

Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority
Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee
Terms of Reference
March 2025

Introduction

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee (RUC) is to provide advice/comments, as it pertains to the recreational use types of the Ganaraska Forest, to the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA) Board of Directors on:

1. Etiquette, standards and guidelines for recreational uses occurring in the Ganaraska Forest;
2. Recreational user conflicts, and potential solutions, within the Ganaraska Forest;
3. Change in recreational use trends, technology, and demographic as it relates to mitigating future conflicts, retaining recreational interest in the Ganaraska Forest, and ensuring safe trail use while reducing liability;
4. Changes to or new Provincial legislation, and GRCA plans that pertain to recreational use; and,
5. The multi-use recreational trail system, and how recreational opportunities can be improved upon, while at the same time mitigating risk to the user and the ecology of the Ganaraska Forest.

The Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee will also carry out work to:

1. Ensure rules, etiquette and regulations pertaining to recreational use in the Ganaraska Forest are communicated to their organization or municipality membership/population;
2. Promote co-operation among the various recreational user groups;
3. Support the development of recreational programs and/or assist in events in the Ganaraska Forest, which are subject to approval of the Conservation Authority;
4. Communicate with the respective recreational organization or municipality, opportunities to participate in Conservation Authority programs or initiatives that are mutually benefiting and in the best interest of the Ganaraska Forest and recreational opportunities.

Governance

2.0 Committee Structure

Each governing body/municipality listed in section 2.1 is responsible to appoint one representative from that organization or municipality to sit on the RUC. In doing so, each use type will have one vote. The appointee from a governing body is to represent the recreational use type and all its users the Ganaraska Forest. The appointee from a municipality is to be a resident of the municipality and represents the Municipality and its relationship to the Ganaraska Forest.

Appointment methods are determined by the governing body/municipality. The GRCA will provide notification to the governing body/municipality when appointments are required. When a new member is appointed to the RUC, an orientation session may be provided, along with the Terms of Reference of the Committee.

Each representative will sit on the RUC as a voting member for a four (4) year term, which will coincide with municipal elections. A newly appointed RUC membership will be in place by April of the year following the municipal election. Appointments can be made to the RUC throughout the 4 year term as required to fill vacancy. The appointments are volunteer based and no remuneration nor per diem is provided.

A GRCA Board of Director will sit on the Committee as an ex-officio non-voting member and will be appointed annually at the Annual General Meeting of the Board of Directors. The role of the Board of Director is to represent the Board of Directors, and to provide expertise and advice to the Committee.

Members must attend 3 out of the 4 regularly scheduled meetings per year. If a member misses a meeting, communications will be sent to the individual from the GRCA noting the absence and emphasizing the need to attend the remainder of the meetings that year. When 2 meetings are missed, a note will be sent to the governing body or municipality, noting the absence and the request to discuss the absence with the appointed individual. If absenteeism continues, the appointed individual will need to be removed from the Committee by the governing body or municipality.

2.1 Voting Members

Members of the RUC will be appointed by a governing body which represents the majority of Ontarians (see section 2.0). 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 as outlined in section 2.0

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

2.2 Responsibilities of Voting Members

- Members must communicate and provide updates to the governing body, organization, or municipality after each meeting.
- Members need to have an open line of communication with the user or municipality that they represent.
- Members are to bring concerns related to recreational use conflict to the Committee.
- Members must participate cooperatively, collaboratively and with respect, with other members of the Committee.
- Members must make decisions that are best for the Ganaraska Forest rather than in the best interest for the individual use type, group or individual.

2.3 Chair

The Chair is appointed by the GRCA Board of Directors and is a non-voting member of the Committee. The Chair's role is to facilitate and chair meetings in a neutral/non-biased manner, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate in contributing to the meeting.

It shall be the duty of the Chair, with respect to any meetings over which they preside, to:

- Preserve order and decide all questions of order, subject to appeal; and without argument or comment, state the rule applicable to any point of order if called upon to do so;
- Ensure that the public in attendance does not in any way, interfere or disrupt, the proceedings of the members;
- Receive and submit to a vote all motions presented by the members, which do not contravene the rules of order;
- Announce the results of the vote on any motions so presented;
- Adjourn the meeting when business is concluded.

