

# KEN REID CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

2020-2040



**KAWARTHA  
CONSERVATION**

Discover • Protect • Restore



# About Kawartha Conservation

## Who we are

We are a watershed-based organization that uses planning, stewardship, science, and conservation lands management to protect and sustain outstanding water quality and quantity supported by healthy landscapes.

## Why is watershed management important?

Abundant, clean water is the lifeblood of the Kawarthas. It is essential for our quality of life, health, and continued prosperity. It supplies our drinking water, maintains property values, sustains an agricultural industry, and contributes to a tourism-based economy that relies on recreational boating, fishing, and swimming. Our programs and services promote an integrated watershed approach that balance human, environmental, and economic needs.

## The community we support

We focus our programs and services within the natural boundaries of the Kawartha watershed, which extend from Lake Scugog in the southwest and Pigeon Lake in the east, to Balsam Lake in the northwest and Crystal Lake in the northeast – a total of 2,563 square kilometers.

## Our history and governance

In 1979, we were established by our municipal partners under the *Ontario Conservation Authorities Act*. The natural boundaries of our watershed overlap the six municipalities that govern Kawartha Conservation through representation on our Board of Directors. Our municipal partners include the City of Kawartha Lakes, Region of Durham, Township of Scugog, Township of Brock, Municipality of Clarington, Municipality of Trent Lakes, and Township of Cavan Monaghan.

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# Acknowledgements

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Community groups and organizations who participated in the development and consultation included:

Kawartha Lakes Pride  
Sir Sanford Fleming College  
Toronto-Algonquin Greenway  
Tourism Kawartha Lakes

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# Executive Summary

Ken Reid Conservation Area (Ken Reid CA) is a 110-hectare (272 acre) property located on Sturgeon Lake at the outlet of McLaren Creek, 6 km north of Lindsay, Ontario. It was purchased by Kawartha Conservation in 1981, with the goal of providing the community a place to interact with and to appreciate the natural environment. Today, Ken Reid CA is held in high regard by our communities, seeing upwards of 20,000 visitors annually.

In 1983, Kawartha Conservation developed a Master Plan for the Conservation Area. Based on the priorities, funding, and community values of the day, the Conservation Authority has continuously worked to implement that plan, and its recommendations. With new opportunities arising, and a renewed community interest in natural areas, it was determined that Ken Reid Conservation Area needed a new management plan to guide future decision making. Ken Reid CA continues to be an important community space that is appreciated by a variety of community groups and individuals alike.

In the development of this Management Plan, it was noted that managing various needs and desires for the property required a thoughtful approach to balancing the environmental needs of the land, financial resources of Kawartha Conservation, and the societal needs for access to greenspace and community gathering areas. To ensure all aspects were taken into consideration, a detailed planning process was developed to allow for community involvement, knowledge transfer, and to maintain flexibility to incorporate changing technologies and trends.

The results of the consultation process and the identification of emerging trends and opportunities have guided the recommendations for Ken Reid CA over the 20-year lifespan of the management plan. Our community identified that their values lie within the diverse trail system, the off-leash dog park, and the opportunity to escape the urban setting so close to home. Kawartha Conservation recognized the opportunities to develop partnerships through special projects and events at Ken Reid CA, in-kind supporting local tourism goals. City of Kawartha Lakes Tourism takes pride in experiences that enhance arts and heritage, fishing, cycling, and trail exploration. Providing our visitors and community with the opportunity to find meaningful connections and experiences with nature demonstrate that Ken Reid CA has something to offer everyone.

## Emerging Trends and Opportunities

Recognizing the changing environment around us, more frequent and extreme weather events were identified as a growing trend that provides additional maintenance challenges. These challenges include continuous roadway maintenance and improvement, invasive species management, and supporting the natural environment through assisted migration and new habitat restoration techniques.

Through the last census, the City of Kawartha Lakes witnessed a 2.9% population increase, and it is expected that the area will keep growing. The table below shows census populations and percent increase from 2011-2016 for all municipalities within our watershed. It is important as a public service organization that we continually address our current visitor demographics to ensure we are meeting the needs of our visitors. With growing populations, and therefore the expected increase in usership of Ken Reid CA, there will be increased pressures on our natural environment, trails, and other infrastructure such as parking lots and roadways.

Maintaining strong and healthy relationships with our municipalities and community organizations will allow for the success of Ken Reid CA. These partnerships provide educational institutions, community groups, and municipalities with a direct connection to nature. As Kawartha Conservation continues to engage watershed partners and foster relationships, we want to enhance engagement and knowledge sharing with First Nations Communities, expand partnerships with educational institutions, and maintain relationships with municipalities, community groups and industries.

## Goals and Recommendations

In 1983, the vision for Ken Reid CA was to *“protect, conserve and interpret the natural resources of Ken Reid Conservation Area as a regional facility for the use and enjoyment of the public”*. This vision still holds true today. Kawartha Conservation’s intent is to continue to provide an area for public appreciation, exploration, and enjoyment of the natural environment. The goals for the Management Plan are to 1) protect our natural features and functions of the landscape, and 2) connect our community to nature in a way that is meaningful and inspiring.

### Protect

It is the goal of Kawartha Conservation to protect the environment at Ken Reid CA. This will allow current and future generations to enjoy the natural environment and what it has to offer. In order to protect our natural features and functions of the landscape, the management plan recommends the following:

1. Implement management zones to allow for the protection of sensitive habitats and ecosystems
2. Acquisition of adjacent properties
3. Continued trail management and improvement activities
4. Invasive species control for high priority species that threaten biodiversity
5. Identify restoration projects to enhance or improve natural areas and significant habitats

Beyond the goals established above, the protection of Ken Reid CA will occur through enforcing designated conservation area uses, as determined by legislation, and boundary management. While these areas are not high priority actions included in the Management Plan, ongoing review of these factors will help to determine if they become key management priorities.

### Connect

Kawartha Conservation takes pride in providing quality opportunities for visitors to develop meaningful connections with the natural environment. Our community consultation process highlighted the fact that our diverse community has very different reasons for visiting Ken Reid CA. As a result, what is “meaningful” for one, may not be the same for another. To address this, and still providing meaningful and inspiring connections to nature, the following actions have been recommended:

1. Facilitate and host community events
2. Enhance user experiences
3. Improve accessibility
4. Facilitate knowledge sharing opportunities
5. Demonstrate environmental stewardship



