

LANARK COUNTY



Recreational Use Policy
June 11, 2009
Adopted August 25, 2009

Recreational Use Policy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Description</u>	<u>Page #</u>
A. LANARK COUNTY COMMUNITY FOREST (LCCF).....	3
Introduction	3
Objectives	5
B. RECREATION POLICY	5
1. Assumptions	6
2. Criteria for Analysis of Recreational Activities.....	6
C. RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES	7
1. Low Impact Activities.....	7
2. Dog Walking	7
3. Mountain Biking	7
4. Snowmobiling	8
5. Other Off-Road Motorized Vehicles (ORMV's).....	8
6. Hunting/Fishing	9
7. Trapping	10
8. Bait Harvesting.....	11
9. Harvesting of Non-Wood Forest Products	11
10. Prohibited Activities.....	11
11. Special Use.....	12
APPENDIX “A” – Implementation Strategy	13
Timelines	13
Information/Education.....	13
Stewardship	13
Conflict Resolution	13
Enforcement	13
APPENDIX “B” – Code of Conduct for County Forest and Trail Users.....	14
General Rules of Etiquette	14
1. Walkers & Hikers	14
2. Equestrians	15
3. Cyclists.....	15
4. X-Country Skiing.....	16
5. Snowmobile and ORMV Operators	16
APPENDIX “C” – Criteria for Motorized Trail Consideration	18
1. Ecological Sustainability	18
2. Physical Sustainability.....	18
3. Social Sustainability	18
4. Compliance with Legislation.....	18
5. Trespass to Property	18
6. Tread Lightly Principles	18
7. Provincial Incorporation	18
8. Speed Limits.....	19
9. Noise Limits and Spark Arrestors.....	19
APPENDIX “D” – General Use and Indemnity Sample Agreement Template	20
APPENDIX “E” – Properties with Prohibited Activities	22
1. Baird Property – West Half Lot 11, Concession IV, Lanark (89 acres)	22
2. Pakenham Property (southern portion) – Lot 11, Concession VI, Pakenham	22

Recreational Use Policy

A. LANARK COUNTY COMMUNITY FOREST (LCCF)

Introduction

The Community Forests of Lanark County consist of 38 forest properties, totaling 4,638 hectares (11,461 acres)

Table 1 shows the location of the Community Forest, by Municipality and Geographic Townships:

Table 1			
Area of Community Forest - by Municipality			
Municipality Geographic Township	Area		%
	In Hectares	In Acres	
Lanark Highlands	3,702	9,148	80
• Lavant	1,390	3,435	
• Dalhousie	964	2,382	
• Darling	753	1,861	
• Lanark	349	862	
• N. Sherbrooke	246	608	
Tay Valley	415	1,025	9
• S. Sherbrooke	294	726	
• Burgess	121	299	
Mississippi Mills	405	1,001	9
• Pakenham	405	1,001	
Montague	91	225	1.95
Drummond North Elmsley	25	62	
• Drummond	25	62	.05
Total	4,638	11,461	100

The Community Forests of Lanark County are generally considered to be in good health.

The Community Forests provide excellent habitat to a wide variety of mammals, birds, reptiles and plants. For the most part, the Community Forests are situated close to Crown and private forest lands, resulting in large unbroken tracts of forest that are most beneficial to many species of wildlife. The Community Forests contain parts of five provincially identified deer yards. Approximately 15% of the Community Forests, or 695 hectares, is water, wetlands and open areas. Four of Lanark County's forest properties contain Provincially Significant Wetlands.

Recreational Use Policy

In 1938, the County of Lanark purchased its first block of Community Forest lands, 648 hectares (1600 acres) of forest in Lavant Township. At the same time, the County entered into an Agreement with the Province of Ontario for the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) to manage the County's Community Forests. Over the years, the County purchased additional blocks of land, the last block being purchased in 1987, giving the County a total of 4,638 hectares (11,461) of Community Forests.

On April 25, 2001, the County terminated the forestry agreement with the Province and assumed full responsibility for managing the Community Forests. The County recognized that it needed the right *tools* to fulfill its new responsibilities so that it could effectively manage the Community Forest for forest health and for a variety of values and uses.

In the fall of 2001, the County of Lanark issued a Request for Proposals, seeking a consultant to *develop a Community Forest Business Plan, for a five year period ensuring that there is public consultation throughout the planning process.* The Planning Team of Gordon Harrison, Jim McCready, R.P.F and David Oliver were selected.

In January of 2002, the planning process was launched with a presentation to County Council. Key stakeholders and the public were involved throughout the planning process. In November of 2002, the *Business Plan for the Community Forests of Lanark County, 2002 to 2006* was tabled. Involving the public and community groups in all aspects of the planning process resulted in broad public support for the *Business Plan*.

Late in fall of 2002, the Community Development Committee of the Whole passed a Motion "that the Community Development Committee accepts the Lanark County Community Forests Business Plan; and that, the Forestry Sub-Committee continue to implement the business plan . . . and that, Staff Recommendations be put on hold pending the outcome of the recommendations from the Corporate Administrative Review." On November 27, 2002, County Council adopted the Report of the Community Development Committee, containing this Motion.

In December of 2002, the BMA Administrative Review Report recommended that "responsibility for the implementation of the business Plan and the on-going forestry management be transferred to the Director of Public Works." In September of 2005, Council authorized the transfer of staff responsibility for the Community Forests from the Clerk's Office to the Public Works Department and approved the creation of a Project Engineer Position.

In 2005, the Community Forests Sub-Committee was restructured to include four County Councillors, the Coordinator of the Community Stewardship Council of Lanark County and a public representative (a member of the Community Stewardship Council). The Advisory members of the Community Forest Sub-Committee include the County's Project Engineer, a representative of Mississippi Valley Conservation and a representative of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

In 2009, the Community Forest Sub-Committee was restructured to become the Community Forests Working Group consisting of the Lanark County Facilities and Fleet Manager, two Members of Lanark County Council, a Stewardship Council Member, a Stewardship Council

Recreational Use Policy

Coordinator, a Ministry of Natural Resources Member and a Mississippi Valley Conservation Member.

