

# Cootes Paradise Heritage Lands & Borer's Falls-Rock Chapel Heritage Lands Management Plans

## Public Meeting #2 Summary Report



Prepared by Lura Consulting for:  
Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System (CEES)  
October 2018



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This report was prepared by Lura Consulting, the independent facilitator and consultation specialist for the Cootes Paradise Heritage Lands and Borer's Falls-Rock Chapel Heritage Lands Management Plans. If you have any questions or comments regarding this report, please contact:

**Susan Hall**

17 Baldwin Street North, Suite 108

Whitby, Ontario L1M OA7

416-410-3888

[shall@lura.ca](mailto:shall@lura.ca)

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## 1. Project Background

The Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System (CEES) is a collaborative initiative of nine organizations and agencies in the Burlington-Hamilton area (including municipal governments, Conservation Authorities and non-profit organizations). Together, these partner organizations own or manage almost 1,900 hectares (4,700 acres) of natural lands in this area, and are working to protect, connect and restore the natural lands, and to deliver sustainable recreation and education opportunities. The Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System is divided into six core Heritage Lands, which reflect the natural and cultural components of their respective areas and contain some of the most botanically rich lands in Canada.

Management Plans for the Cootes Paradise Heritage Lands and Borer's Falls-Rock Chapel Heritage Lands are being developed in order to provide a cohesive and holistic management framework for the partner-owned properties. Community and stakeholder engagement is an important aspect of development and implementation of these plans.

CEES has retained North-South Environmental Inc. in collaboration with Lura Consulting, Schollen & Company Inc., Cecilia Paine, and Ken Dakin to undertake the development of the Management Plans.

## 2. Public Meeting #2 Overview

### 2.1. Meeting Format

CEES held a Public Meeting as part of the process for developing the Cootes Paradise Heritage Lands and Borer's Falls-Rock Chapel Heritage Lands Management Plans. The meeting took place on September 27, 2018 from 6:30pm – 9:00pm at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington.

The purpose of the Public Meeting was to:

- Re-introduce the project and management planning process;
- Provide an overview of the draft management plans;
- Discuss the management recommendations, implementation and monitoring and evaluation; and
- Seek feedback from the public on the management plans.

The format of the meeting consisted of an open house, an overview presentation, and a plenary discussion. Approximately six people attended the meeting.

Participants were encouraged to provide feedback on the comment forms. They were also directed to provide feedback after the meeting through an online survey. No post-meeting submissions were received.

## 2.2. Presentation

Tomasz Wiercioch, Coordinator of CEES, provided a brief introduction to the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System and the management planning process. Mirek Sharp, North-South Environmental Inc. provided an overview of the work completed to date and reviewed the draft management plans focusing on the management recommendations, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. The meeting was facilitated by Susan Hall, Lura Consulting.

Following the presentation, participants were invited to ask questions of clarification.

## 2.3. Discussion

### **General**

- C. I just want to say that I am impressed by process.
- Q. Who runs the Cootes Paradise fish barrier?
- A. The Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) does.
- Q. I was under the understanding that the fish barrier was a ten-year project. Is it on time?
- A. The ultimate goal was to delist Hamilton Harbour. The thought was that with the fish barrier, the carp population would diminish. It is taking a long time. The west end of Cootes Paradise has been much improved, however, last year's rain was terrible for the ecosystem. The original idea was 2020, but there is still a huge population of carp in the harbour. Until that population of native fish species increases, the barrier will need to be there.

### **Proposed Recommendations**

- Q. What about the identification of the lands?
- A. Identity is a big issue. The different organizations have different land use rules. We need to look for solutions to identify the lands as part of CEES.
- Q. What does the recommendation listed as "need for trail connections" mean?
- A. There are a number of trails that aren't connected where you can't get from one area to another. We are recommending connectivity between existing trails.
- Q. Are you going to detail where savannah should be or developed?
- A. We prepared an ecological classification map that conforms to the Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System protocols. We did not identify what was on the lands historically, we only prepared land classification based on current conditions. The identification of where savannah habitat should be developed based on historical findings would be in the detailed study phase. The recommendations in the management plan are intended to give direction to do that work.
- Q. With regard to the septic issues, is that on private property? Is that a provincial or city issue?
- A. Yes. Septic management crosses multiple jurisdictions.

- C. Invasive species are an issue. Natural lands are turning into European forest.
- C. There should be a regular program that teaches our children what native species are.
- Q. Where the trail linkages break, is the idea to loop the trails. it's challenging? Has that come up?  
A. Not specifically.
- C. With regards to cultural features, the head of the lake is and where the trail linkage is at the west end of Cootes Paradise, that might be a priority area for indigenous history. Maybe it should be identified or commemorated.

#### **Implementation**

- Q. These plans set guidelines for agencies to follow, but what happen if they don't follow through in a timely fashion?  
A. There is no recourse. The Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System is operated under a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the landowning partners, but there is no overseeing body. The management plans help them to get funding (i.e. from municipalities, the trillium fund, etc.). There is nothing legally binding in the MOU. It is simply a shared common goal amongst agencies.

#### **Securement**

- Q. Who decides who buys what tract of land?  
A. It is typically a conversation amongst partners.

#### **Partners**

- Q. Do the Hamilton Naturalists own property?  
A. No, they are currently not landowning partners.

### **3. Next Steps**

Community members were encouraged to provide any additional comments on the draft management plans by October 5, 2018. Public feedback will be considered. The final management plans will be available on the Cootes to Escarpment Website when completed.