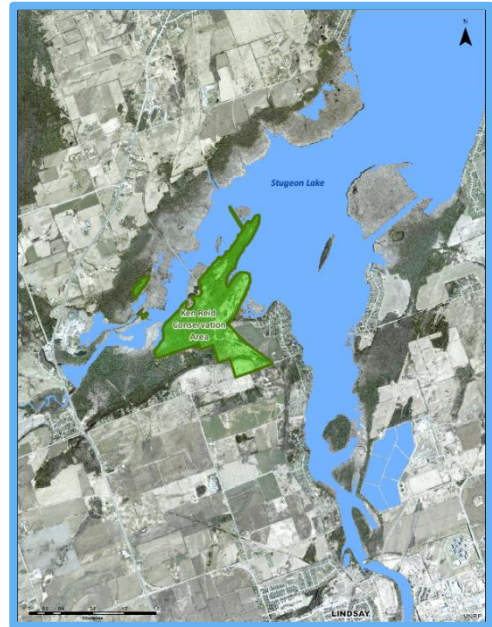


# 1.0 Introduction

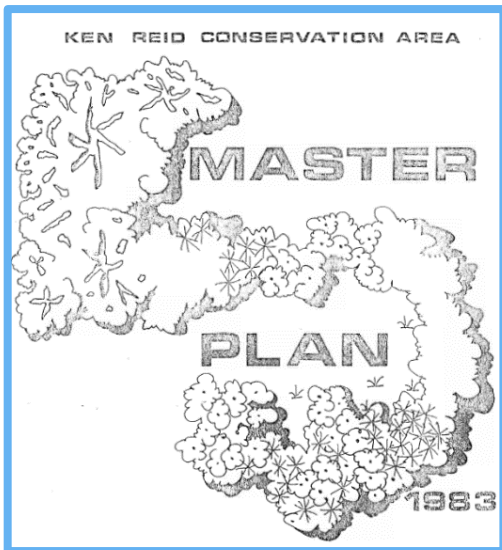
Ken Reid Conservation Area (Ken Reid CA) was purchased in November 1981 by Kawartha Conservation as our flagship conservation area, with the intention of providing an area of public appreciation and enjoyment of the natural environment.

Ken Reid CA is a 110-hectare (272 acre) property located on Sturgeon Lake at the outlet of McLaren Creek, 6 km north of Lindsay, Ontario. Kawartha Conservation has primary ownership of 98 hectares of the property, while the remaining 14 hectares are owned by the City of Kawartha Lakes and managed under agreement by Kawartha Conservation until 2031. Ken Reid CA boasts an intricate trail system with over 10 km to choose from, a group campground, lake vistas, and 2 scenic boardwalks. Ken Reid CA is home to the largest Dog Park in the City of Kawartha Lakes, and has also provided a place for local students to study nature in classes, carrying out projects, and field truthing lessons learned in classrooms.

The previous master plan for Ken Reid CA was completed in 1983, two years after the property was first purchased. Since then, our community has grown and experienced a shift in values. Where once there were large group camping excursions, and groomed cross country skiing, we now see family gatherings and individual activities growing. Ken Reid CA has become a popular destination



*Local context map showing the location of Ken Reid Conservation Area to the Town of Lindsay*



*Cover for the original Ken Reid CA Master Plan, 1983*

for snowshoeing and winter hiking, as well as community hiking groups where Ken Reid CA provides a sacred sense of place. With the advent of social media, Ken Reid CA has become an Instagram and Facebook favourite with many visitors sharing their pictures and stories online. With this, we see more and more adults and families that are looking for more interpretive programs that help them to develop a sense of space in the Kawarthas.

This Management Plan will provide an overview of current use, function, operation, and management practices of Ken Reid CA and make recommendations for updating some. In addition, the Management Plan will identify key opportunities for restoration, trail development, and infrastructure development. As our community grows and changes, this Management Plan will need to be revisited and reviewed to ensure its ongoing relevance to the values of our visitors. While the intention is to provide a 20-year guidance document, it is recommended that a 10-year review be undertaken to ensure that the community and property values are still in alignment. In addition, annual work plans should reference the overall recommendations within this plan. This practice will ensure that the Ken Reid Conservation Area Management Plan remains a guiding force for the care of the property.

## 2.0 Developing the Management Plan

In order to develop a management plan that reflects our community and Kawartha Conservation, a thorough planning process was developed. The planning process provided the opportunity for organizational and community involvement through consultation and knowledge transfers through a review of historical documentation. Each of these provided a holistic view of our conservation, organizational and community values. Emerging trends were also taken into consideration while developing the management plan, which identify the opportunities within our environment and community. It is important that the management plan remain flexible enough to incorporate different technologies and management practices.



*Components considered in the development of the Management Plan*

### 2.1 Historical & Current Context

The 1983 Master Plan identified the overarching goal of Ken Reid CA was to “protect, conserve, and interpret the natural resources of Ken Reid CA as a regional facility for the use and enjoyment of the public”. The Master Plan included activity zones, a market analysis, site inventory and evaluations, alternative concept evaluations and public input. It is recognized that due to changing demographics, climate, and property development over the last 37 years, that these inventories and analyses have changed. Activity zone parameters that were established still have relevance, but boundaries have been adjusted to reflect current vegetation, and emerging community values. While the overarching goal may not have changed dramatically, the way in which we set about achieving that goal may vary from actions taken in the early days of establishing our conservation area. The information gleaned from this review helped to set parameters for our consultation process.

Currently, management decisions are made by the leadership team and take into consideration the financial resources available, as well as the need of the project. Day to day operations are guided through standard operating procedures, and the execution of annual workplans.

### 2.2 Consultations

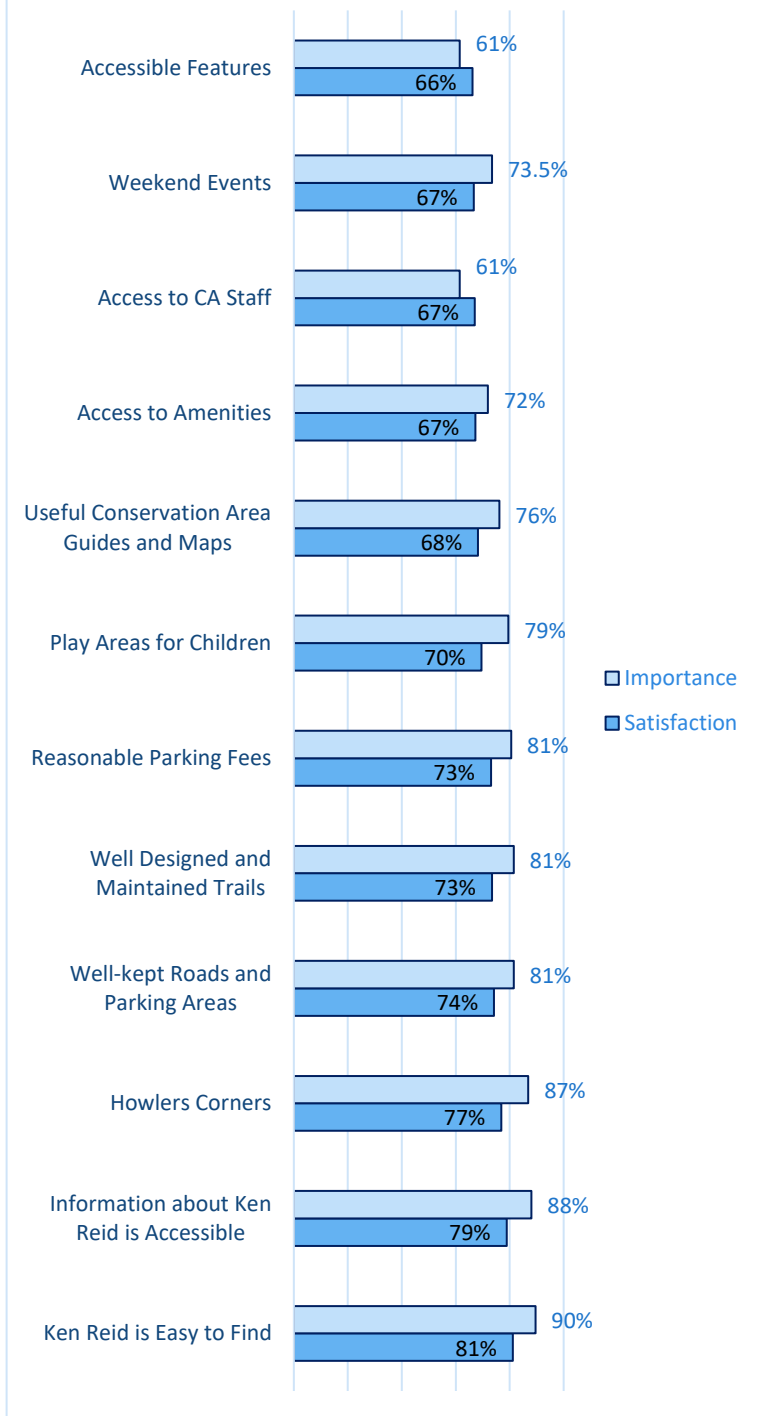
As indicated in our Corporate Strategic Plan, one of Kawartha Conservation’s guiding principles in “connecting people with nature in a way that is accessible, memorable and inspiring”. We see our Conservation Areas as a first line of interaction with the public. Ken Reid CA provides a direct link to our community and thus provides a unique opportunity for Kawartha Conservation to strengthen our relationship with the public.

