



Copeland Forest Friends Association

Annual General Meeting Minutes

April 27, 2023

Heights of Horseshoe

General Session

1. Land Acknowledgement – David Kennedy
2. President's Welcome, Introductions and Report – David Kennedy
 - a. 10 years since stewardship report presented to Ministry. Two years later (2015), Copeland Forest Friends Association was formerly established.
 - b. David acknowledged in attendance: Oro-Medonte Mayor Randy Greenlaw, Councillor Robert Young and founding Board member Ted Duncan.
 - c. David highlighted 10 years of achievement from establishing the organization governance to introducing signage and a trail map; signs were later enhanced to encourage appropriate use and last fall a large kiosk sign was installed in P2 parking area. Snow is now cleared in both parking lots on Ingram Road. Georgian Paving generously grades the lots annually in support of the association. On the ecology side, water testing is the longest lasting project having started 7 years ago, we've established a baseline and the water quality remains very good. The efforts to control the spread of garlic mustard focused on highly vulnerable areas started 5 years ago, is ongoing and volunteers are needed. Ecological trail assessment completed this past year. When all user groups work together we can accomplish so much more.
3. Trail Committee Report – Don McKinnon
 - a. Fall 2021 trail committee was established; expect trail plan to be completed later this year.
 - b. Copeland has greater ecological sensitivity compared to other forests in the area and supports all user groups except motorized vehicles. The increased use requires a formalized trail plan.
 - c. Recent highlights: completed trail user survey last summer (results on web site); initiated development of Copeland forest history, completed ecological assessment (posted on web site), structural assessment, starting draft of recommendations and contribution to annual work plan.

- d. Implementation will follow the completion of the trail plan following presentations of the draft plan to the Board and MNRF this summer, following that to the User Groups. When trail plan is endorsed it will require a focused maintenance effort. From the user survey many volunteered to assist with trail maintenance.

BREAK and User Group Meetings

CFFA AGM Business Meeting

1. Call to Order – David Kennedy
2. Review of 2022 AGM Meeting Minutes – Lisa Banks
 - a. Presented summary of 2022 AGM meeting highlights and noted one change to be made regarding the approval of the bylaw amendments that were passed by membership in 2022.
 - b. Motion to approve 2022 Minutes as presented; Jamie Herbst
 - c. Seconded by Kim Drury
 - d. Passed by membership
3. Business Arising from the Minutes – Lisa Banks
 - a. Request a member to move to approve the 2022 bylaw amendments and another to second.
 - b. Motion to approve 2022 by-law amendments by Pat Tuero
 - c. Seconded by Kathy Newman
 - d. Passed by membership in 2022
 - e. Board to review the by-laws and letters patent to ensure compliance with the Ontario Not-for-Profits Corporation Act before the Oct. 2024 deadline and present these to the membership at or before the next annual meeting.
4. Financial Report – David Myles
 - a. David outlined the association revenue and expenses and explained increased expenses in administration of membership database and snowplowing, these costs primarily covered by an Oro-Medonte Township grant and private donations
 - b. Motion to accept - Lori Howard
 - c. Seconded by Kathy Newman
 - d. Passed by Membership
5. Membership Report – Jamie Herbst
 - a. Reported over 50% of membership is comprised of hikers and bikers
 - b. There are now more convenient ways to pay membership than ever before.
6. Outgoing Directors – David Kennedy

- a. David Kennedy acknowledged outgoing Directors, Kyra Howes, Derek Witlib, and Brad Turner for their service and many contributions to the success of the association.
- b. Jennifer Copeland recognized outgoing President David Kennedy who was dedicated and visionary in his efforts to establish and then grow the association in support of all user groups.

7. Election of New Directors and Directors at Large

- a. There are four vacant Director positions, however two user groups Businesses and the Anglers and Hunters had insufficient quorum to nominate candidates. The following new user group directors and directors at large were nominated:
- b. Kyra Howes - interim director Naturalist user group
- c. Ann Marie Markle - Mountain Bikers user group
- d. Don McKinnon; David Myles and Pat Tuero – Directors At Large
- e. Motion to approve the slate of directors by Jennifer Copeland
- f. Seconded by Kim Drury
- g. Passed by Membership

8. User Group Reports

- a. Each user group to discuss:
 - i. What is something positive that you've experienced from the Forest in the past year?
 - ii. As a user group member, what improvements would you like to see in the forest for next year?
- b. Naturalist – Positives: therapeutic nature of the forest, encountering species, swans are back, access to Ducks Unlimited (DU) pond cleared by heavy equip. protecting people from wild parsnip. Enjoy meeting people in the forest and hearing their stories. P1 parking cleared of snow! Improvements; Sustain control of wild parsnip and phragmites. Monitor trails to DU pond for invasive species due to heavy equipment use. Keep it wild/don't manage the forest. Concerns about 1 way signs reducing "wildness of area." Unable to cross some old trails that should possibly be closed, trail work or maintenance could harm them. Reduce islands and trail fragmentation.
- c. Horseback riders – 13 members. Parking lots are amazing. All riders feel 99% of interaction on the trails is amazing. Improvements – user education, all need to learn more about the trails. Would like to see work done on the bridges. The group wants to know the Association's position regarding e-bikes and dogs off leash on trails as well as plans for establishing an organized trail maintenance crew. The group also suggested development of a video (or similar) would be beneficial to educate trail users on trail etiquette and how to properly interact with horses.

- d. Residents – 9 members. Positives: wildflowers, photography, meeting like-minded people, making friends. Forest was saviour during COVID. Camps for young children. Improvements – signage could include suggestions for apps (trails, plant identifier), more poop control. More volunteers for garlic mustard. Develop southern access to the forest off Pine Ridge Trail. Offer more guided hikes perhaps with Ganaraska members.
 - e. Mountain biking – good interaction with forest users; trails quickly cleared of debris, forest is clean. Improvements – signage emphasizing no motorized vehicles, some seen in the forest, more bridge platforms to mitigate islands, trail closures for horses in wet seasons.
 - f. Snow Sports – small group, appreciate the single track trails and that the forest isn't busy in winter. Considerations: for increased parking at P4; consider a bridge crossing at the old pond to support year round access.
 - g. Hiking – 10 members, incredible beauty every day, in awe of what they see and hear, incredible experiences with grandchildren. Some enjoying forest since 1964. Yellow trillium, watch owls and beavers. Room for improvement in P4 area and at P3 consider labelling it for those less abled, keep it smoother. Improve washout site, perhaps a switchback to mitigate erosion. Some like to see the pond re-established, and once history completed, historical plaques installed. Consider a user fee for larger groups hosting events. Consider monitoring the large group foraging. Do more to educate people regarding the ski trails to stay off to the side so it is safe for everybody.
 - h. Hunters and Anglers – Derek and Ted met. Wildlife sightings are truly incredible when you spend hours quietly in forest. Improvements – the washout area and draw down on DU pond. Despite all the trails/activity, in the winter there are a lot of deer in the east end.
9. Door Prize Draw
- a. Several Copeland Forest Friends Association caps and Copeland Forest scented Soy candles were presented to lucky ticket holders.
10. Other Business/Q&A – no questions or discussion
11. Meeting Adjournment
- a. Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. by Don McKinnon

- b. Seconded by David Myles
- c. Approved by membership