

To:	Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	March 25, 2021
Subject / Report No:	PDR-CW-11-21
Title:	Forest Management Plan
Prepared by:	Sarah Johnson
Reviewed by:	Randy Scherzer
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All
Status:	

Recommendation

1. **That Report PDR-CW-11-21 regarding the updated Forest Management Plan as recommended by the Forest Management Plan Advisory Committee be received; and**
2. **That the Forestry Management Plan be endorsed; and**
3. **That any future revenue from sustainable forest management be used to protect the overall health and preservation of Grey County forests; and**
4. **That following approval of the Forest Management Plan, correspondence be sent to the members of the Committee thanking them for their guidance and assistance in completing this Plan.**

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 made up of industry stakeholders. The draft Plan has gone through a public consultation process. A revised draft of the Plan was prepared (link at the end of this report) based on this consultation as well as discussions with the Forest

Management Plan Advisory Committee. The final draft has been endorsed by the Advisory Committee, as such staff are requesting endorsement by County Council.

Background and Discussion

Report [PDR-CW-12-19](#) was presented in early 2019 outlining the terms of reference for a technical advisory committee and provided an explanation of what the document would cover and who would assist in the composition and review of the document.

In February 2020 Report [PDR-CW-09-20](#) was brought forward to Committee of the Whole requesting that a draft of the Forest Management Plan be circulated for public consultation and that after, a final draft would be prepared and presented to the Forest Management Plan Advisory Committee (FMPAC) for discussion and recommendation for approval.

[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 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.

[Addendum to PDR-FM-06-21](#) was presented on March 10, 2021 to the FMPAC with a recommendation for endorsement to Grey County Council. FMPAC endorsed the Forest Management Plan and recommended that this be brought forward to County Council for approval. The FMP provides a 20-year plan for the management of the County's Forest properties, it will replace the previous plan that is set to expire in 2023. It also includes recommendations for enterprises like maple syrup or honey, foraging, and it will include the newly adopted land acknowledgement. It will also include administrative updates (forest names, etc.).

In addition to these items, within the FMP there is also policies that would promote biodiversity protection and enhancement, including species at risk surveys to mitigate and protect during harvests, invasive species management and other opportunities to enhance natural features. The FMP will have a key component that will ensure the forests can be managed sustainably. Healthy forests will provide the foundation for a healthy ecosystem which provides a healthy environment for recreational uses. The FMP will also consider Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation, when managed sustainably they will be able to better withstand stresses that are caused by the forecasted warmer, drier and more unstable climate we face in the near future.

The forest management operations projected for each property over the next 20 years is describes in the Appendix for the FMP. At the beginning of each year a plan will be prepared, and an Annual Report will be prepared at the end of the year to track the progress of these operations. The revenues generated from forest management activities will be used primarily to offset the expense of the County's forest and trails program. In the event that revenues exceed expenses, they will be placed into reserves to balance years in which expenses exceed revenues.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

In order to maintain Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certification an approved Forest Management Plan must be in place for the County Forests.

Financial and Resource Implications

This project was 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.

Forest preservation and protection is important for all Grey County Forest properties. Historically, most of the revenue from sustainable harvests has been put back in to improving the health of these forests. It is recommended that going forward, all revenue received from sustainable harvests would be put back into the forests to assist with the overall management and related programs (invasive species management, etc.).

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](#)

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

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

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