Objectives

1. To maintain and enhance the health and sustainability of the forest ecosystems of the Community Forests.
2. To facilitate opportunities for a variety of responsible uses of the Community Forests. Possible uses include but are not limited to:
 - Economic uses, including but not limited to timber harvesting, maple syrup production, gathering mushrooms, trapping and fishing
 - Tourism and recreation
 - Education
 - Cultural
 - Natural heritage
 - Research
3. To promote a better understanding and appreciation of the values and uses of the Forests.
4. To continue to provide opportunities for community work placement programs such as, but not limited to *Ontario Works*.
5. To manage disturbances (fire, insects and diseases) for the overall health of the Community Forests while ensuring that human life and private property are protected from such disturbances in a responsible and effective manner.
6. To engage in active partnerships with County Municipalities, in particular Lanark Highlands, resource agencies, businesses, community groups, farmers and others to manage and provide stewardship of the Community Forests.
7. To pursue a variety of sources of revenue and funding so that averaged overtime, the **management** of the Forests is financially self-sustaining.
8. To manage the Community Forests as a model of sustainable forest management and forest harvesting practices.
9. Prevent soil erosion and restore and conserve water resources.
10. Preserve, conserve and improve wildlife habitat.
11. Provide opportunities for public recreation and education.

B. RECREATION POLICY

Lanark County is located 45 minutes west of Ottawa, which has a large population centre. In the past, the County has permitted most types of recreational uses provided they are not damaging to the forest. However, there has been no effort to monitor recreational use and

Recreational Use Policy

no policy framework from which to regulate activities. In order to ensure the continued enjoyment of the forest by all responsible users, reduce conflict and minimize environmental impacts, a Recreational Use Policy is required.

During the consultation process for the business plan, it became apparent that policies cannot be developed for the County Forest in isolation. Trails play an important role in promoting a healthy lifestyle and more prosperous communities. The County has recognised the value of trails and has formed the Lanark County Municipal Trails Corporation (LCMTC) to develop, maintain and promote County trails and their integration with other trails in the County. The development and promotion of trails of all kinds has received provincial attention with the development of the Ontario Trails Strategy in 2005, and several organizations from within the County played a direct role in its development. Interest in the policy development for the Lanark County Community Forest has been widespread, including local, municipal, provincial and other organizations.

The Lanark County Community Forest are a rich mosaic of forests, wetlands, streams and lakes, plants and animals, geological features, heritage features and lands once cleared for farming. Some of the properties that now make up the Community Forests were purchased from land owners who believed that their land should revert to its previous forested state and be held in public trust. The Community Forests are situated in a landscape that contains Crown lands and lands owned by private individuals.

Forests are considered healthy when their inherent ecological processes are functioning within a natural range of variability. Healthy forests are able to adapt to changes, stresses and disturbances (taken from the Eastern Ontario Model Forest's Information Report No. 42: *State of the Forest Report*, 1999).

Healthy Community Forests will support a variety of uses that benefit the people of Lanark County and surrounding areas. They can play a positive role in contributing to the overall health of Lanark's environment and economy, as well as providing environmental benefits outside Lanark.

1. Assumptions

Further to the County Forest Objectives, which have been established for many years, the following assumptions have been utilized:

- The County Forest will be managed to meet or exceed FSC Certified Management Standards.
- The County Forest is owned by the Corporation of the County of Lanark and is not crown land.
- Recreational pursuits in the forest are a privilege, not a right.
- Forest health, management and associated operations take precedence over recreational activities.
- Recreational activities must have minimal impact on the forest interior (inner core).

2. Criteria for Analysis of Recreational Activities

All recreational activities within the Lanark County Community Forest have some impact upon the forest and other users. While assessing the level of impact is subjective, the following criteria were applied to each:

Recreational Use Policy

- Activity must have minimal environmental impact.
- Activity must not have significant impact upon other forest users.
- Activity must be compatible with forestry operations.
- Activity must not pose significant liability concerns to the County.
- Activity should not require significant County staff intervention for administration or policing.

C. RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The continued enjoyment of the various users will depend upon respecting the forest environment and the rights of others. A “Code of Conduct” has been adopted which applies to all those who wish to use and enjoy the Lanark County Community Forest (Appendix “B”).

1. Low Impact Activities

Most passive users of the Lanark County Community Forest leave only footprints while taking away a host of benefits, including healthy outdoor activity and improved peace of mind. Some outings and activities take place entirely within a forest tract while others may just pass through. Linear systems such as the Trans Canada Trail provide linkages while trail loops on individual properties provide opportunities for more casual users. Both are important in providing opportunities for residents to get out and enjoy all that Lanark County has to offer. Improving access to trails through improved coordination, mapping, signage and promotion will best be accomplished by partnering with and supporting existing trails organizations.

Recommendation 1.1 – THAT walking, hiking, cross-country skiing, cycling, snowshoeing, orienteering, geo-caching, nature appreciation, nature study, dog sledding and horseback riding be permitted in the Lanark County Community Forest as per the Code of Conduct.

Recommendation 1.2 – THAT partnerships be strengthened with existing trails organizations to promote trail use throughout the County (See Appendix “A”).

2. Dog Walking

Many residents utilize the Lanark County Community Forest as an area to exercise, not only themselves, but their pets. While this practice is generally accepted, large or aggressive dogs can be frightening and potentially dangerous for other users. Serious consequences can result particularly if uncontrolled dogs meet with equestrians.

Recommendation 2.1 – THAT dogs must be under control, or on leash, at all times while within the Lanark County Community Forest.

3. Mountain Biking

Mountain biking is one of the fastest growing recreational pursuits within the County Forests. Damage to forest soils and vegetation is minimal with most mountain biking activity. In heavily used locations, the construction of new “single track” trails can reach levels, which may become damaging to the site, and dangerous to other

Recreational Use Policy

users. Entering into Use Agreements with area clubs or organizations will improve communication with County Staff and limit unacceptable practices.

Recommendation 3.1 – THAT mountain biking be permitted and that Use Agreements be encouraged with organized groups.

