



Conservation Advisory Board Meeting Agenda

Thursday, February 9, 2023

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Notice of Meeting

Conservation Advisory Board

Thursday, February 9, 2023
4:00 p.m.

This meeting will be held in person for Conservation Advisory Board members and designated, limited staff only.

The public may view the meeting live on HCA's You Tube Channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/HamiltonConservation>

- 1. Welcome** – Dan Bowman
- 2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest** – Dan Bowman
- 3. Approval of Agenda** – Dan Bowman
- 4. Delegations**
- 5. Member Briefing**
 - 5.1. Valens Lookout Platform Project – Matt Hall
- 6. Chair's Report on Board of Directors Actions** – Dan Bowman
- 7. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting**
 - 7.1. Minutes – Conservation Advisory Board (November 10, 2022) – Dan Bowman Page 1
- 8. Business Arising from the Minutes**
- 9. Staff Information/Presentation for Facilitated Input**
 - 9.1. Spencer Gorge 2023 Operations / Reservation Service – Gord Costie / Bruce Harschnitz Page 7
- 10. Staff Reports/Memorandums**

Reports for recommendation

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|---------|
| 10.1. Westfield Heritage Village Accession List | – Peter Lloyd | Page 27 |
| 10.2. Advanced Day Pass Program Pilot | – Lindsay Davidson | Page 29 |
| 10.3. Invasive Species Program Plan 2023 | – Mike Stone | Page 33 |

11. New Business

12. Next Meeting – Thursday, April 13, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

13. Adjournment

HAMILTON CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Conservation Advisory Board

MINUTES

November 10, 2022

Minutes of the Conservation Advisory Board meeting held on Thursday, November 10, 2022 at the HCA Main Administration Office – Woodend Auditorium and livestreamed to YouTube, commencing at 4:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Dan Bowman – in the Chair
Joanne Di Maio – Webex
Cynthia Janzen
Duke O’Sullivan – Webex
Wayne Terryberry – Webex

Santina Moccio – Webex (Ex-officio)

REGRETS: None

STAFF PRESENT: Madolyn Armstrong, Lisa Burnside, Gord Costie, Matt Hall, Scott Peck, Kathy Smith, and Jaime Tellier

OTHERS: None

1. Welcome

The Chair called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present.

2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The Chair asked members to declare any conflicts under the HCA Administrative By-law. There were none.

3. Approval of Agenda

The Chair requested any additions or deletions to the agenda.

**CA 2217 MOVED BY: Wayne Terryberry
 SECONDED BY: Cynthia Janzen**

THAT the agenda be approved.

CARRIED

4. Delegations

There were none.

5. Member Briefing

There was none.

6. Chair's Report on Board of Directors Actions

The following report recommended to the Board of Directors at the May meeting was approved.

CA 2211 HCA Trail Map Standards Report

7. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

7.1. Minutes – Conservation Advisory Board (April 14, 2022)

**CA 2218 MOVED BY: Cynthia Janzen
 SECONDED BY: Joanne Di Maio**

**THAT the minutes of the April 14, 2022 Conservation Areas
Advisory Board meeting be approved.**

CARRIED

8. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was none.

9. Staff Reports/Memorandums

9.1. Saltfleet Master Plan Trails and Site Concept

Staff provided a presentation of site concepts and summary of public comments to date.

Staff then posed questions for facilitated input by CAB members on the site concepts presented to review strengths, weakness and opportunities with summary comments noted below as well as feedback on the facilitated question format.

1. Challenges

Managing capacity and demand were discussed as possible challenges. Capacity will be based on parking, but the area is also accessibility by Dofasco trail. There was not overwhelming support for a reservation system when surveyed during public consultation. Waterfall sites tend to see the majority of visitation. The need for a marketing and communications strategy to educate visitors about alternative options to waterfalls will be noted in the master plan.

There was discussion regarding safety concerns for visitors around the water features on site. The trails were designed and built on top of the berms that form the wetlands, and therefore staff do not foresee any pedestrian safety issues. There is always potential for misuse in the wetland areas, e.g. dogs off leash, etc. Staff will have to be cognizant and manage for this behaviour.

