



NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: April 2, 2026

TIME: 7:00 pm

LOCATION: Hybrid, In-Person / Zoom Meeting

AGENDA

MEETING: GANARASKA FOREST RECREATIONAL USERS COMMITTEE

MEMBERS: Bob Gallagher, Matthew Robbins, Jim Pearson, Matt Mair, Garry Niece, Rick Trumper, Lisa Thompson, Shawn Marshall, Amber Panchyshyn, Alex Schmidt, Carolyn Richards, Peter Wood, Steve Brownell, Maureen McDonald, Paul Kravis, 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 – November 6, 2025 - **attached**

4. Adoption of the Agenda
5. Delegations:
None
6. Presentation:
None
7. Business Arising from Minutes:
None
8. Correspondence:
 - a) 01/26 Charlotte Batty email re: Mountain Biking Access – ***note and file***
 - b) 02/26 Julie Hunt email re: Ganaraska Forest – ***note and file***
9. New Business:
 - a) Recreational Users Committee Terms of Reference Updates - **Staff report attached**
 - b) Winter Season Recreational Use Update - **Staff report attached**
 - c) 2026 Trail Maintenance, Infrastructure and Program Improvements - **Staff report attached**
10. Adjourn

MINUTES OF THE GANARASKA FOREST

RECREATIONAL USERS COMMITTEE

November 6, 2025

RUC 3/25

1. Welcome, Land Acknowledgement and Call to Order

The Chair welcomed all present and called the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee (RUC) meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

MEMBER PRESENT: Bob Gallagher, Chair
Matthew Robbins, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters
Jim Pearson, Ontario Trail Riders Association
Matt Mair, Ontario Nature
Garry Niece, Hike Ontario
Rick Trumper, Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Club
Alex Schmidt, Ontario Cycling Association
Carolyn Richards, Ontario Federation of ATV Clubs
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: Shawn Marshall, Cross Country Ski Ontario
Amber Panchyshyn, Orienteering Ontario

ALSO ABSENT: Lisa Thompson, Ontario Federation of Trail Riders
Peter Wood, Ontario Federation of 4WD Recreationists
City of Kawartha Lakes (position unfilled)

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

None.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

RUC 13/25

MOVED BY:

Carolyn Richards

SECONDED BY:

Matt Mair

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee approve the minutes of the September 4, 2025 meeting.

CARRIED.

4. Adoption of Agenda

RUC 14/25

MOVED BY:

Steve Brownell

SECONDED BY:

Maureen McDonald

THAT the agenda be adopted with a Point of Information added to New Business as item D.

CARRIED.

5. Delegations

None

6. Presentations

None

7. Business Arising from the Minutes

Ed Van Osch provided the RUC with a verbal review of the comments received by RUC members and their respective user groups and community regarding Ganaraska Forest parking infrastructure. It was noted that many of the submitted comments align with that of the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority's (GRCA) knowledge of the infrastructure issues, challenges, and opportunities. Ed Van Osch stated that the RUC comments will be taken into consideration during property management decisions.

RUC 15/25

MOVED BY:

Steve Brownell

SECONDED BY:

Maureen McDonald

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receive the verbal report of RUC representative submitted parking lot comments presented by Ed Van Osch for information.

CARRIED.

8. Correspondence

An email letter was submitted to GRCA in gratitude for authorizing and facilitating a recent Special Event known as The Ganny Enduro.

RUC 16/25

MOVED BY:

Steve Brownell

SECONDED BY:

Matt Mair

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee note and file correspondence item #1.

CARRIED.

9. New Business

a) Central Forest Trail Infrastructure Improvements

Steve Brownell inquired if GRCA had implemented GPS coordinates or What3Words on newly installed trail markers within the Central Forest. Ed Van Osch informed the RUC that new signage is intended to be utilized as wayfinding signage and has been installed at standard 50 or 75 metre intervals along trails within the Central Forest.

Steve Brownell inquired to the possibility of RUC members or volunteers being authorized to assist with blaze signage installation. Pam Lancaster stated that volunteer opportunities do exist, and signage installation can be included as a volunteer opportunity. Further to that, Pam Lancaster stated that staff has nearly completed the signage installation for this project and no further signage is to be installed at this time.