#### Community Consultations

Involving our community in the consultation processes provided a direct opportunity to voice their values and what is meaningful to them. Providing our community with the opportunity to comment on program delivery and property management allowed for the alignment of use and values between our various conservation area users, which include: the general public, community groups, schools, and Kawartha Conservation. Hearing from our community helped steer the management plan so that we can achieve our goal of connecting people to nature.

Our community survey collected feedback and provided significant detail on the community’s values and importance of Ken Reid CA, through the first half of the consultation process. This survey collected both qualitative and quantitative information regarding Ken Reid CA, which helped to identify how user experiences could be enhanced

## Importance and Satisfaction with Features and Resources at Ken Reid Conservation Area



*Comparing Ken Reid CA user satisfaction with the importance of features. This data was collected through the user survey.*

by addressing the comments provided. Feedback identified that there is great potential for different users within Ken Reid CA.

Key areas that were identified by our community were the overall improvement in communication around events and programming. Results indicated that engaging through regular communications is beneficial to the community, so they are aware of the programs and events we offer. We found that visitors come to Ken Reid CA for a variety of reasons, but in general, they value the diverse trail system, the off-leash dog park, and the opportunity to escape the urban setting so close to home. Among the recommendations for improvement were the need to update signage for enhanced wayfinding, providing community events and interpretive hikes, and investing in infrastructure.

The figure on the left identifies the different values of our community, and that their importance and satisfaction seem to align, but there is room for improvement in most of the categories.

### Internal Consultations

Our team recognizes the opportunities to develop partnerships through special projects and events at Ken Reid CA, which also support local tourism goals. Activities such as experiential walks and programs as well as the possibility of camping facilities could expand our impact on tourism and attract new visitors to Ken Reid CA. Kawartha Conservation recognizes the importance in building strong relationships with our community through events and special projects.

Other suggestions included engaging First Nations communities in the implementation of the management plan, which will help to foster stronger relationships and a transfer of knowledge. Committing to be a leader in integrated watershed management, ecosystem health, and community sustainability, Kawartha Conservation recognizes the valuable partnerships we have made over the years. These partners have led to many research opportunities and monitoring projects

throughout Ken Reid CA. Identifying these opportunities to build on these past successes is a key objective of the management plan.

The internal consultations put emphasis on connecting those to nature while supporting the local economy and tourism industry. Ken Reid Conservation Area has been identified as one of the most popular places to visit in the Kawartha Lakes. Creating an experience for Ken Reid CA visitors will attract them to return year after year, supporting local communities outside of the busy tourism season.

## 2.3 Emerging Trends and Opportunities

The Ken Reid CA Management Plan was developed to allow for flexibility in adapting to changing community values, emerging environmental pressures, and responding to funding and resource opportunities. Through the development of the plan, five topics were noted and considered in the development of the recommendations: climate change, population growth and demographic changes, funding, enhancing tourism and developing partnerships.

### Population Growth & Changing Demographics

Population growth and changing demographics were identified amongst the emerging trends for the Kawartha Watershed. Southern portions of our watershed are located within the Greater Golden Horseshow (GGH), which is one of the most dynamic and fast-growing regions in North America. The unique landscape supports biodiversity, supplies drinking water, sustains resource-based industries, supports recreational activities and helps moderate the impacts of climate change (Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017).

Through the last census, the City of Kawartha Lakes witnessed a 2.9% population increase, and it is expected that the area will keep growing. The table below shows census populations and percent increase from 2011-2016 for all municipalities within our watershed. It is important as a public service organization that we continually address our current visitor demographics to ensure we are meeting the needs of our visitors. With growing populations, and therefore the expected increase in usership of Ken Reid CA, there will be increased pressures on our natural environment, trails, and other infrastructure such as parking lots and roadways.

*Table 1: Population growth observed across the Kawartha Watershed’s municipalities, from 2016 census data (Statistics Canada, 2016).*

Population and Dwelling Counts	Kawartha Lakes	Municipality of Trent Lakes	Township of Scugog	Township of Cavan Monaghan	Township of Brock	Municipality of Clarington
Pop. In 2016	75,423	5,397	21,617	8,829	11,642	92,013
% Change 2011-2016	2.9	5.8	0.2	2.7	2.7	8.8

The increase in population is also leading to an increase of multi-culturalism within the City of Kawartha Lakes. It is recognized that there may be the need to update current management practices to accommodate our visitors at Ken Reid CA. For example, signage may require updates to reflect languages of our largest visitor demographics. Multiculturalism also provides an opportunity for us and our community to learn about other cultures and religions and how the natural environment plays an important role within them. Our community, though growing, is also experiencing a shift in demographics, with an increasing aging population. It is important that Ken Reid CA provide

access to greenspace for all members of our population. Through different programs, such as Seniors Walking in Nature (WIN), as well as upgrading and developing infrastructure to improve accessibility.

# IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE



## TEMPERATURE CHANGE

On average, temperatures will increase by 4.7°C by the 2080s

- Days above 30°C are expected to rise from 6 to 54 in the coming decades

**Impacts:**  
Damage to infrastructure and damage to our ecosystems



## PRECIPITATION

We will experience rainfall at a faster rate, shorter storms with increased intensity and shorter breaks between heavy storms

**Impacts:**  
Flash flooding, more frequent flooding, road washout, infrastructure damage and habitat destruction



## INVASIVE SPECIES

New species of plants, pests, insects and other organisms migrating and persisting in our environment.

