

MINUTES OF THE GANARASKA FOREST

RECREATIONAL USERS COMMITTEE

April 3, 2025

RUC 1/25

1. Welcome, Land Acknowledgement and Call to Order

The Chair welcomed all present and introduced Shawn Marshall as a new member of the Recreational Users Committee. The Chair called the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee (RUC) meeting to order at 7:02pm.

MEMBER PRESENT: Bob Gallagher, 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
Shawn Marshall, Cross Country Ski Ontario
Amber Panchyshyn, Orienteering Ontario
Alex Schmidt, Ontario Cycling Association
Carolyn Richards, Ontario Federation of ATV Clubs
Peter Wood, Ontario Federation of 4WD Recreationists
Steve Brownell, Municipality of Port Hope
Maureen McDonald, Township of Cavan Monaghan
Karen Graham, Municipality of Clarington
Lance Nachoff, GRCA Board of Directors

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

ABSENT WITH REGRETS: Rick Trumper, Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Club

ALSO ABSENT: City of Kawartha Lakes (position unfilled)

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

RUC 1/25

MOVED BY: Gary Niece

SECONDED BY: Maureen McDonald

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee approve the minutes of the November 7, 2024 meeting.

CARRIED.

4. Adoption of Agenda

RUC 2/25

MOVED BY: Lisa Thompson
SECONDED BY: Carolyn Richards

THAT the agenda be adopted.

CARRIED.

5. Delegations

None

6. Presentations

None

7. Business Arising from the Minutes

None

8. Correspondence

None

9. New Business

a) Recreational Users Committee Terms of Reference

Pam Lancaster explained the updates to the RUC Terms of Reference, highlighting that wording and content was updated to clarify the RUC's advisory role to the Board of Directors and that RUC appointee terms are set to four years to align with municipal elections. Additionally, Pam Lancaster identified that Ontario Federation of 4wheel Drive Recreationists were miss labeled in the Terms of Reference and ensured that revisions would be made to the Terms of Reference to reflect the proper wording.

RUC 3/25

MOVED BY: Carolyn Richards
SECONDED BY: Maureen McDonald

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receive the Recreational Users Committee Terms of Reference for information.

CARRIED.

b) Post Winter Season Update

Jim Pearson posed a question to staff, inquiring as to GRCA's intentions to incorporate signage into the West and East Forests to differentiate between Motorized and Non-motorized uses and seasonality. Additionally, Jim Pearson stated that Northumberland Forest signage model is working well, and that GRCA needs to have more signage outside of the Central Forest. Pam Lancaster informed the RUC that GRCA is incorporating additional trailhead, directional and informational signage throughout the Ganaraska Forest as budgets allow and that Users will see more GRCA signage within the Ganaraska Forest during 2025.

Maureen McDonald asked staff if GRCA can use the local papers, radio and media outlets to inform the public about motorized opening dates. Pam Lancaster responded by explaining that GRCA currently utilizes press releases and e-newsletters to communicate messaging about the Ganaraska Forest. The press releases are picked up by local print and radio media outlets. In addition, GRCA shares messaging via the www.grca.on.ca website and on several social media platforms. Lisa Thompson added that all Ontario Federation of Trail Riders (OFTR) members are familiar with trail closures and that OFTR trails are subject to similar closures and timing. Jim Pearson mentioned that Ontario Trail Riders Association is in favour of installation of gates to close parking lots during seasons closed to motorized use. Carolyn Richards stated that Ontario Federation of ATV Clubs shares GRCA messaging on social media platforms and more signage will not stop non-compliance and that some users will continue to violate posted rules.

RUC 4/25**MOVED BY:** Lisa Thompson**SECONDED BY:** Peter Wood

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receive the Post Winter Season Update staff report as information.

FURTHER THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee remind their representative user groups to comply with all posted signage within the Ganaraska Forest.

CARRIED.

c) May 1st Opening Update

Ed Van Osch explained that the Staff Report was completed prior to the March 29, 2025 ice storm that left the Ganaraska Forest Centre (GFC) without power for 6 days and due to this storm GRCA has temporarily closed the Ganaraska Forest to the public. Staff are currently assessing trail damage and addressing hazardous situations on GFC grounds to ensure GRCA to administer the Education program and continue to offer GFC rental space. Once the GFC is deemed safe, staff will move to the trail system to address trail blockages. GRCA is prepared to utilize contractors to address trail blockages that are beyond the scope of staff

abilities and GRCA equipment. The Ganaraska Forest will reopen to all authorized users as scheduled on May 1, 2025. In addition, Ed Van Osch stated that people interested in volunteering with the GRCA should visit the www.grca.on.ca for further information on how they can get involved.

RUC 5/25

MOVED BY: Gary Niece
SECONDED BY: Jim Pearson

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receive the May 1st Opening Update staff report for information.

CARRIED.

The Chair, Bob Gallagher asked if there are any topics that the RUC members would like to bring to staff's attention for possible inclusion on future RUC agendas. Alex Schmidt asked for an update relating to the Central Forest single-track map. Bob Gallagher suggested that since this topic is already taking place outside the structure of this meeting that Alex request a meeting with staff to discuss this issue. Jim Pearson requests a discussion regarding the reasoning behind the May 1st annual opening date of motorized season, suggesting that GRCA follow the same seasonality as Northumberland Forest. Alex Schmidt also asked for information on why special events are capped at 100 individuals.

10. Adjourn**RUC 6/25**

MOVED BY: Lisa Thompson
SECONDED BY: Peter Wood

THAT the meeting adjourned at 7:46pm.

CARRIED.

The next meeting of the Ganaraska Forest Recreational User Committee is Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 7:00 pm.

Chair



Conservation Lands Coordinator