



NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: November 7, 2024

TIME: 7:00 pm

LOCATION: Hybrid, In-Person / Zoom Meeting

AGENDA

MEETING: GANARASKA FOREST RECREATIONAL USERS COMMITTEE

MEMBERS: Bob Gallagher, Matthew Robbins, Jim Pearson, Jennifer Jackman, Garry Niece, Rick Trumper, Lisa Thompson, Amber Panchyshyn, Alex Schmidt, Carolyn Richards, Peter Wood, Steve Brownell, Maureen McDonald, Karen Graham, 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 6, 2024 - **attached**
4. Adoption of the Agenda
5. Delegations:
 - a) Single Track Trails in the Ganaraska Forest – Alex Schmidt – **Staff report attached**
6. Presentation:
None
7. Business Arising from Minutes:
None
8. Correspondence:
None
9. New Business:
 - a) To Consider Class 1 E-Bicycle for Use Within the Central Forest – **Staff report attached**; and To Allow Class 1 E-Bicycle for Use Within the Central Forest **Notice of Motion attached**
 - b) Discussion on 2.1 of the Terms of Reference to Provide Possible Recommendations to the Board of Directors – **Staff report attached**; and Discussion on 2.1 of the Terms of Reference to Provide Possible Recommendations to the Board of Directors - **Notice of Motion attached**
 - c) Ganaraska Forest Trail Map Platforms – **Staff report attached**
10. Adjourn

MINUTES OF THE GANARASKA FOREST

RECREATIONAL USERS COMMITTEE

September 5, 2024

RUC 3/24

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Bob Gallagher welcomed all present and introduced himself as the new Chair of the Recreational Users Committee. The Chair called the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee (RUC) meeting to order at 7:01 pm, followed by a brief introduction of committee members and GRCA representatives that were present.

MEMBER PRESENT: Bob Gallagher, Chair
Jim Pearson, Ontario Trail Riders Association
Jennifer Jackman, Ontario Nature
Garry Niece, Hike Ontario
Randy Cunningham, Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Club
Amber Panchyshyn, Orienteering Ontario
Lisa Thompson, Ontario Federation of Trail Riders
Alex Schmidt, Ontario Cycling Association
Carolyn Richards, Ontario Federation of ATV Clubs
Steve Brownell, Municipality of Port Hope
Lance Nachoff, GRCA Board of Directors

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

ABSENT WITH REGRETS: Maureen McDonald, Township of Cavan Monaghan

ALSO ABSENT: Matthew Robbins, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters
Peter Wood, Ontario Federation of 4WD Recreationists
Cross Country Ski Ontario (position unfilled)
City of Kawartha Lakes (position unfilled)

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Alex Schmidt inquired about the results of a statement made by during the June 6, 2024 minutes in Section 10, Other Business. Where the Chair Lance Nachoff stated; "The Chair offered for members to send their three biggest concerns about the Forest to him or Pam Lancaster, Conservation Lands Coordinator."

Lance Nachoff, stated that in light of the chair position being vacant at the time, the submitted comments were held until the Chair position had been filled.

RUC 07/24

MOVED BY: Alex Schmidt
SECONDED BY: Jim Pearson

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee approve the minutes of the June 6, 2024 meeting.

CARRIED.

4. Adoption of Agenda

Alex Schmidt requested to add a notice of motion under new business regarding the allowance of Class 1 E-mountain bike use within the Central Forest. Additionally, Steve Brownell requested to add a notice of motion under new business regarding the discussion of 2.1 of the RUC Terms of Reference and the membership of the RUC. The Chair accepted the two notice of motions under new business.

RUC 08/24

MOVED BY: Garry Niece
SECONDED BY: Jim Pearson

THAT the agenda be adopted with the addition of two new business items.

CARRIED.

5. Delegations

None

6. Presentations

DSV-101 Managing the Pest in the Ganaraska Forest was presented by Gus Saurer, GRCA Forester.

Jim Pearson inquired as to pesticide applications currently occurring in the Ganaraska Forest. Gus Saurer informed the RUC that GRCA did receive funding grants for invasive species control during both 2023 and 2024. Pesticides application is part of this funding. GRCA is not currently applying pesticides within the Ganaraska Forest, but has done some pesticide controls in the demonstration tall grass prairie plot near to the Ganaraska Forest Centre.

Jennifer Jackman inquired as to the effectiveness of the Hypena moth. Gus Sauer informed the RUC that trials in York Region have shown positive results, and current information indicates positive winter survival numbers.

