been selected as a threshold based on research provided by the GRCA in 1978, Snyder et al, 2008 and the Ganaraska Forest Trails Project, 1997.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
29%	16%	22%	11%	22%

Distance from Other Trails and Neighbouring Land Uses

1. To offer a feeling of immersion within nature and distance from society, trails will be located no closer than 50 meters to a GRCA property edge.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21%	18%	19%	13%	28%

2. To offer a feeling of immersion within nature and distance from society, parallel trails will be separated from one another by 25 to 50 meters. In some situations, parallel trails can be as close as 11 to 25 meters.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
22%	21%	20%	11%	26%

Trail Enjoyment Features

Desirable Features / Experiences

The Ganaraska Forest has many natural features that can be enjoyed. Please select the features you feel are most desirable to experience or see when out on trails.

- Views from heights of land: 287 respondents
- Hardwood forests: 280 respondents
- Pine plantations: 184 respondents
- Mixed forests: 281 respondents
- Meadows: 190 respondents
- Water features (the ability to see them from a distance): 220 respondents

What is an ideal length of a looped trail?

- 2 km or less: 33 respondents
- 2 to 4 km: 94 respondents
- 5 to 8 km: 153 respondents
- 8 to 12 km: 114 respondents
- 12 to 16 km: 107 respondents
- 16 km to 20 km: 85 respondents
- 20 to 50 km: 60 respondents
- 50 km or more: 40 respondents

Specific Comments

A range of comments were submitted that either allowed context to be added to the respondent's agreement or disagreement to the criteria, but also to the following questions:

- In your own words, what is an ideal trail?
- Any final comments, questions or ideas?

All comments will be reviewed in detail. Any comments that can inform model criteria will be considered. Comments that are not related to modeling will be considered where applicable during the development of the Conservation Lands Strategy.

During the time the survey was opened, the public expressed concerns that if existing trails were located within areas where the model indicated they are less favourable, that those trails would be closed. Staff reassured those with this concern that the model is not intended to create "yes" or "no" response, but rather to inform decision making. The decision could range from scenarios, such as, the trail can remain, or that it should be relocated.

The public also expressed concerns that model results would indicate that certain recreational activities should not occur. To alleviate concerns, the GRCA released the following statement on February 26:

The Gannaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA) is NOT closing trails to any existing user groups in the Gannaraska Forest. Despite misinformation circulating online, the GRCA remains committed to providing multi-use, recreational trails for ALL to enjoy, including both motorized and non-motorized activities.

The GRCA continues to implement recommendations from the Ganaraska Forest Management Plan, adopted by the Board of Directors in 2017, which remains the guiding document for the Ganaraska Forest. The GRCA also continues to work on access agreements with landowners / municipalities with trails leading into the Ganaraska Forest so they can legally continue.

A Conservation Lands Strategy must be completed prior to December 31, 2024, as required by provincial legislation. This document will undergo public consultations, including the first open houses taking place this week. The GRCA encourages you to attend the open houses (Feb. 27th / Feb. 28th) to learn how new, science-based tools can inform decision making in the Ganaraska Forest, as well as consider filling out the online survey to provide input on these science-based criteria.

Next Steps

During 2024, results of the public consultation will be reviewed in detailed and considered as they relate to the development of modeling criteria. Comments that are not related to modeling will be considered where applicable during the development of the Conservation Lands Strategy. The GRCA will continue with the creation of the GIS model and carrying out Phase 1, which will run scenarios within the Central Forest for trail location identification.

STAFF REPORT – March 21, 2024

TO: Chair and Members of the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority

RE: CA Act Amendments and Ontario Regulation 41/24

BACKGROUND:

On February 16, 2024, a new Minister's regulation (Ontario Regulation 41/24: Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits) under the *Conservation Authorities Act* was approved by the Province. This regulation will apply to and be used by all 36 Conservation Authorities.

Please note that Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority's (GRCA) planning and regulatory processes remains largely the same. On this basis:

- Municipalities will continue to circulate *Planning Act* applications to the GRCA for review and comment on natural hazards,
- GRCA will continue to require applications for a permit to undertake otherwise prohibited development, interference and alteration activities in regulated areas as defined under the *Conservation Authorities Act* and in O. Reg. 41/24,
- Legislative changes do not impact planning services that GRCA currently provides.

The new regulation will replace GRCA's individual regulation, O. Reg. 168/06 Regulation of Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations with Shorelines and Watercourses. The regulation's effective date is April 1, 2024. The enactment of O. Reg. 41/24 coincides with the proclamation of associated sections within the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

Conservation Authorities Act updates:

- The "conservation of land" and "pollution" tests have been removed and "unstable soils and bedrock" has been added. The tests of "flooding", "erosion" and "dynamic beaches" remain,
- Certain enhanced Minister's powers regarding permitting,
- Additional review/appeal processes for permit fees and decisions to the Minister and/or the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) regarding,
- New/enhanced enforcement Powers include changes regarding the ability for Officers to enter properties, issue stop work orders as well as enhanced penalties for fines and imprisonment.

