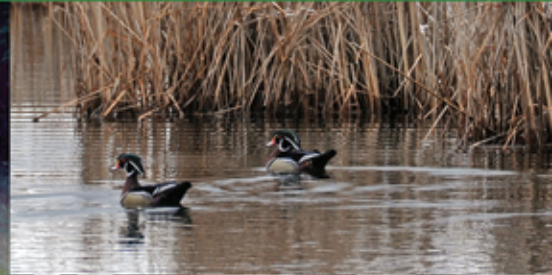




Copeland Forest Stewardship Committee

Stewardship Recommendations to the Midhurst District MNR

June 2013





This project has been made possible by a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation

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Group photo of the Copeland Stewardship Committee and the White Trilliums by David Kennedy

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All other photos by Dorthea Hangaard

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Foreword – Setting the Context

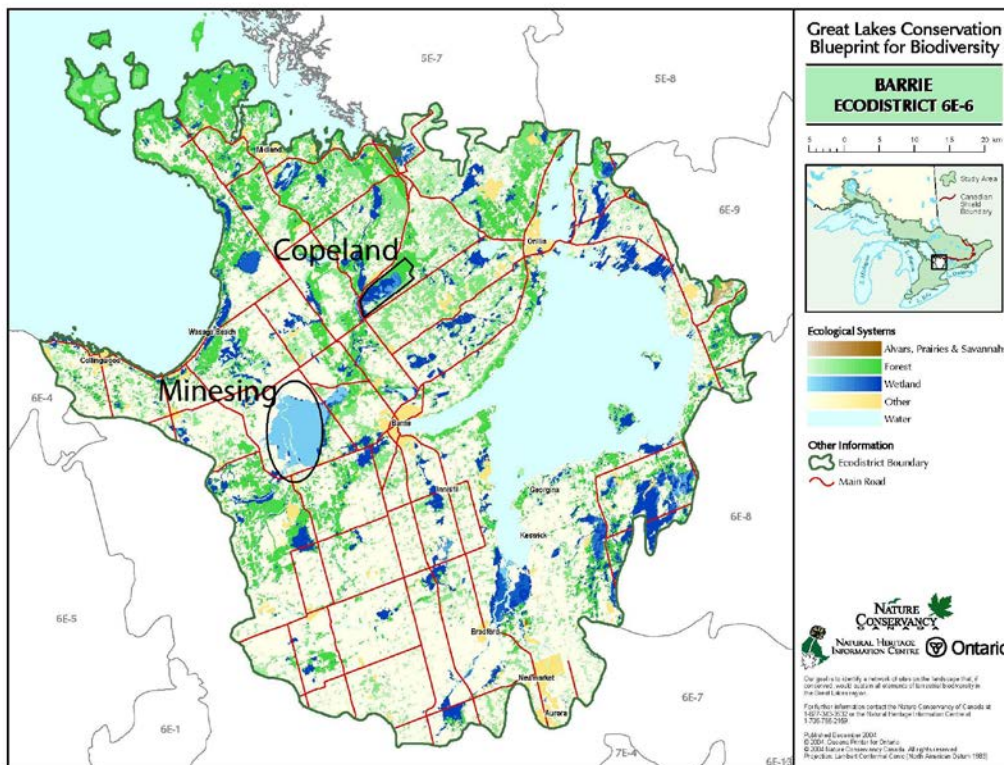
Southern Ontario is the most densely populated region in Canada, with 35% of the total Canadian population residing here. While the southern Ontario region comprises only 15% of the total land mass of the province, 92% of all Ontarians live here.

Less than 200 years ago a nearly continuous forest covered southern Ontario. Today, most of this forest has been lost to urban development and agriculture, and the remaining forests are primarily second growth.

A study published in 2000 by the LandOwner Resource Centre found that remaining forests in southern Ontario are largely fragmented woodlands smaller than 250 acres. Today, areas of forest interior habitat (“deep woods”), which are 250 acres or greater, comprise less than 3% of forests in southwestern and eastern Ontario (LandOwner Resource Centre, 2000). These deep wood habitats are less windy than small forests, have less extreme temperatures, less noise pollution, and retain moisture through the driest days of summer.



MNR (unpublished). Note dark green is all natural cover including wetlands.



Nature Conservancy of Canada, 2005.

Numerous birds, insects, reptiles, amphibians, and plants rely on deep woods conditions in order to survive, and the negligible amount of deep woods habitat left in the south of our province accounts for many endangered, threatened, and rare species listings.

At 4,400 acres (1,760 hectares), the Copeland Forest is an ideal example of this deep woods habitat. Nestled on the edge of the Oro Moraine, it contains the highest quality of mature upland deciduous forest in the region, as it undulates and eventually drops 55 metres to a complex of wetlands containing the headwaters of three major watersheds that all drain into the Georgian Bay.

Every year thousands of visits are made to the Copeland by people from all over southern Ontario and beyond. The appeal is that it is the largest naturalized upland forest within commuting distance of the GTA, and it is free from the usual provincial park rules of usage and fees. Because there are over 22 active entrances to the forest, even a rough estimate of how many thousands visit is complicated and expensive to calculate. Through surveys and public meetings, and extensive conversations with forest users, we have learned that the following human activities are known to take place in Copeland Forest:

- Hunting and trapping (for turkey, deer, rabbit, squirrel, grouse and duck)
- Hiking
- Dog walking
- Nature walks and photography
- Mountain biking
- Cross-country skiing
- Horseback riding
- Trail running
- Trail building and maintenance
- Snowshoeing
- Dog sledding
- Special events such as the diabetes ride-a-thon and adventure races
- Mushroom picking
- Orienteering
- Geo-caching
- Outdoor Education
- Bird studies and bird watching
- Research (Acid Rain, Snowstation)
- Target practice
- Commercial bait fishing
- Retriever dog training
- Search and Rescue Training

Many people living adjacent to the forest use it every day for walking the dog, trail running, mountain biking, and cross-country skiing, and residents often told us they moved to the area because of Copeland Forest. Guests of Horseshoe Resort and Carriage Hills Resort visit from points around the globe, and use the forest mainly for cross-country skiing, hiking, and mountain biking.

People out for a walk (with or without the dog), mountain bikers, cross-country skiers, snowshoers, horseback riders, and trail runners are the heaviest users of the forest. Some mountain biking clubs from Midland, Orillia, and Barrie have a regular weekly ride in Copeland, and other mountain bikers told us they travel from points as far south as Hamilton and Waterloo to ride the upland of Copeland Forest. There are numerous horse ranches in Oro-Medonte, and some have built businesses around taking riders into Copeland Forest. Appendix "A" *Recreational Usage of the Forest* summarizes the results of 150 surveys filled out at public meetings during 2011 & 2012.

Considering the tremendous amount of pressure on this forest from humans and other species alike, the forest has managed very well. A concern has been growing, however, that ever-increasing recreational activity will eventually compromise the forest's natural cycles. Of the hundreds of recreational users we spoke to over the past two years, all were united in saying that the health of the forest ecosystem is of paramount importance. Combine that with increasing conflicts between user groups, and the time was right to study the forest and work with users to improve the recreational experience and take responsibility for stewardship.

The Couchiching Conservancy (CC) has been capably guided by an Advisory Committee, drawn from our board, membership, and the MNR, who have been overseeing the goals of the project. The following people have played a role on the Advisory Committee:

- David Kennedy, Chair of Advisory Committee (CC member)
- Ingrid VanderMarel (CC member)
- Mark Bisset (CC Executive Director)
- Jamie Powell (Past Present)
- Isabelle Thiess (CC member)
- Brenda Robinson (CC member and former MNR staff)
- Al Winters (MNR)
- John Osmok (MNR)
- David Hawke (CC member, former MNR staff, and current CC staff)
- Margo Holt (CC member)
- Dorthea Hangaard (Copeland Forest Stewardship Initiative Project Coordinator)

In particular, David Kennedy was one of the driving forces in bringing Copeland Forest to the attention of the Couchiching Conservancy in 2009.

The Four-Season Biological Inventory conducted by Winterspider Eco-Consulting is sure to provide sage guidance over the next decade and thanks go out to Judith Jones and John Morton for their extensive field studies and clear recommendations.

The Couchiching Conservancy wishes to thank the Midhurst District Ministry of Natural Resources for their foresight in undertaking this project with us, and we look forward to the next steps. In particular we would like to thank:

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| • Mark Shoreman | • John Osmok |
| • John Kus | • Paul Jurjans |
| • Al Winters | • Phil Gorma |

Finally, to the members of the Copeland Forest Stewardship Committee, and everyone who has participated in this initiative so enthusiastically, you have all of our admiration and respect for taking on this daunting and important task. In the years to come, we hope you will reap the benefits of your work in an increasingly healthy forest that rejuvenates your body and soul.



Process and Methods to Arrive at Stewardship Recommendations

After a series of public meetings with user groups in 2011 which were organized by the Couchiching Conservancy, two representatives from each of the major user groups were selected to sit on a Stewardship Committee. Representation was based on user groups rather than clubs, and while technical advisors are invited to meetings as well, only user groups have a vote on decisions. We began meeting just over a year ago in May of 2012; tasked with creating a report of stewardship recommendations to the MNR.

Our process began with the creation of a draft Terms of Reference to give us a basic structure. We then studied the main science reports on Copeland, particularly the Four Season Biological Inventory (Jones and Morton, 2012) which had just been completed. We reviewed the original MNR Management Plan documents (including a presentation by the main author, Dan Mansell), studied the history of land use, and consulted with the public.