**Impacts:**  
Damage to our ecosystems, and reduced habitat for pollinators, fish, and other native species



■ *Infographic demonstrating the impacts of climate change in the Kawartha Watershed*

## Climate Change

Local research-based climate change projections have been determined through the recent publications *Towards Resilience: Durham Community Climate Change Adaptation Plan* and *The City of Kawartha Lakes Healthy Environment Plan*. These reports identify significant changes and impacts on our natural landscape. The infographic (left) describes the impacts of climate change that the Kawartha Watershed, and therefore Ken Reid CA is most likely to witness.

With more frequent and extreme weather events, additional maintenance challenges are put forward. Some of these challenges include infrastructure repair and maintenance, severe weather-related influences on invasive species management, and increased use of the park as people look to escape the urban heat islands in the summer.

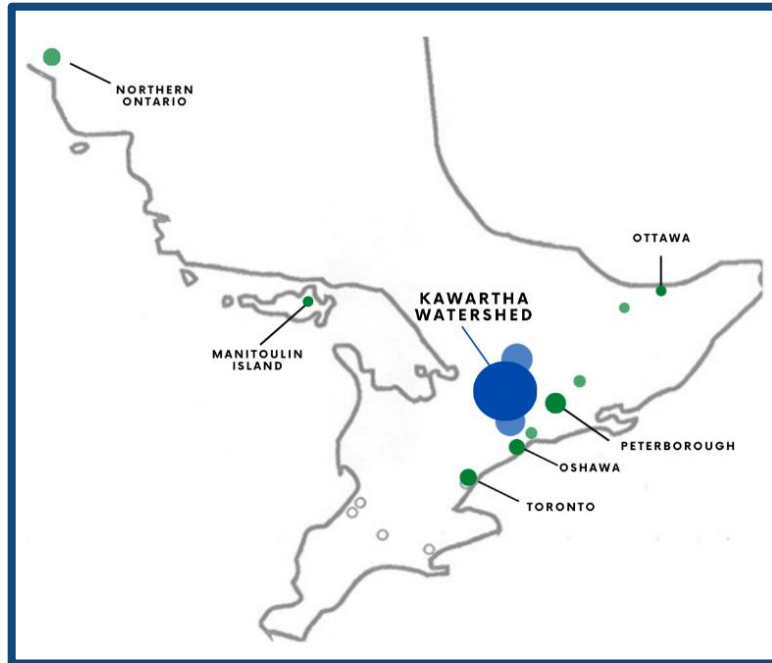
While each of these impacts provide challenges, they also provide opportunities to test different technologies, provide additional services to our communities, and to undertake unique restoration projects. As the climate continues to change, we will need to consider different management techniques to ensure the property continues to provide high quality nature enjoyment while protecting its ecological value.

## Enhancing Tourism

Tourism plays an important role in the economic development of our communities within the Kawartha Region. Kawartha Lakes Tourism takes pride in the experiences provided to both residents and visitors who are looking to explore the area, through arts and heritage, fishing, cycling and trail exploration.

By providing different opportunities for visitors and our community to find meaningful connections and experiences within nature, we can demonstrate that Ken Reid CA has something to offer everyone. Beyond the trail network, Ken Reid CA provides opportunities for tourism in the shoulder season for day trips to the Kawartha Lakes, and the possibility for winter camping. It is becoming more common for residents to opt for staycations and looking for opportunities to learn more about their own community and landscape and have a better connection to their home environment.

Ken Reid Conservation Area has a wide range of users and use frequency, with visitors coming from all over Ontario, with a majority from the Kawartha Lakes. The infographic below represents where Ken Reid Visitors have come from: the blue dots represent locations within the Kawartha Watershed, and the green represents visitors from outside our direct community.



*Infographic representing the location of where Ken Reid CA visitors' primary residence is. The blue represents visitors from within Kawartha Watershed, where the green is outside of our Watershed.*

The range of our visitors shows that there is great potential for Ken Reid CA to attract tourists to the Kawartha Area. With visitor locations extending far north and east of Ken Reid CA, it is assumed that visits extend beyond day trips. Building on this information, it is valuable for Kawartha Conservation to provide a welcoming environment, where people want to return to the conservation area, as well as explore other areas throughout the town of Lindsay.

### **Building and Maintaining Partnerships**

Over the years, community groups and educational institutions have utilized the natural environment within Ken Reid Conservation Area for a variety of projects. Ken Reid Conservation Area plays host to the Trillium Lakelands District School Board annual cross-country run, group camping for local cadet corps along with boy scouts and girl guides, and more recently, provides geared to curriculum educational programs and summer camps.

Maintaining strong and healthy relationships with our municipalities and community organizations will allow for the success of Ken Reid Conservation Area. These partnerships provide educational institutions, community groups, as well as municipalities with a direct connection to nature. As Kawartha Conservation continues to engage watershed partners to foster relationships, we want to enhance engagement and knowledge sharing with First Nation communities, expand partnerships with educational institutions, maintain relationships with municipalities, community groups and industries.

# 3.0 Visions, Goals, and Objectives

In 1983, the vision for Ken Reid Conservation Area was “to protect, conserve, and interpret the natural resources of Ken Reid Conservation Area as a regional facility for the use and enjoyment of the public”. This vision still holds true today. Kawartha Conservation’s intent is to continue to provide an area for public appreciation, enjoyment, and exploration of the natural environment.

## TO PROTECT, CONSERVE AND INTERPRET THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF KEN REID CONSERVATION AREA AS A REGIONAL FACILITY FOR THE USE AND ENJOYMENT OF THE PUBLIC



### PROTECT OUR NATURAL FEATURES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE LANDSCAPE

1. Implement Management Use Zones
2. Acquisition of Adjacent Properties
3. Trail Management
4. Invasive Species Control
5. Restoration Projects

### CONNECT OUR COMMUNITY TO NATURE IN A WAY THAT IS MEANINGFUL AND INSPIRING

1. Host and Facilitate Community Events
2. Enhance Visitor Experience
3. Improve Accessibility
4. Facilitate Knowledge Sharing
5. Environmental Stewardship



*Goals and Recommendations of the Ken Reid Conservation Area Management Plan*

## 4.0 Protect

It is the goal of Kawartha Conservation to protect the environment at Ken Reid Conservation Area. This will allow current and future generations to enjoy the natural environment and what it has to offer. In order to protect our natural features and functions of the landscape, Kawartha Conservation should complete the following recommendations.

### Recommendations:

1. Implement management zones to allow for protection of sensitive habitats and ecosystems
2. Acquisition of adjacent properties
3. Continue trail management and improvement activities
4. Invasive species control for high priority species that threaten biodiversity
5. Identify restoration projects to enhance or improve natural areas and significant habitats

Beyond the goals established above, there are other ways protection of Ken Reid CA will occur, through designated conservation area uses as determined by legislation, and boundary management.



*Environmental Monitoring within Ken Reid*

## 4.1 Management Zones

The implementation of management zones throughout Ken Reid CA will allow for the protection of significant habitats, provide safe and well-designed areas for public enjoyment, and designate areas for any future development. The management zones, which are depicted in the table and map below, were determined for select reasons that would enhance the natural environment within Ken Reid CA, support recreational activities, and manage development.

