

EDC Recommendations
Regarding a
Section of the K & P Trail South of Calabogie

Background:

In mid-July, the Greater Madawaska Township Council passed a resolution requesting that the Trails Sub-Committee of the Township's Economic Development Committee (EDC) give special consideration to one particular section of the K&P Trail within the Township and prepare a report on its findings for presentation to Council by year end. (Copy of the resolution is attached.) Subsequently, the sub-committee also received one piece of correspondence sent to the Township by concerned rate-payers living near the trail in question.

The particular section of the K&P Trail under discussion has been the subject of previous discussions at EDC, with several members presenting various perspectives on the matter. Consequently, the Trails Sub-Committee met on August 18 to consider the matter and offers the following report:

At issue:

A particular, short, piece of the K&P Trail, South of Calabogie Lake, running from Barryvale to Sand Hill. The issues already identified are well described in Council's resolution and include the condition of the trail, its maintenance, use, value to the Township, compatibility with local residents' enjoyment of their own properties, current and future policies related to the trail, etc.

The Sub-Committee, having given thorough consideration to Council's request, County policies and to the substantial body of information previously gathered on this issue, notes the following:

1) The principal underlying issue appears to be the real use of this section of the K&P Trail (i.e., whether or not it should maintain its designation as a recreational trail only, or whether it should be converted to a public road and maintained as such by the Township).

2) Key subordinate issues relate to the options applicable within each of the above categories, ie:

a) If kept as a Trail: should it provide four-season access for all motorized off-road vehicles or have its use(s) more strictly defined; and if so, how and by whom?

b) If converted to a Road: what might its impact be on the Township and its residents; and what, if any, restrictions might apply?

Observations and Recommendations:

1) Council, in forming its request, appears to envision a research framework similar to that employed in the development of the Renfrew County "K & P Corridor Management Plan" (See copy and accompanying map - attached). This document was created by the County's Development and Property Committee and involved input and substantial resources from a variety of sources. With the resources and time available, the Trails Sub-Committee, an entirely volunteer group of Greater Madawaska rate-payers, cannot hope to mirror the comprehensive approach of the County committee. Fortunately, virtually all of the key issues have already been identified, researched, analyzed and appropriate recommendations detailed in the County's plan.

The Trails Sub-Committee of the EDC recommends that, wherever and whenever possible, the Township of Greater Madawaska adhere to the well-developed parameters clearly defined in the County's "K & P Corridor Management Plan". The County plan, together with the recommendations below, should serve as a model for the future development of not only the K&P trail, but of all trails within Greater Madawaska.

2) In interpreting and applying the overall "K & P Corridor Plan" framework to the section and circumstances at issue, the Trails Sub-Committee notes that the K&P Trail has already established itself as a multi-use corridor for recreational vehicles of all types, with non-motorized utilization a significant but secondary application. It therefore suggests that this trail be considered a multi-use trail and the following conditions should apply (subject to review and technical guidance by the Township's Planning and Legal staff):

a) The Township should first ensure it has full and sole ownership of both this and any adjoining sections of the K&P Trail within its boundaries.

b) The Township should maintain the section in question (approx. Barryvale to Sand Hill) as a Trail, but should designate this section (and only this section) as accessible to vehicular traffic under special terms and conditions set out by the Township. Because the trail is already primarily used by recreational vehicles,

limited on-road vehicular traffic use for this section is not seen as incompatible with overall Trails policy, provided that appropriate measures are taken to limit such use. These would include:

i) The relevant section of the trail should be developed and signed accordingly (so that users are aware of its multiple-use functionality and any related rules the Township may wish to develop for general safety). With legal advice, the Township will want to consider whether it will be a public road, with restrictions for use (which may create lot frontage on a municipal road), or some form of right of way for designated non-recreational use.

ii) The Township should consider developing a series of “vehicle permits” which would grant access to designated on-road vehicles to use this section of the trail. These would then be sold, upon application, to residents whose properties abut this section of the Trail, and certain valid commercial users (eg. licensed logging contractors). These permits would have to be conspicuously displayed on the approved vehicles and would be valid only for specific periods of time (eg. monthly, seasonally, annually, or specific designated time periods). They should be priced according to the value of the contemplated usage to the users, and reflect of any costs to be incurred by the Township.

iii) Pricing of these permits should therefore provide sufficient revenues to: provide and maintain the appropriate signage; upgrade/maintain the Trail to the satisfaction of all permitted users; generate reserves for other trail development; and provide for monitoring and enforcement of the rules governing its use.

c) All other sections of the Trail should be appropriately gated to prevent any expansion / extension of its use by “on-road” or non-recreational vehicles.

d) The fact that the K&P Trail is disrupted at Bluff Point / Barryvale, and does not provide an unbroken route through Greater Madawaska, should be turned into an asset for the local tourism industry. The Township, in collaboration with local businesses, should seek to establish year round “trail head” locations, parking and comfort facilities, etc. close to each end of the break, thereby encouraging recreational vehicle users of the Trail to utilize the Calabogie area as an initial or terminal destination, rather than merely a way-point en-route to some other locale. Signage and advertising could then promote such use and it should serve as the model for future trail development in the township. Organized trail users should be encouraged to show these trail heads on their mapping and information.

3) If the Township requires further consultation with Trail users, rate-payers, or other interested parties, professional assistance should be secured to organize and facilitate such meetings and Township staff or free-lance assistance should be contracted to provide the required administrative support. The Trails Sub-Committee would be prepared to share its own research with any such project team and to input to or periodically review its work.

4) To encourage the extension, expansion and further use of Township trails (both the K&P and others), the municipality should set aside special funding so that local residents with particular relevant knowledge can be encouraged to work with the Trails Sub-Committee on the development of on-line and printed guides and lists of attractions. These could include such things as exceptional wilderness vantage points, fishing maps, bird and wildlife viewing areas, etc. Such resources would encourage the further use of Township trails and facilities, thus exposing our municipality to a greater number of visitors and benefiting the overall economy of the area.

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Respectfully Submitted:
Trails Sub-Committee of the Economic Development Committee
Township of Greater Madawaska
August 21, 2007