The public consultation was an Open Forum facilitated by Gordon Ball in November of 2012. Hosted and catered by Horseshoe Resort, the forum was a day-long exercise resulting in 22 Reports from 140 participants (see Appendix "B"). The forum was a great success and we received positive and enthusiastic feedback from many people, and good coverage in local media including a spot on the CTV evening news. There were some breakthroughs, such as the meeting between horseback riders and mountain bikers that began a much-needed dialogue.

The 22 reports contained a wealth of creativity, concerns, and recommended actions for Copeland Forest. The Stewardship Committee considered each report, divided them into themes, and selected four areas to focus on that represented the main themes that emerged. Four sub-committees worked on each of these themes, to produce the recommendations in this report.

The four themes are:

1. Ecology and Sustainability
2. Trails
3. Education and Legacy
4. Governance and Funding

We worked from the following template, inserting sections as appropriate:

- Relevant background/history.
- Current Management Plan.
- Statement of the Issues/Current Concerns.
- Goal of the new stewardship recommendations (e.g. reduce user conflict).
- Objectives (e.g. signs, protect sensitive areas, hold meetings for user groups annually).
- Recommendations/Action Plan/Strategy: Short, Medium, and Long-Term.
- Proposed timeline for implementation, Partnerships.
- Supporting documentation (e.g. Open Forum Reports), references (science reports), maps.
- Future considerations that are relevant but go beyond the scope of this particular issue.

Our Request to the MNR:

The Copeland Forest Stewardship Committee wishes to establish a long-term working relationship with the MNR to achieve the stewardship recommendations outlined below. We ask that you consider our short-term recommendations as a priority, so that we may make any revisions necessary and begin working on them as soon as possible.

In September 2013, the Stewardship Committee plans to begin work on a governance model that will allow us to fundraise for future stewardship activities. We would like to request that you respond to our medium and long-term goals with enough lead time for us to complete paperwork such as Articles of Incorporation, and funding applications.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to have a say in the future of Copeland Forest, and we look forward to working with you.

Frieda Baldwin (Hikers)
Sean Billing (Horseshoe Resort)
Don Budge (Snowsports)
Neil Craig (Resident-at-large)
Ted Duncan (Anglers and Hunters)
Mary Anne Greatrix (Mountain biking)
Ted Greatrix (Mountain biking)
David Kennedy (Couchiching Conservancy)
Dave Lord (Naturalists)

Bob Marshall (Hikers)
Carol McIsaac (Horseback riders)
Sandy McLoughlin (Horseback riders)
Dave McNabb (Resident-at-large)
Bob Miller (Orienteering)
Bill Trayling (Snowsports)
Mike VanderJagt (Anglers and Hunters)
Ingrid VanderMarel (Couchiching Conservancy)
Pat Woodford (Naturalists)

Dorthea Hangaard facilitates the meetings, and Al Winters followed by John Osmok attend on behalf of the Midhurst District Ministry of Natural Resources office

"Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul." -- John Muir, (1838 - 1914) essayist, conservationist

These are some of the comments we have received over the past two years by email, through the survey, in personal conversation, and at meetings:

"The forest is a public gem and public access should be maintained. Especially in these frenetic times, people need green oases of nature to enjoy. Parks such as Copeland encourage people to be active and to appreciate nature." – Barrie resident

" I don't know how I would get through my work week without visits to Copeland Forest in the evening." - local resident.

"Copeland Forest is an oasis, an escape from the hurried pace of life, filled with birdsong and the wonders of nature and one of Simcoe County's best kept secrets! We feel blessed to have it so close." – local resident

"I think we would have a difficult time choosing a favourite season. One spring we found a single yellow trillium along one of the trails and then we looked for it every year after that. This year, we discovered hundreds in the eastern section of the forest and were delighted!" – commutes to visit forest

"I moved to the Barrie area in 1987 and started using Copeland then. Four years ago I moved to Craighurst to be closer to the forest. I cross-country ski and hike in Copeland. I love it--I think it is a jewel."

"As a long time user of the forest for horseback riding, I have found it to be one of the most beautiful and peaceful places to go. Sharing the trail with other nature enthusiasts on bikes or walking is such a pleasure without motorized vehicles to spoil the peace of the forest. My friends and I go to the forest to ride from spring to fall and look forward to the seasons change and the interesting changes in the plant life and see the different species of animals who allow us to see them in their habitat."

"I appreciate how big the forest is, and the diversity of plant life found there."

"When we found Copeland, it was on our way home to Dundas on a Sunday evening. We had to leave after just a few minutes' walk in the trails but we were so excited that we could not wait to get back up to the cottage the following weekend and get our bikes in there. We tried to keep it a secret but it was very difficult not to share with close friends. That was about 5 years ago. I live in Guelph now and can only get up to Copeland a few times per year."

"I've been a resident of Barrie since 1983 and have enjoyed Copeland Forest in every season since then. It is refreshing and rejuvenating to walk through the forest. We love cross country skiing and snow shoeing there in the winter, hiking to see the first signs of spring and later the dog tooth violets and the trilliums."

"The Copeland Forest brings beauty and peace to my life."

"It's a tremendous water source."

"Please protect the biodiversity and keep it accessible to city people."

1. Recommendations for the Ecology and Sustainability of Copeland Forest:

Sub-Committee Members: Dorthea Hangaard, Bob Miller, Mike VanderJagt, Ingrid VanderMarel, Pat Woodford.

A. Relevant Background and History:

From 5,000 to 1,000 B.C. Hunter-Gatherers used Copeland as part of their hunting territory. From 1,000 B.C. to 1,000 A.D. there was a large Huron agricultural settlement within 1 km of Copeland and it is likely that the Huron used Copeland for hunting as well.

Logging took place in the forest from 1872 to 1975. The 4,400 acres (1,760 hectares) comprising Copeland were never clear-cut the way other areas in Simcoe County were because it was a mixed forest and mainly low-lying without good agricultural soil. The Copelands planted 800,000 seedlings (supplied by MNR), of a wide variety of species, between 1922 and 1978.

Copeland Forest has been used for decades for recreational activities such as hunting and fishing (with a special designation for black powder/musket hunting for many years), camping, swimming, and cross-country skiing. There is also a 7 km active CP Railway line running east-west through the forest.

An extensive Botanical Study of Copeland Forest was undertaken by the MNR in 1979 (Bobbette and Webber). They found the site to be very diverse, with more than 600 species of vascular plants and more than 20 types of vegetation. Copeland Forest is recognized as a regionally significant Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) within Ecodistrict 6E-6 for its representation of swamps and for the headwaters of the Coldwater and Sturgeon Rivers, and Willow Creek.

As part of the Copeland Forest Stewardship Initiative, a Four-Season Biological Inventory (Jones and Morton) was completed in 2012. This study provides information on the presence and location of any sensitive species and its habitat, as well as any sensitive vegetation, reconfirms that Copeland should remain an ANSI, and makes recommendations on priority areas and management needs for protective management of the forest. The Ecology and Sustainability recommendations will rely heavily on this study.

B. Current Management Plan:

A management plan was created in 1984 by the MNR and was to be followed until 2004. The plan identified zones to guide management and applicable uses. The plan also stated that the Environmental Assessment Act (R.S.O. 1980) should be applied during implementation.

Current rules, as posted, include:

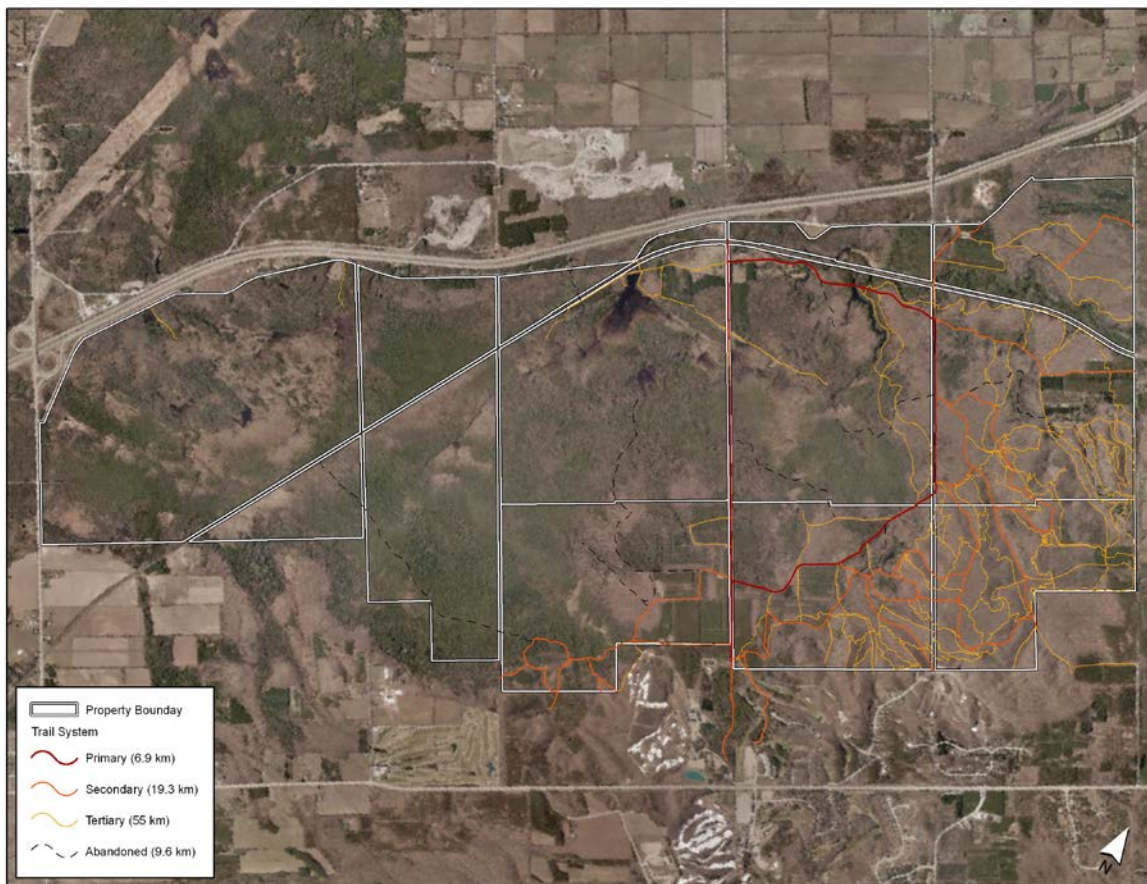
- Year round day use permitted
- Hunting permitted in season
- Dogs must be leashed
- No trail building
- No motorized vehicle