### Nature Reserve Zone

- Receives little to no human interference and will be set aside as undisturbed plant and wildlife habitat. Minor resource management will occur for habitat improvement. Features that exist within this zone include sections of the existing trail network, which will not be removed or rerouted, significant breeding habits, historical wetlands, and species at risk

### Passive Recreation Zone

- This zone receives frequent human use for trails and nature appreciation. There will be moderate to intensive vegetation and wildlife management to correct and improve conditions. Features that exist within this zone is the trail network, which contains a series of puncheons and boardwalks, and amenities and infrastructure such as washrooms and picnic shelters



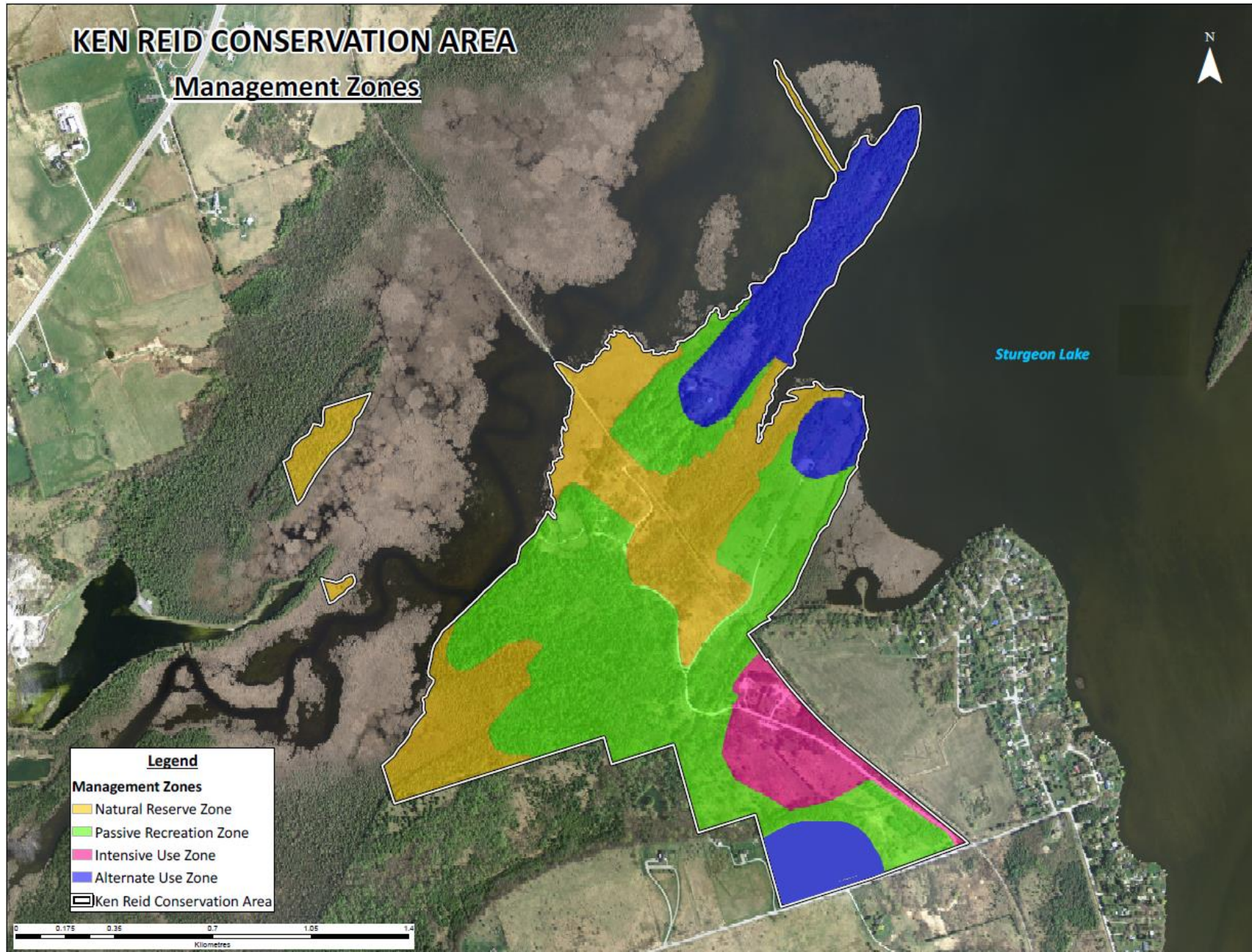
### Alternative Use Zone

- This zone will include areas for potential future development, but there is limited access to resources and amenities. This zone currently is home to large open spaces, and trail networks. If these zones were deemed unsuitable for development in the future, it is recommended they become passive recreation zones.

### Intensive Use Zones

- This zone will accommodate intensive human uses such as the service and maintenance areas for Kawartha Conservation. The natural and physical resources will be intensely managed to support the sustained use of the area. Features in this zone consist of roads and parking lots, the administration building and field center, and the workshop and vehicle compound.

Notably, the nature reserve zone within the middle of Ken Reid is a part of a historical wetland, which is habitat that is difficult to establish. In addition to its historical significance, wetlands and their surrounding areas provide breeding habitat for a variety of species, including species at risk. The alternative use zone at the north end along the point has the potential to host and expand amenities such as camping. Two other alternative use zones exist within Ken Reid CA, one at the beach and one on the top of the escarpment. These alternative use zones would serve as potential locations to host a future multi-use interpretive center. It is recommended that if the alternative use zones are not used for development, they should be re-evaluated to a passive recreation zone.



*Delineated management zones throughout Ken Reid Conservation Area*

## 4.2 Land Acquisition

Kawartha Conservation takes pride in protecting our natural landscapes across the Kawartha Watershed. Acquiring properties adjacent to Ken Reid CA would provide opportunities for us to protect sensitive habitats, such as the provincially significant wetland, McLaren's Marsh, as well as provide habitat for sensitive species such as Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark. Adding properties to Ken Reid CA would enable partnerships with organizations and landowners, meet community needs and provide the opportunity to protect more of the landscape.

Kawartha Conservation has primary ownership of 98 hectares of the property, while the remaining 14 hectares are owned by the City of Kawartha Lakes and managed under agreement by Kawartha Conservation until 2031. Acquiring the remaining 14 hectares within Ken Reid CA from the municipality would allow for a contiguous boundary for the conservation area.

### Actions include:

1. Acquire the 14 hectares of Ken Reid Conservation Area currently owned by City of Kawartha Lakes
2. Acquire adjacent properties to the conservation area as opportunities arise

## 4.3 Trail Management

The trail network at Ken Reid CA provides a variety of experiences for all visitors, whether it is walking throughout the cedar forest, exploring the escarpment loop or swaying on the marsh boardwalk. The network allows for hikers, bikers, and walkers alike to enjoy a variety of views and experiences. Trails are a direct connection between our community and the natural environment, and they are a way to introduce our community to new species, habitats and experiences at Ken Reid CA.

Community surveys identified that the trail network is a large influencer of why they visit Ken Reid CA. Survey responses provided additional feedback on the trail network, where 87% of respondents identified that they were either satisfied or extremely satisfied with the trail network. It was noted that there are areas where the trails are worn and would benefit from small upgrades and regular maintenance.