In the absence of the Chair, a non-voting Committee member will assume the role of Chair. The first non-voting Committee member to assume the role is the Board of Director member. In the absence of the Chair and the Board of Director member, the recording secretary can fulfill the role as Chair for that meeting.

When the Chair position needs to be filled, a job posting will be circulated, advertising the volunteer position. Interviews and selection will occur by a Committee made up of the Chair of the GRCA Board of Directors, the Board of Directors RUC member, the CAO/Secretary-Treasurer, and Conservation Land Coordinator.

The Chair position is for a 4-year term, and the same chair can be re-appointed.

2.4 Conduct of Members

Members, including the chair, shall maintain a high standard for conduct and at all times comply with applicable laws and the Code of Conduct (Appendix 1).

No member at any meeting of the RUC shall:

- a) Speak in a manner that is discriminatory in nature based on an individual's race, ancestry, place of origin, citizenship, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, colour, marital status, family status or disability;
- b) Leave their seat or make any noise or disturbance while a vote is being taken or until the result is declared;
- c) Interrupt a member while speaking, except to raise a point of order or a question of privilege;
- d) Speak disrespectfully or use offensive words against the Authority, the members, staff, or any member of the public;
- e) Speak beyond the question(s) under debate;
- f) Resist the rules of order or disobey the decision of the Chair on the questions, order or practices;
- g) Criticize any decisions of the Authority or Committee except for moving, in accordance with the provision of the policy, that the question be considered.

If any Committee member violates the standard of conduct, they may be ordered by the Chair to leave their seat for the remainder of the meeting. In the case of an apology being made by the offender, they may, by majority vote of the Committee, be permitted to retake their seat.

No persons except members and staff shall be allowed to come to the table during the meetings of the RUC without permission of the Chair or the Committee.

No member may direct staff to prepare a report unless the request has been sanctioned by the Board of Directors as per the Administrative By-Law.

Members will respect all matters of confidentiality. Members will not reveal any confidential information they learn during the performance of their duties to anyone not present at Committee meetings. Breaches of confidentiality will be addressed with appropriate sanctions, including potential dismissal from the Committee.

2.5 Recording Secretary

A staff member of the Conservation Authority will be appointed as the recording secretary by the CAO/Secretary-Treasurer and is a non-voting member of the Committee.

The recording secretary will prepare the agenda and minutes of each meeting, which will be circulated to Committee members and posted on the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority website a minimum 5 business days prior to the meeting day.

The minutes will be sent to the next GRCA Board of Director meeting as information.

2.6 Amendments to Committee Structure and/or Terms of Reference

The Committee structure and the Terms of Reference will be considered annually by the GRCA Board of Directors, and a revised Terms of Reference, if applicable, will be provided before the first RUC meeting of the year as part of the agenda package.

Meeting Procedures

3.0 Rules of Order

All meetings will be conducted in a normal business-like manner and according to Robert's Rule of Order.

3.1 Public Participation

The general public is welcome to attend Recreational Users Committee meetings.

3.2 Delegations

Delegations will be encouraged to first address their presentation to the Board of Directors of the Gannaraska Region Conservation Authority. In turn, the Board of Directors may suggest a presentation to the Recreational Users Committee. To make representation to the Committee, a request must be made in writing to the Chair at least 10 business days prior to the meeting. Such requests should include a brief summary of the nature of the presentation and the name of the person(s) making it. Presentations shall be limited to 10 minutes. A copy of the presentation should be sent to the recording secretary the Friday prior to the meeting in order that it can be circulated in advance to the RUC members. Presenters should be prepared to answer questions from Committee members.

3.3 Correspondence

All correspondence shall be addressed to the Gannaraska Region Conservation Authority and submitted to the CAO/Secretary-Treasurer. Correspondence will go into the Board of Directors meeting where it may be actioned to go forward to the next RUC meeting for consideration.

