
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County seeking public and stakeholder input on Forest Recreation Policy update

Midhurst/August 8, 2017 – The County of Simcoe is encouraging anyone who spends time in our Simcoe County Forest to complete a brief survey to provide input into a review being undertaken of the Recreation Policy.

The Recreation Policy governs the public use of the Simcoe County Forest. The Policy was approved by County Council in 2006 to ensure the continued enjoyment of the Forest by all responsible users, to minimize environmental impacts and to reduce conflicts.

Assumptions which have governed the existing Policy and Forest Management Plan, and will continue to guide decision making include:

- The County Forest is considered to be a ‘working forest’ and is not parkland, preserve or for single-use.
- Recreational pursuits in the Forest are a privilege, not a right.
- Forest health, management and associated operations take precedence over recreational activities.
- The County Forest is owned by the Corporation of the County of Simcoe, is not crown land, and as such the County is ultimately responsible for management decisions.

A review of the Recreation Policy is being undertaken to assess where it is working well and to identify what changes or modifications may be needed to better address public use and improve the experience of Forest users. The outcome of the review and public feedback may include recommendations for minor amendments, clarifications and possible other changes to better achieve Policy objectives.

“We take great pride in being a municipal leader in forest stewardship and Forests Ontario recently recognized our efforts by naming us Ontario’s Green Leaf Challenge award winner among large organizations for planting more than 81,000 trees so far this season,” said Warden Gerry Marshall. “Our forests are a treasure and asset to all our residents and visitors. Please take our brief survey and have your say in how we experience and share the Simcoe County Forest in a responsible way.”

The survey is available online at www.simcoe.ca/recsurvey. The survey can also be taken over the phone by contacting Customer Service at 1-800-263-3199.

About the Simcoe County Forest

At approximately 33,000 acres and growing, the Simcoe County Forest is the largest municipally-owned forest in Ontario and among the largest of its kind in Canada with over 150 properties ranging in size from 13 to over 3,500 acres. The County of Simcoe is one of the few municipalities in Ontario that continues to invest in additional lands to ensure that the substantial environmental, social and economic benefits continue into the future. Within the past decade, the County Forest has expanded by more than 3,700 acres. Our forests contain more than 450 km of trails used for various recreational pursuits. These trails are developed and maintained by non-profit groups through a high degree of volunteerism.

County of Simcoe Forestry received Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) re-certification by the Rainforest Alliance™ in 2015 (FSC C013174), meeting the FSC's strict environmental and social standards. The County first achieved FSC certification in July 2010. Learn more about the FSC certification program at <https://ca.fsc.org/index.htm>

County of Simcoe is composed of sixteen member municipalities and provides crucial public services to County residents in addition to providing paramedic and social services to the separated cities of Barrie and Orillia. Visit our website at simcoe.ca.

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