Recommendation 3.2 – THAT the construction of new mountain biking trails or elevated structures be prohibited except where authorized through a Use Agreement.

4. Snowmobiling

As is the case throughout much of Ontario, over the past 30 years snowmobiling has matured into a very well-organized sport benefiting both the riders and the economy. Lanark County Staff and/or LCMTC should contact key Club Members to address situations of concern. There are negligible complaints regarding their activities. The local clubs within Lanark County are responsible for the Use Agreements with the County.

Numerous Club Members maintain a mapped and signed trail system. A Trail Permit is required and the trails are self-policed by Club Members with assistance from the O.P.P.. County Forestry Staff can easily contact key Club Personnel to address situations of concern such as rerouting trails that may interfere with a winter harvesting operation. As activities occur during winter months, few other County Forest Users are present or impacted by snowmobile use.

Recommendation 4.1 – THAT snowmobiling be permitted to continue on designated OFSC Trails where Use Agreement are in effect with the County LCMTC.

5. Other Off-Road Motorized Vehicles (ORMV's)

For the purpose of this Report, an ORMV is defined as any motorized vehicle, except snowmobiles, designed for off-road use which is a maximum gross vehicle weight of 400 kg. This largely includes all-terrain vehicles and motorcycles.

The number of ORMV's utilizing County Forests has increased dramatically over the past few years for a number of reasons:

- Increasing population levels.
- Increasing popularity of ORMV's and off-road motorcycles due to improved technology.
- The finite or declining open space available for off-road vehicle use.

Most ORMV Operators are respectful of the forest and other users. A number of ORMV enthusiasts have been coexisting with other forest users for many years with little problem.

Concerns regarding ORMV's are expressed as either environmental degradation or conflicts with other users. With ORMV's some compaction and erosion does occur on trails. Because they operate in spring, summer and fall, however, impacts on soil conditions can occur particularly in wet areas and stream crossings. Some operators

Recreational Use Policy

actively seek out wet locations and cause severe rutting as a result. Damage to trails is also a concern to the local snowmobile clubs who are increasingly forced to repair damage caused during summer months.

Conflict with other groups is mainly attributed in order of magnitude to noise, dust, danger and fumes. Adjacent land owners are also objecting due to the amount of trespassing, which occurs to access County Forest. Because Lanark County Community Forest properties are numerous, but scatter, ORMV users are currently using a combination of trails on private and public land, roads, ditches and unopened road allowances to get from one tract to the next.

While unrestricted and unregistered use of ORMV's is problematic for jurisdictions throughout rural Ontario, significant benefits from increased tourism and outdoor recreation are possible with the proper controls. With sales increasing every year and without designated areas to operate these vehicles, trespassing, conflicts and damage to property will continue to escalate. Designated trails will provide an opportunity for users to become organized, insured, implement a trail maintenance program, and reducing environmental impact. It is also hoped that by working with and promoting clubs, a volunteer warden program could be instituted to assist police on designated trails and thereby reduced user conflict should result.

Eliminating vehicle traffic and restricting ORMV use to designated trails will have an unintended impact upon area hunters. A recommended compromise includes provisions to permit ORMV use to enable infirm hunters to access the Lanark County Community Forest and to facilitate the retrieval of large game.

Recommendation 5.1 – THAT independent ORMV's be permitted to use designated trails, within County Forests, at such time that all Terms and Conditions of usage and insurance requirements of the Lanark County Municipal Trails Corporation are met, and THAT, Use Agreements with ORMV Clubs are in place, which specify adequate insurance, a permit system (e.g. OTC gold Pass), trail maintenance program, noise limits and an enforcement mechanism.

Recommendation 5.2 – THAT in addition to designated trails, ORMV's be permitted to utilize County Forests for the following purposes:

- To enable OFORMV or OFTR Members where authorized to facilitate volunteer patrols or stewardship activities.
- To enable improved access for hunting as specified in Recommendation 6.2.

6. Hunting/Fishing

Hunting is a traditional sport in Lanark County and is a management tool used by OMNR to regulate and control wildlife populations. Hunters are required to be trained and pass examinations and be licensed. These requirements and the stringent regulations of the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* make hunting the most regulated recreational use within the County Forests. Some residents fear hunters and others are opposed to hunting in principle. Fishermen frequent some of the coldwater streams and lakes available in the forest with little or no consequence.

Recreational Use Policy

With the increasing population around certain forest tracts and the associated activity in such areas, conflicts can be drastically reduced by eliminating hunting from a very small percentage of the Lanark County Community Forest, which are now very close to or within rural development areas. This will limit hunting opportunity on less than 3% of the Lanark County Community Forest, while additions to the Lanark County Community Forest in other less populated areas will continue to more than offset any losses to area hunters due to urban encroachment.

Recommendation 6.1 – THAT hunting and fishing remain as a permitted use on most County Forest Tracts.

Recommendation 6.2 – THAT hunters be permitted to utilize ORMV's on designated ORMV Trails throughout the County Forests as follows:

- To enable disabled or inform hunters to access the Lanark County Community Forest during all hunting seasons.
- To facilitate the retrieval of downed large game (deer, moose and bear).

Recommendation 6.3 – THAT only portable and temporary tree stands and ladders be permitted. Use of nails and hardware are not permitted.

Recommendation 6.4 – THAT further to Recommendation 6.1, hunting NOT be permitted on the following Lanark County Community Forest tracts of land (See Appendix "E").

7. Trapping

This set of guidelines gives direction to the County of Lanark when requests for trapping rights, on County properties, are received. County Staff will work closely with the Ministry of Natural Resources and the local chapter of the Ontario Fur Managers Federation to assign trappers to designated properties. Quotas for trappers are allocated by the Ministry of Natural Resources. Licenses for trappers are issued by the Ontario Fur Managers Federation. Under MNR's Management, the County properties were treated as Crown Lands. Now that the County is responsible for management, it should manage the Community Forest properties as would a private land owner, requiring trappers to apply for and obtain a letter of permission to trap the property. This letter is then filed with their license.