3.4 Quorum

One half (50%) of the Committee's voting membership, with filled positions, shall form a quorum for the transaction of business.

If there is no quorum within one half hour after the time appointed for the meeting, the Chair for the meeting shall declare the meeting adjourned due to a lack of a quorum, or shall recess until quorum arrives, and the recording secretary shall record the names of the members present and absent.

If during the meeting a quorum is lost, then the Chair shall declare that the meeting shall stand recessed or adjourned, until the date of the next regular meeting.

Where the number of members who are disabled from participating in a meeting due to the declaration of a conflict of interest is such that at that meeting the remaining members are not of sufficient number to constitute a quorum, the remaining number of members shall be deemed to constitute a quorum, provided such number is not less than two.

If a member is unable to attend any meeting and wishes to bring any additional information or opinion pertaining to an agenda item to the members, the member shall address in writing or email to the Chair and recording secretary such correspondence

prior to the start of the meeting. The correspondence shall be read aloud by the Chair or recording secretary without comment or explanations.

3.5 Motions and Voting

All motions require a mover and a seconder. Discussions on motions will be limited to 10 minutes with extensions beyond this time at the discretion of the Chair. Members may speak twice on any motion.

A majority vote of the members present at any meeting is required upon all matters coming before the meeting.

If any member who is qualified to vote abstains from voting, they shall be deemed to have voted neither in favour nor opposed to the question, which will not alter the number of votes required for a majority.

On a tie vote, the motion is lost.

3.6 Notice of Motion

At the discretion of the Chair, new business will be introduced from members by a notice of motion, introduced at the meeting prior to when the business will be dealt with. This will permit members to solicit input from the governing body or municipality prior to presenting the notice of motion and voting. Notices of motion require a mover and a seconder.

The member will provide to the recording secretary, 7 days prior to the meeting, written information and the recommendation wording when the notice of motion was introduced, to form a notice of motion report that will be included in the agenda package.

A staff report, without a resolution, may precede a notice of motion report so that staff input can be considered when considering the notice of motion resolution.

If the notice of motion resolution is defeated, the topic cannot be re-introduced within the following 2 meetings.

Meeting Schedule

4.0 Meetings

Meetings of the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee shall normally be held on the first Thursday of the month for the months of April, June, September and November at the Administrative Office of the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority, both in office and virtually (hybrid), or virtually. Additional meetings will occur at the call of the GRCA Board of Director Chair or RUC Chair.

Report to the GRCA Board of Directors

5.0 Reporting Function

The Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee Chair or designate, other than staff, shall report to the GRCA Board of Directors on its activities over the previous year by the last scheduled meeting each year.

Appendix 1 - Code of Conduct

1. Background

The Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA) demands a high level of integrity and ethical conduct from its Committee members. The Authority's reputation has relied upon the good judgement of individual members. A written Code of Conduct helps to ensure that all members share a common basis for acceptable conduct. Formalized standards help to provide a reference guide and a supplement to legislative parameters within which members must operate. Further, they enhance public confidence that members operate from a base of integrity, justice and courtesy.

The Code of Conduct is a general standard. It augments the laws which govern the behaviour of, and it is not intended to replace personal ethics.

This Code of Conduct will also assist members in dealing with confronting situations not adequately addressed or that may be ambiguous in Authority resolutions, regulations, or policies and procedures.

2. General

All members, whether appointed representatives of an organization or municipality, are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on the Authority.

All members shall serve in a conscientious and diligent manner. No member shall use the influence of their position for any purpose other than for the exercise of their official duties.

It is expected that members adhere to a code of conduct that:

- i. upholds the mandate, vision and mission of the Authority;
- ii. considers the recreational use of the Ganaraska Forest in its entirety, including their appointing organization or municipality;
- iii. respects confidentiality;
- iv. approaches all Ganaraska Forest issues with an open mind, with consideration for the Ganaraska Forest as a whole;
- v. respects the democratic process and respects decisions of the Recreational Users Committee, GRCA Board of Directors, GRCA staff, as well as Executive Committee, Advisory Boards and other committees, if and when applicable;
- vi. declares any direct or indirect pecuniary interest¹ or conflict of interest when one exists or may exist; and
- vii. conducts oneself in a manner which reflects respect and professional courtesy and does not use offensive language in or against the Authority or against any member or any Authority staff.