C. Statement of the Issues/Current Concerns

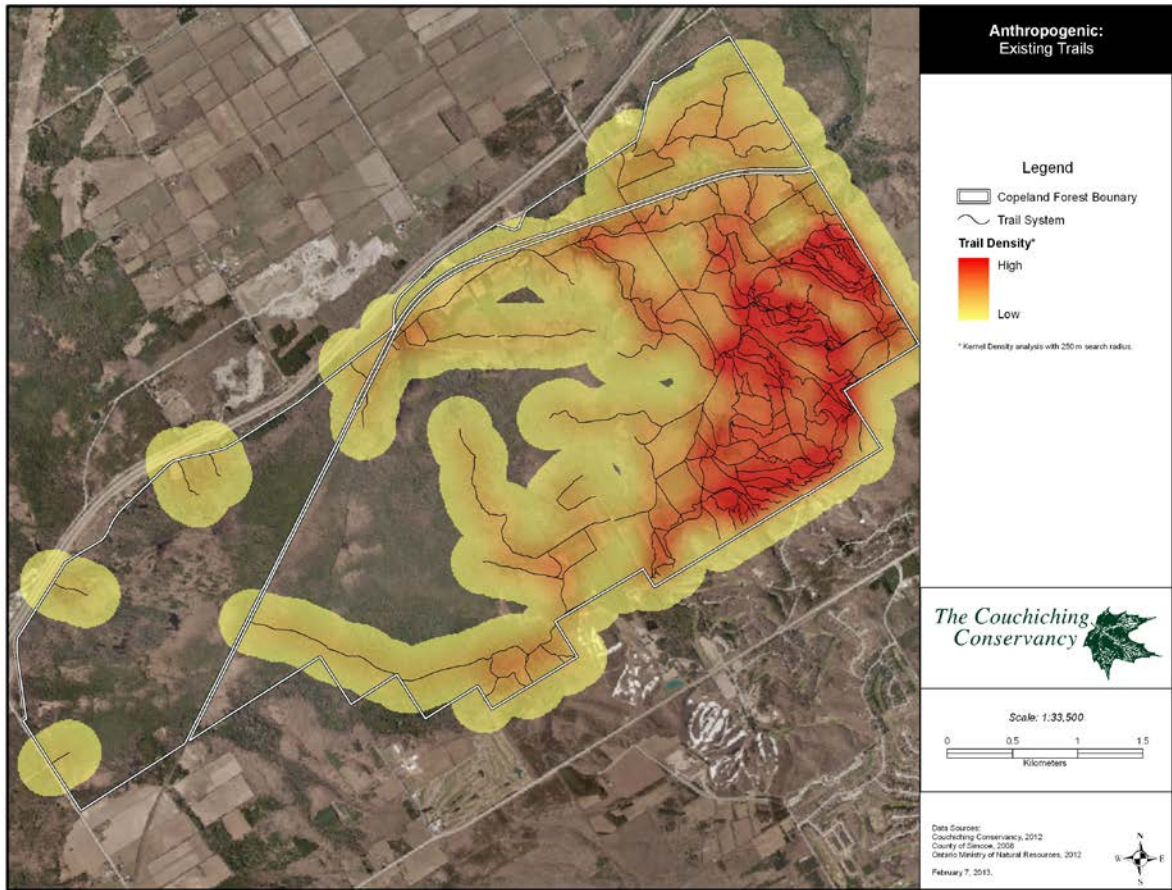
Human Pressure:

The landscape immediately surrounding Copeland's boundaries today includes commercial skiing, golf courses, and new residential subdivisions, farms, and county forest tracts. The increase in development in Simcoe County, and the proximity of Copeland Forest to Toronto and Barrie, is resulting in increased recreational use of Copeland Forest.

The number of single track trails being unofficially developed is growing all the time, and in 2011 the MNR mapped as many trails, official or otherwise, as they could find. The results show that there are 26.2 kilometres of double track trails and 55 kilometres of single-track trails, mainly unofficially built. In other words the ratio of single track unofficial trails to sanctioned trails is roughly 2:1, as illustrated below:



The densest network of trails is show on this Trail Density Heat Map:



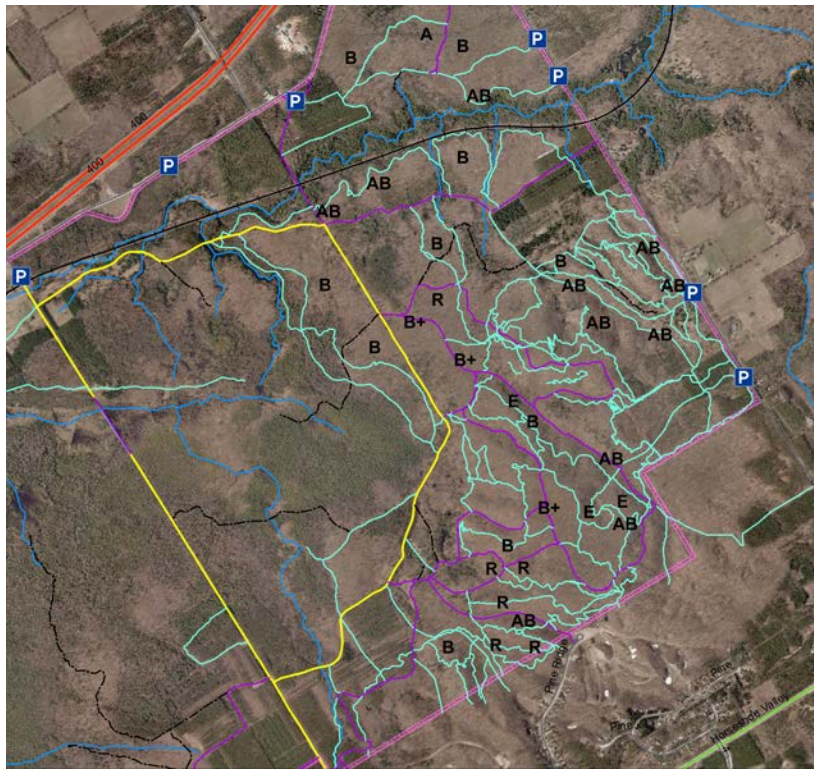
Significant Ecological Values in Copeland Forest:

Rare and at-risk fauna observed in Copeland included Eastern Pondmussel, Olive-Sided Flycatcher, Yellow Rail, Bay-Breasted Warbler, Red-Bellied Woodpecker, Milksnake, Snapping Turtle, and Monarch Butterflies. No direct threats to any of these species were observed at this time.

Sixteen plants that are regionally rare were documented. Half are listed as uncommon, meaning there is a conservation concern for these species provincially over the long term. All sixteen species were encountered only once at Copeland, indicating that the ranking of local rarity assigned 22 years ago in the Bobbitt study is still valid, perhaps even more so today.

The “Woodland Quality and Presence of Spring Ephemerals” mapping work has particular significance for the Upland of Copeland Forest as it relates to trail density. The highest ranking assigned, “A”, occurs in only one location in an area of very low trail density. “A” means the forest has the largest trees, least disturbance, and most ephemeral species. AB is the next highest ranking, and there is a large area of “AB” forest in the upland of Copeland that also

corresponds to a high density of trails. These areas contain the core of the intact, functional forest ecosystem, the most amphibian breeding potential, the most breeding habitat for birds and other species, and contain a seed source for the restoration of less-common species.



Legend:

A, AB, B+, B,C = forest conditions where A has the largest trees, least disturbance, and most ephemeral species;

R=Maple Regeneration;

E = ephemerals are especially rich.

Also of note is a study on the lichens of Copeland Forest by Dr. Troy McMullin which will be published before the close of 2013. The March 2013 draft, presented to the public on June 4, 2013, identifies 15 types of calicioid lichens spread throughout Copeland Forest, in addition to many other lichen species. The calicioid lichens, however, are indicators of old growth forests so they were a surprising find. Based on the type and number of calicioid lichens found in Copeland, Dr. McMullin says that the forest can be classified as a “young old growth forest.”

