

July 8th, 2020

Presentation to : Committee as a Whole, Georgian Bluffs Council

RE: Implementation of the Recreation and Trail Master Plan

Presentation by Clark and Ann Schneider



First we would like to thank Council for initiating the development of a Recreation and Trails Master Plan (RTP). The community consultations and frequent opportunities to give input were very much appreciated.

It is good to see congruency between the Strategic plan and RTP

### **Strategic Plan**

**Objective 3:** Demonstrate and Enhance Environmental Stewardship:

2. Protect environmentally sensitive areas and habitat

**Objective 4.** Increase Available Recreational and Social Opportunities

On March 27th, 2020 , we directed a letter to all council members about RTP and its recommendations. Thank you to those that responded to the letter. Much of what was in that letter is still salient today so the letter has been attached.

As you move forward with the Implementation of RTP we would like focus on the following point from that letter:

- All trail use designations must be in harmony with the Niagara Escarpment Commission use directives

**Here is an excerpt from an email we directed to The Niagara Escarpment Commission on June 29th, 2020**

My partner Clark and I have been very active with the constituent trails group in Georgian Bluffs. Our focus has been on requesting that trail use is determined by a solid assessment of the natural environment that will look at what kind of traffic a trail can sustain without damage to the eco system. We are happy that the Recreation and Trails Masterplan prepared by Monteith and Brown, commissioned by the Georgian Bluffs council, concurs.

Their report speaks of:

- a hierarchy of trail use
- evaluation of impact on environmental areas
- evaluation of impact on adjacent area
- the ability to create a safe trail experience for users

At this point we are very concerned about two areas:

The Curley Harnden Trail (Bruce Caves). The other trail that completes the loop is the Len Holley Trail.

Coles Trail

Both of these areas have sensitive ecosystems in need of protection.

### **Here is an excerpt from the response we received:**

I appreciate the work you and your partner are doing in Georgian Bluffs on the Trails master plan and the input you have provided. I acknowledge your concerns about the delays and want to reassure you we are moving forward with our investigation on these two issues. As these two sites are contraventions of our ACT, I can not provide any further details, however I wanted to let you know we have followed up with Town staff and the file is now moving forward.

We were not previously aware that Georgian Bluffs was in contravention of the NEC Act so we are strengthening that recommendation to:

- **All new trail designations must be in full compliance with the NEC Act. All current trail designations that are not in compliance with NEC Act must be re designated and both active and passive measures must be put in place to ensure that non permitted use stops**

**In addition if council in their planning follows the following points from the RTP action plan with a few additions we believe they will be meeting their Strategic Plan Objective.**

**Strategic Plan**

**Objective 3: Demonstrate and Enhance Environmental Stewardship:**

## **2. Protect environmentally sensitive areas and habitat**

### **RTP Action Plan points**

**11- excerpt- At a minimum, give considerations to the type of trail that may be required based on an evaluation of impacts on environmental areas, adjacent land uses, costs required to develop a trail, and the ability to create a safe trail experience for users.**

#### **Here we would add:**

**Ensure that trail surface can sustain designated use without damage to the trail surface and surrounding ecosystem**

**In addition to cost required to develop a trail ongoing maintenance cost must be addressed.**

**12- Coordinate trail development planning, funding and the potential to link trail systems with partners including, but not limited to, the County of Grey and the County of Bruce, the Niagara Escarpment Commission, the Bruce Trail Conservancy, and the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority.**

#### **Here we would add:**

**Consultation with constituents in the vicinity of specific trails.**

**13 - ≥ Work with local law enforcement agencies, municipal by-law enforcement staff and local motorized and non-motorized trail clubs to develop a strategy aimed at discouraging non permitted uses and illegal activities from occurring within municipal trails.**

#### **Here we would add:**

**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.**