Alex Schmidt asked to see an example of the blaze signage. Pam Lancaster presented signage examples to the RUC. Bob Gallagher questioned what material the signs are made of and how are they installed. Jim Pearson asked if the signs could withstand UV light. Pam Lancaster informed the RUC that the signage is constructed of PVC and that although it will deteriorate over the years, that the material is a cost-effective way of supporting navigation in the Forest. Signage has been installed on trees using aluminum nails or mounted on T-bars in areas without suitable trees and that aluminum nails were chosen to limit the risk of future safety hazards during logging or maintenance procedures.

Alex Schmidt asked if GRCA has plans to incorporate map signage within the trail system. Pam Lancaster stated, “decision making” signage will be added to the trail system to assist users with navigation and that GRCA is taking inspiration from other organizations with successful trail systems.

Alex Schmidt requested clarification on the hazardous hills and curve sections mentioned in the Staff report. Ed Van Osch explained that the hazards mentioned were in relation to the safety of cross-country skiers and staff during grooming operations.

RUC 17/25

MOVED BY:

Jim Pearson

SECONDED BY:

Maureen McDonald

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receive the Central Forest Trail Infrastructure Improvements Staff report for information.

CARRIED.

b) Pre-Winter Trail Maintenance

Jim Pearson inquired as to the amount of funds provided by Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) towards trail grading. Rick Trumper stated that OFSC provides \$4000 to \$5000 annually to the GRCA to be utilized for trail grading projects that benefit OFSC use of the Ganaraska Forest.

Bob Gallagher requested clarification on the nature of reporting trail surface degradation. Ed Van Osch stated that RUC representative should report any trail surface issues submitted to them by users to the Forest Recreation Technician. This data is collected and utilized to make maintenance decisions.

Jim Pearson inquired as to the ability of GRCA to address hazards on unmaintained municipal roads. Rick Trumper stated that OFSC communicates with the municipality to arrange maintenance where the OFSC trail uses municipal lands. Pam Lancaster stated that GRCA does not perform any maintenance on municipal owned lands, but GRCA does communicate issues reported to GRCA to municipal partners. A conversation began related to municipal right of ways, which is outside of the GRCA's jurisdictional authority.

RUC 18/25**MOVED BY:**

Rick Trumper

SECONDED BY:

Jim Pearson

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee routinely approach respective users and groups to obtain information regarding the location and nature of trail surface concerns within the Ganaraska Forest;

FURTHER THAT The RUC routinely share collected user group information regarding trail surface concerns with the Forest Recreation Technician via email; and

FURTHER THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receive the Pre-Winter Trail Maintenance Staff report for information.

CARRIED.

c) Ganaraska Forest RUC on the GRCA Website

Pam Lancaster stated that GRCA has taken steps to develop a place on www.grca.on.ca dedicated to RUC, including minutes, notifications, delegations, and RUC representative names additionally, if RUC representatives feel comfortable, RUC member contact info will be included.

Bob Gallagher thanked Pam Lancaster for GRCA's decision to act promptly by addressing this issue and requested clarification regarding security and notification protocol. Pam Lancaster stated, if requested, GRCA Staff can respond on behalf of an RUC member, additionally, staff will send a confirmation email to RUC members requesting permission to post RUC member emails on the website.

RUC 19/25

MOVED BY: Steve Brownell
SECONDED BY: Karen Graham

THAT, if desired, the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee provide a different email to be used for the email form on the GRCA website to the Forest Recreation Technician Ed Van Osch by November 14, 2025;

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

CARRIED.

d) Changes to Conservation Authorities

Steve Brownell requested an update regarding the provincial announcement of a proposed amalgamation of Conservation Authorities. Pam Lancaster informed the RUC members that on October 31, 2025, the Province of Ontario issued a Press Release to announce its plans to introduce changes to conservation authorities across the province. Currently, staff are not privy to any further information other than what has come from the official Ontario announcement, which can be found online on Provincial websites.