RUC 09/24

MOVED BY: Carolyn Richards
SECONDED BY: Steve Brownell

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receive the Dog Strangling Vine Information presentation for information.

CARRIED.

7. Business Arising from the Minutes

None

8. Correspondence

None

9. New Business

a) Trailhead Signage Update

Steve Brownell inquired as to why GRCA removed OFTR signage from the Ganaraska Forest. Pam Lancaster informed the RUC that the proposed Conservation Lands Strategy will support and direct signing procedures within the Ganaraska Forest, and that GRCA has paused removal of all signage until the Conservation Lands Strategy is approved by the Board of Directors.

Jim Pearson requested that the RUC be provided with a chance to review the Ganaraska Forest signage design. Pam Lancaster informed the RUC that Conservation Lands Strategy will support a consistent message to the Forest Users.

Pam Lancaster clarified the locations of new signage and informed the RUC of the plan to implement the first trail signage applications on the Central Forest yellow trail beginning in 2025.

RUC 10/24

MOVED BY: Carolyn Richards

SECONDED BY: Lisa Thompson

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receive the Trailhead Signage Update Staff report for information.

CARRIED.

b) Trail Maintenance Update

Alex Schmidt inquired, what are the guidelines for trail maintenance within the Ganaraska Forest. Pam Lancaster informed the RUC that Staff are developing trail maintenance guidelines through the Conservation Lands Strategy.

Alex Schmidt stated that both Albion Hills and Kelso Conservation Areas have excellent trail systems that GRCA could look to as an example.

RUC 11/24

MOVED BY: Jennifer Jackman

SECONDED BY: Jim Pearson

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receives the Trail Maintenance Update Staff report for information.

CARRIED.

c) Recreational User Group Discussion

A discussion occurred where each RUC representative was asked to share what their respective User group valued at Ganaraska Forest. Some comments include but are not limited to:

- Ganaraska Forest offered a variety of high-quality trails in the Central Forest.
- Access for families and generational use.
- Valuable conservation area providing habitat space that provides various ecological functions.
- Opportunities for volunteering and funding opportunities.
- User Group has a good working relationship with GRCA
- Trail design meets the needs of User group
- Ganaraska Forest is the only Conservation Area within Ontario that offers a motorized trail system
- Desire exists for increased communication capability between user groups and GRCA
- User Groups are interested in various options for recreational use

RUC members also discussed issues, some of which surrounded lack of signage, the need for more trail maintenance, the need for increased volunteerism, a cap of 100 participants for special events, lack of cellular signals in the Forest and users of the Forest that do not follow federal, provincial, municipal or GRCA rules including the need for day passes or memberships.

RUC 12/24

MOVED BY: Alex Schmidt

SECONDED BY: Jim Pearson

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receive the Recreational Users Group Discussion staff report for information; and,

FURTHER THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee continue to provide Forest Recreation Technician with User Group specific information, updates and concerns.

CARRIED.

d) New Business: Notice of Motion to Allow Class 1 E-Mountain Bike Use Within the Central Forest

Alex Schmidt provided a notice of motion for the November 7, 2024 RUC meeting. The motion is: "To Allow Class 1 E-Mountain Bike Use Within the Central Forest".

RUC 13/24

MOVED BY: Alex Schmidt

SECONDED BY: Jim Pearson

THAT a notice of motion to allow Class 1 E-mountain bike use within the Central Forest be added to the November 7, 2024 RUC meeting.
CARRIED.

e) New Business: Notice of Motion for a Discussion on 2.1 of the RUC Terms of Reference to Provide Possible Recommendations to the Board of Directors

Steve Brownell provided a notice of motion for the November 7, 2024 RUC meeting. The motion is: “A Discussion on 2.1 of the RUC Terms of Reference to Provide Possible Recommendations to the Board of Directors”.

RUC 14/24

MOVED BY: Steve Brownell

SECONDED BY: Jim Pearson

THAT a notice of motion for a Discussion on 2.1 of the RUC Terms of Reference to Provide Possible Recommendations to the Board of Directors be added to the November 7, 2024 RUC meeting.
CARRIED.

10. Other Business

None

11. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:44 pm.

RUC 15/24

MOVED BY: Jim Pearson

SECONDED BY: Alex Schmidt

THAT the meeting adjourn.
CARRIED.

The next meeting of the Ganaraska Forest Recreational User Committee is Thursday, November 7, 2024 at 7:00 pm.