1. All trappers presently trapping County properties will require a letter of permission. This will be placed on their license with the Ontario Fur Managers Federation. The County will work closely with the local chapter of the Ontario Fur Managers Federation to obtain the names of active trappers and issue letters of permission.
2. If at any time it is felt that a trapper, assigned to a property, is not in compliance with the terms and conditions stated in their permit, the County will consider taking appropriate measures.

Recommendation 7.1 – THAT Trapping Permits be considered through Applications.

Recreational Use Policy

8. Bait Harvesting

This set of guidelines gives direction to the County of Lanark when requests for bait harvesting, on County properties, are received. County Staff will work closely with the Ministry of Natural Resources to assign bait fishers to designated properties.

1. All bait harvesters presently harvesting County properties will require a Letter of Permission.
2. If at any time it is felt that a bait harvester, assigned to a property, is not in compliance with the terms and conditions stated in their Permit, the County will consider taking appropriate measures.

Recommendation 8.1 – THAT Bait Fishing Permits be considered through Applications.

9. Harvesting of Non-Wood Forest Products

Gathering of mushrooms, fiddleheads and other naturally occurring edible and medicinal products has been growing substantially in popularity. While generally considered to be a healthy and harmless activity, there is growing concern, among experts, that over harvesting may be impacting the sustainability of some species in some locations. Working with Naturalists and interested groups, to educate users regarding appropriate harvesting practices, will be investigated.

Recommendation 9.1 – THAT the harvesting of non-prohibited, non-endangered, non-wood forest products be permitted for personal use only; AND THAT the County reserves the right to restrict harvesting, if warranted.

10. Prohibited Activities

The Lanark County Community Forest has traditionally been open to vehicular traffic largely due to expediency. While access had been enjoyed by many for legitimate purposes, it has unfortunately created difficulty in curtailing unwanted activities such as dumping, bush parties and fires. Also, some of the most excessive rutting of forest access roads is caused by 4 x 4 vehicles utilizing the Lanark County Community Forest during spring months. Only through restricting vehicular access, can we hope to curtail most unwanted activities.

Recommendation 10.1 – THAT the following uses or activities be prohibited within the Lanark County Community Forest:

- Operation of motorized vehicles, in excess of 400 kg gross vehicle weight (except on authorized access roads – signed).
- Littering, dumping or disposal of any foreign material.
- Open fires and cooking fires.
- Camping in unauthorized areas.
- Consumption of alcohol.
- Target practice (paintball).
- Cutting, pruning, digging or gathering of trees, shrubs, groundcover or firewood.
- Construction of unauthorized structures – permanent tree stands.

Recreational Use Policy

- Placement of unauthorized signs.
- Tapping of maple trees for personal use.
- Harvesting of species at risk (ex. Ginseng) in accordance with the *Endangered Species Act*.

11. Special Use

A number of agreements may be approved each year for individual events such as mountain bikes races, horseback riding and adventure racing. Longer term Use Agreements may be signed with Mountain Biking Clubs, resorts and other organizations. In each case, the event or activity must not result in significant environmental impact to the Lanark County Community Forest, or interfere with forestry operations. These Agreements do not grant exclusive use of the tract in question and should not interfere with other users. A Use Agreement, which includes proof of insurance, is required to protect the County.

Recommendation 11.1 – THAT Use Agreements, for single events and longer term use, be considered on an individual basis with consideration given to the following:

- Environment impacts associated with the event or use.
- Impact on other forest users.
- Compatibility or conflict with forestry operations.

Recommendation 11.2 – THAT organize events are not permitted without a valid Use Agreement in effect. This includes any activity which is advertised or if participants are charged an entry fee, but does not include organized hikes or nature walks.

Recreational Use Policy

APPENDIX “A” – Implementation Strategy

Achieving compliance will require a long term and multi-faceted approach, including education, partnerships and enforcement. Working cooperatively with the public and various user groups to build awareness, assist with monitoring and reduce conflicts will be critical.

Timelines

A period of grace will help to ensure that users are provided an opportunity to adjust and enter Agreements, if required. Assuming that the policy framework is adopted in 2009, it is recommended that the implementation of most changes not occur until the year after the Policy is adopted by County Council.

Information/Education

Informing and educating the public about changes to the permitted uses of the Lanark County Community Forest will take time, a varied approach and consistent effect. A standard “Code of Conduct” for trail users (Appendix “C”) will be adopted and widely disseminated. The following methods may be utilized to inform and educate users of the Lanark County Community Forest:

- The County Website.
- Direct contact with all members of the public who provided comments.
- A news release.
- A public open house in Lanark County and Lanark Highlands.
- Publication of a new Recreation Policy and Lanark County Community Forest Pamphlet.
- Completion of the Lanark County Community Forest Mapping.
- Effective and consistent signage and boundary marking.
- Displays at events throughout the County (fall fairs).

Stewardship

Many individual members of the public and organized groups have indicated a willingness to work cooperatively with County Staff to assist with a range of activities. While some effort will be required to establish and maintain effective partnerships, it would assist staff tremendously in keeping abreast of issues and concerns. Reporting prohibited activities, garbage clean-up days, trail maintenance and user education can all be accomplished more effectively with assistance from the public.

Conflict Resolution

Uses, activities and potential for conflicts will continue to evolve over time. Maintaining a Community Forest Working Group to provide recommendations to resolve issues as required will be an important ongoing requirement.

Enforcement

Although every effort will be made to achieve compliance by working cooperatively, enforcement might be required to alter behavior in some cases. Options that could be considered include the utilization of By-Law Enforcement Officers, working in cooperation with area OPP and the hiring of off-duty officers and Trail Wardens to conduct additional patrols in problem areas. Requests can also be made for the OPP S.A.V.E. Program, which is a mobile unit, which patrols areas on ORMV's, snowmobiles and boats. Again, successful enforcement will require a variety of techniques and a long-term commitment.

Recreational Use Policy

APPENDIX “B” – Code of Conduct for County Forest and Trail Users

These guidelines have been adapted from the Ontario Trails Council’s User Guidelines for shared-use trails. Cell phone usage might not be available in all areas. Be aware that the forest is used for big and small game hunting and tree harvesting. Use with caution. Contact Ministry of Natural Resources for the hunting season’s time.