The number of connection points were noted as an aspect of the design to consider. The cost of building the trails was also noted. There has been proactive fencing and buffering for neighbouring properties.

2. Benefits/Strengths of the Concept

The balance between recreational infrastructure and flood attenuation and natural heritage goals were discussed. Flooding and the wetlands were incorporated into design of the recreational aspects of the site. In certain areas, trails will be seasonal only (mown grass) for a few seasons until we understand how the wetlands function. The trails on the concept drawing are the maximum that would be suitable for the site.

Staff expect these new amenities will be well received, particularly with additional programming and features as suggested by the members. This has been an exciting project for staff. It was noted area residents will likely enjoy watching the area and trail system develop over the next 10 to 15 years.

It was agreed that different sized loops are a good consideration for various users. Visitors will enjoy being able to view the wetlands

3. Opportunities

The CA will appeal to a variety of visitors for with different interests. Promoting the historical and archaeological significance of the site will be included in interpretive materials. The engineering and flood control functions of the site were noted as the primary draw for visitors, as well as wildlife education and interpretation. Local

academic institutions may be interested in the site for research opportunities and can be a great demonstration site for a project of this type.

It was suggested that the flood control engineering and benefits be incorporated into media materials to highlight the service the CA provides for area residents. This information could also be included in education and interpretive programming and infrastructure.

Local naturalist clubs and naturalists were noted as likely stakeholders. Birding groups may be attracted to the wetland feature. Staff expect migratory birds and look outs will be appealing to birders. Staff also expect academic institutions will be interested in research for a variety of disciplines.

The site is uniquely suited for users with accessibility needs. There is good potential for incorporating wheelchair accessible trails during detailed design. The trails are relatively flat particularly near the main parking lot. The berm trails have been designed for AODA compliance.

The potential for the site to be used for outdoor education was noted. HCA has a centralized outdoor education centre at the Dundas Valley Trail Center, however there is interest in offsite field trips. There will need to be infrastructure in place to support this programming, e.g. bus turn arounds, etc. The site could be suitable for self-guided tours.

The new Conservation Area is an opportunity to attract donors that want to focus on climate change. Yes, we will be able to promote funding opportunities for specific projects outlined in the master plan.

4. Conservation Advisory Board Engagement

The common theme of members' comments were that all were supportive of facilitated questions at an earlier point in a project. The members felt the questions were helpful in directing the discussion for a robust and engaging discussion. It was suggested that questions should be provided in advance so the members have more time to consider and prepare responses.

10. New Business

10.1. CAB Terms of Reference Pilot – Verbal Discussion

The members supported the idea to have CAB address new initiatives earlier in the development phase to provide opportunity for greater input. Reports and other information will continue to come to CAB.

Staff were directed to work with the CAB Chair through 2023 to incorporate greater opportunities and focus on early input for key HCA initiatives from each of the WMS, CaPSS, and CAS divisions.

11. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the CAB is scheduled for Thursday, December 8, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.

12. Adjournment

On motion, the meeting was adjourned.

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Spencer Gorge Reservation Service

Conservation Advisory Board – February 9, 2023



2023 Operational Considerations

- For 2023, staff are looking for input from CAB as we continue to evolve the reservation service
- Staff have received emails and calls from some local residents and membership pass holders expressing the desire for greater access to the conservation area as it was often visible from the low number of cars in the parking lot that there was capacity, particularly outside of the Fall Colour Period
- Staff are looking to balance greater visitor and community access without requiring a reservation, while controlling visitation when high visitation could be expected

Background

- Spencer Gorge Conservation Area continues to be one of the most spectacular tourist attractions across the city featuring the iconic escarpment features of Dundas Peak, Tew Falls, and Webster Falls
- HCA continues to evolve its visitor management strategies for the area over the past decade, adjusting to its growing popularity