This inquiry has been recorded as a Point of Information.

10. Adjourn**RUC 20/25**

MOVED BY: Jim Pearson
SECONDED BY: Rick Trumper

THAT the meeting adjourned at 7:56 pm.

CARRIED.

The next meeting of the Ganaraska Forest Recreational User Committee is Thursday, April 2, 2026 at 7:00 pm.

Chair



Forest Recreation Technician

From: Charlotte Batty <charlotte@miniadventures.com>
Sent: Monday, October 27, 2025 1:01 PM
To: Info <info@grca.on.ca>
Cc: gannyenduro@gmail.com <gannyenduro@gmail.com>
Subject: Mountain Biking Access

Hello Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority Management and Recreational User Committee - Ontario Cycling Association Representative,

I enjoyed the Ganny Enduro mountain bike race on October 5th which used the Ganaraska Forest. I travelled from Minden to attend this event and loved being back in the Ganaraska Forest.

I would like to see more previously available singletrack in the Ganaraska Forest open to mountain bikers in the future, and for mountain bikers to have greater access to additional singletrack than is currently offered.

Happy trails,



Charlotte Batty
• **Minii Adventures MTB Experiences**
• Chief Experience Officer
• MiniAdventures.com
• 705-441-6221
•  [@Mini_Adventures](https://www.instagram.com/Mini_Adventures)
•  [@MiniAdventures](https://www.facebook.com/MiniAdventures)
•  [@MiniAdventures](https://www.youtube.com/MiniAdventures)

From: Julie Hunt <pjhunt@live.ca>

Sent: November 10, 2025 5:06 PM

To:

Subject: Ganaraska Forest

Largest Block of Contiguous Forest in Southern Ontario – 11,000 Acres

I've written several letters to representatives of my area with the hope that someone would listen to what is happening to our beautiful Ganaraska Forest. My husband and I, like most of our neighbours, purchased property as close to the Ganaraska Forest as possible to enjoy its many outdoor benefits. The cost of living near the forest is high, property was expensive to purchase, and our reality taxes are well over \$8,000.00 and rising.

When we first moved into the area in 2015, we were able to enjoy the Ganaraska Forest with its many single-track trails and double wide trails. Many of the trails were clearly marked with signs which coordinated with maps available to purchase. It was fun for so many to enjoy the forest on horseback, hiking, mountain biking, bird watching, etc. using the trail system to safely go through the entire forest, East, Central and West. In 2018 we, like many of our neighbours, took the time to participate in the development of the Forest Management Plan and were encouraged to see our friends, neighbours and many users' groups cooperate in maintaining the concept of the multi-use public forest. We understood that we would continue to use the forest in much the same way as we had become accustomed to for many more years.

In 2022 when the big windstorm went through Southern Ontario, we understood it damaged the forest and we accepted what the GRCA said in their press releases that the forest would be temporarily closed while they undertook the work to clean up and re-open the trails. When we were finally given the go ahead to re-enter the forest we discovered that the trails were not open, that not only had they not cleared them, but they had also intentionally blocked them, they had built gates, fences, and piled brush debris, changed the forest map and that they intended to permanently change the forest. None of this seemed remotely related to the storm damage.

The Central Forest was non-motorized, which allowed equestrians to drive to the Forest Centre, park in the horse trailer parking lot where they could ride out into the many trails, single-track and double wide. There were also paddocks where you could put your horse in so you could use the Forest Centre Facilities, knowing they were safely confined. Today, that is no longer possible. My friend and I trailered our horses to the Central Forest Labour Day Weekend. We were very disappointed to find the horse parking lot was not as it had been a few years ago. The road in was almost unpassable, the grass was high, not cut, the portable potty, picnic table, and mounting blocks were gone. The one hitching post left was covered with poison ivy and vines, unusable. Trails leading out into the forest were all closed off with either orange plastic fencing or brush debris. Signs marked Trail Closed. Now there is only one exit from the parking lot which leads to the Orange cross country ski trail. As we rode our horses through the Central Forest, there were no signs designating the trails as they were there for many years, the signs were removed. Trails were either fenced off with more orange fencing and marked closed or so heavily covered in stumps and brush debris, they were unpassable. We met up with a young father and his son who were hiking through the forest. The father stopped us and asked us where the hiking trails were; he was unable to find them, no signs. He told us he had enjoyed the forest in his early 20's and had brought his son to hike the trails and could not believe there were only double wide available. He had hoped to bring his family here to enjoy hiking outdoors but there was no point since they were gone. This is true. We rode around the Central Forest only to find all single-track signs gone and the only trails open were