Chair



Conservation Lands Coordinator

STAFF REPORT – November 7, 2024

To: Chair and Members of the Recreational Users Committee

RE: Delegation – Alex Schmidt

Alex Schmidt has requested to be a delegation at the November 7, 2024 Recreational Users Committee meeting. He will be speaking as the representative of the Ontario Cycling Association regarding single track trail in the Central Forest.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receive the delegation for information.

Prepared by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Ed Van Osch', written in black ink. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

Ed Van Osch, Forest Recreation Technician

STAFF REPORT – November 7, 2024

To: Chair and Members of the Recreational Users Committee

RE: To Consider Class 1 E-Bicycle for Use Within the Central Forest

Background on Previous Decisions

On September 2, 2021 a staff report was presented to the Recreational Users Committee (RUC) regarding electric vehicle use in the Ganaraska Forest (attached). The resolution of the staff report, that was approved by the RUC was as follows:

RUC 20/21

MOVED BY: Dave Grant
SECONDED BY: Jennifer Jackman

THAT the Recreational Users Committee support the staff report that classifies E-Bikes as motorized and authorized for use only within the boundaries of the motorized portions of the West and East Forest.

CARRIED.

At the September 5, 2024 RUC meeting, a Notice of Motion was made to bring forward a motion to *allow Class 1 E-mountain bike use within the Central Forest*. The following staff report outlines staff's analysis of the potential to allow Class 1 E-mountain bike use within the Central Forest.

What is an E-Bicycle

An E-Bicycle or E-Bike is a bicycle that can operate manually or under some variation of electrically produced power supplied from an onboard battery. These bicycles vary in design in which some look like a traditional bicycle, while others have futuristic design with advanced technology or even look like a roadworthy scooter. There is one thing all E-Bicycles have in common. They are all equipped with permanent functioning pedals, and they can operate using an electric battery.

With demands growing for alternative modes of transport, new cycling options and features that provide an alternative, eco-friendly option has allowed for rapid advances in the cycling sport. The E-Bicycle market is growing at a rapid rate and many new products are being mass produced with very little preparation from government and policy makers

California Classification System

Rapid growth in E-Bicycle popularity prompted the State of California to create a three-tier E-Bicycle classification system designed to help regulate where E-Bicycles could operate safely and share spaces with pedestrians and vehicles alike. The three-tiered California based class system places battery powered bicycles into one of three categories ranging from Class 1, Class 2 and Class 3. This system identifies E-Bikes through various modes of operation and speed regulations. Across the United States, various levels of government and park authorities have adopted the California system, but it is not a regulation under the statute of law in many areas, including Ontario.

The Californian 3-tiered class system breakdown is as follows:

- Class 1: has mounted pedals with pedal assist only, must be pedaling to receive assistance from the electric motor, motor will not assist beyond 20mph
- Class 2: has mounted pedals, uses a throttle to operate the EB without engaging the pedal system, motor will only propel to 20mph
- Class 3: has pedals, uses pedal assist only, up to 28mph

Authorized use areas:

- Class 1: authorized on walking trails (separated from roads with barriers)
- Class 2: authorized on bike lanes on roadways
- Class 3: authorized on shared roadways in main traffic

Ontario Rules

The Province of Ontario does not recognize the California three-class system, but some conservation authorities, municipalities and private trail systems have adopted the California classification system.

As described on the Province of Ontario website: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/riding-e-bike>. E-Bicycles defined as:

A power-assisted bicycle, also called an electric bicycle or e-bike, is a bicycle with an electric motor that has:

- a handlebar for steering
- working pedals
- two or three wheels
- an electric motor
- braking systems

To operate an e-bike in Ontario, the e-bike must have:

- a maximum assisted speed of 32 km/h
- a maximum weight of 120 kg (includes the weight of the bike and battery)
- an electric motor not exceeding 500 watts
- no modifications to the motor to allow it to exceed a power output greater than 500 watts and an assisted speed greater than 32 km/h
- battery and electric motor securely fastened to the bicycle frame to prevent them from moving while the e-bike is operating
- all electrical terminals properly insulated
- minimum wheel width of 35 mm and minimum diameter of 350 mm
- two independent braking systems that applies force to each wheel and is capable of bringing the e-bike, while being operated at a speed of 30 km/h, to a full stop

within 9 metres, on a level asphalt surface, from the point at which the brakes were applied

Removing the pedals makes the e-bike a motor vehicle, which requires a licence, insurance and registration to operate. It is also illegal to modify your e-bike's electric motor to make it more powerful or to increase the assisted speed of the bike.