There is value in maintaining a diverse suite of trails that intersect unique habitats within the conservation area. Some of these areas, however, provide access challenges that require intensive infrastructure to overcome. It has been identified that there is a need to manage trails and boardwalks throughout Ken Reid CA for water level shifts during the wet and winter seasons.

### Actions include:

1. Develop and implement a trail service standards procedure



*Map of the current trail network at Ken Reid CA. Noted: This map does not reflect the location of accessible trails*

2. Develop infrastructure such as puncheons and boardwalks to work around ecologically sensitive habitats and naturally wet areas.
3. Develop a schedule for maintenance and upgrades to maintain trail infrastructure.
4. Assess erosion control and soil compaction concerns on trail networks.
5. Create trail improvements that will reduce the impact on infrastructure while considering the communities connection to nature.
6. Investigate new technologies that can reduce maintenance pressures as structures require replacement.

## 4.4 Invasive Species Control

With the emergence of invasive species throughout Ken Reid CA, it is recognized that there is a threat to habitat for native wildlife, as the non-native species can take over environments, and prevent native plants from growing. Priority species for control can change quickly. Dog-Strangling Vine (*Vincetoxicum rossicum*) and Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) currently present the largest threat, we recognize the threat of other invaders. Invasive Phragmites (European Common Reed/*Phragmites australis*) continues to expand its range in the Kawarthas. This highly destructive wetland plant could have significant impact on McLarens Marsh that makes up a good portion of Ken Reid CA.

Current invasive species control techniques consist of species removal through pulls and spot spraying. Kawartha Conservation currently has a partial inventory of invasive species for less than half of Ken Reid CA. To fully understand the property, and the threats that exist, it is recommended that a full inventory be completed.

In order to protect the natural environment and habitats that exist, Kawartha Conservation should continue to work with partner organizations and seek new partnerships for invasive species management: including surveying, treatment, and removal of invasive species throughout Ken Reid CA. This will allow for individual and specific treatment plans to be developed for different species, allowing for the most successful actions and allocation of resources.



*Two high priority invasive species found at Ken Reid Conservation Area, Garlic Mustard (top) and Dog-Strangling Vine (bottom)*

### **Actions include:**

1. A fulsome site evaluation be completed to determine the size and location of invasive species colonies
2. Develop and implement an Invasive Species Management Strategy for the entire property

## 4.5 Restoration Projects

Restoration projects are implemented to improve or target representative communities and habitats. In turn, they combat invasive species, act as educational demonstration sites for landowners, provide habitat for species at risk.

Ken Reid CA has a variety of opportunities for restoration projects, which include tree planting, pollinator habitats, medicine gardens, and grassland habitat restoration. These projects and initiatives will be determined through several factors. Funding and partnership opportunities, the implementation of management zones, and invasive species management, which will help prioritize and locate appropriate actions and projects throughout the conservation area. As the climate continues to change, it is also recommended that restoration projects should consider assisted migration when selecting species for planting.

**Actions include:**

1. Enhance representative habitats for species at risk
2. Demonstrate leadership through action
3. Support the recommendations of provincial and municipal strategic plans, and Kawartha Conservations Stewardship Strategy
4. Implement recommendations from the fulsome site evaluation and Invasive Species Management Strategy

## 5.0 Connect

Kawartha Conservation is guided by the desire to provide quality opportunities for our visitors to develop meaningful connections with the natural environment. Our community consultation process highlighted the fact that our diverse community has very different reasons for visiting Ken Reid CA. As a result, what is considered *meaningful* for one, may not be the same for another. To address this and still provide meaningful and inspiring connections to nature, the following actions have been recommended.

### Recommendations:

1. Facilitate and host community events
2. Enhancing user experiences
3. Improve accessibility throughout the conservation area
4. Facilitate knowledge sharing opportunities
5. Demonstrate environmental stewardship



*Student learning about plants and the environment at Ken Reid CA.*

## 5.1 Community Events

Kawartha Conservation utilizes the environment and facilities at Ken Reid CA, where we have hosted a variety of public events that have attracted over 1,600 community members annually. Kawartha Conservation has hosted interpretive events with themes surrounding birds, forest therapy, Seniors walks in nature, tree plantings, in addition to movie screenings, and the popular Christmas at Ken Reid. On average, our visitors identified that they spend 1-3 hours in the conservation area.

On top of community events, our day camps and educational programs run year-round as a way of connecting kids to nature, where learning about the natural environment is fun and interactive.

Beyond Kawartha Conservation events, Ken Reid CA is home to community organized events that are hosted throughout the year, ranging from cross country runs to pride walks and group camping excursions. These events



*Santa pays a visit to Ken Reid CA during Christmas at Ken Reid, a popular community event*

provide unique opportunities for community members to come out and enjoy Ken Reid CA in a way that is interesting and meaningful to them. Many members have participated in educational sessions, and interpretive walks and hikes throughout Ken Reid CA. Users of the park have identified that these types of community events are highly valued. They provide an added experience and draw people in from the local community as well as visitors from other communities. As such, it is highly recommended that these types of programs continue to be offered, and partnerships with event organizers be

developed. It is also recommended that there be variety in the lengths and types of events that are hosted, which will allow for different groups within our community to come out and find a connection with nature.

**Actions include:**

1. Continue to host interpretive and themed events
2. Continue to promote our location for community events
3. Continue to provide an education program with nature and curriculum based environmental education

## 5.2 Enhancing User Experience

There is an opportunity to build on the current uses of Ken Reid CA to enhance our user experiences. Finding ways to draw new visitors as well as spark interest with current single use visitors. Our user survey identified that alternative forms of recreation throughout the different seasons be offered. We believe partnering with businesses, organizations and groups within our community will enhance the experience of our visitors, providing an outdoor experience.

Ken Reid CA is home to diverse and significant habitats that provide opportunity for a rustic camping experience within a relatively central and close location for the surrounding towns and communities. Ken Reid currently accommodates camping through an open area referred to as group camp, where camping, campfires, and family/group picnics can take place as a permitted use. In the past, it has been home to organized camping trips.

Within the user survey, our community identified that they would like to see outdoor games, rustic and winter camping experiences, improved trail maps, indigenous learning opportunities, and an increased staff presence to address questions and concerns.

**Actions include:**

1. Investigate the feasibility for individual campsites within Ken Reid CA
2. Partner with local tourism associations and businesses
3. Assess the potential for outdoor equipment rentals such as snowshoes and cross-country skis
4. Assess the feasibility of implementing nature-based games and outdoor equipment

### 5.2.1 Amenities

Changing community values and the importance placed on nature experience has some impact on the amenities provided throughout Ken Reid CA. Creating a place that is open and inclusive for all, providing accessibility features that encourage people of all ages and abilities to visit will require some upgrades to older infrastructure. Where necessary, infrastructure has been removed when posing threats to visitor safety. While some of these upgrades have significant financial impact, others can be achieved by simply changing signs. As financial resources allow, we should investigate opportunities to add accessibility features to existing and future infrastructure.