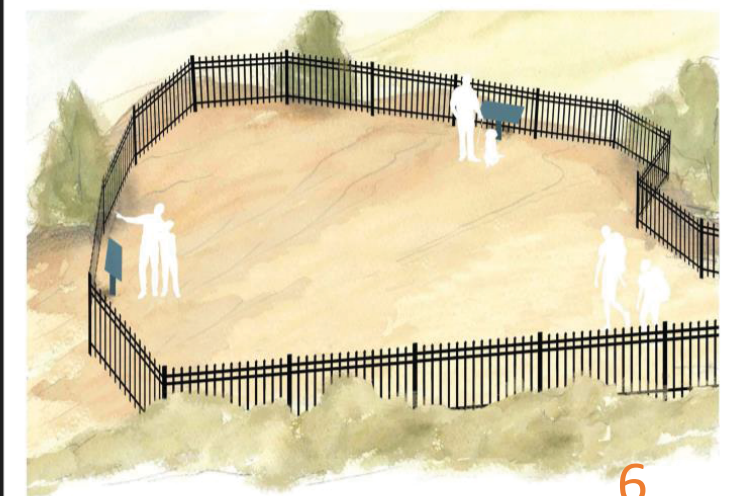
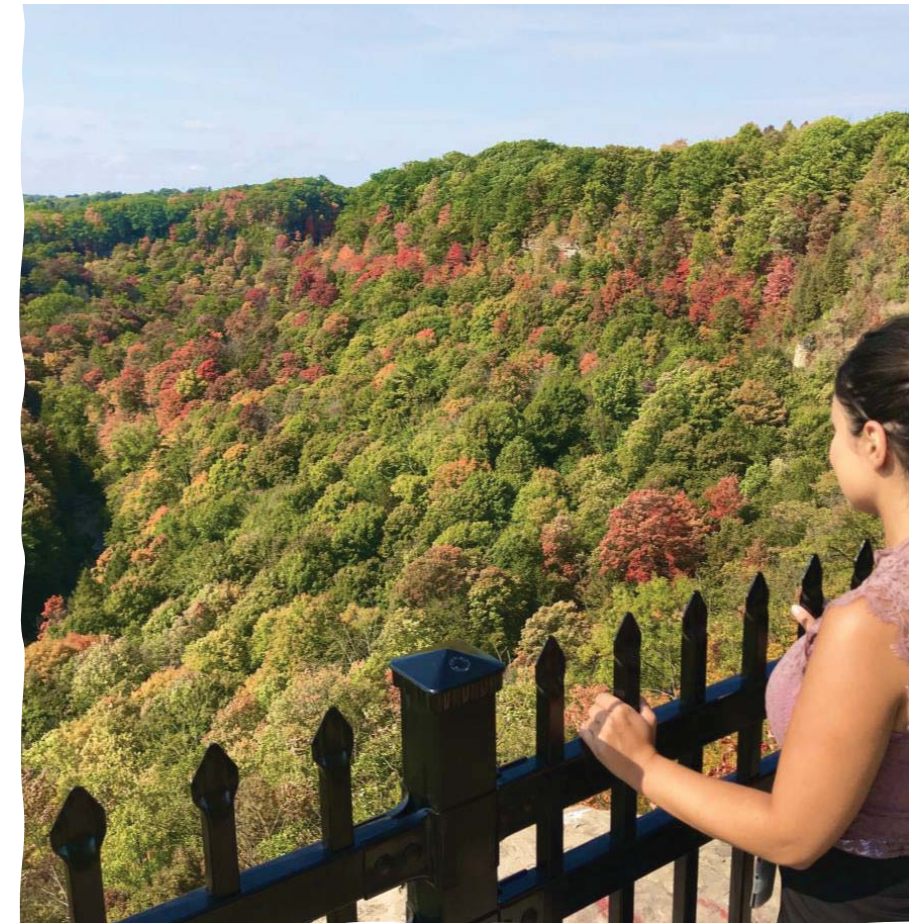


Visitation Pressures

- In the past, the Spencer Gorge has experienced high numbers of visitors and crowding on its trail system and viewing platforms, particularly during the brilliant Fall Colour Period
- Additionally, there was traffic congestion in the small community causing safety concerns

2020 – Covid Closure

- The pandemic was the genesis of the pilot 2020 reservation service operations for the Fall Colour Period
- COVID shut down of the area March - September
- Safety and access improvements implemented during shutdown:
 - Safety fencing, gate system & property fencing
 - Staff reviewed and proposed incorporating a seasonal reservation service as part of operations of the area to address times of high visitation to CAB which was endorsed and approved by the Board of Directors