¹ Pecuniary interest includes the financial or material interests of a Member and the financial or material interests of a member of the member's immediate family.

3. Gifts and Benefits

Members shall not accept fees, gifts, hospitality or personal benefits that are connected directly or indirectly with the performance of duties.

4. Confidentiality

The members shall be governed at all times by the provisions of the *Municipal Freedom and Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Members shall not disclose or release by any means to any member of the public, either in verbal or written form, any confidential information acquired by virtue of their position, except when required by law to do so.

Members shall not permit any persons, other than those who are entitled thereto, to have access to information which is confidential.

In the instance where a member vacates their position on the Recreational Users Committee they will continue to be bound by the *Municipal Freedom and Information and Protection of Privacy Act* requirements.

Particular care should be exercised in protecting personal data from an individual who has brought forward information to the Recreational Users Committee.

5. Use of Authority Property

No member shall use for personal purposes any Authority property, equipment, supplies, or services of consequence other than for purposes connected with the discharge of Authority duties or associated community activities of which the Authority has been advised.

6. Work of a Political Nature

No member shall use Authority facilities, services or property for his/her election or re-election campaign to any position or office within the Authority or otherwise.

7. Conduct at Recreational Users Committee Meetings

During meetings of the Recreational Users Committee, members shall conduct themselves with decorum. Respect for delegations, staff and for fellow members requires that all members show courtesy and not distract from the business of the Authority during presentations and when others have the floor.

8. Influence on Staff

Members shall be respectful of the fact that staff work for the Authority as a whole and are charged with making recommendations that reflect their professional expertise and corporate perspective, without undue influence.

9. Business Relations

No member shall borrow money from any individual who regularly does business with the Authority unless such individual is an institution or company whose shares are publicly traded and who is regularly in the business of lending money.

No member shall act as a paid agent before the Authority, the GRCA Board of Directors, Executive Committee or an advisory board or committee of the Authority, except in compliance with the terms of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.

10. Encouragement of Respect for the Authority and its Regulations

Members shall represent the Authority in a respectful way and encourage public respect for the Authority and its Regulations.

11. Harassment

It is the policy of the Authority that all persons be treated fairly in the workplace in an environment free of discrimination and of personal and sexual harassment. Harassment of another member, staff or any member of the public is misconduct. Members shall follow the Authority's Harassment Policy as approved from time-to-time.

Examples of harassment that will not be tolerated include: verbal or physical abuse, threats, derogatory remarks, jokes, innuendo or taunts related to an individual's race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical or mental disabilities, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status or sexual orientation. The Authority will also not tolerate the display of pornographic, racist or offensive signs or images; practical jokes that result in awkwardness or embarrassment; unwelcome invitations or requests, whether indirect or explicit and any other prohibited grounds under the provisions of the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

12. Breach of Code of Conduct

Should a member breach the Code of Conduct and/or Terms of Reference, they shall advise the Chair and Vice-Chair, with a copy to the CAO/Secretary-Treasurer, as soon as possible after the breach.

Should a member allege that another member has breached the Code of Conduct, the said breach shall be communicated to the Chair, with a copy to the CAO/Secretary-Treasurer, in writing. In the absence of the Chair, or if a member alleges that the Chair has breached the Code of Conduct, the said breach shall be communicated the Vice-Chair, with a copy to the CAO/Secretary-Treasurer, in writing.

Should a member of the public or a municipality allege that a member has breached the Code of Conduct, the party making the allegation will be directed to follow the notification procedure outlined above.

Any breach, or alleged breach, of the Code of Conduct shall be investigated in accordance with the Enforcement of By-laws and Policies procedure outlined or referred to in the Authority's Administrative By-law.