

**March 27 2020**

**Directed to:**

**GEORGIAN BLUFFS COUNCIL**

Please accept our letter and photographs as further information as you continue on the important work of finalizing a Recreation and Trails Masterplan. We have lived in Georgian Bluffs, formerly Keppel Township since 1975 at 464280 Concession 24. We love the area and over the years have run, biked skied tobogganed and walked dogs for many, many hours on our local trails as we have enjoyed our neighbourhood.

We have attended two of the meeting set up by the Consultants and one Council meeting to offer feedback and to hear suggestions. We believe that the draft plan is headed in the right direction by suggesting there be designated uses for the trails but have some concerns about what this would mean.

When we look at the various possible and present uses of the current trails we see there is hiking, walking, running, skiing, snowmobiling, ATV use, horse back riding, birdwatching, forest bathing, dog exercising et cetera. Within the above activities there is a clear hierarchy of activities that have greater impact on the trail itself and the surrounding populace. For example, birdwatching has a very minimal impact as it requires quiet and only leaves foot prints, while ATV use can be very damaging to the trails leaving significant ruts in soft areas, damaging sensitive flora and creating excessive noise pollution for neighbouring families.

When the Council selects those trails which are capable of sustaining heavy traffic such as ATVs and those which are only able to handle minimal impact activities it is imperative that local neighbourhoods are consulted regarding their use of these trails and their experience witnessing what works best. Council has to be sure that if a trail is to designated multi use that it does not then negate the use of foot traffic because of the noise and damage that the ATV use will cause. This would include ensuring that the trail base is strong enough to prevent the damage that motorized traffic can create.

To illustrate this point we will speak to two sections in particular. The W Hill which has been deemed a multi use trail and the south section of the Coles Side Road (The Kemble Mountain Trail /the Bruce Trail Coles Side Trail). We will include photographs of both sections to demonstrate our concern.

## **W Hill**

This section of road has been closed to ongoing vehicle traffic and labelled a multi use trail; including, horse back riding, biking, hiking, skiing and ATVs. This is a beautiful section of our neighbourhood and the township did a good job preparing the road for it's new multi use designation. Unfortunately since then we are beginning to see rutting in the road created by ATVs. This rutting exacerbates the erosion caused by heavy rain. Though at this point the road is not damaged to the point of not being safely walkable the potential for that to happen is definitely there.

There is also the issue of noise pollution as multiple ATV's often travel together as a group past the homes leading to W Hill from either the north or south.





## **Coles Side Road**

### **(The Kemble Mountain Trail / the Bruce Trail Coles Side Trail)**

Though a beautiful trail, this trail is now damaged past the point of being walkable. Sections have become so badly rutted by ATV traffic that even the ATV's have moved off the original path creating a second rutted path and in some locations even a third rutted path. There are even places where the ATV's have gone into the fields on the left or right of the original road allowance to bypass the mess that has been created. There has been some suggestion that the damage has been created by mud trucks. This does not appear to be the case as based on the measured size of the ruts the axle width of the vehicles used is no more than 50 inches. We have a small Ford Ranger with regular tires, the axle width is 70 inches.

Historically the Bruce Trail Association has been an excellent steward of their trails on both private and public land. The trails are maintained and kept safe. No one is prepared to take ownership of the damage on our public trails when it is caused by ATV use. The question is, who should be responsible for correcting this damage?

Unless this question is addressed in the trail plan, trails that are designated multipurpose use become single purpose use over time because of the ATV damage.







### **Recommendations:**

- The nature of all trails be evaluated to determine what type of use each trail can handle without sustaining damage as you move towards a trail plan. Consultation with the Bruce Trail Association, naturalist organizations and community members should be part of this process.
- Determine who is responsible for repairing the damage that currently exists
- Developing a policy that protects our trails from damage and assigns responsibility if damage occurs.
- Have adequate signage to designate trail usage and have barriers in place to prevent inappropriate use. An example of how this has been done effectively is the rail trail between Meaford and Collingwood. There are large barriers at each intersection and signage designating acceptable use.
- Develop a system of monitoring and enforcing appropriate trail use

We are very lucky to have some wonderful parks in our area as well. These parks offer spectacular scenery and options for outdoor recreation. Proper maintenance of the parks is very important for their enjoyment and we will site two in particular.

The Colpoy's Bay lookout is a wonderful place, however the driveway servicing this park is desperately in need of gravel and repair. As one avoids the deep holes one moves more onto the shoulder further damaging the area.

We think Cedar Hill Park is one of the gems of the Township with a magnificent view and wonderful swimming. We have noticed over the last 10 years an increased use of this park and some added amenities would help with this increased traffic. For example, a couple of extra garbage facilities so prevent littering. Also we don't think that there has been a new picnic table put there in many years and this would be a very welcome addition to add to the enjoyment of people's stay. We have noticed in another area that concrete picnic table have been used which would be more durable and less susceptible to man and weather damage. The boat launch here has also suffered damage this winter and will need repair if it is to be useful. It is a very nice place to launch canoes and kayaks. This park is also heavily used by divers and perhaps consulting these people would lead to some other recommendations to make their activities more enjoyable.

Sincerely;  
Clark and Ann Schneider

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