6



2020 Reservation Service

- Reopening for Fall Colour Period
- By reservation only September 19 until November 15th (7days/week)
- No drive up or walk-in entry permitted
- Collaboration with City of Hamilton to address street parking in community and congestion through increased parking fines coupled with increased Parking Bylaw enforcement



Dundas Peak – Before and After

2019



2020





2020

2019



Tew Falls Parking – Before and After

9

A photograph of two people standing on a paved overlook with a black metal railing. They are both wearing jackets and jeans, looking out over a vast landscape of rolling hills and valleys covered in trees with autumn foliage. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. One person is holding a smartphone up to take a picture of the view.

2020 Reservation Experience

- Out of the 58-day operating pilot, reservations were made every single day during this time period
- 50% of the days were fully booked for the Dundas Peak/Tew Falls experience and Webster Falls was fully booked for 31% of the days
- Additionally, a further 29% of the days for the two experiences were over 75% booked
- Reservations were low relating to poor weather days as the pilot neared its end in mid-November

Reservation Service Continues in 2021

- Following the 2020 experience, staff proposed to CAB (which was endorsed and approved by the Board), that the reservation service continue as an extension of the 2020 fall pilot program during the 2021 main operating season allowing staff the opportunity to further evaluate the effectiveness of a longer reservation service period from May to November
- Also would provide the opportunity to review potential to be a permanent part of operations to address parking and visitor management for the area



2021 Reservation Service

- Reservation service started May 1 daily until November 15 (7 days/week)
- Marketing campaign included:
 - Billboard advertising on Hwy 5
 - Google advertising and search priority link to website
 - Notation on Google Maps
 - Social media posts and media releases
- City continued increased Parking Bylaw presence and road signage



2021 Reservation Experience

- Some COVID closures and restrictions were in effect across the Province which began to ease, particularly in the Fall
- No weekday capacity was over 75% until the Fall
- Parking lots on site could handle weekday capacity without need for reservations until Fall Colour Period
- Greatest attendance experienced during Fall Colour Period and on some weekends of the reservation period
- Staff note that 2021 Fall visitation was lighter than 2020, however, the weather was not as good and the easing of pandemic restrictions did open up more recreation options for people to once again experience



2022 Reservation Service

- As a result of 2021 attendance and capacity experience, staff proposed changes to CAB which was endorsed and approved by the Board
- Reservation service operated:
 - Weekends only from May 21 to September 17
 - Daily from September 17 to November 6
- Marketing campaign from previous years continued to promote 2022 reservation requirements
- City continued increased Parking Bylaw presence and road signage



2022 Reservation Experience

- COVID restrictions eased and most recreation options open for people to once again experience
- No issues were experienced weekdays when reservations were not required; the parking lots had capacity and there was no need to re-instate reservation requirements
- Outside of long weekends, weekend reservations had well over 50% capacity available, and up to 80% on a few weekends
- Parking lots on site could handle regular weekend capacity without the need for reservations
- Fall Colour experience was similar to 2021