Impact of Recreational Activity:

Proliferation of Single-Track Trails, Not enough Single-Track Trail Maintenance:

Jones and Morton note that the effects of the unofficial single track trails are visible in much of the upland forest. Many recently-created trails were noted. They made a direct connection between the increasing proliferation of single-track trails and the loss of ground flora in some areas. They also pointed out that it seems to stem, in part, from taking alternate routes around small obstacles, and repeated use then wearing away or dislodging the duff and humus. “The combination of loss of ground cover and increased density of trails in a small area may potentially lead to impacts from erosion. In 2011, damage from erosion was not observed on single-track trails; however, there is the potential for it if there is heavy rainfall or rapid snowmelt.” (Jones, Morton, pg. 34).



The spread of the invasive species **Garlic Mustard** by mountain bikes, hikers, horses, dogs, etc. Jones and Morton are concerned that the mountain bikes likely have a greater potential to spread Garlic Mustard in higher quantities and over a larger area than other user groups. This is due to the number of mountain bikers using Copeland Forest, the area they can cover within the property, and the force with which the tires contact the ground.

“Horses are able to walk in muddy places that human feet would normally avoid, and the wet spots in several trails through the uplands have been churned up and expanded from horseback riding usage. Horses may also spread invasive species and may introduce the seeds of non-native species in their droppings.” (Jones, Morton pg. 35).

Off-trail usage in butternut seedling and winter denning areas.

Invasive Species:

- **Common Reed** (*Phragmites australis*) along the railway tracks could easily spread to adjacent wetlands where Yellow Rail habitat is located.
- **Proliferation of Garlic Mustard** (*Alliaria petiolata*) in forest upland.
- **Leafy Spurge** (*Euphorbia esula*) is present in one very small patch at the Pine Ridge entrance.
- **Yellow Parsnip** (*Pastinaca sativa*) at the Ducks Unlimited Pond.

Other Disturbances:

- Mowing of grassland at Martinville before grassland bird nesting is over.

D. Goal of the new stewardship recommendations

Maintain or improve the ecological values in Copeland Forest, and balance this with the need for present and future generations to access the forest for recreational activities.

E. Objectives and Action Plan

Short-Term (Easy wins, 6 to 8 months):

1. Work with the trail-builders to educate them about ecological sensitivities in Copeland, and to implement an immediate moratorium on further trail-building. Work with the trail-builders to remove obstacles on trails that result in alternative routes. This can partly be achieved via the Couchiching Conservancy's summer internship program.
2. Continue the garlic mustard control at Martinville and Pine Ridge with the volunteer crews, and close the Pine Ridge trail that goes through the garlic mustard patch while this eradication takes place, to discourage further spread under tires, hooves, or feet.
3. Control the small patch of Leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*) at the Pine Ridge entrance.
4. Work with the Trails Sub-Committee to place signs asking people to stay on the trails in butternut seedling areas, winter denning areas, and an area of high lichen density, and ensure these trails are well-maintained to avoid alternative routes.
5. Re-route trails out of seepage areas at the Ganaraska Pond and Duck Weed Pond with volunteers, and erect signs asking horseback riders to avoid these areas.
6. Work with the Diabetes Ride-A-Thon to change the date of their event until after July 15th, to protect nesting birds in the grasslands at Martinville, or to stop mowing altogether if possible.
7. Contact CP Rail to see if they have a disaster plan in place should there be a derailment and spill of toxic chemicals.
8. Seek out an Ecoforester to sit on the Copeland Stewardship Committee as a technical advisor.

Medium Term: 1 to 2 years

9. Work with the Trails Sub-Committee and single-track trail users in the "A" and "AB" forest interior habitat to reduce trails in these areas, and maintain the remaining trails to avoid alternate routes around fallen trees and other obstacles.
10. Control the Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) along the railway tracks using the protocols for Common Reed eradication established by the Ontario Invasive Plant Council. Work with the Orillia Fish and Game Conservation Club and CP Railway (the rolling and burning will have to be done when there are no trains present—not so easy!) to achieve this goal.
11. Build a plan to control the Yellow Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*) at the Ducks Unlimited Pond.
12. Create an education series for the general public on the ecological features of the Copeland forest and on invasive species.
13. Build teams of Copeland Ambassadors who will attend the above workshops and learn about the management plan to help enforce standards established.
14. Ask the Ecoforester to look at the Red Pine plantations and make recommendations.

Long-Term: 5 year plan

15. Work with the Trails Sub-Committee and Copeland single-track users to agree on an acceptable density of single track trails for all areas of the forest.
16. Develop a comprehensive plan for the eradication of garlic mustard in all patches in Copeland Forest.
17. Monitor watershed health using a “citizen science” approach.
18. Monitor for species at risk (using “citizen science” approach) that were not found or were rare in 2011 science study but for which there is suitable habitat: the Least Bittern, Red-headed woodpecker, Whip-poor-will, Eastern Ribbon Snake, Milksnake, and Forked Three-awned grass.

F. Future considerations

- **Forest Management Plans** ought to be developed by forest ecologists rather than commercial loggers, and should be undertaken only with regard to safeguarding the overall health of the forest. Any commercial gain through forestry should be incidental to preserving the forest in its natural state.
- Study on **deer populations** in Copeland and map out deer yards.
- Develop a full **Property Management Plan**.

2. Recommendations for the Trails of Copeland Forest

Sub-Committee Members: David Kennedy, Sandy McLoughlin, Mary Anne Greatrix, Frieda Baldwin, Carol McIsaac, Bob Marshall, Dave Lord

A. Relevant Background and History



A double track trail along the valley floor, with a parallel single track trail just above.

The existing trail network consists of a mix of old roads and 2-track cross-country ski trails. As well, there are many unofficial single-track trails. According to the Ministry of Natural Resources, there are 26.2 km of primary and secondary trails (2 track) and 55 km of single track trails. As well, there are 9.6 km of abandoned trails. Since the early 1990's, mountain bikers and others have created a network of single-track trails, primarily in the Oro Moraine (hilly) section of the Forest. These trails are not officially designated and receive limited maintenance.

Horseshoe Resort has maintained the two-track cross country ski trails for 50 years and has a long-standing contract with the Ministry for the use and maintenance of these trails.

The Ganaraska Trail enters the Forest at three points and meets in the centre of the Forest. This trail was established in 1969.

B. Current Management Plan

A Resource Management Plan was developed after the acquisition of the property and issued in 1984. The Plan states the following with respect to trails:

- “Access to the resources of the area is on the existing system of roads and trails.... The system will require little expansion or alteration and minimal maintenance. All trail user groups will share the 35 km system on a seasonal basis.”

- “Maintenance of the entire (road) network would be too costly and is considered impractical and unnecessary. The portion of the network which will be managed as a recreational trail system will be an adequate representation of the road network.”
- “A comprehensive signage system will be used which will permit users to easily identify and follow any one or combination of the loops which make up the system.”
- “Trail head facilities will be developed in the development zones (off Ingram Rd)...Access to the system will be available in the summer through Horseshoe Resort.”
- At trailheads, “visitors will have access to information regarding identification of area boundaries, information on trails system and the location of sanitary and other facilities. Other pertinent information such as the opening and closing hunting seasons, the location of current forest and wildlife operations, and regulations governing use of the area will also be provided.”

The Resource Management Plan also covers use of the trails by selected users:

- “Horseshoe Resort ...will maintain a cross country trail network under a rental agreement allowing the resort to control use of the trail and maintain them to high standards.”
- “The Ministry will work with the Ontario Trail Riders Association to administer equestrian activity. The activity will be monitored for the (first) five year period....Data will be collected and analyzed and impacts upon soils and vegetation and other user groups will be documented. The Ministry will, then, be able to more accurately determine the demand for riding opportunities, the facilities and policies required.... Riding will be restricted to the summer and fall seasons (May 1 to October 30) and to Sundays only during the small game hunting season.”

The Resource Management Plan also addresses conflicts between trail use and other resource management activities:

- “Trails forming components of the recreational trail system may not be used as (logging) skid trails but may be used for hauling upon approval of the area superintendent.”
- “Steps will be taken to control beaver activity if they threaten other resources such as roads or trails.”

The Resource Plan also made provision for camping and picnicking facilities with washroom provisions.

Issues that are not covered by the Resource Management Plan include:

- Biking on single track or 2-track trails in the Forest.
- Organized hiking and the Ganaraska Trail Association.
- Orienteering and trail running.
- Snow shoeing and dog sledding activities.
- Dog walking activities.
- Bird watching and naturalist activities.

Since the late 1980 to 90s, the Resource Management Plan has lapsed and has not been updated.

At present, there are a limited set of policies posted for Forest users:

- Motorized vehicles (such as cars, ATVs, snowmobiles) are not permitted.
- Trail construction within the Copeland Forest is prohibited.

- Dogs should be on a lead when walked within the Forest.
- Hunting is permitted.



Posted policies at the Martinville entrance.

The “No Trail Construction” signs are posted at the Breenville parking lot, near one of the Pine Ridge Trail entrances, and at some trail entrances along the 5th Line.

