

To:	Chair and Members of Forest Management Plan Advisory Committee
Committee Date:	March 10, 2021
Subject / Report No:	Addendum to PDR-FM-06-21
Title:	Final Draft of the Forest Management Plan
Prepared by:	Sarah Johnson
Reviewed by:	Randy Scherzer
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All
Status:	Endorsed by the Forest Management Plan Advisory Committee through resolution FM01-21; Adopted as presented through resolution CW62-21; Endorsed by Grey County Council CC34-21

Recommendation

1. **That Addendum to Report PDR-FM-06-21 regarding updates to the Forest Management Plan be received; and**
2. **That the Final Draft Forest Management Plan be adopted and approved as presented; and**
3. **That following approval of the Forest Management Plan, that the Forest Management Plan Advisory Committee be dissolved.**

Executive Summary

The Forest Management Plan describes how the County Forests are to be managed over a 20-year period. The current Forest Management Plan was adopted by County Council in 2003 and requires updating.

A Forest Management Plan update has been completed by Grey Sauble Conservation Authority staff in consultation with County staff and the Forest Management Plan Advisory Committee. The draft Plan has gone through public consultation. A revised draft of the Plan was prepared based on discussions with the Forest Management Plan Advisory Committee. These changes have been completed and staff are recommending

that the final draft be endorsed by the Advisory Committee and to recommend that this be brought forward to County Council for approval.

Background and Discussion

Report [PDR-FM-06-21](#) was presented at the December 16, 2020 Forest Management Plan Advisory Committee (FMPAC) meeting. The report provided a draft Forest Management Plan (FMP) and outlined potential amendments based on feedback received as part of the public consultation. The potential amendments that were discussed with the FMPAC included renaming of some of the County Forests, whether or not maple syrup/sap or beehive activities should be considered within County Forests, as well as discussion regarding First Nations and Metis traditional land acknowledgements. FMPAC provided recommendations regarding these topic matters and staff have made some further revisions to the FMP as outlined below.

Forest Names

This is an administrative item and for information purposes, a number of the Forest Properties held names that were not always unique or they had a name that was too broad of a location (i.e. there were a few that contained road names, which could provide issues in an emergency to locate the property). As such, Planning staff, in consultation with Grey Roots, communications staff, conservations authorities and Saugeen Ojibway Nation, will be proposing to rename 19 out of the 45 County forest properties in accordance with the County's asset naming policy and procedures. If supported by Council, these new names will be reflected in the final FMP. A separate report discussing this matter was brought forward to Committee of the Whole on February 25 – [PDR-CW-05-21](#).

Maple Syrup/Honey

Through the consultation it was determined that a few of our properties were being used or were desired to be used for the purposes of making maple syrup/sap collection or situating beehives. FMPAC recommended that wording be added to the FMP that addressed this matter in a broad sense, evaluating these types of requests on a case-by case basis, and utilizing the tests from Section 7 of the RTMP to evaluate these requests. If a request is evaluated, and it has been determined that any risks can be mitigated/minimized, staff would then work with Purchasing staff to offer these opportunities through an RFP/tender process and work with agreement/Legal staff on preparing an agreement with the operator.

Foraging

Along the same vein as the above noted uses, foraging has also come up as a potential permitted use in County Forest Properties. Based on the discussion with FMPAC, the FMP has been updated to reflect that permissions for foraging only be permitted for personal consumption and that remaining on the trails is required and that overharvesting is not permitted. The FMP has also been revised to include wording to address protecting species at risk.

First Nations and Metis Acknowledgement

Staff were contacted by the Metis Nation of Ontario (MNO) regarding the FMP and the request for them to hunt in County forest properties. With respect to hunting in County Forests, all hunters must abide by provincial rules and regulations where hunting is permitted. MNO also requested consideration of wording to be included in the Plan acknowledging the Metis.

FMPAC recommended that any traditional land acknowledgement encompass and align with a broader, corporate, county-wide policy or plan. With regard to this, Report CCR-CW-03-21 was presented at the February 11th Committee of the Whole meeting and recommended a First Nations Land Acknowledgement be approved by Council. Council approved the policy on February 25, 2021. As per the approved policy, the traditional land acknowledgement has been included in the final draft of the FMP.

Next Steps

Based on the changes made to the FMP as highlighted in this report and as discussed with FMPAC at the previous meeting, it is recommended that FMPAC endorse the final draft Forest Management Plan and to recommend that this be brought forward to County Council for approval.

With the Committee's support, staff will prepare a report and include this final draft of the FMP and present it to Committee of the Whole/Council later in March or early in April. Attached to this report is a link to the final draft of the FMP and related reports.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

Although the province discontinued its "agreement forest" program many years ago, those County Forest properties which were formerly provincial "agreement forests" must not be used "for any purpose that is inconsistent with forestry purposes" without the approval of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (*Forestry Act*, s. 2(3)).

Financial and Resource Implications

This project is being completed by Planning and GSCA contract staff with a total budget of \$60,000 which has been spread over a 3-year period. Most of the expense for this project was updating the forest inventory data for each County Forest tract which has been completed by GSCA staff and commenced in 2017. Once the FMP has been finalized and approved by Council, there will not be any further costs anticipated beyond the regular budgeted forest maintenance as part of the existing contract with Grey Sauble Conservation Authority. Any enhancements to the County Forest Trails will be addressed through the Recreational Trails Master Plan and be part of future budget considerations. Through the discussions with FMPAC, the need for sustainable harvest practices has been prioritized, while also trying to ensure that stable income is provided to offset forest maintenance costs.

Relevant Consultation

- ☒ Internal – Clerk’s, Legal Services, Transportation Services, Tourism, Economic Development, Finance
- ☒ External – Municipalities, First Nations, Metis, Conservation Authorities and agencies were consulted as part of this review. Interested public members and groups were also engaged.

Appendices and Attachments

[Final Draft Grey County Forest Management Plan Appendices](#)

[Current Forest Management Plan](#)

[PDR-CW-12-19 Forest Management Plan Advisory Committee Report](#)

[PDR-FM-06-21 Updates to the Forest Management Plan](#)

[PDR-CW-05-21 Forest Renaming Report](#)

[CCR-CW-03-21 Land Acknowledgement Policy](#)