the cross country double wide tracks, orange and purple. This was a long weekend and this father and son were the only ones we saw in the forest. Previously when we would ride here the forest was humming with people horseback riding, hiking, biking...all enjoying the beauty of the outdoors. It is apparent that not only did the GRCA put no effort into clearing the damage on single track they have actively tried to close them, both by blocking the entrances with fences or large debris piles but also by piling debris on the trails during logging operations. We have witnessed this in both the East and West forest in the last two years after logging and it is very obvious intentional.

So, the Central Forest is effectively closed. There is little reason for anyone other than cross-country skiers to use it now. The signs are gone, the trails are closed and/or destroyed by brush debris placed at trail entrances to keep people from using them.

The East and West forests are multi-use and with the hard work of many individuals (mostly dirt bike riders), many of the single-track trails that are once again open. However, all signage that has been there for many years has been removed. The maps have been changed and do not show the many single-track trails that have existed for many years, single track is now labeled "unmaintained". Most trails are only open and available because of the hard work of the individual users trying to maintain safe and open trails, apparently with no cooperation or help from the GRCA. In fact, we have seen trail signage has been put up labeling the trails by name, use and direction only to see them inexplicably disappear soon after.

I've joined the Great Prine Trail Riders hoping to offer support in keeping our Ganaraska Forest open. Its members seem to be long-term users of the Ganaraska Forest and know the trails well; they are attempting to coordinate efforts to maintain trails for the safe use and enjoyment of not only for their members but all users. I appreciate that they seem alone in their struggle to keep the forest open according to the Ganaraska Forest Management Plan 2018–2038 which should be everyone's goal. So, if you were to enter the forest today, especially the Central Forest, and you were not familiar with the trails of 2015, you would not see where trails have been closed or understand why so many are upset with the closures. The Central Forest no longer has anything to offer anyone wanting to enjoy the outdoors. I question the value of the permit that the GRCA sells given their recent approach to the long-standing uses many of us have enjoyed. It appears to me that the user groups and individuals should join with the dirt bikers as the best way now to open the trails in the Central Forest as they seem to have taken the task of managing the trails where the GRCA staff have left a vacuum. It's up to you. The Forest belongs to you and me, it has been a wonderful recreational resource for many years, and has been an economic engine for real estate, agricultural and recreation. Each of you representing your area and the users of the Ganaraska Forest are responsible for ensuring the forest remains open and that management is following the Ganaraska Forest Management Plan 2018-2038. This is a crisis.

Shame on you if you let them continue to purposely close the forest due to intentional neglect despite the public process and plan that they and we agreed would govern the management of the forest for many more years.

Julie Hunt
9399 Wright Road
Campbellcroft LOA 1B0

STAFF REPORT – April 3, 2026

To: Chair and Members of the Recreational Users Committee

RE: Recreational Users Committee Terms of Reference Updates

Each year the Recreational Users Committee Terms of Reference is reviewed and updated when required. At the November 27, 2025 GRCA Board of Directors meeting, it was recommended that proposed changes be presented to the RUC for comment. In doing so, the stated Terms of Reference update process described in Section 2.6 has been postponed to accommodate this review.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Ganaraska Recreational Users Committee provide comment on the Recreational Users Committee Terms of Reference to be considered by the GRCA Board of Directors.



Prepared by:

Ed Van Osch, Forest Recreation Technician

Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority
Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee
Draft Terms of Reference for Discussion
April 2026

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. It is recommended that appointee has knowledge

and connection to the Ganaraska Forest. Further, the appointee is required to have a Ganaraska Forest membership.