**Actions include:**

1. All washrooms be identified as gender neutral throughout the conservation area and Administration Building
2. Address concerns regarding accessibility of amenities

## 5.2.2 Infrastructure Maintenance and Upgrades

Infrastructure throughout Ken Reid CA has many different meanings, including the administrative offices of Kawartha Conservation, trails, roadways, and amenities such as outdoor washrooms and picnic shelters. The updating and replacement of aging infrastructure can have significant impacts on financial and human resources.

Kawartha Conservation faces seasonal challenges with road maintenance as excess water creates rutting, potholes, and the potential for road washout. Changing weather patterns have brought more rain and ice in winter seasons, making road maintenance difficult and expensive. Poor drainage has resulted in increased maintenance costs and a decrease in user satisfaction as the road becomes unpassable in wet months. Visitors have identified road conditions as a negative experience that needs addressing.



*Conservation Lands Technicians completing hazard tree removal along the Cedar Boardwalk*

### **Actions include:**

1. Identify infrastructure improvement options for the main roadway to address erosion, drainage, and winter maintenance needs
2. Determine additional parking areas for future considerations
3. Assess winter access to the back of the conservation area, and potential events that could occur
4. Implement a plan to address infrastructure maintenance, upgrades or decommissioning that will meet the needs and safety standards for our community.

## 5.3 Improving Accessibility

During the user survey, it was identified that our community highly values accessibility to and throughout Ken Reid CA. Accessibility has a different meaning for members of our community, therefore we have addressed it in the forms of signage, accessible trails and infrastructure, and conservation area maps and visitor guides.

### 5.3.1 Signage

Signage, an important part of any conservation area, has the ability to affect the experience of every visitor. Ken Reid CA has an extensive trail network that requires improvements to ensure signage and trail markers meet the needs of our visitors. Adequate signage ensures that our visitors will enjoy Ken Reid CA without getting lost, confused, or missing key features entirely. Proper signage at trailheads and main areas throughout Ken Reid CA is one way of providing information about amenities and trails, including distance, difficulty, and wayfinding.

### **Actions include:**

1. All current signage throughout the conservation area be updated and expanded to reflect the following:
  - a. Visibility and clarity
  - b. Reflect the location of amenities and trails, including trail length and difficulty
2. Provide interpretive signage that will enhance the visitors experience

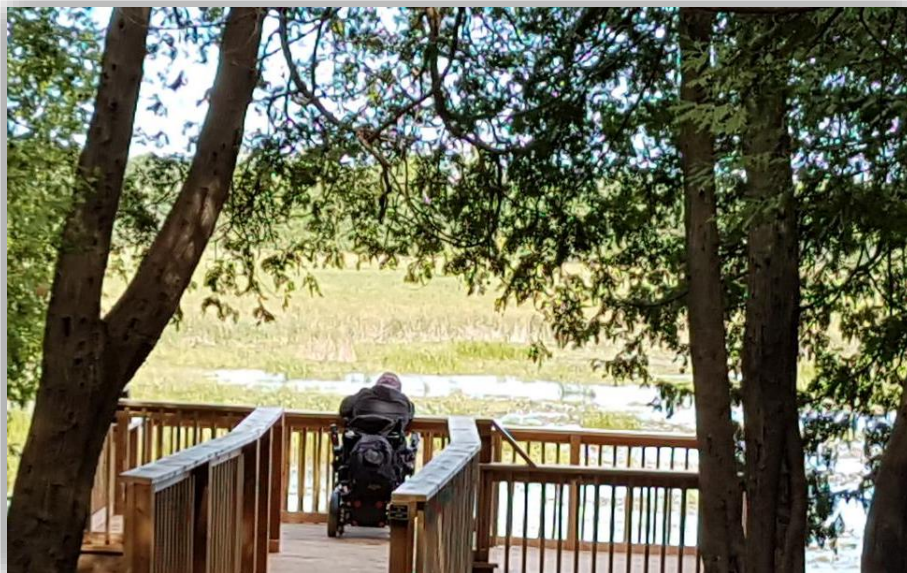


### 5.3.2 Accessible Trails and Infrastructure

Accessible trails have an important role to play in providing everyone in our community a direct and tangible pathway into nature. Kawartha Conservation takes pride in ensuring everyone can form a connection with nature in a way that is meaningful to them. This was the driving force behind developing two accessible trails throughout Ken Reid CA. The Marsh Lookout, the flagship accessible trail, is 425 meters long, and the Point Loop Trail is our longest accessible trail at 920 meters. By developing accessible trails with gravel beds to the Marsh Lookout and along the shoreline of Sturgeon Lake, ensures those with impairments can enjoy parts of Ken Reid’s adverse trail network and beautiful scenery. Through the development and implementation of more accessible features beyond trails, Kawartha Conservation will continue to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to spend time in nature at Ken Reid CA.



*The Point Look accessible trail winds through the forest along the shoreline of Sturgeon Lake*



*In addition to trails, Ken Reid CA offers accessible infrastructure such as the Lookout over McLarens Marsh*

The Kawartha Lakes is experiencing demographic shifts, as our population is aging, and once seasonal residents are beginning to retire, and make the Kawartha Lakes their permanent residence. It is important to recognize that accessibility has many different meanings throughout our community. Providing greenspace for the improvement of physical and mental health is the overall driving force behind providing all members of our community the opportunity to come to Ken Reid CA and experience the environment in a way that is meaningful, safe, and accessible.

**Actions include:**

1. Maintain existing accessible trails
2. Continue to consider accessibility options as infrastructure projects are being designed

### 5.3.3 Maps and Conservation Area Guides

Maps and conservation area guides help improve user experiences and provide educational opportunities that help connect visitors to the park and provides current and future visitors the opportunity to plan their trip in advance.

Conservation area guides have proven to be a popular tool in the past when Kawartha Conservation launched the birding checklist for Ken Reid CA. The checklist continues to be a great success within the community, providing a great way to enjoy the outdoors. Providing similar materials with different themes may spark more interest to new and old visitors alike.

#### **Actions include:**

1. Assess the feasibility of implementing digital and online interactive trail maps and using technology to enhance user experience
2. Provide interactive conservation area visitor guides

### 5.4 Facilitate Knowledge Sharing Opportunities

Local academic institutions such as Fleming College and Trent University, as well as organizations such as the Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit, have identified that Ken Reid CA provides many areas for research and study due to the diverse ecosystems that exist throughout the park. Research has the ability to build upon itself, therefore there needs to be opportunities to access the wealth of knowledge that exists. Expanding on the current and facilitating new research opportunities allows educational institutions and community organizations to gain new information and understanding of the natural environment by utilizing the vast land and varying ecosystems within Ken Reid CA.

Within our community, it has been recognized that many visitors of Ken Reid CA have vast knowledge and expertise with the local environment. These forms of community-based knowledge sharing, and research continues to teach staff and visitors alike many things about Ken Reid CA that go beyond common knowledge. Providing a space for the community to share their knowledge on Ken Reid CA, and the ecosystems that are present, allows them amongst others to foster relationships, and the opportunity to continuously learn and explore their curiosities about the environment around them.