The Ganaraska Forest

The Ganaraska Forest is a multi-use recreational forest divided into three sections: West, East and Central Forests. The trail system within the Central Forest measures over 30 kilometers in length and is operated and maintained as a non-motorized area. The Central Forest trail system provides recreational opportunities for a variety of non-motorized use activities, including hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

The Central Forest is also home to the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority's (GRCA) Outdoor Education Program that runs out of the Ganaraska Forest Centre and utilizes much of the Central Forest trail system and educational spaces within the Central Forest. When recreational use was being formalized in the late 1970s, the Central Forest was classified as a non-motorized to reduce potential conflict between motorized vehicles and the delivery of the GRCA Outdoor Education Program. Today, the non-motorized classification additionally allows Forests users to enjoy the Forest without the interaction of motorized Forest Users.

Although powered by a battery, an Electric Bicycle (E-Bike) is still a recreational vehicle with a motor, and therefore classified as a motorized vehicle for the purposes of Ganaraska Forest rules. Therefore, GRCA staff are currently in the opinion that an E-bike continue to not be permitted in the non-motorized Central Forest. However, E-bikes and any other types of electric vehicle that meet provincial rules are permitted for use in the motorized sections of the West and East Forests.

Prepared by:



Ed Van Osch, Forest Recreation Technician

ATTACHMENT TO November 7, 2024 Staff Report

STAFF REPORT – September 2, 2021

TO: Chair and Members of the Recreational Users Committee

RE: Electric Vehicle Use in Ganaraska Forest

Electric Vehicles

Recent changes in environmental awareness, social economic behaviour and advancements in technology are driving a change in what the transportation industry is offering customers. Electric vehicles (EV) have become commonplace on roads in Ontario and now consumers are demanding more variations or alternative powered vehicles. The demand is so great that many powersports, passenger vehicle and bicycle companies plan to release fully electric vehicle (EV) line-ups by 2025.

Currently Ganaraska Forest Rules and Regulations do not address EV's, which is challenging. Many EV's available on the market are not recognised or permitted by the province of Ontario and do not fall under the rules of the *Highway Traffic Act* or *Off Road Vehicle Act*, hence some EV's are not permitted for use on municipal roads, public property or private property not belonging to the EV's owner such as the Ganaraska Forest.

To prepare for the possible influx of EV's in the off-road vehicle market, the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA) will be including EV's as motorized vehicles in all categories of forest use and EV's will be included in the Ganaraska Forest Conditions of Use and Trail Etiquette.

E-Bikes

In addition to fully electric vehicles, Pedal Assist Electric Bicycles are gaining popularity at Ganaraska Forest. E-bikes are equipped with both pedals and electric motors and can be operated by pedal power, pedal power with electric assist, or under full electric power. E-bikes electric motors are designed to reduce the amount of muscle excursion required when the operator chooses to combine pedaling with the power of electric motor. This option gives a significant advantage to cyclists that may not have the physical stamina to tackle longer routes or hilly terrain. This advantage can quickly turn into a disadvantage with possible health risks if the battery were to run out of power in the forest where the operator is forced to pedal home unassisted by the electric motor.

There is conflict with E-bikes and the GRCA non-motorized rules for the Central Forest. The Central Forest classification as non-motorized allows people to experience a tranquil slow-paced environment free from the speed and noise of the motorized use in the West and East Forests. Challenges E-bikes present to the non-motorized Central Forest include; the possibility of operation at increased speeds, noise generated from EV motor operation, increased impact on trail surfaces and conflict between user groups on non-motorized Central Forest trails. Some possible conflicts with E-bike operation include; startling horses, E-Bike operators not seeing other trail users while at

high rates of speed under fully electric power and negative impacts to trail surface integrity.

Ontario Ministry of Transportation rules state that E-bikes must have:

- *Working pedals*
- *An electric motor not exceeding 500 watts*
- *A maximum speed of 32 km/h*
- *A maximum weight of 120 kg*
- *A permanent label from the manufacturer in both English and French stating that your e-bike conforms to the federal definition of a power-assisted bicycle*

In addition, it is illegal to modify your e-bike's motor to make it more powerful or to increase the speed of your e-bike.

Therefore, since E-bikes have motors and the Central Forest is classified as Non-Motorized and there is potential for negative effects to trail integrity and possible conflict between user groups, GRCA staff feel that E-Bikes should be classified as motorized and authorized for use only within the boundaries of the motorized portions of the West and East Forest.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee recommend the GRCA Board of Directors support the staff report that classifies E-Bikes as motorized and authorized for use only within the boundaries of the motorized portions of the West and East Forest.