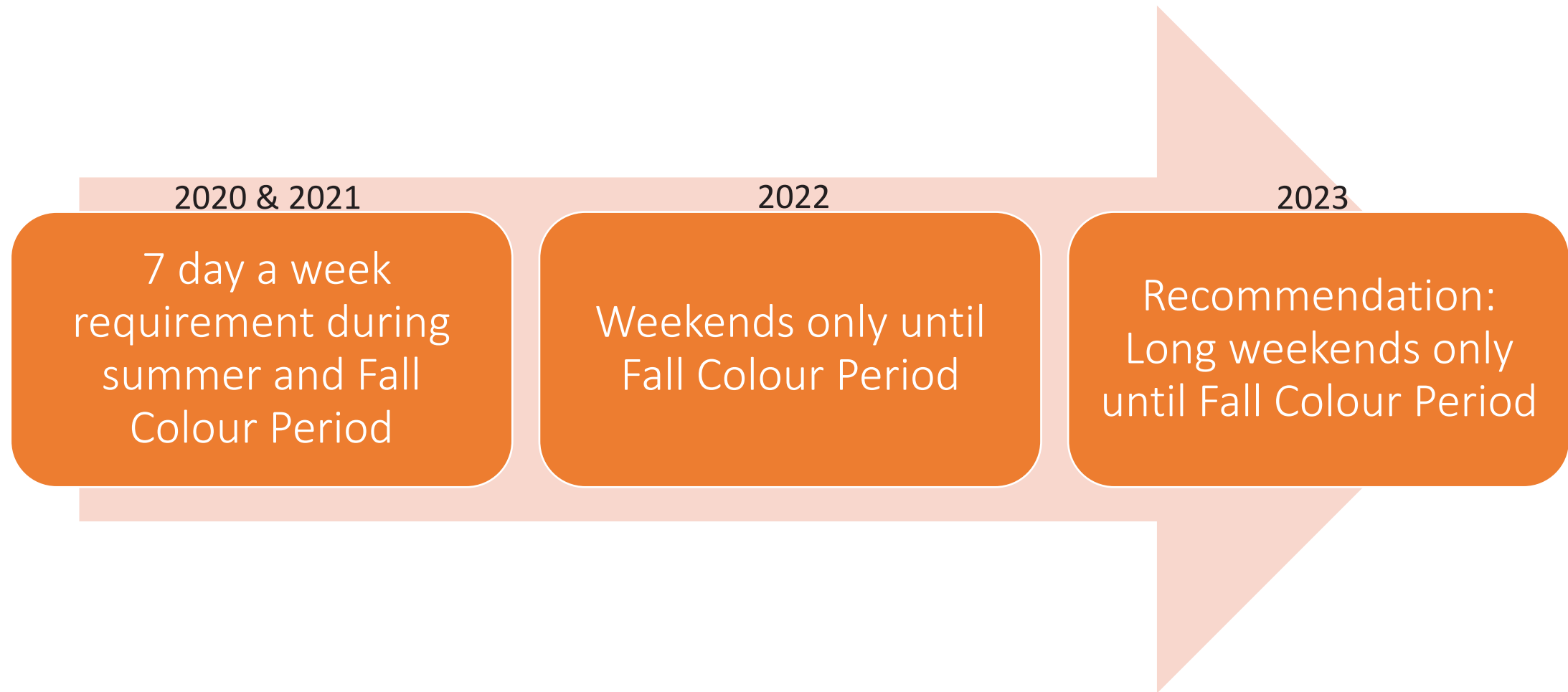


Reservation Service Impact

- The reservation service experience of the past three years:
 - provided a safe and equitable way to see this beautiful area
 - ensured an enjoyable experience for visitors
 - guaranteed a parking spot
 - created the ability to enjoy these areas without big crowds
 - successfully controlled and regulated the number of visitors
 - reduced vehicle traffic and congestion within the nearby community
- The Fall Colour period can create the most unpredictable outcomes regarding traffic and visitation with social media outside of HCA's control promoting it as one of the top destination to see magnificent fall colours which have become an "event"



Reservation Requirement Evolution



2023 Reservation Service Recommendation

- Reduce reservation requirements from every weekend to long weekends only from May to September:
 - Victoria Day – Sat/Sun/Mon - Canada Day – Fri/Sat/Sun/Mon
 - Civic Holiday – Sat/Sun/Mon - Labour Day – Sat/Sun/Mon
- Continue with daily advanced reservation requirement for the Fall Colour Period from the fourth Saturday in September to the second weekend in November

The recommendations strive to balance greater visitor and pass holder access while controlling visitation when high visitation levels can be expected. This an evidence based change based on parking lot capacity and supported by comments we have received.

Questions

What are the benefits/strengths of scaling back the reservation service to just long weekends May – September and then daily during the Fall Colour Period?

What challenges/concerns do you anticipate with the reduced reservation requirement?

How might these challenges/concerns be mitigated?

Questions

Would you anticipate HCA receiving more support than concern on this change to make Spencer Gorge more accessible without a reservation, or vice versa?

What should HCA particularly pay attention to in communicating this change in reservation service to the public?

Does this proposal feel consistent with the strategic initiatives of HCA?