- Expect and respect other trail and forest users.
- Keep to the right to allow other users to pass on your left. When stopping for a break, move to the side to allow others room to pass.
- Stay on the existing trail. Do not create new trails.
- Respect neighboring land owners by staying off private property and avoid excessive noise.
- Leave the trail as you found it. Whatever you pack in, pack out. Leave the wild flowers and wildlife for other to enjoy.
- Maintain control of your pets. Carry a leash for your dog and be prepared to use it. “Stoop & Flick” when waste is on the trail path.
- Use trails only according to the permitted uses indicated on the signage. Some trails are user specific i.e. hiking or snowmobile only trails.
- Some trails may close seasonally or during forestry operations. Obey trail closure signs.
- Most trails are wet and soft in the spring. Check the trail conditions. If you are leaving tracks over ½” deep, do not use the trail. If there are no signs posted, but weather conditions have been bad, do not use the trail.

In addition to the Hunting Etiquette, please follow the Trails User Code of Conduct

General Rules of Etiquette

1. Walkers & Hikers

Remember that on shared use trails there are a variety of other users enjoying the trail with you. If you have children in your group, make sure they are aware of any horses, dogs, bicycles, ORMV’s or snowmobiles passing.

When passing horses, say “hello” to help the horse know you are not something scary. If approaching from the front, stop and let the horse and rider pass unless the rider indicates otherwise. When approaching from the rear, ask if it is OK to pass, then proceed on the left (keep dogs leashed and close to you).

If you have a walking stick, do not raise it in the air, as the horse may think you are going to hit it.

Keep control of your pets, particularly when sharing the trail with cyclists, children, horses or snowmobiles.

If you have a large group, let the other users know its size when passing them, e.g. “Passing on the left, 15 hikers and 2 dogs, may we go by?”

Do not walk in groomed cross-country ski tracks.

Recreational Use Policy

2. Equestrians

Ride at a safe pace. Keep to a walk unless safety is certain and ground conditions are good so that no trail damage will occur. Never gallop.

When your vision of the trail ahead is restricted, slow down and control of your mount. Always assume that there may be another trail user ahead.

Ensure your horse is well mannered. Kicking, biting and excessive spooking are not safe on shared use trails. Train your horse to accept various experiences and other users. Ride with an experienced horse if your mount is nervous.

Keep to the right to allow other users to pass on your left. Help other users by telling them the safest and easiest way by.

Pass other users on the left, in single file, after receiving their permission. Allow them to get control of any pets and be especially alert for children.

Large groups of horses intimidate people. If you have a large trail ride in progress, pass other trail users in groups of six with spaces between. Inform the user you are passing of your group size, e.g. "four horses and three dogs, passing to your left, may we come by?"

Use the bridges for waterways.

In winter months, stay off of groomed ski trails. Only use groomed snowmobile trails, where permitted.

Children love to pet horses. Tell them how to approach your horse safely.

Never leave horses unattended.

3. Cyclists

Keep your pace safe and slow down to pass other trail users.

Slow down if your vision of the trail ahead is restricted. Always assume there may be another user ahead and be prepared to stop.

Yield the trail to hikers and horseback riders. Speak when you are about 30 feet away to alert them. Be careful when passing children or dogs, especially from behind. Allow the owner to control the dog before passing.

Some horses may be frightened by moving objects rapidly approaching them. Slow down and ask how to pass safely. The rider may indicate to continue at your present speed. If the horse reacts, stop and wait for the rider to regain control.

If you have a larger group, consider riding in groups of six with spaces between. When riding in a large group and passing other users, let them know your party size, e.g. "We are a party of 18 cyclists in three groups of six; may we pass on the left?"

Recreational Use Policy

Always use the bridges supplied for crossing waterways. Some trails are for hikers only. Respect those trails by only riding on trails for cycling. Use extra caution, at access points, and when crossing roads.

4. X-Country Skiing

Use common sense and personal awareness, particularly in intense cold or when sharing the trail with snowmobiles.

Keep to the right to allow other users to pass to your left. Be alert for other trail users and ski in control, particularly when your vision of the terrain ahead is restricted. Always assume that there could be someone up ahead and be prepared to stop.

Do not ski late in the day. Plan to be off the trail by dusk.

Carry sufficient supplies and clothing for unexpected eventualities.

Keep track of your progress and where you are. For remote areas, leave your itinerary and expected return time with someone. Obey all posted signs and warnings. Keep off closed trails.

Do not stop where you obstruct the trail or are not visible from above or at a bend.

Before merging onto a trail, look both ways (particularly uphill) and yield to others. When going downhill or passing others, ski in control to avoid the persons below and beside you.

The motion of X-Country Skiing may startle a horse. Do not scare horses by approaching silently, rapidly or waving your poles. When approaching from the front, stop and let them pass unless the rider indicates otherwise. If approaching from behind, alert the horse and rider from about 30 feet away with a friendly "hello". Ask the rider the best way to pass.

5. Snowmobile and ORMV Operators

Be safety conscious. Be aware. Ride with care. Stay on the designated trails. Off riding can injure vulnerable plants, crops and wildlife. Enjoy wildlife viewing opportunities, but avoid stressing any species. Avoid sudden stops and starts and quick directional changes with acceleration. Slow down when your vision of the trail ahead is restricted, at night or over unfamiliar terrain. Always assume there could be other trail users ahead and be prepared for a controlled stop. Keep your speed and engine rpm low and steady when approaching and passing other trail users, homes, etc..

Slow down and be courteous when approaching or passing other trail users. Communicate with the riders of horses and those walking pets. Your machine may scare a horse. When approaching from the front, stop and let them pass unless the rider indicates otherwise. Approach slowly from behind and allow the rider to signal when it is OK to pass. If the horse reacts, stop and wait for the rider to regain control. Do not use horns as warnings around horses.