Prepared by:

Ed Van Osch, Forest Recreation Technician

ATTACHMENT TO November 7, 2024 Staff Report

Notice of Motion – November 7, 2024

To: Chair and Members of the Recreational Users Committee

RE: To Allow Class 1 E-Bicycle for Use Within the Central Forest



October 28, 2024

Re: Notice of Motion Wording

Ontario Cycling, the Provincial Territorial Sport Organization for Cycling in Ontario, is putting forward a Motion to allow Class 1 E-Mountain Bike use within the Central Forest.

The rationale for putting this Motion forward includes:

- 1. Increased Accessibility:**
Class 1 e-mountain bikes provide an excellent opportunity for individuals of varying fitness levels to enjoy the trails. They enable those who may have physical limitations or are new to biking to experience the outdoors alongside more seasoned riders.
- 2. Catering to More Riders and Families:**
The inclusion of e-MTBs will attract a broader demographic, including families and recreational riders. This promotes outdoor activity and fosters a community of diverse users who can share in the enjoyment of our natural spaces.
- 3. Minimal Noise Pollution:**
Class 1 e-mountain bikes are designed to operate quietly, producing far less noise than traditional motorized vehicles. Their silent operation allows for a more peaceful experience in the forest, enhancing the enjoyment for all users, while not taking away from the quiet experience of other recreational users.
- 4. Trail Impact and Sustainability:**
A study conducted by the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) indicates that e-mountain bikes do not cause significant additional damage to trails compared to traditional mountain bikes. By integrating e-MTBs, we can promote sustainable trail use without compromising the integrity of our natural resources.
- 5. User Group Harmony:**
The introduction of Class 1 e-mountain bikes is unlikely to increase conflict with other user groups. In fact, data suggests that when properly integrated, e-MTBs coexist harmoniously with hikers and traditional bikers. Clear communication and education about trail etiquette will further enhance this coexistence.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Pam Julian (she/her/hers) BA, MSc, MA
President & CEO
pam.julian@ontariocycling.org

Ontario Cycling Association
2-2015 Pan AM Blvd, Milton, ON L9E 0K7
www.ontariocycling.org

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Class 1 E-Bicycles are allowed for use within the Central Forest

STAFF REPORT – November 7, 2024

To: Chair and Members of the Recreational Users Committee (RUC)

RE: Discussion on 2.1 of the Terms of Reference to Provide Possible Recommendations to the Board of Directors

At the September 5, 2024 Recreational Users Committee (RUC) meeting, a Notice of Motion was made to bring forward a motion *for a Discussion on 2.1 of the RUC Terms of Reference to Provide Possible Recommendations to the Board of Directors*. The following staff report outlines staff's information regarding the intent of section 2.1 of the RUC Terms of Reference.

Section 2.1 *Voting Members* of the Terms of Reference outlines the composition of the Recreational Users Committee (see image below). The structure of the RUC is designed to ensure that all allowable uses within the Ganaraska Forest is represented by a governing organization that undertakes that use, and that represents the majority of Ontarians, are represented on the RUC. In addition, each municipality with boundaries within the Ganaraska Forest will appoint a representative to sit on the RUC.

Although the selection request is directed to a Provincial level organization, that organization could choose to have representation come from a regional or local organization. Additionally, by asking representation from a Provincial level organization, only one representative from each user group is part of the RUC, not many local organizations that may represent the same user type. Only one organization can represent a use on the RUC so that one use type does not outweigh others.

It is important to note that 2.2 of the Terms of Reference does require members, among other things to:

- report to the governing body, organization, or municipality at least once per year.
- have an open line of communication with the user or municipality that they represent.
- bring user or municipal population concerns to the Recreational Users Committee.

Therefore, an organization representative that sits on the RUC should be communicating not only to the membership of the organization but to the general use type population.

2.1 Voting Members

Members will be appointed for a four (4) year term. When a new member is appointed to the RUC, an orientation session may be provided, along with the terms of reference of the Committee.

