

TRAIL PLANNING FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS

Goal 2: Determine Compatible Uses

Objective 1: Develop
recommendations for
compatible recreation

Objective 2: Develop
recommendations for
Access and Trail signs

Objective 3: Develop
recommendations for Trail
Design

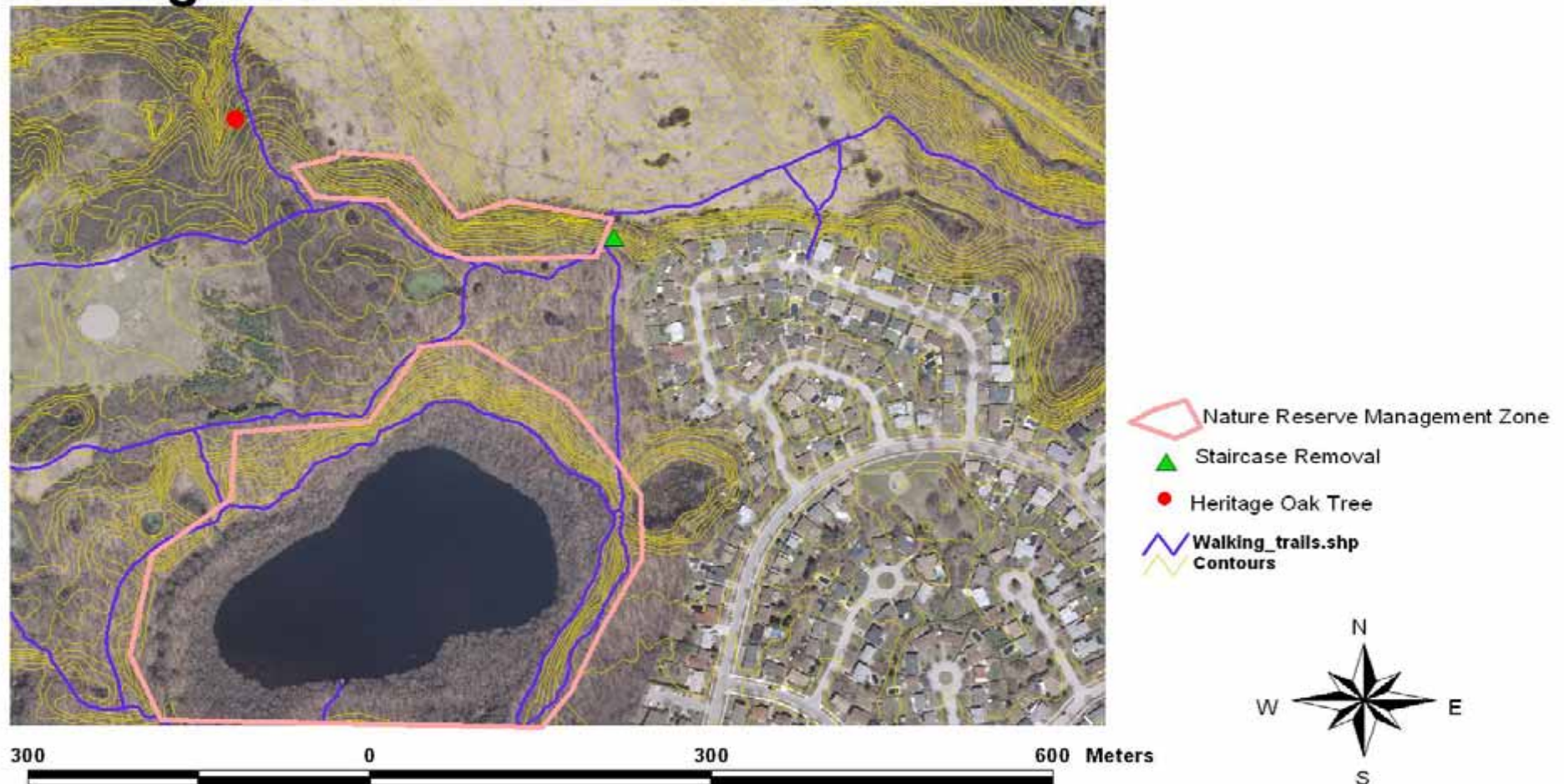


Recommendation 59: Close or re-route trails in fragile and sensitive areas

Recommendation 63: Identify and incorporate interpretive features into trail design

Recommendation 65: Mitigate impacts of trails at sensitive sites using natural materials

Spettigues Staircase Removal and Trail Re-route Heritage Oak Tree Protection



TRAIL ISSUES FOR REVIEW

POLICY, PROCESS, PRACTICE

- **Policy context**

- # 1 priority is resource protection

- # 2 priority is sustainable, safe use

- **Process for trail planning**

- ecology drives the plan, not the use

- process must be transparent, consistent, public

- **Best Practices**

- trail impacts relate to location, width, surface type

- ecological and social issues related to use of asphalt

TRAIL LOCATION, WIDTH, SURFACE

1. Trail location - based on Management Zones

A management strategy is proposed based on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) protected areas classification and delineation of zone categories that are managed to attain different goals.

This zoning approach is used in Canadian National Parks and Provincial Parks with zones ranging from strictly controlled use and access to zones permitting greater access and variety of use.

TRAIL LOCATION, WIDTH, SURFACE

2. **Trail Width** - as width increases, it can result in greater habitat fragmentation and loss of aesthetic appeal of “wilderness” experience
 - *Specify standard trail width within zones with maximum trail width not to exceed 2.5 m*

3. **Trail Surface Type** - all surface types may create impacts if the use exceeds the ability of the surface to absorb impacts
 - *Specify surface types allowed within each zone, with the standard being natural surface and no restriction on use of asphalt in specified zones only*

MANAGEMENT ZONES AND TRAIL HIERARCHY FOR ESAs

ZONE	TRAIL TYPE	USERS	TRAIL WIDTH	TRAIL SURFACE
Nature Reserve	No Trail or temporary by permit Level 1	None; for scientific research needs and baseline data collection only	none	Natural earth surface Meandering patterns to eliminate potential for a trail to develop
Natural Area	Level 1 -Hiking	Pedestrians on foot, dog walkers, cross-country skiers	0.5 – 1.5 m	Natural earth surface Wood chips Boardwalk
Access & Staging	Level 1 - Hiking, Level 2 - Accessible pedestrian	Pedestrians on foot, dog walkers, cross-country skiers wheelchair, stroller, bicycles	0.5 – 2.5 m	Natural earth surface Wood chips Boardwalk Hardened with asphalt or other suitable non-erodible material
Restoration & Management	Level 1 –Hiking Level2 – Accessible pedestrian	Pedestrians on foot, dog walkers, cross-country skiers, wheelchair, stroller	0.5 – 1.5 m	Natural earth surface Wood chips Boardwalk Hardened with asphalt or other suitable non-erodible material
Special Features	Level 1 - Hiking, Level 2 - Accessible pedestrian	Pedestrians on foot, dog walkers, cross-country skiers wheelchair, stroller	0.5 – 2.0 m	Natural earth surface Wood chips Boardwalk Hardened with asphalt or other suitable non-erodible material
Cultural Heritage	Level 1 - Hiking, Level 2 - Accessible pedestrian, Level 3 – Multi-use	All uses	0.5 -3.0 m	Any

NEXT STEPS

1. **Circulate** the *Planning and Design Standards for Sustainable Trails in Environmentally Significant Areas* to the public, other Advisory Committees of Council, and interested stakeholders for review and comment
2. **Test Standards** in the Medway Valley and The Coves ESAs
3. **Incorporate Standards** in all new Conservation Master Plan and new trail planning in significant natural areas

