



NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: November 6, 2025

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, Shawn Marshall, 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 4, 2025 - **attached**

4. Adoption of the Agenda
5. Delegations:
None
6. Presentation:
None
7. Business Arising from Minutes:
 - a) Ganaraska Forest Parking Lot Infrastructure feedback/comments from Forest Users summarized by RUC members.
8. Correspondence:
RUC #1 Ganaraska Forest & Mountain Bikes
9. New Business:
 - a) Central Forest Trail Infrastructure Improvements - **Staff report attached**
 - b) Pre-Winter Trail Maintenance - **Staff report attached**
 - c) Ganaraska Forest RUC on the GRCA Website - **Staff report attached**
10. Adjourn

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

From: Michael Henderson <bliss_2000@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, October 10, 2025 6:13 AM
To: Info <info@grca.on.ca>
Cc: gannyenduro@gmail.com <gannyenduro@gmail.com>
Subject: Ganaraska Forest & Mountain Bikes

Hello GRCA management and recreational user committee (Ontario Cycling Representative)!

Myself and my son attended the Oct.5,2025 bicycle event - the Ganny Enduro. I was so happy to get to ride again in the Ganaraska Forest. Over the years I have ridden there several times, and I loved being back.

I would like to see more of the previously available singletrack in the forest opened again for mountain bikers and hikers to use. The more trail options there are, the more likely I am to travel there from Toronto with my friends or family.

Thanks for the work you do,
Michael Henderson

STAFF REPORT – November 6, 2025

TO: Chair and Members of the Recreational Users Committee

RE: Central Forest Trail Infrastructure Improvements

The Ganaraska Forest trail system is visited by thousands of recreational users annually and Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA) is committed to offering an outstanding trail system. The GRCA operates the Central Forest trail system with 4 season trail offerings to non-motorized activities. Trail use activities include hiking/snowshoeing, horseback riding, mountain biking, and cross-country skiing.

Offering a multi-use non-motorized 4 season trail system offers a variety of maintenance and operational challenges. Throughout 2025, staff addressed several challenges that had been identified through public feedback, operational observation, and RUC discussions. Staff actively planned and implemented property management procedures designed to address several operations issues that challenged the functionality and safety of the trail system offered within the Central Forest.

GRCA implemented the following improvements within the Central Forest trail system during 2025:

- Orange B-Loop between CF8 and CF9 has been redesigned to eliminate hazardous hills and curve trail sections within this portion of the Central Forest trail system. This trail modification will allow for optimization of winter trail grooming and will decrease hazards to operational staff year-round. The trail bed has been widened, and problematic trees have been removed within the footprint of the trail.
- In response to historical low snow depth and poor cross-country ski trail quality within the first 0.5km of the Orange Trail, staff have implemented forestry practices to reduce the tree canopy cover in this section of the Central Forest trail system. Reducing canopy growth will allow for greater accumulations of snow depth, which in turn will allow staff to develop an increased snow trail bed, maintain a higher quality track-set, and reduce the amount of historical ice build up within this section of the trail system.
- To enhance user experience and assist with trail navigation, GRCA has incorporated trail blaze signage within the Central Forest trail system. These trail blazes compliment the Ganaraska Forest Trails Map Application, and can be found along the Orange, Yellow, Green and Purple trails and Orange A, B, C and Purple B Loops. The Purple A Loop is undergoing continuous trail restoration procedures and will be signed when works are completed.

All of management the procedures mentioned above are part of general property operations and to ensure that Gananaska Forest remains a world class destination. The GRCA will continue to implement a variety of assorted trail maintenance procedures and infrastructure improvements throughout the Gananaska Forest.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Gananaska Forest Recreational Users Committee receives the Central Forest Trail Infrastructure Improvements staff report for information.

Prepared by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Van Osch', written over a horizontal line.

Ed Van Osch, Forest Recreation Technician

STAFF REPORT – November 6, 2025

TO: Chair and Members of the Recreational Users Committee

RE: Pre-Winter Trail Maintenance

The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) is signed into a multi-year property use agreement with the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA). This agreement authorizes the OFSC to operate the OFSC snowmobile trail system on pre-determined trails within the Ganaraska Forest from December to April annually.

As part of a working relationship, OFSC and GRCA are committed to contributing towards trail surface maintenance including mechanical grading. GRCA typically plans grading work to commence during the autumn. This timing allows for the removal of whoops and other damages that may have occurred during the previous Ganaraska Forest operating seasons and ensure trails are in optimal condition for the OFSC season as well as for the May opening season the following year. Both GRCA and OFSC contribute monetarily towards this active management procedure and depending on the degree of trail surface decay and available budget, there is approximately 5-10 days of grading that occurs each fall.

GRCA Staff and OFSC Volunteers actively inspect the Ganaraska Forest trail systems to identify trail surface degradation. This information along with ongoing public reports of damage is compiled by GRCA and cross referenced with OFSC mapping. The compiled data is utilized to develop a grading plan that does not conflict with other GRCA programs or logging efforts, optimizes the budget and meets the needs for both partner organizations.

Trail grading involves multiple passes with appropriate equipment to form a crowned trail. A trail with proper crowning displays a slight convex slope from the centre of the trail to the outer extent of the trail footprint. This degree of accuracy requires skilled operators with appropriate road works equipment.

Through a request for quote process, the GRCA utilizes contractors to perform this pre-winter season grading. Contractors that are interested in viewing quote requests are encouraged to visit www.grca.on.ca

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee approach respective user groups and obtain information regarding the location and nature of trail surface concerns within the Ganaraska Forest trail system.

FURTHER THAT Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee representatives are asked to submit user group comments to the Forest Recreation Technician when they are received.

and FURTHER THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receives the Pre-Winter Staff report for information.

Prepared by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Van Osch', written over a horizontal line.

Ed Van Osch, Forest Recreation Technician

STAFF REPORT – November 6, 2025

TO: Chair and Members of the Recreational Users Committee

RE: Ganaraska Forest RUC on the GRCA Website

The Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority is taking steps to increase the presence of the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee on the GRCA website. A dedicated page (<https://grca.on.ca/forest-recreation/recreational-users-committee-ruc/>) has been created that generally describes the role and composition of the RUC, as well as meeting information. Member names have also been listed on the page with their affiliated organization.

Next steps with the website is to consider what emails will be used by the public/Forest users to communicate with RUC members. The method to communicate is with a form on the website that allows an individual to select who they want to communicate with and enter the message. This message is sent as an email generated from the website and sent to that particular RUC member. A copy of the initial form submission is retained on GRCA servers in accordance with the GRCA's Privacy Policy and retention schedules.

By using a form, an RUC member's email is hidden until the RUC member responds to the sender. This is the same method used on the website contact page for GRCA program and service inquiries. The email address that would be used in the form is what is currently being used by GRCA staff to communicate with RUC members, unless it is requested that a different email be used.

When communicating by email with the public as an RUC member it is important to continue to follow the RUC Terms of Reference, and Code of Conduct. Any inquiries received through the GRCA website is considered for information purposes for RUC business.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT if desired, Ganaraska Forest Recreation Users Committee members provide a different email to be used for the email form on the website to the Forest Recreation Technician by Friday November 14, 2025.

FURTHER THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receives the Ganaraska Forest RUC on the GRCA Website staff report for information.



Prepared by:

Ed Van Osch, Forest Recreation Technician