C. Statement of the Issues/Current Concerns

- Coordination between user groups and ways of addressing conflicts.
- Address trail etiquette for all trail users.
- Maintain trails and ensure the trails are sustainable.
- Recognize Ganaraska Trail route on all maps.
- Improve access points throughout all seasons.
- Maps and signage to guide trail use, ensuring users enjoy their experience and protect sensitive areas.
- Emergency markers to assist with access for accidents, injury and help for lost trail users.
- Address the issue of hunting and trail use.
- Ensure dogs are under control on the trails, either on lead or under “voice control”.
- Protect ski trails in the winter for the enjoyment of skiers.
- Address the need for a multi-use non-motorized trail for the winter months.

D. Goal of the new trail management recommendations

Ensure a sustainable network of trails that respect the Forest's ecosystem. Provide a broad range of trail opportunities while preserving the environment for future generations. Enhance trail user experience while ensuring safe passage on the trails.

Develop a trail maintenance group.

E. Action Plan/Recommendations

Short Term (6-12 months)

1. Develop a map and brochure of dual track trails and map the Ganaraska Trail based on existing Ministry data (identify trail junctions, describe trail loops and distances between junctions, show GPS coordinates, etc.).
2. Develop and install signage and a trail marker system for dual track trail system. Signs will identify trail junctions, warn of trail and railway crossings, and show GPS coordinates.
3. Create dual track connecting trails off 5th Line to provide for focused access and effective emergency response:
 - the 5th line most northerly parking lot to the 4th line parking lot.
 - the 5th line most southerly parking lot to the main dual track.
4. Explore a multi-use winter trail (for horses, cyclists, dog sledding, walkers):
 - Assess need for trail.
 - Review potential location and impacts.
 - Develop recommendations.
5. Create a Trail user forum to plan and work on the trails:
 - Develop and gain commitment to a trail users' charter.
 - Host a founding inaugural trail user meeting.
 - Develop a contact list for various trail user groups.

Medium term (1- 2 years)

6. Develop the trail user forum and organize trail maintenance activities:
 - Sponsor annual or bi-annual trail user meeting and trail workshops.
 - Organize spring and fall maintenance and clean up days.
7. Inventory and assess single track trails:
 - Map the single track trails, Forest eco-system, and areas of ecological sensitivity.
 - Assess and develop principles to guide creation and maintenance of single-track trails (trail density, trail buffers, erosion etc.).
 - Propose a recommended network of single track trails, including plans to open and/or close trails.
 - Assess medium term maintenance issues.
 - Produce a report and recommendations.

8. Develop a trail maintenance plan:
 - Assess dual track system for short and medium term issues.
 - Assess 3rd line right-of-way (wet area) as year round dual-track possibility.
 - Assess single track trail report (from #7 above) and develop a priority project list.
 - Develop a list of regular maintenance activities.
 - Develop a short-long term list of capital improvements (board walks, bridges etc).

9. Post trail related information for all users:
 - Post hunting seasons.
 - Post contact information for all user groups.
 - Post “etiquette” policies

10. Host trail etiquette and Be Safe Be Seen (hunting safety for trail users) workshops.

Long Term (2+ years)

11. Develop a Forest access policy, focusing on three main access areas and provide interpretative and emergency information at these points:
 - Ingram Rd (two parking lots),
 - 5th Line (one parking lot) and,
 - Horseshoe Valley (one parking lot) and,
 - Minimize access at other locations.

12. Develop a proposal for a large size parking area on the 5th line:
 - Provide an alternative access point.
 - Examine alternative locations, including County Forest access point and existing 5 Line entrances.
 - Minimize forest disruption by using pine forest plantation.
 - Keep cars off the road and minimize impact on neighbors.
 - Ensure safety for young children as the railway is not crossed.
 - Ensure access to single track hiking and biking.

And/or

Establish a community recreation centre and access point off Horseshoe Valley Road:

- Provide a southern access point to the Forest.
 - Provide parking space and visitor amenities.
 - Provide interpretative information for Forest users.
13. Examine the need for picnic and visitor services at the three main access areas and management and capital requirements associated with this development. Visitor services could include: toilet facilities, covered and uncovered picnic areas, waste containers etc.

F. Strategy/Timelines

All trail user groups need to be involved in the implementation of the proposed recommendations. The trail user groups to be included are:

- A. All recreation-specific groups: Biking, hiking, equestrian, winter sports (snowshoeing and skiing), hunting, orienteering, neighbours, and naturalists.
- B. The Midhurst District Ministry of Natural Resources field staff, the Couchiching Conservancy, the Ganaraska Trail Association, The County of Simcoe, Simcoe County Trails Group (HTG), Horseshoe Resort, Township of Oro-Medonte.

A trail user forum needs to be established to guide the implementation of the recommendations and to involve volunteers in trail-related activities.

The trail-related activities should be assessed after 3 years and a new 3 year plan developed.

3. Recommendations for Education and Legacy in Copeland Forest

Sub-Committee Members: Sean Billing, Don Budge, Bill Trayling, Ted Greatrix

A. Background for Recommendations:

- Reviewed the 1984 plan.
- Studied public feedback including the Open Space Meeting.
- Collaborated with the Stewardship Committee.

B. Goal - Education and Legacy:

Increase responsible and safe usage of the forest amongst all user groups and create educational and learning opportunities that enhance the user's experience and protect the legacy of the Copeland Forest.

C. Issues/Concerns/Opportunities:

As identified at the Open Space Meeting:

- Forest can be intimidating and not welcoming to users.
- Need for education and training workshops for all ages.
- Educational programs for children/students specifically.
- Volunteer opportunities are required for students.
- Develop technology to support learning.
- Conflicts do exist between user groups.
- Learning/Educational uses are consistent with other user groups interests

D. Objectives:

- Create awareness that the Copeland Forest is open and welcoming for educational activities.
- Identify areas that are prime for learning and those prime for protection (limited or no traffic).
- Provide a platform for self-guided experiences.

Short Term Recommendations:

1. Develop welcome signage, basic mapping, and the Rules of Forest etiquette in collaboration with the Trails Sub-Committee and the Ecology and Sustainability Sub-Committee.
2. Educate public on the responsible and safe uses of the Forest.
3. Use multiple platforms to communicate key information about the forest: website, GPS points, brochures and signage.
4. Provide reference points for self-guided and soft-interpretation experiences.

Medium Term Recommendations:

5. Develop an educational master plan based on the input of community stakeholders.

Long Term Recommendations:

6. On-going evaluation of the educational master plan to ensure the key objectives are served and activities remain relevant.

4. Recommendations for the Governance of Copeland Forest

Sub-Committee Members: Dave McNabb, Ted Duncan, Neil Craig, David Kennedy

A. Preamble

This report proposes a not for profit corporation model for public participation in the governance of the Copeland Forest in the provincial interest, acknowledging the groundswell of interest from grassroots users. Our objective is to help create a legacy of sustainable resource values in the forest ecosystem for generations, capable of integrating and supporting a full range of conservation, recreation, education, economic, cultural and other human uses, interests, and impacts.

B. Background and Current Status

- The Copeland Forest is a Crown Forest owned by the Province of Ontario. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) Midhurst area office has responsibility for management of the Copeland Forest.
- The MNR is currently reorganizing its operations to focus on its core responsibilities as it transforms in the face of Ontario fiscal realities. A local 'Partnership Specialist' role has been created in the Midhurst area office to deal directly with the full range of area wide MNR partners.
- The original Resource Management Plan for the Copeland Forest has lapsed and not been updated since the late 1980's. That plan called for direct management of the Forest through a Superintendent. Subsequently, the Forest was managed through a memorandum of understanding with the Lions Club of Oro-Medonte. This Lions Club has dissolved and no new arrangement has been put in place. The Copeland Forest hosts a variety of human uses and user groups.

C. Issues, Concerns and Opportunities

- The MNR is providing basic property management operations such as trail signage at the borders of the Forest, including the prohibition of new trail construction.
- Anecdotally and through direct observation we understand that risks are increasing to the health and biodiversity of the forest without active stewardship.
- The curtailment of human activity in the Copeland Forest is a logical extension of the status quo and may be inevitable without an updated and implemented active stewardship plan.
- Active stewardship is required to assess and manage the capacity of the ecosystem (and its natural resource values) to integrate and sustain a full range of human uses and interests and mitigate unforeseen and inconvenient potential impacts to Ontarians, forest users, the local way of life, local heritage and local economy.
- Active stewardship will help to reconcile, set standards and integrate uses and create guidance for users who use the forest together at the same time. Regular polling and engagement of user groups and technical advisors will also help in validating the status and capacity of resource values to integrate and support human uses and impacts.
- An inventory and a survey of the ecosystem and the risks to its health has been undertaken by the Couchiching Conservancy and will provide a basis for monitoring the potential risk of human

impacts.

- The public needs this information. In the absence of publicly available information on the health of the forest and in light of the anecdotal evidence discussed, there is a groundswell of local grassroots interest in the ongoing governance and revenues available to fund active stewardship of the forest. Feedback received from the public in the November 2012 Open Forum and in our Stewardship Committee deliberations, confirms this.
- We believe the provincial interest will be served well with a new model and process for active stewardship of the Copeland Forest and public participation in its governance in the face of Ontario fiscal realities and constraints on the MNR. Grassroots expectations suggest the need for the direct participation of users, user groups, other interested groups and local stakeholders in the active stewardship of the forest.

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Appendix "A"

Results of a survey conducted during the first year of the project, between October 2011 and February 2012. See next four pages for raw results.

The survey asked two main questions:

1. Where do you live? - There were two options, either "Oro-Medonte" (O/M) or "Other"

Out of a total of 150 respondents, 82 lived in Oro-Medonte, and 68 answered "other".

