



# Update to County Council on the Forest Master Plan

February 6<sup>th</sup> 2008

# Presentation Outline

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# Background

2007 Forest budget approved for:

- FAC (20 stakeholders): act as a sounding board for County and its consultants to test ideas and findings
- Trail Study (Trent University): to address lack of accurate trail map, take trail measurements, consult with forest users and assess current signage
- Independent Public Facilitator (Ogilvie, Ogilvie and Company): to assist and support with FAC workshops and public meetings

# Progress of F.A.C.

- May 16 2007 : Introduction to Forest Master Plan
- June 16 2007: Forest visit-2 hikes
- Sept. 27 2007: Introduction to Trails Study and Preliminary Findings
- Oct. 25 2007: Legal Opinion and Environmental Planner Opinion on Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act/Plan and Green Belt Plan

## Progress of F.A.C continued

- Nov. 29 2007: Update from Trail Study, tentative recommendations
- January 12 2008: Full day planning session for FAC members to present their perspectives and to discuss draft trail report
- January 24 2008: Open House and Public Forum- 7 FAC members had displays

# Open House

- Excellent turnout-estimate 30 people during the day, +100 for Public Forum
- Media coverage (newspaper and TV)
- Forest is a highly valued asset for Northumberland County residents
- Many people acknowledge need to accommodate all users but appear to prefer designated use zones

# Public Forum Summary

## Unresolved issues regarding recommendations:

- Areas outside non motorized zones, hunting, future of Scout Camp, disagreement over legislation, enforcement logistics, ecological sensitivities of the Forest, road allowances, complexity of user impacts
- Significant opposition exists to allowing ANY motorized use of trails in the Forest
- Likely no consensus agreement possible

# FAC: Next Steps

- Debrief on Public Forum
- Create sub-committee for recreational issues and trails planning
- Continue with other Forest Master Plan components-ecology, fire, police, conservation etc

# Trail Study Deliverables (to date)

+150 user surveys (including hunters and winter users, adjacent landowners)

- FAC interviews
- +300 trail condition measurements
- +50 days field work
- +100 photographs of trail condition, signage, use etc

Draft report: “Trails, trail users and their management in Northumberland County Forest”

# Trail Study Upcoming Work

- Signage Plan to be prepared
- Ongoing user surveys and trail mapping
- Ongoing consultation with FAC on trail standards, maintenance etc
- Set up permanent trail condition monitoring locations
- Final Trail Report to be prepared by Summer 2008

# Staff Position (to date)

- Provide appropriate places for all users
- Monitor the Forest conditions closely for environmental impacts and respond promptly
- Designate user zones/trail routes
- Allow ATV clubs to gain ground with issues as snowmobilers did

# Forest Master Plan: Next Steps

- Meeting with Township of Alnwick-Haldimand on road allowances in Forest
- Meeting with Scouts to discuss future of leased property
- Fire Plan and Fire Risk Meter signs to be released early this year
- Seasonal treatment of dog strangling vine

# Forest Master Plan: Next Steps continued

- Prescribed Burns- burning 19 ha (47 a) this year through ongoing partnership with the Rice Lake Plains Joint Initiative
- In house development of GIS maps via AutoCAD Map 3D, with support from Lower Trent CA
- Follow up with another Public Meeting in the Fall