Members of the RUC will be appointed by a governing body which represents the majority of Ontarians. The governing body shall represent one of the uses authorized within the Ganaraska Forest. The governing body includes:

- Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters
- Ontario Trail Riders Association (equestrian)
- Ontario Federation of ATV Clubs
- Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs
- Ontario Federation of Trail Riders (off-road motorcycles)
- Ontario Federation of 4Wheel Drive Enthusiasts
- Ontario Nature
- Hike Ontario
- Cross Country Ski Ontario
- Orienteering Ontario
- Ontario Cycling Association

In addition, a member from each municipality whose boundaries fall within the Ganaraska Forest will be appointed to the RUC by the municipality to represent the municipality as outlined in Section 2.0

- Municipality of Port Hope
- City of Kawartha Lakes
- Township of Cavan/Monaghan
- Municipality of Clarington

Prepared by:



Ed Van Osch, Forest Recreation Technician

Notice of Motion – November 7, 2024

To: Chair and Members of the Recreational Users Committee (RUC)

RE: Discussion on 2.1 of the Terms of Reference to Provide Possible Recommendations to the Board of Directors

At the September 5, 2024 Recreational Users Committee (RUC) meeting, a Notice of Motion was made to bring forward a motion *for a Discussion on 2.1 of the RUC Terms of Reference to Provide Possible Recommendations to the Board of Directors*.

RUC 14/24

MOVED BY: Steve Brownell

SECONDED BY: Jim Pearson

THAT a notice of motion for a Discussion on 2.1 of the RUC Terms of Reference to Provide Possible Recommendations to the Board of Directors be added to the November 7, 2024 RUC meeting.

CARRIED.

The following outlines information from the RUC member who brought forward the Notice of Motion.

In my [Steve Brownell] role as RUC rep for Port Hope I've had a number of local recreational users reach out over the past few months asking why their local groups are not represented on the recreational user committee. Since their groups are not on the committee they are unable to communicate with the RUC or get direct information to their users from the RUC. There are local clubs with a strong interest in trail usage and maintenance issues along with forest access and management. It occurs to me that perhaps the majority of the members of the RUC are not forest users and have limited connection to the forest or the users.

I am asking that the GRCA consider the inclusion of additional recreational user clubs and groups who have a strong interest in recreational uses of the Ganaraska Forest to be given a seat on the recreational user committee.

As the RUC is an advisory board, the addition of local recreational users would be viewed as an inclusionary action, facilitating increased community and user engagement with stakeholders giving them a voice to participate in forest issues.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT a Discussion on 2.1 of the RUC Terms of Reference [occur] to Provide Possible Recommendations to the Board of Directors.

STAFF REPORT – November 7, 2024

To: Chair and Members of the Recreational Users Committee

RE: Ganaraska Forest Trail Map Platforms

The Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA) offers a map of the Ganaraska Forest for recreational purposes in various ways to support user navigation. The GRCA has moved to a digital mapping platform so that trail status can be updated immediately. This ability has proven very helpful when communicating temporary trail closures due to logging or hazards.

Users or the general public can view the digital map in two ways: on the GRCA website or in the Field Maps mobile application.

On the GRCA website the map can be viewed on a mobile device or desktop computer. There is also a print function as part of the map viewer. Any updates to the map are displayed instantly.

Field Maps (an ESRI application) is a mobile application that is available for free on android and iPhone/apple device. When someone downloads the Field Maps application, they do not have to create an account. They can “skip sign in” and be prompted to a search function. When the term “Ganaraska Forest Trail Map” is typed in the search bar the map package will appear. This map package is then downloaded to the mobile device so that it can be used offline. It is always important to check for downloads before visiting the Ganaraska Forest in case updates have been made to the map.

Up until this point the map is downloaded on a device, cellular data is required. Once downloaded to the device, data is no longer required to use the application. The navigation “blue dot” uses the devices GPS function of the device to find your location to help navigation. This is very beneficial in the Ganaraska Forest where cellular signal is absent in many areas. The map, because it is downloaded on the device, does not rely on data to display the map, or to navigate.

Field Maps can be used to view the map only or there are various tools that can be used to: save (bookmark tool) certain views of the map; to measure; or to mark up (e.g., draw a shape, take notes). ESRI is always improving their platforms so in the future there may be additional tools that could be offered to increase user experience.

GRCA staff are continually reviewing the functionality of the digital mapping platforms and are looking at ways to improve user experience. Since launching the digital mapping platforms in late 2022 improvements have been made to symbology of the data layers (e.g., colours, line styles and thicknesses), labeling and streamlining the number of steps required to access the map from Field Maps.

It is important to remember that previous paper / PDF maps are no longer valid for use and the GRCA does not recognize the use or displayed trail data of third-party mapping applications.

To accommodate those who can not access the digital map, paper maps are available by request. However, these maps are provided for information only and users must refer to the website for current trail information.

RECOMMENDATION:

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

Prepared by:



Ed Van Osch, Forest Recreation Technician