2. What activities bring you into Copeland Forest, and how many times have you visited the forest in the past year to do these activities?

Out of a total of 150 respondents, these are the amount of times they visited the forest to do the following activities:

SS =	Snowshoeing	926
XCS =	Cross-country skiing	1,191
DS =	Dogsledding	0
H&NW =	Hiking & nature walk	1,790
DW =	Dog walking	1,543
RDT =	Retriever dog training	1
P =	Photography	320
MTNB =	Mountain biking	2,515
TR =	Trail running	460
AR =	Adventure racing	13
O&GEO =	Orienteering & geocaching	16
HR =	Horseback riding	658
DEER =	Deer hunting	11
DUCK =	Duck hunting	5
GR =	Grouse hunting	7
RAB =	Rabbit hunting	0
SQ =	Squirrel hunting	0
TRL BLD	Trail building	167

There was also an "other" category and people added forest bathing, the Diabetes Ride-A-Thon, outdoor education/school trips, and mushroom picking.

APENDIX “A” – Copeland Forest Stewardship Initiative Survey

O-M	Other	SS	XCS	DS	H&NW	DW	RDT	P	MTNB	TR	AR	O&GEO	HR	Deer	Duck	GR	Rab	SQ	TRL	BLD
		2			2															
Y	Innisfil							40	40											
		20	20		50	50			25			2								
Y		4	4		4															
Y		1			1		1													
Y		2	30		3				30	5										2
Y																				
Y			40			10							16							
Y	Barrie	10	10						40											
		15	20						20											
Y		20	20		20				20	20										
Y	Barrie		5						10											
	Midland	4	1		4				30	2										
		2	3		200	200		2												
Y		5	40		20				15	10	1	1								1
Y		6	30		20				3	15	1	1								
Y		2	2		2				60											4
Y		4	8		12				8			2								
Y	Midland				4				30											
					1															
Y	Severn Twp					3							10							2
	Muskoka		4		2				10											
	Barrie	3	3						75	3										
	Dundas								2											
		1			4															
Y	Wasaga B	10			50					10										10
	Midland	5							30											
					20	20			2	10										
Y		70	6		150	150			10	30			60							
Y		40	30			35			8	40			150							
Y	Barrie								100											
	Coldwater	12			6	2			62											6
	Barrie	10	10			60			60	4	5	1								
	springwtr twp				3			3	3					5	5	5				10
	wasaga				1															
		3	3		3	3														
Y	Barrie												20							

O-M	Other	SS	XCS	DS	H&NW	DW	RDT	P	MTNB	TR	AR	O&GEO	HR	Deer	Duck	GR	Rab	SQ	TRL	BLD
Y	Barrie	10							15				40							
		40	60		40				60											8
Y		10	50		15				45											4
Y	Orillia	20			10				100											4
		5	30		5				5	100		2								3
Y	Innisfil	4	20						30											
		10	15					150												
Y																				
Y	Alliston	10							100											
Y	Orillia	3			20				25											
					6	6			10											
Y	Barrie																			
		3			10															
Y																				
Y		4	4							20				4						
Y	Innisfil	2							7											
	Innisfil	2							7		2									
	Barrie	5			5	5			50											
	Barrie								6											
	Brampton								6											
			3		4						1									
Y	Vic Harbour								25											
	Barrie	10				100			50											
									5											
Y		5	10		12				10	10										
Y		6	6		6				6	6										
Y		3																		
Y	Orillia	2			6			6						10						
	Orillia	5			7															
	Barrie		1						3											
	Barrie																			
	Orillia								50											
	Midland	12			6	4			12	3	1									
	Orillia	2			6															
Y													5							

APENDIX “B”

Copeland Forest Open Forum

Saturday November 3, 2012

Horseshoe Resort

9 am to 3 pm

Group Reports

The Copeland Forest Open Forum was attended by 140 people, and facilitated by Gord Ball. One question was asked at the beginning of the session,

“What are the challenges and opportunities facing Copeland Forest?”

From this question, participants arrived at a list of topics they wished to discuss, and after the brainstorm, these topics were posted and participants signed up for the sessions they were interested in. For the remainder of the day, groups met and produced a report covering the key aspects of the discussion (see blank template, attached). These reports follow here.

At the end of the day, all reports were posted on a wall, and the remaining participants (approximately 75 people) were given 5 red sticky dots and asked to place one dot beside the topics they viewed as most important. Those totals are indicated at the top of each report, and the reports are listed in order of the amount of dots they received. Considering that 234 red dots were placed on reports, and each person received 5 dots, approximately 47 people participated in this part of the exercise.

The names of participants have been removed and replaced by the total amount of people who participated in each meeting. If you attended one of the meetings and would like a copy of the report with the names, please contact dorthea@couchconservancy.ca (705) 326-1620 .

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COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session:

Who convened the session?

Who attended?

.....
.....

Major issues discussed:

-
-
-
-

Interesting ideas that emerged:

-
-
-
-

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

-
-
-
-

COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session: **Long term ecological sustainability of the Copeland Forest**

Who convened the session?

Who attended? 11 people

Major issues discussed:

- There is a need for ecological sustainability LONG TERM that underpins ALL activities
- The need to cap/limit human activities –what activities? what intensity?
- The impact of trails on the ecology
- Motorized vehicles –i.e.”sequays”
- The province has “backed off”
- Orienteering & geo-caching –what is the impact? Can it stay on the trails?

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- The environment is dynamic – changing
- What could it be? 4,000 acres of forest
- Invasive species have 3 elements: foreign, opportunistic, climate change
- ALL USERS need to care everything is connected
- Could decrease the size of the gates
- Need to determine a target, an overall vision
- Growth projected for the area –Horseshoe –sewage plant
- Include on the signs to respect the culture

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

- Ongoing monitoring of ecological health
Action:
- Not make more trails –stay on trails Action :
- More signs, mapping, enforcement Action:
- Communication & Education Action:
- Best practices for all users to support long term sustainability of the ecology–N.B. invasive species
- On the entrance signs - identify the user groups and a contact for each &user groups will educate members Action :

COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session: Sustainable Trails in Copeland

Who convened the session?

Who attended? 14 people

Major issues discussed:

- **Current network includes some unsustainable trails – erosion, sensitive areas etc**
- **Well intentioned maintenance will continue (underground) but without standards and planning**
- **Mapping of current trail network is required and should be combined with the Life Sciences Inventory**
- **No particular group or organization has stepped up to take ownership of a holistic sustainable trail plan**
- **Mountain bikers thought that there was a MTB steering committee but it has not taken a leadership role or has lost momentum**
- **Insurance is one key issue that must be overcome in order for official trail planning and building/maintenance to take place – and only an organization (above point) will be in a position to get insurance**

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- **Huronian Trails and Greenways could be in a position to take a leadership role in the trail building aspect of Copeland planning**
- **The Barrie Cycling Club could be the mountain biking representation at HTG**
- **Trail inventory and trail plans must be part of the recommendation that goes to the MNR from the Stewardship Committee**
- **HTG and the Stewardship Committee (or maybe Couchiching Conservancy) have separate Trillium grants that could be used to create the trail inventory and plan**
- **Mtn bikers expressed a desire to ensure trails are sustainable**
- **The point was made that no more kms of trails are required but some trails might need rebuilding, rerouting, or even closing**

- **IMBA Trail Crew can be brought in to help with the trail inventory and planning and eventually execution of trail maintenance/building**

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

- **HTG should have representation on the Stewardship Committee**
- **Follow up with ___ on involvement of both HTG and BCC as well as funding and insurance issues**
- **Follow up with ___ to get picture of how IMBA can be engaged to help develop trail inventory and planning components of Stewardship Committee to MNR**
- **_____ and _____ may be able to take more of a leadership role in MTB advocacy**

COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session: Raising the Awareness of Protecting the Integrity of CF

Who convened the session?

Who attended? 11 people

Major issues discussed:

- How to protect the land and be good stewards.
- How to treat the environment in a friendly way
- Safety concerns of all user groups
- How to engage all user groups to achieve common objectives

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- Signage and control – create a culture or philosophy - values
- Diversity of user groups also means a diversity of solutions to any issues/concerns
- Is it possible to create a revenue stream? E.g. logging, Horseshoe lease, partnerships/sponsors and user fees e.g. cycle clubs, adventure racing
- MNR needs to get more involved, not less involved.

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

- Create a vision statement that captures the culture and philosophy of CF use (_____ will help work on this. He is email list).

COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session:

Water Quality and Water Issues

Who convened the session?

Who attended? 11 people

Major issues discussed:

- **It is the headwaters of 3 streams.**
- **Impact possibilities: snow making, snow runoff, road salt, quarry to north, golf course
Chemicals, Railway-creosote ties, spills.
Development-residential and commercial upwards of 5000 units!**
- **Monitoring. Is there current monitoring? Is there a need for future monitoring? Who
should do the monitoring?**
- **Drainage map of area would point to areas of concern.**

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- **NVCA has jurisdiction to all surrounding lands (SSEA has some downstream
responsibilities but NVCA is responsible for all of Oro-Medonte.**
- **Buffering lands around the forest. Is it possible to create a buffer zone around the
forest? Could it be done through voluntary property owners or through some official
plan amendments.**
- **Source Water Protection has responsibility around municipal wells that exist in
Horseshoe and Craighurst.**
- **Sewage treatment plant is owned by Skyline. They want to give it to the municipality.
It is not able to accommodate new growth. What will the new plant look like or cost?**

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

- **Find out if there is any current monitoring of water. And should there be any future monitoring of water quality and who should do it. NVCA? MOE? MNR? – _____**
- **Steering committee needs to be more informed about all of the potential/planned growth for the area.- ? contact township**
- **NVCA, MOE or SWP or Some INDEPENDENT organization should do a full EA environmental assessment of the larger area surrounding the forest including Craighurst and horseshoe valley. – _____**

COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session: Long-term management of Copeland Forest – “Friends of Copeland”

Who convened the session?

