

Report PDR-PCD-35-16

To: Chair McQueen and Members of the Planning and Community Development Committee
From: Sarah Morrison, Intermediate Planner
Meeting Date: October 13, 2016
Subject: **Recreational Forest Trails Master Plan**
Status: Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution PCD118-16; Endorsed by County Council November 1, 2016 per Resolution CC138-16;

Recommendation(s)

1. **THAT Report PDR-PCD-35-16 be received and;**
2. **THAT \$20,000 be considered in the 2017 budget to complete a Recreational Forest Trails Master Plan using funds from the Trails Reserve.**

Background

A report was presented to the September 22, 2016 Planning and Community Development Committee, regarding a request to use a County Forest Property for ATV use. There was significant opposition for the proposed use by existing users of the trails, as well as considerable support from ATV enthusiasts. Committee determined that it would be more appropriate if a comprehensive Recreational Trails Master Plan be completed for all of the forest properties within the County to determine what uses should be permitted on the various trails. This Plan would help direct trail user groups to more appropriate properties for their respective activities. The ATV request for use in the forest was deferred until the comprehensive report has been completed.

Overview

The Forest Recreation Trails Master Plan is a document that would set out the direction for the future years ahead. It would outline the vision, goals and objectives necessary to conserve the County Forests while considering the recreational needs of the community. The Management Plan should be updated every 10 years to best consider recreational changes, conservation considerations and economic development.

Plan Elements

The elements of the plan will include each of the following:

- Access and recreation management
- Natural features
- Risk Management
- Community involvement, public education and awareness
- Economic development/tourism
- Implementation plan

Strategy

The intent of the plan will be to critically assess each of the plan elements and set out a process in order to achieve this assessment.

- Define the process
- Plan elements

Considerations

- Staff time and hiring of a consultant
The project will require outside assistance but existing staff resources will also be utilized to complete the study. It is anticipated that a consultant will be hired to help facilitate public meetings and coordinate all of the information. Staff will assist in the meetings as well as coordinate the report with all of the collected information.
- Public consultation/user survey/special interest groups
As noted, staff would like to hire a consultant to assist in facilitating the public meetings and consultation process that will facilitate all user groups and engage the public to gather as much information as possible.
- Timelines
The study would be completed prior to the end of 2017. Gathering information from each user group from all of the seasons is essential.
- It is also worth considering looking at the CP Rail Trail at this time and create an overall Recreational Trails Master Plan.

Financial / Staffing / Legal / Information Technology

Considerations

It is recommended that \$20,000 be included in the Forest Trails budget for 2017 with the funds coming from the Trails Reserve. The project will be completed with the assistance of a consultant; however a significant portion will also be completed by staff.

Link to Strategic Goals / Priorities

3.5 Protect and conserve natural and cultural heritage resources and landscapes, including those that offer scenic value and habitat preservation.

3.7 Continue to implement the Grey County Recreational Trails Strategy and seek opportunities to work with others to expand the County-wide trails network.

Respectfully submitted by,

Sarah Morrison, Hons. BA, MCIP, RPP
Intermediate Planner

Director Sign Off: *Randy Scherzer*