#### **Actions include:**

1. Facilitate First Nations knowledge sharing
2. Continue to provide opportunities for collaborative research projects with academic institutions, government agencies, private sector partners, and environmental experts
3. Identify and prioritize the need for monitoring projects and research opportunities

### 5.5 Demonstrate Environmental Stewardship

Low impact development (LID) projects are a land use planning and engineering design approach to manage stormwater runoff and water infiltration as a part of green infrastructure. LID emphasizes conservation and the use of on-site natural features to protect water quality and reduce impacts of excess water on the landscapes. Examples of LID projects include infiltration basins, green roofs, bioretention swales, engineered wetlands or rain gardens.

Climate change will have an impact on the maintenance of infrastructure at Ken Reid CA, such as impacting water infiltration and runoff, and potentially degrading the roadway and extended driveway through increased freeze-thaw events. In 2019, a rain garden demonstration site was established at the site of the accessible washroom to deal with the road runoff and to highlight the benefits of establishing gardens on private property. Future recommendations include continuing to look for opportunities to implement demonstration sites to alleviate management challenges while demonstrating best practices.



*Stewardship staff planting a rain garden to facilitate infiltration from water runoff*

The Kawartha Conservation Stewardship Strategy has set a goal of connecting our community to stewardship activities. Creating connections within our community by engaging watershed partners is an important goal because it will help to foster a community stewardship ethic and lead community members to embrace their role as environmental stewards. By providing a space where our community can learn about stewardship activities, and the positive effect they can have on the environment

**Actions include:**

1. Road improvements to alleviate pooling of water and improve infiltration
2. Demonstrate rain capture and infiltration features around buildings and structures
3. Manage high and low water fluctuations to reduce pressures on the roadways
4. Design and management of trails that address naturally flooded or wet areas
5. Assess the opportunity to expand green infrastructure

## 6.0 Summary

Ken Reid Conservation Area (Ken Reid CA) was purchased in November 1982 by Kawartha Conservation as our flagship conservation area with the intention of providing an area of public enjoyment in the natural environment. Ken Reid CA boasts an intricate trail system with over 10km to choose from, a group campground, lake vistas, and 2 scenic boardwalks. Ken Reid is home to the City of Kawartha Lakes largest dog park and have also provided a place for local students to study nature in classes, carrying out projects, and field truthing lessons learned in classrooms.

In 1983, the vision for Ken Reid CA was *“to protect, conserve, and interpret the natural resources of Ken Reid Conservation Area as a regional facility for the use and enjoyment of the public”*. This vision still holds true today. Kawartha Conservations intent is to continue to provide an area for public appreciation and enjoyment of the natural environment. We take pride in providing spaces and opportunities for the community to interact and develop a meaningful connection with nature. The development of the Management Plan provides an opportunity to re-evaluate our management practices to ensure they are in like with changing community values, environmental pressures, and expanding opportunities.

The input provided from the community, staff, and stakeholders has been a vital step in preparing the Management Plan. Working with our community, this plan will help guide Kawartha Conservation in the implementation of projects and improvements, so they have the largest positive impact on our community while respecting the sensitive nature of the environment it was established to protect.

Recommendations and Actions based on the goal: **Protect** the environment at Ken Reid Conservation Area.

Recommendations	Actions
Implement management and use zones throughout Ken Reid CA that will protect significant habitats and allow for public enjoyment of Ken Reid CA	Implement the 3 developed management zones: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Nature Reserve Zones</li> <li>2. Passive Recreation Zones</li> <li>3. Intensive Use Zones</li> </ol>
Acquire land within and adjacent to Ken Reid CA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain the 14 hectares within Ken Reid CA that is currently owned by City of Kawartha Lakes</li> <li>• Explore the feasibility of purchasing lands adjacent to Ken Reid CA as they become available</li> </ul>
Enhance trail management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement a trail service standards procedure</li> <li>• Develop infrastructure to work around ecologically sensitive habitats and naturally wet areas</li> <li>• Develop a schedule for maintenance of trail infrastructure</li> <li>• Assess erosion control and soil compaction concerns on the trail network</li> <li>• Create trail improvements that will reduce the impacts on infrastructure</li> <li>• Investigate new technologies that will reduce maintenance pressures as structures require replacement</li> </ul>
Control high priority invasive species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A fulsome site evaluation to determine the size and location of invasive species colonies</li> <li>• Develop and implement an Invasive Species Management Strategy for the entire property</li> </ul>
Identify restoration projects to enhance or improve natural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance representative native habitats for species at risk</li> <li>• Demonstrate leadership through action</li> <li>• Support the recommendations of provincial and municipal strategic plans, and Kawartha Conservations Stewardship Strategy</li> <li>• Implement recommendations from the Invasive Species Management Strategy</li> </ul>

Recommendations and Actions based on the goal: **Connect** our community to nature in a way that is meaningful and inspiring.

Recommendations	Actions
Facilitate and Host Community Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to host interpretive and theme-based events</li> <li>• Continue to promote our location for community events</li> <li>• Continue to provide an education program with nature and curriculum based environmental education</li> </ul>
Enhance User Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate the feasibility of creating individual campsites</li> <li>• Partner with local tourism associations and businesses to provide activities within the shoulder seasons</li> <li>• Assess the potential for outdoor equipment rentals, including snowshoes and cross-country skis</li> <li>• Assess the feasibility of implementing nature-based games and outdoor equipment</li> </ul>
	<p>Amenities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All washrooms be identified as gender neutral throughout the Conservation Area and Administration Building</li> <li>• Address concerns regarding the accessibility of amenities</li> </ul>
	<p>Infrastructure Maintenance and Upgrades:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify infrastructure improvements for the main roadway to address erosion, drainage, and winter maintenance needs</li> <li>• Determine additional parking areas for future consideration</li> <li>• Assess winter access to the back of the park, and potential events that could occur</li> <li>• Implement a plan to address infrastructure maintenance, upgrades, and decommissioning that will meet the needs and safety standards for our community</li> </ul>
Improve Accessibility	<p>Signs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All current signage be updated and expanded to reflect visibility and clarity, as well as the location of amenities and trails, including length and difficulty</li> <li>• Provide interpretive signage to enhance the visitor experience</li> </ul>
	<p>Accessible Trails:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain the Marsh Lookout and Point Loop trails as accessible trails</li> <li>• Continuously consider accessibility options as infrastructure projects are being designed</li> </ul>
	<p>Maps and Conservation Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the feasibility of implementing digital trail maps</li> <li>• Provide interactive Conservation Area visitor guides</li> </ul>
	<p>Accessible Trails:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain the Marsh Lookout and Point Loop trails as accessible trails</li> <li>• Continuously consider accessibility options as infrastructure projects are being designed</li> </ul>

Recommendations	Actions
Facilitate Knowledge Sharing Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate First Nations knowledge sharing opportunities</li> <li>• Continue to provide opportunities for collaborative research and monitoring projects with academic institutions, government agencies, private sector partners and environmental experts</li> <li>• Identify and prioritize the need for monitoring projects and research opportunities</li> </ul>
Environmental Stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road improvements to alleviate the pooling of water and improve infiltration</li> <li>• Demonstrate rain capture and infiltration features around buildings and structures</li> <li>• Manage high and low times of water in the pond to reduce pressure on the roadway</li> <li>• Design and management of trails that address naturally flooded or wet areas</li> <li>• Assess the opportunity to expand green infrastructure</li> </ul>

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