Who attended? 29 people

Major issues discussed:

- **What is future of Couchiching Conservancy (CC) in Copeland Forest (CF) management, i.e. long term**
- **Central management group “Friends of Copeland Forest”**
- **Everyone wants to continue to use CF**
-

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- **All interest groups are accommodated; conditions of MNR**
- **Central place to gather info to decide on future management**
- **CF divided into separate use areas, train user groups in sustainable use practices**
-

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

- **Central fund to raise money for CF – restricted fund**
- **Develop CF organization**

- **Follow-up public meeting in 2013**
- **Stewardship ctee to make recommendations from Open Space mtg to MNR**
- **Report on today's mtg to all participants**
- **Near agreement from MNR to manage trails**

COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session: Keep the forest natural.

Who convened the session?

Who attended? 9 people.

Major issues discussed:

- **Protect our water!! Need first class sewage treatment for Horseshoe/Craighurst development areas which will run into the Copeland Forest if not monitored properly.**
- **What is Natural? Non manicured ... for sure.**
- **Liability? .. use at own risk.**
- **There is a change of indigenous animals/birds etc.**
- **Long term there will be more use from increased populations.**
- **Conservation and restoration dictates human use; ecology balanced with user use.**
-

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- **C.P. Railway goes through the forest .. use creosote ties, what do they do to protect the forest environment? Can we encourage good management practices?**
- **Create and protect animal/bird habitat .. interior and exterior habitats from human use. Quantify areas to protect.**
- **Eliminate some trails to allow regeneration?**
- **Monitor and enforce; fundraise and create management teams to protect forest.**
- **Protection of water – headwaters of 3 different streams emanate from the forest. Sewage treatment (primary and secondary) from commercial and residential areas supreme importance.**

- **Need to consider the impact of ALL development projected for an area rather than a project by project approach.**

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

- **Friends of Copeland Forest (C.F.) encourage and outline concerns about water and sewage – worried about building at edges of C.F. – _____**
- **Make proposed residential and commercial developments WELL known – ____**
- **Set ecological goals and priorities as TARGETS for C.F. AT LEAST don't lose any more ecological functions. ____**
- **C.P. Rail – Contact them re: minimizing impact on C.F. ____**

Need to create habitat for Bald Eagles and other animals/birds.

- **Curtail more local development in immediate areas of C.F.; creating feral animals in forest. ____**
- **Create Education and Awareness of Forest, slow down change . ____**
- **Introduce CHILDREN/STUDENTS to our forests – the C.F. will depend on our next generation to CARE enough to protect and love it.**

THANKS FOR DOING THIS DAY AND ALLOWING US TO DECIDE THE DIRECTION FOR THE FOREST.

COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session:
Active Forest Management

Who convened the session?

Who attended? 9 people

Major issues discussed:

- Sustainable forest practices that recognize forest health and different recreational users
- MNR has no resources management and the legislation has not allowed MNR to keep the revenue
- How to manage ecological interests and recreational uses and timber harvesting
- Harvest some areas and leave other areas untouched

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- Explore new partnerships to jointly manage the Forest
- Could Copeland be a Park rather than a resource management area
- Need to retain revenue within Copeland

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

- Get expertise to determine Copeland Forest health via access to provincial forest health programs and expertise
- Look at other models where communities jointly manage forests such as St. Williams Forest Council and the Eastern Ontario model forest
- Seek clarification and even change legislation or get an exemption so forest can be managed
- Look at community licensing programs (e.g. Alberta) to access crown land and resources
- An authority be created similar to the Algonquin Forest Authority to retain harvesting within the Copeland

COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session:

Education Component

Who convened the session?

Who attended? 8 people.

Major issues discussed:

- **Education sector should be at the table – historical and current users of the land. Potential for more education, educational placements**
- **Need for awareness of Copeland where it is, what it is, it's fragility, need for integrity**
- **How can we respect and protect the environment e.g. define areas for uses, define times for uses (e.g. hunting)**
- **Need a vision for the land before can decide what we will communicate and educate**
- **Lack of organization re: education e.g. lack of understanding of what are permitted/non permitted uses.**
- **Sharing – use of the land and stewardship of the land**

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- **If we can organize effectively, we can advocate for local, provincial and land use (e.g. organized forestry) funding**
- **Signage needed at 5 main entry points (early win)**
- **Need a master plan for education and awareness, with input from many and dissemination by all users e.g. media, orientation centre, through user groups, seminars at organization/community meetings, brochures, speakers bureau, video, information a local tourist centres, information for Horseshoe guests**

- **Collection of known information e.g. historical, natural, etc that can be shared with all users**
- **Learn from the experience of other “like” groups e.g. MTM Conservation (Tiny Marsh, Matchedash, Markle Lake**
- **Education should be at the table.**

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

- **Education Subcommittee – to create a master plan based on the vision. Can determine what information needs to be shared, where & how; need to engage young people and other local groups (e.g. individuals and scouting/guiding organizations); find resources to fulfill the plan (e.g. sponsors)**
- **Create a “Friends of the Copeland” group to with sharing the education and stewardship message**
- **Disseminate information/messages through Chamber of Commerce (potential opportunity for environmental initiative), Service Clubs (potential sponsorship), user group organizations, web, social media, Horseshoe**

Willing to work on these proposed actions:

Six people put down their names and email addresses.

COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session: **Spooky Steeds meet Stealthy Cyclists**

Who convened the session?

Who attended? Approximately 40 people. Not all names were recorded.

Major issues discussed:

- **Communication between user groups on the trail, how horses and riders need to know you are coming from behind as well as which way you will pass**
- **Right of Way; Who has the**
- **Trail Etiquette; Establish what each group needs;**
- **Education regarding use of trails;**
- **Establish Rules; Code of conduct;**

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- **3 members from each group - Equestrian and Cyclist - get together quarterly to discuss the above. Take back information to share with their own groups.**
- **Informative signage for trail entrances; Will explain to new users what the rules/code of conduct are;**
- **Maintenance of trails – All users are responsible for trail maintenance;**
- **Develop 3 Cardinal Rules – Establish at multi group meeting**
-

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

- **_____ from Huronia Trails and Greenways informed of online message board to communicate wants/needs of each group;**
- **OTRA, Couchiching Conservancy and HTG to band together to discuss wants/need**

COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session:

Commercial Activities in Copeland Forest

Who convened the session?

Who attended? 24 people.

Major issues discussed:

- **Horseshoe – Skyline relationship with the MNR**
- **Special events taking place in the forest**
- **The ‘Business’ of Copeland Forest**

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- **How will the plans put forth by the Conservancy be funded, or financed**
- **Is a new legal entity required ‘Friends of Copeland Forest’, or ‘Copeland Culture of Conservation’. How will this be structured and maintained**
- **Current ‘commercial’ activities taking place in the forest: Horseshoe xc skiing & snowshoeing, tour groups who pay attendance fees (biking, hiking, birding etc.), Active Forest Management, Special events (Cycling, Trail Running, Orienteering, Ski Loppets, Snowshoe etc.) (Charitable, Not For Profit, For Profit),**
- **Future potential ‘commercial’ activities: Solar Panel Installation, Business Partners**

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

- **Stewardship Committee should explore the creation of an entity to oversee the forest via an agreement with the MNR (see Wye Marsh, or other such agreements that already exist). This includes how such a group would be governed and financed.**
- **Identify all commercial activities taking place within the forest and how each activity fits into the long-term plan to maintain the environmental, cultural and recreational attributes of the forest**

COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session: Bike Trails – Construction, Maintenance, Etc

Who convened the session?

Who attended? At least 15 people. 13 names were recorded but more attended.

Major issues discussed:

- **Construction**
- **Maintenance**
- **Expansion**
- **Path Sharing / Access**
- **Mapping**
- **Facility Access / Parking**
- **Events**

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- **Construction: Is there a process to allow for new trails to be built when needed?**
- **Maintenance: If there is an official maintenance group, is there liability associated?**
 - **There is an ‘army’ of volunteers from all groups ready to do work**
 - **Some think trails should be left as is with obstacles in place (challenging)**
 - **Need a method of reporting maintenance issues. How? To who?**
 - **Can users raise money for maintenance / mapping?**
- **Mapping: Is the existing mapping good enough for safety**
 - **Group is worried that if mapping is too good, too many people will come!**
 - **Maps are already readily available online through various sources**
- **Facility Access / Parking: Parking is available off Ingram Rd & Line 5**
 - **People are entering south end through private property**
- **Events: In general, cyclists think that major events would have a negative impact on the forest and should be discouraged.**

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

- **Construction: No new construction is permitted**
- **Maintenance: Groups should work as a single entity, not separate interest groups**
 - **Coordinate strengths of each group to work together**
 - **Need method of allowing or advising of maintenance reqt's**
 - **Need governing body to coordinate volunteers**
- **Facility Access / Parking: Ingram lots need to be cleared of snow (safety issue)**

COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session: Invasive Species (sub group to Ecological Sustainability)

Who convened the session?

