



277 Kenrei Road  
Lindsay, ON K9V 4R1

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE May 2, 2007**

# **Charges Laid in East Cross Forest**

SCUGOG- After seven months of distributing pamphlets, talking with property users and hosting a public information session, Kawartha Conservation is cracking down on trespassing in the East Cross Forest. They want to get the message out to everyone—the area is temporarily closed to the public—and offenders will be prosecuted.

"Durham Regional Police are now taking a zero tolerance approach in the East Cross Forest. If you get caught, you are going to be charged," says Inspector Bruce Townley, head of Durham's ATV taskforce. Since April 21, police have issued more than 80 warnings and laid 25 charges, which carry a \$65 fine. Officers will soon be checking for license, permit and insurance offences, which will cost offenders another \$110.00 each. He suggests that offroad enthusiasts visit the Durham police website at <http://www.drps.ca>, and check out the 'ATVs - Rules of the Road / Where to Ride' link under the What's New section to learn more about their legal responsibilities.

There is a common misconception that the entire East Cross Forest area, which lies in the southeast corner of Scugog, is legally accessible to the public. The fact is that all the land is privately owned, so those wishing to access any portion of it must first get permission from the landowner. Kawartha Conservation wants the public to know that under no circumstances will anyone be allowed to access their 557 acre property until it is opened as a multi-use conservation area, hopefully in 2009.

"We are urging everyone to please, stay out of the area. That includes anyone in a vehicle, on horseback or on foot, so that we can determine the best restoration strategies to ensure the longevity of this natural environment," says Kristie Virgoe, Kawartha Conservation manager, environmental protection and restoration. "The sooner we get the area restored, a management plan in place and the trails readied, the sooner it can open for everyone to enjoy."

In addition to the increased police presence, Canadian Shield Anticrime Security Force is working under contract with Kawartha Conservation to patrol the property. They have been onsite since last fall, educating the public about the new ownership. They are working closely with Durham Region police to identify repeat offenders accessing the property, and may also lay charges under the Trespass to Property Act.

A community clean up of the forest is planned for June 9<sup>th</sup>. Several offroading and ATV organizations have generously volunteered to help in the clean up effort. For more information about East Cross Forest, or to register for the clean up, visit [www.kawarthaconservation.com](http://www.kawarthaconservation.com) or contact Kristie Virgoe at 705 328-2271 ext. 223, [kvirgoe@kawarthaconservation.com](mailto:kvirgoe@kawarthaconservation.com).

Kawartha Conservation is a watershed-based environmental organization focused on providing abundant clean water within a healthy landscape. It is one of 36 conservation authorities in Ontario providing natural resources management. The Kawartha Watershed intersects portions of the City of Kawartha Lakes; Township of Scugog; Township of Brock; Municipality of Clarington; Township of Galway-Cavendish & Harvey; and Township of Cavan-Millbrook-North Monaghan.

For more information please contact:

*Lezlie Goodwin, 705.328.2271 ext 233 or [lgoodwin@kawarthaconservation.com](mailto:lgoodwin@kawarthaconservation.com)*

*Kristie Virgoe, 705.328.2271 ext 223 or [kvirgoe@kawarthaconservation.com](mailto:kvirgoe@kawarthaconservation.com)*