Park and dismount from your machine and walk to sensitive, scenic, historic and cultural areas. Remove your helmet when talking to other trail users. Do not ride on groomed X-Country Ski tracts. When parking along a trail, park machines in single file, over to the right

Recreational Use Policy

as far as possible, to avoid obstructing the trail. Ensure you are visible and turn off your machine. Obey all regulations and by-laws regulating the operation of your snowmobile or ORMV.

Recreational Use Policy

APPENDIX “C” – Criteria for Motorized Trail Consideration

Applications for trail routes shall be reviewed by County Staff and the LCMTTC thereof. If the trail is deemed satisfactory and all conditions are met, a Use Agreement (Appendix “E”) will be presented to council. Proposals for motorized use of specific trails within the Lanark County Forests must meet the following criteria and will have an Agreement with the County of Lanark:

1. Ecological Sustainability

The ecological impact of the trail must be minimal and not harm the environmental sustainability of the area. The applicable Conservation Authority, Ministry of Natural Resources and/or local municipal comments (is there suitable parking) may be consulted for opinion on ecological suitability.

2. Physical Sustainability

The trail must be of suitable width and navigability for off-road vehicle use and be able to withstand the human and natural forces acting upon them without unreasonably degrading the trail bed. Year round trail stewardship is sought through cooperation between user groups.

3. Social Sustainability

The rights of adjacent land owners and other affected parties must be taken into consideration, including concerns over dust, noise and trespass to property. Conflicts with residential areas must be avoided whenever possible. Spatial separation and site specific characteristics, or the lack thereof, shall be given due consideration when selecting a trail location.

4. Compliance with Legislation

The proposed trail uses must conform to all applicable legislation, including the provincial *Highway Traffic Act*, Ontario Regulation 316/03, *Off-Road Vehicles Act*, *Motorized Snow Vehicles Act*, *Trespass to Property Act* and Municipal By-Laws.

5. Trespass to Property

The proposed trail layout must not lead users to private property or utility corridors, unless specific written permission exists for use of the private or utility-owned lands. Deviation from an established trail is illegal under the *Trespass to Property Act*.

6. Tread Lightly Principles

Proposed trail uses must be consistent with the principles and guidelines of the non-profit *Tread Lightly* organization which promotes land stewardship, safety in recreational sport and environmental messaging.

7. Trail Permit System

Motorized recreation clubs must apply for permission to use the Lanark County Forests and must belong to a provincially incorporated association e.g. (Clubs, Ontario Federation of Trail Riders), and have a permit system (e.g. OTC Gold Pass), Trail Warden System, Trail Maintenance Program and Third Party Liability Insurance.

Independent riders (ie: not belonging to a motorized recreation club) using the Lanark County Forests Trails must meet the Terms and Conditions of usage and insurance requirements of the Lanark County Municipal Trails Corporation.

Recreational Use Policy

8. Speed Limits

Please obey speed limits as posted.

9. Noise Limits and Spark Arrestors

In order to ensure consistency with Ontario Regulation 316/03, no vehicle exhaust system shall be modified in such a manner that would result in increased noise emissions.

Recreational Use Policy

APPENDIX "D" – General Use and Indemnity Sample Agreement Template LAND USE PERMIT

	PERMIT #
NAME OF APPLICANT:	TELEPHONE #
AS TRUSTEE FOR:	
POSTAL ADDRESS:	
CITY/TOWN/VILLAGE:	
PROVINCE/STATE:	
COUNTRY:	

LOCATION OF LAND:

LOT:	CONC./BLOCK:	TOWNSHIP:	MUNICIPALITY:
			AREA IN HA.:

AS PER SKETCH AND DESCRIPTION WHICH IS ATTACHED TO THE ORIGINAL PERMIT FOR THIS SITE AND FORMS PART OF THIS PERMIT. A COPY OF THIS SKETCH AND DESCRIPTION IS ON FILE AT THE COUNTY OF LANARK PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT AND AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION BY THE APPLICANT AT ANY TIME DURING NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS.

FEES(S) AND PERIOD OF LAND USE:

AMOUNT DUE:	ANNUAL FEE (SUBJECT TO ADJUSTMENT:	EFFECTIVE DATE:	TERMINATION DATE:

NOTE: TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL LAND USE PERMITS ARE ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS FORM.

ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO THIS PERMIT:

--

APPLICANT'S CERTIFICATION:

I CERTIFY THAT THE INFORMATION GIVEN HEREIN IS TRUE AND COMPLETE AND THAT I HAVE READ, FULLY UNDERSTAND AND AGREE TO COMPLY WITH ALL OF THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS SET OUT IN THIS PERMIT AND THAT I AM OF THE AGE OF MAJORITY. I AGREE THAT THIS IS THE COMPLETE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PARTIES HERETO.

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:	DATE SIGNED:

COUNTY USE:

UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE REGULATIONS OF THE COUNTY OF LANARK, THIS LAND USE PERMIT IS HEREBY ISSUED TO THE ABOVE APPLICANT, SUBJECT TO ALL TERMS AND CONDITIONS CONTAINED HEREIN AND NO OTHER, AND THESE SHALL BE THE EXCLUSIVE TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO THE USE OF THIS LAND.

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY OFFICIAL:	DATE SIGNED:

Recreational Use Policy

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

IT IS AGREED BY THE PARTIES HERETO THAT:

1. THIS LAND USE PERMIT GIVES THE PERMITTEE ONLY THE RIGHT TO USE THE DESCRIBED SITE FOR THE PURPOSE SPECIFIED IN THIS PERMIT AND DOES NOT CONVEY ANY RIGHT, TITLE OR INTEREST IN THE LAND OR IN ANY TREES STANDING, GROWING OR BEING ON THE PERMIT AREA, OR IN ANY MINERALS, SAND GRAVEL OR SIMILAR MATERIALS, IN, ON, OR UNDER THE LAND. USE OF ANY SUCH MATERIALS, UNLESS AUTHORIZED HEREIN, MUST HAVE SEPARATE WRITTEN APPROVAL FROM THE COUNTY OFFICIAL. WITHOUT LIMITING THE GENERALITY OF THE FOREGOING, THIS AGREEMENT IS A LAND USE PERMIT AND IS NOT A GRANT, LICENSE OF OCCUPATION, OR LEASE OF LAND.
2.
 - (i) A PERMITTEE IS AN OCCUPIER UNDER THE TRESPASS TO PROPERTY ACT AND THE OCCUPIER'S LIABILITY ACT AND SHALL TAKE SUCH CARE AS IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CASE IS REASONABLE TO SEE THAT PERSONS ENTERING ON THE PREMISES, AND THE PROPERTY BROUGHT ON THE PREMISES BY THESE PERSONS, ARE REASONABLY SAFE WHILE ON THE PREMISES;
 - (ii) ANY POSTING OF SIGNS OR NOTICES PURSUANT TO THE TRESPASS TO PROPERTY ACT AND THE OCCUPIER'S LIABILITY ACT, ON THE LAND USE PERMIT AREA, SHALL BE SUBJECT TO PRIOR APPROVAL OF THE ISSUING OFFICER;
 - (iii) THE PERMITTEE AGREES TO REMOVE ALL SIGNS OR NOTICES ON TERMINATION OF THE PERMIT OF AT THE DIRECTION OF THE ISSUING OFFICER.
3. ANY BUILDING, STRUCTURE, OR WORKS, CREATED OR TO BE ERRECTED ON THE SITE, OR ANY ALTERATION, RENOVATION, ENLARGEMENT OR RECONSTRUCTION OF IMPROVEMENTS, INCLUDING ANY LAND IMPROVEMENTS OR ALTERATIONS WHATSOEVER, MUST BE APPROVED BY A WORK PERMIT AND ANY OTHER APPLICABLE AGENCIES OR AUTHORITIES. THE APPLICATION TO THE COUNTY OFFICIAL FOR APPROVAL MUST CONTAIN A WRITTEN DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK AND THE PERMITTEE'S EVALUATION OF THE COST OF THE WORK.
4. THE PERMITTEE WILL MAINTAIN THE SITE IN A CLEAN, SANITARY AND FIRE-SAFE CONDITION IN ACCORDANCE WITH ANY APPLICABLE ACTS OR MUNICIPAL BY-LAWS, AND DISPOSE OF ALL GARBAGE IN AN APPROVED WASTE DISPOSAL SITE.
5. ACCESS TO THE SITE, AND QUALITY OF THAT ACCESS, IS STRICTLY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PERMITTEE. A WORK PERMIT MUST BE OBTAINED FROM THE COUNTY OFFICIAL PRIOR TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF ANY ROAD OR OTHER ACCESS FACILITIES. THE COUNTY RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ENTER AND INSPECT THE SITE AND THE RIGHT OF ACCESS FOR COUNTY PURPOSES.
6. IF THE TERMS OF THIS LAND USE PERMIT IS LONGER THAN ON YEAR, THE PERMITTEE WILL PAY THE PRESCRIBED ANNUAL FEE, WHICH IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE, AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH YEAR OF THE TERM. THE COUNTY OFFICIAL MAY TERMINATE THIS PERMIT IF THE FEE IS NOT PAID BY THE DUE DATE.
7. THE PERMITTEE WILL PAY ANY MUNICIPAL OR OTHER TAXES THAT MAY BE LEVIED AGAINST THE PROPERTY, IN THE MANNER PRESCRIBED BY THE TAXING AUTHORITY.
8. THE PERMITTEE COVENANTS TO INDEMNIFY AND FOREVER SAVE AND KEEP HARMLESS THE COUNTY, ITS OFFICER, SERVANTS AND AGENTS FROM AND AGAINST ANY AND ALL CLAIMS, DEMANDS, SUITS, ACTIONS, DAMAGES, LOSS, COST OR EXPENSES ARISING OUT OF ANY INJURY TO PERSONS INCLUDING DEATH, OR LOSS OR DAMAGE TO PROPERTY OF OTHERS WHICH MAY BE OR BE ALLEGED TO BE CAUSED BY OR SUFFERED AS A RESULT OF OR IN ANY MANNER ASSOCIATED WITH THE EXERCISE OF ANY RIGHT OR PRIVILEGE GRANTED TO THE PERMITTEE BY THIS LAND USE PERIT.
9. THE LAND USE PERMIT SHALL NOT BE ASSIGNED OR TRANSFERRED, MORTGAGED OR PLEDGED.
10. THIS PERMIT WILL AUTOMATICALLY TERMINATE, AND ALL RIGHTS OF THE PERMITTEE WILL EXPIRE, ON THE STATED TERMINATION DATE, OR ON THE DEATH OR BANKRUPTCY OF THE PERMITTEE, OR ON THE WINDING UP OF DISSOLUTION OF THE PERMITTEE'S AFFAIRS. THIS CONDITION CANNOT BE WAIVED BY THE COUNTY AND, IF FURTHER USE OF THE LAND IS DESIRED, AN APPLICATION FOR A NEW LAND USE PERMIT MUST BE SUBMITTED.
11. THE COUNTY OFFICIAL MAY REFUSE TO ISSUE A NEW PERMIT, OR MAY, UPON SIXTY (60) DAYS WRITTEN NOTICE OR SUCH FURTHER PERIOD OF TIME AS THE COUNTY OFFICIAL PRESCRIBES, REVOKE OR CANCEL AN EXISTING PERMIT WHEN:
 - (i) THE PERMITTEE HAS VIOLATED ANY CONDITION OR PROVISION OF THIS PERMIT;
 - (ii) THE HEREBY AUTHORIZED LAND USE COMES INTO CONFLICT WITH A NEW OR REVISED LAND ZONING PLAN; OR
 - (iii) IT IS, IN THE OPINION OF THE COUNTY OFFICIAL, CONSIDERED TO BE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST SO TO DO. IT IS, HEREBY AGREED THAT ANY DECISION, MADE BY THE COUNTY OFFICIAL PURSUANT TO THIS CONDITION, IS FINAL.
12. UPON EXPIRY, CANCELLATION, REVOCATION OR OTHER TERMINATION OF THE LAND USE PERMIT:
 - (i) UNLESS A COUNTY OFFICIAL ORDERS OTHERWISE, ALL IMPROVEMENTS, PROPERTY OR OTHER ASSETS REMAINING ON THE SITE AUTOMATICALLY BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE COUNTY AND THE COUNTY HAS NO OBLIGATION WHATSOEVER TO PAY COMPENSATION THEREFOR;
 - (ii) THE PERMITTEE WILL, AT THE COUNTY OFFICIAL'S REQUEST, REMOVE THE IMPROVEMENTS PROPERTY OR OTHER ASSETS FROM THE SITE, AND LEAVE THE SITE IN A CLEAN AND SAFE CONDITION, RESTORED AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE TO IT'S ORIGINAL STATE, EXCEPT WHERE THE REQUIREMENT TO RESTORE HAS BEEN WAIVED, IN WRITING, BY THE COUNTY OFFICIAL;
 - (iii) WHERE THE PERMITTEE FAILS TO REMOVE THE IMPROVEMENTS, PROPERTY OR OTHER ASSETS FROM THE SITE AND/OR FAILS TO RESTORE THE SITE TO A CLEAN AND SAFE CONDITION, WITHIN A REASONABLE TIME, THE PERMITTEE WILL PAY TO THE COUNTY ANY COSTS INCURRED BY THE COUNTY IN, DISPOSING OF OR DESTROYING THE SAID IMPROVEMENTS, PROPERTY OR OTHER ASSETS PURSUANT TO SUBJECT 24(5) OF THE *PUBLIC LANDS ACT*, AND/OR IN RESTORING THE SITE TO A CLEAN AND SAFE CONDITION.
13. THE PERMITTEE ACKNOWLEDGES AND CONFIRMS THAT:
 - (i) UPON TERMINATION OF THIS PERMIT, THE DECISION TO ISSUE A NEW PERMIT IS AT THE SOLE DISCRETION OF THE COUNTY OFFICIAL, AND THE PERMITTEE HAS NO RIGHT TO, NOR REASONABLE EXPECTATION FOR, THE ISSUANCE OF A NEW PERMIT BASED ON PRIOR USE OF THE LAND;
 - (ii) THE SUCCESSIVE ISSUANCE OF ANY PERMIT OR PERMITS FOR THE USE OF THE LAND DESCRIBED HEREIN, WILL NOT CREATE ANY FUTURE RIGHTS OR INTEREST WHATSOEVER IN THE LAND;
 - (iii) SHOULD ANY IMPROVEMENTS WHATSOEVER BE MADE TO OR ON THE LAND, THIS WILL NOT CONFER UPON THE PERMITTEE ANY RIGHT TO USE THE LAND OTHER THAN WITHIN THE TERMS OF THIS PERMIT, NOR WILL IT GIVE THE PERMITTEE ANY RIGHT TO AN EXPECTATION OF FUTURE PERMITS;
 - (iv) NO ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS TO THIS PERMIT, IF INSERTED ON THE FACE HEREOF, SHALL ALTER, VARY, QUALIFY, OR DIMINISH THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS SET OUT ON THIS PAGE;
 - (v) THERE ARE NO OTHER REPRESENTATIONS, WARRANTIES OR CONDITIONS BETWEEN THE COUNTY AND THE PERMITTEE, FOR THE USE OF THE LAND.

