

MINUTES OF THE GANARASKA FOREST RECREATIONAL USERS COMMITTEE

September 4, 2025

RUC 2/25

1. Welcome, Land Acknowledgement and Call to Order

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

MEMBER PRESENT: Bob Gallagher, Chair
Jim Pearson, Ontario Trail Riders Association
Matt Mair, 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
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: Matthew Robbins, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters

ALSO ABSENT: Rick Trumper, Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Club
Steve Brownell, Municipality of Port Hope
Maureen McDonald, Township of Cavan Monaghan
City of Kawartha Lakes (position unfilled)

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Lance Nachoff explained that the Recreational Users Committee (RUC) meeting scheduled for June 5, 2025 was cancelled by the Chair of the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA) due to questions of conduct raised regarding a member of the RUC. This matter was required to be addressed through the Code of Conduct process before an RUC

meeting could take place. The outcome of the process is confidential and cannot be shared with the RUC. Members are encouraged to review the RUC Terms of Reference (March 2025) to ensure that their actions remain consistent with both the Terms of Reference and the Code of Conduct.

RUC 7/25**MOVED BY:**

Carolyn Richards

SECONDED BY:

Alex Schmidt

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee approve the minutes of the April 3, 2025 meeting.

CARRIED.4. Adoption of Agenda**RUC 8/25****MOVED BY:**

Alex Schmidt

SECONDED BY:

Jim Pearson

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) Ganaraska Forest Parking Lot Infrastructure**

Ed Van Osch identified a correction to the Staff report. The correction replaces the wording “south-east” with the wording “south-west” in regard to the location of parking lots in the Central Forest. Additionally, Ed Van Osch explained that GRCA is looking to the RUC representatives to contact their respective user groups to obtain user comments on Ganaraska Forest parking lot infrastructure challenges and submit a synopsis of the received information to the Forest Recreation Technician by November 6, 2025.

Jim Pearson asked if past questions or concerns could be raised through the process identified in this staff report.

Alex Schmidt inquired if GRCA is looking to the user groups to support pre-existing staff ideas. Pam Lancaster replied that the process outlined in the staff report is for fact finding to help inform future property management decisions.

Karen Graham questioned how RUC representatives should reach users to obtain feedback and expressed that RUC representatives are not openly identified on the GRCA website. Bob Gallagher suggested that Karen Graham approach the Municipality of Clarington regarding user group comments submissions.

Carolyn Richards requested clarification regarding submitting individual or group feedback. Pam Lancater explained that RUC members are to discuss parking lot needs and concerns with member's respective user groups and provide a summary of information. This can include a members' knowledge and expertise regarding their use type.

Bob Gallagher clarified that each representative should submit one document containing the comments of their respective user groups. Additionally, the Chair identified that there are challenges finding RUC information on www.grca.on.ca and has extended to Staff to address this issue.

RUC 9/25

MOVED BY:

Alex Schmidt

SECONDED BY:

Karen Graham

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee approach respective user groups and obtain information regarding parking challengers or needs at the Ganaraska Forest.

FURTHER THAT Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee representatives are asked to submit user group comments to the Forest Recreation Technician by November 6, 2025.

FURTHER THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receives the Ganaraska Forest Parking Lot Infrastructure staff report for information.

CARRIED.

b) Trail Maintenance Volunteer Programs

Ed Van Osch explained that the GRCA is preparing revisions to volunteer programs to streamline the application and implementation processes in hopes of attracting interest from qualified and dedicated volunteers. The initial program being revised is the Ganaraska Forest Trail Maintenance Program for Groups.

Alex Schmidt questioned the policy of not authorizing volunteers to use of motorized leaf blowers within the Central Forest.

Jim Pearson questioned if Forest users have the authority to cut and or remove vegetation on trails.

Ed Van Osch informed the RUC that under a signed volunteer agreement that many management processes might be authorized. Additionally, Ed Van Osch explained that the Ganaraska Forest has rules and regulations that each Ganaraska Forest Day Pass or Membership holder has agreed to at the time of purchase. These rules and regulations are enforceable under the *Conservation Authorities Act* and the *Trespass to Property Act*.

Peter Wood asked staff if there is access to the rules and regulations, and if any other pieces of legislation apply.

Pam Lancaster stated that users can find the *Conservation Authorities Act* and Regulation 688/21 Rules of Conduct in Conservation Area Ontario's E-Laws website.

Karen Graham expressed that GRCA should expect a significant interest from the user community for volunteer opportunities.

RUC 10/25

MOVED BY:

Alex Schmidt

SECONDED BY:

Karen Graham

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee approach respective users and groups and encourage participation in volunteer opportunities within the Ganaraska Forest.

FURTHER THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receive the Trail Maintenance Volunteer Programs staff report for information.

CARRIED.

c) 2025 Forest Fire Season Update

Pam Lancaster explained challenges regarding fire prevention at Ganaraska Forest and expressed the need for users to adhere to property rules regarding fire prevention. Ed Van Osch informed the RUC regarding the fire protection measures utilized by the GRCA including property rules prohibiting the use of BBQ's, campfires, camp stoves, incendiary devices and fire works, all of which are enforceable under the *Conservation Authorities Act* and *Trespass to Property Act*. GRCA Provincial Offences Officers, Police and Ministry of Natural Resources Conservation Officers patrol the Ganaraska Forest and have the ability to enforce all property rules.

Carolyn Richards questioned if there is signage indicating BBQ prohibition in the parking lots. Pam Lancaster stated that new property use signage has been installed in parking lots that outline property use rules and users can expect more signage to be incorporated into the Ganaraska Forest into the future.

Bob Gallagher posed a question to Staff asking what the easiest way for RUC is to share GRCA messaging. Pam Lancaster requested that RUC members share/forward GRCA social media posts with their respective user groups.

RUC 11/25**MOVED BY:**

Jim Pearson

SECONDED BY:

Alex Schmidt

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee encourage their respective recreational organization or municipality to share forward GRCA information regarding forest fire risks and prevention.

FURTHER THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee encourages their respective recreational users to report violations related to BBQ's, campfires, camp stoves, incendiary devices and fireworks to authorities.

FURTHER THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receive the Forest Fire Season Update staff report for information.

CARRIED.10. Adjourn**RUC 12/25****MOVED BY:**

Peter Wood


SECONDED BY:

Karen Graham

THAT the meeting adjourned at 8:09pm.

CARRIED.

The next meeting of the Ganaraska Forest Recreational User Committee is Thursday, November 6, 2025 at 7:00 pm.

Chair

Conservation Lands Coordinator