- *Conservation Area Experience - "The provision of high quality, diverse conservation areas that promote outdoor recreation, health and well-being and strengthen public awareness of the importance of being in or near our conservation areas".*
- *Initiative: "Develop visitor and parking management strategies to support conservation areas for sustainable recreation, education and tourism".*

Report

TO: Conservation Advisory Board

FROM: Lisa Burnside, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

RECOMMENDED BY: Gord Costie, Director Conservation Area Services

PREPARED BY: Rondalyn Brown, Manager, Westfield Heritage Village
Peter Lloyd, Collections Officer, Westfield Heritage Village

MEETING DATE: February 9, 2023

RE: Westfield Artifact Accessions/Deaccessions for 2022

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Conservation Advisory Board recommends to the Board of Directors:

THAT the Westfield 2022 Artifact Accessions List as noted in the February 9, 2023 Accessions report be accepted as the artifacts to be added to the Westfield Heritage Village Conservation Area and the Hamilton Conservation Authority collection.

BACKGROUND

Westfield is a living history museum dedicated to the collection, preservation and presentation of objects associated with the cultural and natural history of this area. Westfield maintains an artifact and archival collection consisting of more than 25,000 objects reflecting the social, cultural and material history of the area. The museum is committed to managing this collection according to current professional standards for acquisition, preservation, documentation, research, deaccession and use of the artifact collection.

Objects acquired for the collection will be consistent with the mandate, goals and priorities of the site. Objects collected will normally represent the types of material goods that would have been locally manufactured, routinely available or the product of local activity in Southern Ontario from the period 1790-1925. They must be in a condition suitable for display or research.

STAFF COMMENT

Westfield staff is diligent about adhering to the very important collections management and provincial museum standards to ensure the HCA is managing the artifact collection in a professional manner.

Westfield 2022 Artifact Accessions List

The following items are recommended to be accepted into the Westfield Heritage Village Conservation Area permanent artifact collection in 2022.

- Pulpit from the Strabane United Church
- Newitt Bros, long time Dundas butcher shop, receipt
- Hugh Moore and Sons, Dundas Dry Goods, receipt, 1860's
- Group of three invitations, dinner at Dundas Odd Fellows Hall
- Cast iron toy horse and "Ice" wagon
- Framed photo of a young, local woman, circa 1915

STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGE

The initiative refers directly to the HCA Strategic Plan 2019 - 2023:

- **Strategic Priority Area – Conservation Area Experience**
 - Initiatives – Identify and support a more diverse and accessible range of programs for our conservation area users

AGENCY COMMENTS

Not applicable.

LEGAL/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

HCA assumes liability and responsibility for the appropriate and professional management of the Westfield Heritage Village artifact collection.

CONCLUSIONS

These measures will help care for and manage the Westfield Heritage Village Conservation Area artifact collection and will preserve important pieces of local history for the community.

Report

TO: Conservation Areas Board

FROM: Lisa Burnside, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

RECOMMENDED & APPROVED BY: Scott Fleming, Director of Finance & CSS

PREPARED BY: Lindsay Davidson, Assistant Marketing Manager

MEETING DATE: February 9, 2023

RE: Advanced Purchase Day Use Passes - 2023 Pilot Program

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

WHEREAS HCA continues to identify and act upon investment in visitor services opportunities in our conservation areas;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the report entitled "Advanced Purchase Day Use Passes – 2023 Pilot Program" be received and further;

THAT the Conservation Advisory Board (CAB) recommend to the Board of Directors that staff be authorized to initiate the 2023 pilot program as outlined in the report at Christie Lake, Valens Lake, Fifty Point and Westfield Heritage Village Conservation Areas; and further

THAT staff report back to CAB on the outcome and success of the 2023 pilot program.

BACKGROUND

In the past few years, with the pandemic uptick in visitation and development around some of our conservation areas, such as Fifty Point, HCA has experienced more visitors, resulting in line-ups at our main entry gate areas during times of peak visitation during the summer operating season. Through discussion with park staff, it has been

identified that while HCA has seen an increase in annual pass sales, many visitors are new or have not purchased a pass. As a result, during busy times, the extra time required to transact a day entry admission can contribute to line-ups at our main entry areas. Accordingly, staff worked with our two providers, those for our automatic gates (Key West) and our service provider (CAMIS), to help identify and problem-solve solutions. As these providers began to work more closely together, they made the crucial technology link to sell Advanced Day Use Passes online.