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~~4WD Recreationists
- 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 Ganaraska 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 Ganaraska 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.

6.0 Visibility of the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee

The GRCA has a dedicated web page (<https://grca.on.ca/forest-recreation/recreational-users-committee-ruc/>) that generally describes the role and composition of the RUC, as well as meeting information. Member names are listed on the page with their affiliated organization.

The method to communicate with an RUC member is with a form on the website that allows an individual to select who they want to communicate with and enter the message which is then emailed to the 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. The email address that is used in the form is what is used by recording secretary 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.

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.

STAFF REPORT – April 2, 2026

TO: Chair and Members of the Recreational Users Committee

RE: 2026 Trail Maintenance, Infrastructure and Program Improvements

To ensure Ganaraska Forest remains a world class recreation destination, Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA) is looking to the future projected population growth for Ontario, and the possibilities of recreational growth opportunities. GRCA is preparing for tomorrow by implementing updates to the recreation system today. Over the past 5 years GRCA has implemented several updates to the recreation system, including but not limited to; an integrated [Ganaraska Forest Trails Map](#) app that provides recreational users with real time information, online Forest Pass purchase system, self serve digital kiosk at the Ganaraska Forest Centre, implemented an annual forest trail inspection program, and is continually addressing trail design and operational conflicts. In addition, GRCA is currently administering a multi-year trail and property signage program where signage is being updated to accurately represent GRCA owned properties.

During 2026, recreational users can anticipate encountering various updates to the recreational system offered at the Ganaraska Forest. 2026 project updates include, but are not limited to:

- GRCA plans to make changes to trail grading operations schedule. Traditionally GRCA carried out most major trail grading operations just ahead of autumn leaf fall. Funding for this grading has been supplemented through GRCA operating budgets and a financial contribution by Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC). Late fall trail grooming allowed heavy equipment to prepare the trail surface ahead of OFSC operation season without grading being negatively impacted by fallen leaves building up in grading equipment. Unfortunately, scheduling conflicts limited the overall success of this timing and some years of grooming delivered less than ideal results.

GRCA traditionally viewed this grading as dual purpose, benefiting both the OFSC and Ganaraska Forest pass holders. Trail inspection, staff input, OFSC and recreational user feedback has prompted GRCA to rethink the timing of grading operations. GRCA is considering providing additional grading during the summer operation season while still partnering with OFSC to implement pre-winter grooming efforts. GRCA hopes that implementing interval grading maintenance will address timing issues and reduce the over grading efforts required at one time.

- To ensure recreational users continue to experience a high level of satisfaction with the Central Forest trail system, GRCA is continuing with trail modifications of the ski trail system and Purple A-Loop during 2026. Several areas of the ski trail system have been identified as candidates for trail rerouting. Rerouting is required to bypass areas of concern for both users and operations. In addition to major construction, GRCA is continuing to address encroaching vegetation, stumps, rocks and erosion and continue to add to trail signage improvements. As the year progresses users are encouraged to follow www.grca.on.ca and the [Ganaraska Forest Trails Map](#) for

updates and notification of temporary trail closures due to trail maintenance or construction. Users are also kindly reminded to adhere to all posted signage.

- During 2025 annual trail inspections staff identified an opportunity to improve user access to the in the West Forest. It was noted that some authorized user groups were not able to access the West Forest trail system via Parking Lot P6. Only one classification of authorized trail (single track) officially connects to Parking Lot P6. This lack of infrastructure left dual track and forest road users without access from a Parking Lot designed for general access.

Following the identification of this design aspect, GRCA is developing a formal trail connection from Parking Lot P6 to the official Ganaraska Trail system. This involves the construction of 200 meter section of Forest Road trail heading south out of Parking Lot P6 which will connect to an existing Forest Road trail. To limit the need for lengthy parking lot closure, GRCA is scheduling this work to occur after snowmelt and anticipates this section of new trail to be completed for May 1, 2026.

