



Forest Plan Advisory Team Meeting January 21, 2014

Sutton Room, 55 Zina Street, Orangeville

Regrets: Larry Miller

The following are notes of what was stated by the various representatives under each of the three objective streams of Administration, Environmental and Resource Management, and Public Use and Relations, as well as the general discussion at the end of the meeting.

Administration

- simple affordable access process, agreement re: sign, flagging removal (MOC)
- no fees for use, but fiscally responsible, signs left up at request of horses (snowmobilers)
- fee for hunting reasonable, not feasible for someone to be at gate collecting fees, then more like a park than a forest, no advertising signs (hunters and anglers)
- no fees for use, but fiscally responsible, club members to help with maintenance (ATVs)
- cost of being at the gate not reasonable, volunteer donations, groups to help with funding for different things (Lisa)
- stewardship of trail networks by local clubs (risk management), teaming up with other stakeholders, tourism infrastructure and revenue, trails master plan within forest management plan – Grey County (mountain bikers)
- access for educational purposes, students becoming involved in stewardship (Sarah)
- group user fees are acceptable, volunteer trail maintenance hours, day users go in and out at will – how to organize? Not practical to be at gate, flagging remaining (equestrians)
- Ganaraska Forest (user fee); Simcoe County (free for use) – volunteer stewardship; if costs of permits is too high volunteers start to want the work to be done by someone else; assistance with funding for patrols, signs provided through group, provincial trails strategy (dirt bikers)
- volunteers for wildlife inventory to be distributed to the public (naturalists)
- better, permanent sign system

Environmental & Resource Management

- biodiversity key part of Ontario Curriculum – maintain a variety of forest types, leader in reforestation, explain to students use of forest and its importance (MOC)
- healthy forest, dead trees not falling, reliance on experts, assistance with cleanup (snowmobilers)
- healthy forest, place for variety of wildlife including deadwood, including thinning (anglers and hunters)
- certain places and features looked for, but recognize that they shouldn't be everywhere to protect the environment, patrols by club members to reduce uncouth riders – education, licence taking (ATVs)
- balancing use with having a healthy forest (Lisa)

- workshops/education on sustainable trail development provided to affiliated club members, peer reviewed articles on impact of mountain biking being as impactful as hiking, trail assessments to see if trails should be closed/rerouted (mountain bikers)
- balanced approach of variety of forests showing diversity and multiple uses, approach for climate change (Sarah)
- healthy forest, some knowledge and expertise in trail development and maintenance, privilege to use (equestrians)
- some plans 100% recreational, some others 100% harvesting; all these forests were once considered wastelands; blessing to have these areas; some areas we should and shouldn't go; concern in survey over animosity between horseback riders and mountain bikers; trails originally established by HORRA; animals become acclimatized to uses that are present (U.S. study); good to get the sedentary youth outside no matter what activity they are doing; Ganaraska example of groups getting together and working together rather than me me; arrive clean policy (dirt bikers)
- Simcoe County – bridges, corduroy put in – joint solutions, working together to minimize impacts on the forest, designated trails
- agree with previous comments, issue with invasive species as more people use the trails, education to have people report garlic mustard etc. (naturalists)
- property acquisition policy (MOC)

Public Use & Relations

- enjoy the privilege of being a gateway to the forest, continue granting affordable access to the forest (MOC)
- great to hear comments about working together, survey comments: better washroom facilities, parking, multi-use group cleanup day, tourist dollars brought in by various groups to the community (snowmobilers)
- to ensure protection of hunting and fishing heritage, opportunities, sustained wildlife populations, safe hunting experiences, involvement of OFAH in wildlife reintroductions, licencing, training; Simcoe recognizes that hunters must be members of OFAH (liability insurance and level of responsibility); partnerships between all groups to make the forest better (anglers and hunters)
- same opportunities as snowmobilers and mountain bikers have (ATVs)
- how to promote mutual respect, getting user groups together to increase cooperation, reduce biases; public education of opportunities available
- advocate for multi-use, but sometimes preferred use/seasonal use especially for areas of erosive potential; information on this can be provided; trail stewardship through clubs advocating on behalf of groups coming from abroad – better understanding of working together; trail passes; strong team ethic; locally reaching the level of club organization (mountain bikers)
- creating events to bring together different user groups and the general public to learn about the forest; increasing youth involvement – education, volunteer hours – through MOC or directly (Sarah)
- support education and multi-use trails; trail etiquette signs; OTRA recreational riders; OCTRA competitive/athletic riders (top is one step below Olympic); Ontario Equestrian Federation, Equine Canada, local clubs; all competitors and participants have personal

insurance, clubs also have insurance; water, toilets brought in for events; group events have enforced rules; organized events camp; clean up in spring and fall; partner well with mountain bikers and other groups; issues with unorganized horseback riders – one local individual who purposely criss-crosses single track trails (equestrians)

- similarity between Dufferin and Simcoe in not allowing dirt bikes – insurance, noise, speed – these are being addressed through provision of insurance, noise reducers, speed limits on wide trails, single track similar speed to mountain bikers; cardiovascular effort similar to jogging; ability for disabled individuals to access the forest; pay for off duty police, garbage pick-up; permitted use with stewardship and self-policing vs. rogue use; members won't be motivated to be stewards in an area where they can't ride legally; demographics of mostly middle-aged males and families (34%); email blasts can be done; up to us [County] to set rules (dirt bikers)
- education of all users regarding use; one event per summer in Kalabogie – brings \$100,000 into the local community; spending all your money in the area where you ride so they will have you back – dual sport riders often go from Orangeville to Creemore – would like forest access; trails don't open in the spring until Simcoe County gives the okay (usually sometime in May), same for closing in the fall, posting for deer season
- damaging trails in certain times of year (spring, after heavy rainfall); noise in the spring with breeding birds; timing and flexibility; quick reactions to needed trail closures (naturalists)

General Discussion

- policing – parking lot checks (trailer in), cooperation with OPP, liability insurance, paid duty OPP (spring), Simcoe requires riders to be OFTR members, noise checks
- control through membership system, Club membership
- trail construction using best practices (as opposed to maintenance) – liability coverage through IMBA
- trail use plan developed in conjunction with clubs/user groups
- trail construction guidelines/best practices - IMBA
- new trails as well as designated uses needed
- trail density – ecological impact
- uses that pair well together and those that don't – less interaction between different groups; less impact of use
- physical and time separation (different nights, days etc)
- rogues, rebels seem to be the issue
- sign different uses for different trails
- education through equipment retailers (gateways) as opposed to user groups – OFTR does this
- trail mapping – GPS inventory of all trails contributed through user groups