Recreational Use Policy

APPENDIX “E” – Properties with Prohibited Activities

1. Baird Property – West Half Lot 11, Concession IV, Lanark (89 acres)

This property has good access, an interpretive trail, picnic site, a boardwalk and some characteristics of old growth forest and red pin plantations.

Recommended Uses:

- Education.
- Non-motorized, recreational use of the trails.
- Protected portions with old growth characteristics (for research) with potential to develop uses for disabled.

Recommended Restrictions:

- No motorized vehicles.
- No forest harvesting, except in the red pine plantation to maintain the health of the stand.

2. Pakenham Property (southern portion) – Lot 11, Concession VI, Pakenham (a to be determined portion of the 1,000 acres)

It is recommended that there be a restricted use as it represents the features of Champlain Sea Geology. The property contains good representations of white pine over granite, as well as unique and evident geological features (the Champlain Sea). The property contains part of the Pakenham Complex, a *Provincially Significant Wetland*. This is the only block of Community Forests found in Mississippi Mills. There is strong public interest in passive recreation on the property.

Recommended Uses:

- Protection of and research into the unique features of the site: white pine over granite and the geological features of the Champlain Sea.
- Passive recreation such as hiking and walking and, in time, the possible development of compatible-use trails by organized groups.
- Education.
- All uses, except motorized vehicles.

Recommended Restrictions:

- Forest harvesting in plantation only.
- James Property (White) – Part of Lots 17 and 18, Concession II and III, Part of Lots 18 and 17, Concession III, Darling Township (488 acres).

The James Property is suitable for use for horseback trail riding for organized groups. This property has good access and a number of established trails. The adjoining Crown lands also have an extensive network of established trails. There is also an area that could be used for parking trailers. This property would also be suitable for cross-country skiing in the wintertime.

Recreational Use Policy

3.	Desalvo property	Montague	91 ha
	Peckett property	North Burgess	121 ha
	Amyot property	Pakenham	405 ha
	Conboy property	South Sherbrooke	101 ha
	Young property	Drummond	25 ha
	Total		743 ha

This constitutes 16% of the Community Forest land base. It should also be noted that in most cases only portions of individual properties have the site potential to warrant forest management. The remainder of the property will not have management activities. The five properties listed have had forest management activities previously, mostly in the form of tree planting and stand improvement. The Amyot property, in particular, has had large amounts of public money invested in forest management; Tree planting 22 ha, stand improvement 113 ha and pruning 35 ha. In most cases, this investment was intended to re-establish forests on degraded properties and was done in a manner that depended on future management in the form of thinning. Failure to carry on with the long term plan will not only result in the loss of initial investment but also in the destruction of trees due to lack of prescribed thinning.

Recommended Uses:

- Education, non-motorized, recreational use of the trails.