- Throughout 2026 and beyond, recreational users can anticipate significant changes to existing Ganaraska Forest signage. Updates may include, full replacement, modification to existing posted signage, removal of redundant, obsolete, or non-GRCA signage/markings. Recreational users are encouraged to review signage regularly to ensure they are aware of current information.
- GRCA continues to work towards the development of a single-track looping network of trails leading from and terminating at the Ganaraska Forest Centre. This initiative began in 2024 with trail modeling (Phase 1) and progressed to preliminary route planning in 2025 (Phase 2). During 2026, it is anticipated, that through consultation with partners, staff will be able to begin planning the route for the future Central Forest single track network (Phase 3). Phase 3 is expected to be completed by September 1, 2026. Phase 4 will be implementation/construction. The future single-track route will be constructed and managed by GRCA, with opportunities for the local community and businesses to contribute financially or via the GRCA Volunteer Program. The Recreational Users Committee will be kept informed as this project progresses.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee inform their respective user groups to regularly review and adhere to all posted Ganaraska Forest signage while visiting Ganaraska Forest.

FURTHER that the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receives the Trail Infrastructure Maintenance and Program Improvements staff report for information.

Prepared by:



Ed Van Osch, Forest Recreation Technician

STAFF REPORT – April 2, 2026

TO: Chair and Members of the Recreational Users Committee

RE: Winter Season Recreational Use Update

Over the 2026 winter season, Ganaraska Forest received ideal winter weather which directly benefitted recreational activities. Early snowfalls in November 2025 allowed Staff to begin trail grooming operations on December 1, 2025 with cross-country ski trails officially opening December 4, 2025 and remaining continually open well into March 2026. During this period Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA) experienced very few equipment failures, and that combined with favorable weather and snow conditions allowed staff to consistently provide high quality groomed and track-set cross-country ski trails all winter.

Complementing the cross-country ski trail system, the GRCA also offers the Purple trail and Purple B-Loop to facilitate snowshoe and hiking access within the Central Forest. These trails are groomed regularly and offer recreational users access to a looping trail complete with navigational signage. The trailhead for the both cross-country ski trails and Purple and Purple B-Loop trails are located from the Ganaraska Forest Centre parking lot located at 10585 Cold Springs Camp Road.

Over the past five years, Ganaraska Forest has experienced a steady increase in winter visitors. GRCA feels this increase is directly related to GRCA investment in grooming equipment upgrades, staffing, investment in trail modifications and maintenance and with the addition of navigation signage. During the winter of 2026, GRCA trail cameras recorded over 3000 counts of cross-country skiing and over 500 counts of snowshoeing/hiking on the Central Forest trail system.

Trail modifications implemented along the Orange Trail and the Orange B-Loop Trail during 2025 were greatly received by cross-country skiers. GRCA staff received valuable positive feedback from users regarding the improvements and staff expressed that trail modifications have removed several winter operational challenges from these sections of cross-country ski trails. The challenges addressed by modifications included addressing areas where snow depth was traditionally limited do to vegetative cover and trail width, complicated downhill and uphill curves, tree placement and erosion.

Unfortunately, GRCA continues to witness and receive complaints from various users regarding people disregarding ski trail rules including but not limited to, snowmobile use within the non-motorized Central Forest, skiing in the wrong direction on one way trails, off trail recreational use and walking and horseback riding on ski trails during winter when ski trails are exclusive to cross country skiing. To combat these issues, GRCA is communicating messages via social media platforms, installing seasonal signage outlining trail use etiquette, communicating with partner organizations, installing barriers to unauthorized access and staff are actively engaging and educating with winter users

through one-on-one interactions. GRCA is confident that continuing this level of active involvement will help to alleviate conflict in subsequent winter operation seasons.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee share the following messaging with their respective user groups: that cross-country ski trails are exclusive to skiing during the winter season, the Central Forest is off limits to all forms of motorized use, adhere to all posted signage and please remain on trails indicated as open on the [Ganaraska Forest Trails Map](#).

FURTHER that the Ganaraska Forest Recreational Users Committee receives the Winter Season Recreational Use Update staff report for information.



Prepared by:

Ed Van Osch, Forest Recreation Technician