Ontario Regulation 41/24:

- The definition of a "watercourse" has been changed from "an identifiable depression in the ground in which a flow of water regularly or continuously

occurs” to “a defined channel having a bed and banks or sides, in which a flow of water regularly or continuously occurs”,

- Removal of 120 metre ‘other areas’ or ‘regulated area’ from Provincially Significant Wetlands or wetlands greater than 2 hectares to PSWs to 30m around all wetlands to the implementation of a consistent 30 metre regulated area around all wetlands,
- Requirement for annual updates to mapping as well as notification regarding significant mapping changes,
- Exemptions for low-risk activities,
- Requirements for pre-submission consultations; and enhanced application requirements,
- Customer service standards for CA’s directly in the legislation,
- Requirement for CAs to develop policy and procedure documents with specified details.

To reflect regulatory changes, GRCA must review and update our regulatory mapping (as appropriate) to reflect the new limits.

An interim policy document will be produced to reflect O. Reg. 41/24 and the *Conservation Authorities Act*. The new interim policies will be adopted by the Authority and will remain in place until existing GRCA policies are updated. GRCA will ensure that municipal staff will be provided with the interim policies upon endorsement by the GRCA Board.


Notifications about Ontario Regulation 41/24 and the Conservation Authorities Act have been sent out to the municipalities.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the staff report be received as information; and,

AND FURTHER THAT the Board is aware a transition period is required to appropriately address provisions within the *Conservation Authorities Act* and Ontario Regulation 41/24.

Prepared by:



Ken Thajer, MCIP, RPP
Planning and Regulations Coordinator

Recommended by:



Linda J. Laliberte, CPA, CGA
CAO/Secretary-Treasurer

STAFF REPORT – March 21, 2024

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors

RE: Designation of Provincial Offences Officers

Section 30.1 of the *Conservation Authorities Act (CA Act)* provides for the appointment of officers for ensuring compliance with the Act and its regulations. Traditionally, the appointment of enforcement officers was designated to Section 28 Permit Regulations and/or Section 29 Conservation Lands Regulations.

Upcoming changes to the *CA Act* require Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority provincial offences officers be appointed under Section 30.1 as opposed to the previous designation under Section 28 and Section 29.

This is an administrative change to be in compliance with the *CA Act* and its regulations that will take effect on April 1, 2024.

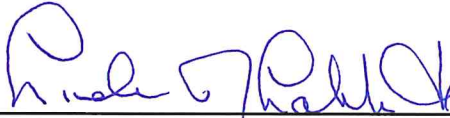
RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the staff report be received as information; and

FURTHER THAT the following individuals be reappointed as Provincial Offences Officers under Section 30.1 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*

George Elgear	#124
Ken Thajer	#131
William Lemieux	#132
Ed Van Osch	#133
Peter Moir	#310
Julie Moir	#311

Recommended by:



Linda J. Laliberte, CPA, CGA
CAO / Secretary-Treasurer

STAFF REPORT – March 21, 2024

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors

RE: 2023 Timeline Report for Section 28 Applications

The purpose of this report is to present GRCA's *Conservation Authorities Act* Section 28 application review timeline data for the year 2023 pursuant to the Conservation Ontario Client Service and Streamlining Initiative.

Background: Two Sets of Section 28 Application Service Standard Guidance

Guidance related to service standards for Section 28 permit applications has been specified in a document from the former Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) titled *Policies and Procedures for Conservation Authority Plan Review and Permitting Activities (2010)*. This guidance addresses administrative matters including determining “complete application”, and decision timelines for “minor” and “major” applications. Following the receipt of a “complete application”, this policy directs that the conservation authorities are to render a decision (i.e. complete the review of a complete application) within 30 days for a minor application or 90 days for a major application. Applications received and issued by GRCA in 2023 under this framework are reported in the table below under “Policy and Procedure Timeline”.

As part of a renewed commitment to efficient regulatory services, Conservation Ontario created a second document titled *Client Service Standards for Conservation Authority Plan and Permit Review (2019)*, which was subsequently endorsed by Conservation Ontario Council in June 2019. This guidance established a second set of service standards that conservation authorities would strive to meet as a best practice. Under this framework, for applications with complete information, conservation authorities would complete their review and make a decision within 28 days for “major” applications, 21 days for “minor” applications and within 14 days for “routine” applications. Applications received and issued by GRCA in 2023 under this second framework are reported in the table below under “CO Guideline Timeline”.

The following table presents the 2023 Timeline results for the 105 permits that were received and issued by GRCA in 2023. The Major, Minor and Routine application types are based upon the level of complexity and scale of the application, as determined by staff during the course of the review process.

Permits Issued Within Policy and Procedure Timeline (<i>MNR, 2010</i>)		Permits Issued Outside of Policy and Procedure Timeline (<i>MNR, 2010</i>)		Total Number of Permits Issued
Major	Minor	Major	Minor	
20	85	0	0	105

Permits Issued Within CO Guideline Timeline (<i>Conservation Ontario, 2019</i>)			Permits Issued Outside of CO Guideline Timeline (<i>Conservation Ontario, 2019</i>)			Total Number of Permits Issued
Major	Minor	Routine	Major	Minor	Routine	
18	67	18	2	0	0	105

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the GRCA Board of Directors receive the Staff Report regarding 2023 Timeline Report for Section 28 Applications, for information.

Prepared by:



Ken Thajer
Planning & Regulations Coordinator

Recommended by:



Linda J. Laliberte, CPA, CGA
CAO/Secretary-Treasurer