STAFF COMMENTS

In 2020 HCA started using the service provider CAMIS across all our Conservation Areas to provide a more functional service for staff and customers. As part of this connection to CAMIS, an HCA support staff person was identified to be the primary contact and to be able to identify and leverage the technology currently in place and to take advantage of the development of future programs.

One of the major concerns identified during the pandemic was traffic congestion at the gatehouses during the busy summer season. Visitors paying for a day-use admission would need to stop at the gatehouse, identify the number of passengers and make payment. This process can take up to two to four minutes per vehicle, depending on various factors, one of which is pin pad processing time, resulting in long lines. Additional time was also spent explaining the annual membership pass as an option for entrance. Areas with shorter entranceways, such as Fifty Point, had traffic backing onto the roadway on busy summer days. The Advanced Day Pass would allow visitors to pre-purchase their admission for the day and quickly scan their phone or printed pass to gain entry to the area, similar to the service provided to the annual membership pass holders.

The pre-sale of the Advanced Day Pass can be controlled by the number of passes available for sale and by date. Marketing staff will work closely with the Conservation Area Services division staff to determine the number of day passes to be made available for sale. Advanced Day Passes can be limited or closed on days when there is a special event, area closure or other operational aspects that would affect visitors.

Ontario Parks launched a similar online advanced day permit in the summer of 2020 to help with the over-popularity of their day-use locations and to help speed up gate transactions. HCA also is aware of other Conservation Authorities offering similar programs. (CH, CVC, Saugeen, GRCA).

Promotion and communication of the Advanced Day Pass will be focused on but not limited to a social media campaign throughout the busy season. Moving online also provides the added opportunity to communicate the value of the HCA Annual Membership Pass and to advise of the ability to apply the Advanced Day Pass fee against their purchase of an Annual Membership Pass. The ability to sell day passes

online will also give us demographic data and the ability to add customers to our monthly e-newsletter.

Staff recommend that in March of 2023, HCA start a soft launch of selling Advanced Day Use Passes online at four major conservation areas. These areas include Christie Lake, Valens Lake, Fifty Point and Westfield Heritage Village Conservation Areas. This early Spring soft launch period will allow a time of discovery for staff and feedback from the public on how this will help further address visitor management in these four Conservation Areas. The program's full pilot launch is planned for the 2023 summer season in May.

Staff will report back to CAB on the success of the 2023 pilot program on how it may be incorporated as part of ongoing conservation area operations.

STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGE

The initiative refers directly to the HCA Strategic Plan 2019 - 2023:

- **Strategic Priority Area – Conservation Area Experience**
 - Initiatives – Develop visitor and parking management strategies to support conservation areas for sustainable recreation, education and tourism
 - Identify and undertake approaches to increase sales of annual membership passes
 - Identify and act upon revenue generation/cost reduction and investment in visitor services opportunities in our conservation areas

AGENCY COMMENTS

N/A

LEGAL/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional costs through CAMIS to provide an advanced purchase day use pass and staff time for marketing and communication efforts will form part of the 2023 workplan. Promotional costs on social media can be covered within existing 2023 budget allocations.

CONCLUSIONS

Staff are recommending that an advance purchase day use pass at select HCA conservation areas be piloted in 2023 to help address visitor management at our main gate entry areas to help reduce line-ups and congestion during peak operating season.

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Report

TO: Conservation Advisory Board

FROM: Lisa Burnside, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

RECOMMENDED BY: T. Scott Peck, MCIP, RPP, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and Director, Watershed Management Services

PREPARED BY: Diana Gora and Jyoti Kasav, Invasive Species Technicians
Lesley McDonell, Terrestrial Ecologist
Mike Stone, MCIP, RPP, Manager, Watershed Planning, Stewardship & Ecological Services

DATE: February 9, 2023

RE: Invasive Species Program Plan 2023

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Conservation Advisory Board recommends to the Board of Directors:

THAT the Invasive Species Program Plan for 2023 be adopted.