Who attended? 8 people

Major issues discussed:

- **Invasive species – several present in CF**
- **Control mainly, irradiation is very difficult**

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- **Must develop a plan**
- **Monitor each year – inventory all locations, size of patch, create map, data base**
- **Removal is an issue – permit needed to use motorized vehicle, or enlist help from all user groups e.g bikes, horses**

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

- **Form a subcommittee to develop a plan – include/engage all user groups**
- **Create teams**
- **Train volunteers**
- **Prioritize new patches**

COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session:
Deer Yard Management

Who convened the session?

Who attended? 11 names recorded, 19 people in total attended the session.

Major issues discussed:

- **Winter deer yard: where is it? how big?**
- **Any trail planning must look at impact on this critical habitat**
- **Warm winters lately have skewed population**

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- **Can volunteers do surveys?**
- **2004 aerial survey covered CF but not in detail (re: deer yards)**
- **High local deer pop due to agricultural uses**
-

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

- **Avoid putting trails into critical yards**
- **Trail planning MUST be aware of deer yard location**
- **NEED research info to make planning decisions**



*Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP report form*

Title of session:
Entrances and Parking Facilities

Who convened the session?

Who attended? 4 people

Major issues discussed:

- Where are the Entrances ?
- Where is the Parking?
- Specifically Southern Entrance?
- Winter Access? (Parking lots not plowed in Winter)

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- Map for Public consumption with Entrances & Parking marked
- Identification of Boundaries for Copeland Forest

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

- 4th. Line Right of Way (at end of Pine Ridge Trail) Develop into signed entrance & parking lot (fill required)
- Exam other opportunities for entrance from South Eg. Ring Road through Timber Ridge Development (not yet developed but in planning stage)
- Develop Map for purchase of Copeland Forest
- Map should be available free for Distribution at all Ontario Government Information Locations

COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session:

Hiking, riding, bicycling, cross-country and trail marking

Who convened the session?

Who attended? Hikers, riders and bicyclers...no names recorded.

Major issues discussed:

- **What signage is required?**
- **People get lost**
- **Are there too many trails in the forest?**
- **Hunting is permitted – people should be warned**

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

- **Place signs at all the access points. The signs should show:**
 - ❖ **The main trails**
 - ❖ **Trails should be numbered**
 - ❖ **The preferred or recommended use for each trail**
 - ❖ **Not motorized vehicles allowed**
 - ❖ **Indicate dates hunting season in place & then “use trails at own risk”**
 - ❖ **Have paper maps available**
 - ❖ **Indicate the trail etiquette, for example, keep to right when encountering horses or bicycles**
- **Trails in forest should be clearly numbered from time to time should have “you are here signs” and show direction of north.**
- **There was agreement that people could share trails successfully**
- **Should be a meeting once per year of people using trails to discuss problems and solutions.**
- **There should be some “no go” or no people allowed areas in the forest**

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- **Well marked trails will help to prevent people from making “ad hoc” trails**



COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session:
Winter activities

Who convened the session?

Who attended? 13 people

Major issues discussed:

- **clarification- walkers, snowshoers, skiers on Horseshoe property**
- **agreement btw Horseshoe/MNR – exclusivity? permits required?**
- **ownership of Copeland – who gets to use it? When leases come up for renewal, who gets to bid? Does Horseshoe have exclusive rights on any part of Copeland Forest? Is their present lease specific to certain areas?**
- **walkers on ski trails, protocol of snowshoeing on a trail someone has made ahead of you**
- **overlap of hunting season & snowsport season**

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- **sharing xc skiing, snowshoeing, walking**
- **emergency response – cell phones, gps**
- **parking lots of Copeland not plowed in winter – users have no place to park, is parking on the road illegal?**
- **signage at main entry points – hunting seasons, permissible activities – where to post? updating? at which access points**

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

- **exact answers to questions re major issues above**

COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session:
Compatibility and Safety for Mixed Use

Who convened the session?

Who attended? 7 people

Major issues discussed:

- **Character of forest changes from area to area and all should be preserved for everyone. Use as an education tool for children/grandchildren etc. Maintain safety while hunting season is in progress. Talked about the woman who was killed pretty much in her own back yard by a hunter.**
- **Dog droppings**
- **Almost too many trails – afraid this “jewel” of Simcoe may be lost as a “natural” forest area**
- **Relationship between Horseshoe Resort and MNR; does this open the door to permitting other commercial uses of the forest? Eg. Guided hikes, dog sled rides, trail rides.**
- **The impact of one group should not negatively affect any other group of users**
- **Hearing the “crack” of a gunshot while using the trail for non-hunting purposes, seeing deer stands in tress can be disconcerting for some users.**

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- **All present agreed that multi-use is a good thing; that it can bring respect and awareness between the various groups**

- **The more “groups” that are involved with it, the more voices can be heard in defense of maintaining it against pressures from developers.**
- **Start off on a ski trail that is not part of the Horseshoe Valley maintained trail system and skiing onto it – is this acceptable? Can I be asked not to use their trail system?**

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

- **By and large everyone agreed that all groups (with the exception of motorized vehicles of any kind – excluding official maintenance vehicles) biking, hiking, skiing, hunting, horseback riding etc., should continue to be permitted in what we agreed is a “jewel” in Simcoe and Southern Ontario. More education and communication is needed so that there is better awareness of all groups using the Forest. More groups provide more voices in support of the Forest.**
- **Better signage, for example, there are generic signs indicating that hunting is permitted in the forest. Could these signs be changed to include specific times when hunting is permitted eg. Deer hunting; first week in Nov & first week in Dec; turkeys in ?? so that all users could be aware and able to make a choice to use the forest for non-hunting purposes during those times.**
- **Thank you for listening!**



COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session:

Garbage +Manure (poop)

Who convened the session?

Who attended? 4 people

Major issues discussed:

- **Manure on trails, parking lot.**
- **Dog poop to be picked up by owners**
- **Garbage in parking lot +trails**

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- **Educating users to pack out what you pack in.**
- **Asking horse riders to clean up after their horses. Simply move the manure off the parking lot area and on the trails**
- **Asking users to remove at least 1 item off the trail per visit to help clean up the trails**

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

- **Trail maintenance _____**
- **Bear resistant garbage bin for the parking lots _____**



COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session: **RESPECT FOR OTHER USERS**

Who convened the session?

Who attended? 4 people

Major issues discussed:

- **Horse manure, garbage , tree limbs in parking lots and on trails.**
- **Everyone needs to remember others use the same trails for variety of activities**

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- **Leave trails in good condition.**
- **Hikers yield to bikers and horses!**
- **Educational signage at parking lot - do's & don't (stoop & scoop etc)**

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

- **Trail mtnce – _____**
- **Liaise with horse rider's re: clean-up manure**
- **Occasional public input sessions by CC/Stewardship Committee**

COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session:

Target Practice in the Copeland Forest

Who convened the session?

Who attended? 4 people

Major issues discussed:

- Forest being used for target practice
- There is no law regulating this
- Once it becomes known that it's not illegal, the practice mushrooms
- Safety issues

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- There has to be a clear law
- Signage required
- Hunters, hikers, cyclists, riders need to understand each others' sports

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

- We need a law; this group feels it should not be legal to target practice in the forest
- The law has to be communicated; instead of excess signage, perhaps add "no target practice allowed" to existing hunting sign
- An education session for non-hunters and hunters alike to understand what is and is not allowed. And for hunters to appreciate the safety concerns of non-hunters.

The problem does exist and is not isolated. One example is a young couple came all the way from Bowmanville to target practice here, understanding that it was legal and thinking that it was gun season here (it wasn't). Other neighbours are aware of it happening, also.

COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session:	INFORMATION RELEASE

Who convened the session?

Who attended? One family who arrived late and so could not post this as a topic.

Major issues discussed:

- **The need for and dire lack of data and information and maps on and for the Copeland Forest**

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- **Make all available maps, information, data and history available for all**

Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

- **Digitize / Scan all documents and data maps and information and post then on the Internet for all to have access to (The Couchiching Conservancy).**



COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session:
Beaver management

Who convened the session?

Who attended? 2 people

Major issues discussed:

- **Do beavers need to be managed?**
- **How does the beaver population get managed?**
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-

Interesting ideas that emerged:

- **The Copeland Forest needs a good forest management plan that takes into account beaver food resources and that will try to simulate the natural disturbances of the forest.**
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Actions proposed (followed by names of those who would be willing to work on them)

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COPELAND FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROJECT
Nov. 3, 2012 Open Space Meeting
SMALL GROUP REPORT FORM

Title of session:

Establishing A cycling club for Horseshoe & Copeland

Who convened the session?

Who attended?

15 cyclists attended from throughout Simcoe County

Major issues discussed: Whether a separate club is justified or if the Barrie cycling club is willing to change their name to encompass the stewardship of the entire region of Simcoe county including the Copeland Forest.

- _____ **Is offering a newly established cycling club called:**
- **CCR Celtic Copeland Riders**
- **Action item: There will be an independent Cycling club established called:**

CCR Celtic Copeland Rider first meeting to be scheduled : Nov 11, 2012 ,7am

Contact: