



Durham Region: Illegal activity in East Cross Forest Conservation Area leads to charges

Kawartha Conservation says zero tolerance policy in full force to protect ecologically sensitive area

(Durham Region, May 6, 2008) Authorities have charged at least 7 people caught trespassing in East Cross Forest Conservation Area. Located in the southeast corner of Scugog Township in Durham Region, Kawartha Conservation is rehabilitating and managing the area to protect important water features, a variety of plant species and cold-water fish habitat after years of ecological devastation from illegal activities.

The charges range from trespassing and driving without a license to having open alcohol in a vehicle. As well, a recently stolen vehicle was found burned-out on the property.

One of the off-roaders charged with trespassing claimed that he didn't see any of the 'no trespassing' signs. However, a search of his vehicle uncovered 3 of the signs in his trunk.

"The illegal activity this spring is particularly concerning," says Kristie Virgoe, Kawartha Conservation Manager of Environmental Protection and Restoration. "Off-roading activity causes a lot of surface damage, and the burning of vehicles releases an array of toxins into surface water and, potentially, groundwater. Surrounding communities depend on these groundwater sources for clean drinking water."

As part of the Oak Ridges Moraine, East Cross Forest provides vital recharge areas for groundwater aquifers and headwaters for creeks and rivers. The East Cross Forest Conservation Area is closed to the public until next spring.

"We've been advising trespassers for almost two years now that the property is closed and trespassers will be charged," says Virgoe. "A zero tolerance policy is in full force to protect this ecologically sensitive area."

Canadian Shield Anticrime will continue to patrol the property and lay charges with the help of Durham Regional Police. "If you come on the property, you will be charged," states Evan Burke, General Manager for Canadian Shield Anticrime. "Trespassing and vandalism will not be tolerated."



Authorities confront wave of trespassing, vandalism and other illegal activity in East Cross Forest Conservation Area this spring

A stolen vehicle set on fire, April 26, 2008



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 municipalities of the City of Kawartha Lakes; Scugog; Brock; Clarington; Galway-Cavendish & Harvey; and Cavan Monaghan.

www.kawarthaconservation.com