BACKGROUND

Invasive Species Program Plan

In 2016 HCA developed an Invasive Species Strategy as a result of the Terrestrial Resources Monitoring Program identifying invasive species as an increasing concern in the watershed. The goal of the Strategy is to ensure a healthy watershed at the ecosystem level, reduce the impacts of invasive species, and provide support to land owners and HCA land managers to monitor and control invasive species. The completion of the strategy and Board of Directors approval in October 2016 has led to greater work on invasive plant species on HCA owned and managed lands, as well as on private lands through stewardship programming. This has included volunteer and staff events to remove invasive species along with contractor work to remove large patches of Phragmites. The program now has two contract technicians dedicated to invasive species work year-round.

STAFF COMMENT

Through annual work planning processes, ecology and stewardship staff identify key priorities, projects and activities to be conducted to advance the goals of the Strategy. The invasive species program in 2022 achieved the following milestones:

Ecology

- Managed 23 species over 13 Conservation Areas
- Controlled 11,215 invasive trees and shrub mechanically and chemically
- Controlled 2.9 hectares of invasive herbaceous plants mechanically and chemically
- Removed 102 industrial sized garbage bags of invasive herbaceous plants
- Treated 2.2 hectares of non-native phragmites
- Mapped invasive species along the Master Plan properties: Saltfleet, Devil's Punchbowl, Winona, Vinemount and Dofasco 2000 Trail
- Removed approximately 3389 spongy moth (LDD) egg masses and 1648 caterpillars from 5 conservation areas
- Completed LDD defoliation forecast surveys for 2023 across the watershed
- Photo monitoring canopy defoliation caused by LDD moths
- Completed Beech Leaf Disease and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid surveys
- Held 5 invasive removal events on HCA land
- Hosted our Hamilton invasive species workshop which brings together all organizations that work with invasive species within the City of Hamilton

Stewardship

- 4 Water Quality and Habitat Improvement Programs (WQHIP) projects on private lands, controlling phragmites and Japanese knotweed
- Worked with 26 private landowners related to invasive species on their properties
- Held 11 invasive removal events at 9 different properties
- Managed 14 species, removing over 4200 plants and 9 garbage bags of herbaceous plant material
- Hosted a virtual invasive species workshop for the public focusing on the identification and control of species

Work planning has begun for 2023 with the following priorities identified for this year:

- Managing over 20 species from herbaceous to shrubs/vines and trees
- Follow-up treatments at 2022 removal sites through mechanical and chemical means
- Treat new populations based on species prioritization, habitat sensitivity, and the aggressiveness of the invasive species
- Contractors may be engaged to treat large patches of manna grass and Japanese Knotweed
- Hosting our third annual Hamilton invasive species workshop Photo monitoring, egg mass scraping and defoliation forecast surveys for LDD moths

- Volunteer events will occur throughout the year on both HCA owned lands and private lands through our stewardship team.
- Continuing to offer advice and assistance to landowners about invasive species on their land
- Continue working on prioritization plans for various HCA properties, mapping occurrences of invasive species and surveying for invasive forest pests
- Providing social media content to HCA's communications team
- Preparing 6 new Water Quality and Habitat Improvement Project (WQHIP) submissions for review by the Project Technical Advisory Committee for approval

It is also noted that Watershed Management Services staff will be undertaking a review and update of the 2016 Invasive Species Strategy that will be brought to CAB for their review.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The initiative refers directly to the HCA Strategic Plan 2019 - 2023:

- **Strategic Priority Area – Natural Heritage Conservation**
 - Initiatives – Maintain and enhance the natural heritage features of HCA lands and manage these lands on an environmentally sustainable basis
 - Work with our partners on stewardship initiatives for the Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program and the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System
- **Education and Environmental Awareness**
 - Support community participation through user group engagement and volunteer group coordination
 - Enhance stewardship programs for both urban and rural areas

AGENCY COMMENTS

Not Applicable

LEGAL/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Not Applicable

CONCLUSIONS

HCA staff are planning to continue with the invasive species program in 2023 through invasive species removal work in priority areas, support to HCA's Conservation Areas through removals and completion of Prioritization Plans, and private landowner outreach and education initiatives.