

HALTON REGIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN
PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND RESPONSE DOCUMENT
FEBRUARY 2005

**Prepared by Halton Region Planning and Public Works Department,
Gartner Lee Limited. and Silv-Econ Ltd.**

INTRODUCTION

This document is a companion to the Halton Regional Forest Final Management Plan dated February 2005. The purpose of this document is to provide a record of all the comments received on the Draft Halton Regional Forest Management Plan dated October 2004. The document details the comments from agencies, groups and individuals in that order and indicates the consultant's response to each comment. The consultants are Gartner Lee Limited. and Silv-Econ Ltd.

Also included are the minutes of the Public Open House held on November 25, 2004 regarding the Draft Management Plan and results from the comment sheet survey at the Open House.

The consultants working on the Final Management Plan considered all the comments received and responded to them in this document. The consultants then considered all the comments in preparation of the Final Plan.

The Public Consultation and Response Document together with the Final Report and a staff report recommending approval and implementation will be submitted to Halton Regional Council for consideration.

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Conservation Halton	12/09/04	<p>Staff of Conservation Halton has had an opportunity to review the Halton Regional Forest Management Plan and wish to provide the following comments.</p> <p>As you are aware, the development of this Plan has been in the works for a number of years and Conservation Halton staff has participated as a member of the Technical Agency Committee. One of the main benefits in the preparations of the Plan has been the ability to gather a significant amount of information with respect to the natural heritage of the various forestry tracts including those areas of sensitivity. This has been complemented recently with further work undertaken through the Halton Natural Areas Inventory. Such baseline data is critical in assessing the health of our ecosystems over the long term. What does not appear to be identified within the strategies for natural heritage objectives, however, are any recommendations relating to long term monitoring of the natural heritage features.</p> <p>Within the discussion regarding maintaining the natural diversity of the forest ecosystem, there did not appear to be any reference to invasive species. Invasive species are becoming more and more of a problem within our natural areas yet the plan does not address any aspect pertaining to their management or removal. It would have been helpful to include a strategy for a proposed action plan and long term monitoring in order to deal with the different invasive species.</p> <p>The Plan identifies the landscape ecology of the tracts and the aspect of core natural areas and connectivity. It would have been helpful to show each of the tracts in the larger ecological landscape to which they may belong with respect to their functionality as cores or corridors. This would also be pertinent with respect to other public lands that may be adjacent or in the vicinity. The Plan fails to recognize the bigger picture with respect to protection of natural lands that provide for core natural areas and connectivity in relation to the extensive public lands that are owned particularly in the Milton area.</p> <p>Under the section dealing with Challenges and Opportunities, there is emphasis on the need to minimize potential impacts from recreational use and adoption of forest management activities that both conserve and enhance forest attributed and functions. The work that Conservation Halton carries out in its forests is also restorative. The aspect of restoration gives a more complete picture of what is achieved through silvicultural techniques to attain a healthy natural and diverse ecosystem.</p> <p>Conservation Halton supports the objectives and strategies for conserving natural heritage features and functions and the integration of recreational opportunities where they are compatible</p>	<p>A section on Monitoring ecosystem health, recreational use, and other values will be added to the plan.</p> <p>This assessment, while important, was not included in the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Forest Management Plan (FMP).</p>

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		<p>with these objectives. Most of the recreational activities noted are similar to those allowed on lands owned and managed by Conservation Halton.</p> <p>What the Plan fails to identify and recognize is the relationship of the various forestry tracts to other public lands in the Region, particularly those owned by Conservation Halton. This is particularly critical in understanding not only the need for providing for recreational usage on similar type of lands but accommodating future usage while protecting the natural heritage features and functions of what are collectively public lands within the Region. There are public lands, collectively, that can accommodate various types of recreational usage while there are others that are highly susceptible in regard to their long-term sustainability. What needs to be understood is that all public lands are going to come under increasing pressure for use in the future. While the Plan did only center on the forestry tracts owned by the Region, what should have been identified, with respect to recreational opportunities, were the other public lands and opportunities for access and connectivity. This is particularly true in the case of Conservation Halton's Hilton Falls Conservation Area and the Region's County Forest that lies adjacent. It is somewhat confusing as to why there was no recognition of this large contiguous public land holding and how it could be managed from a natural heritage and recreational standpoint. It is ludicrous to suggest that there suddenly should be a fence erected to separate these lands. It was our understanding that the relationship of other public lands to the Regional forestry tracts was always to be considered in the terms of reference for the preparation of the Plan.</p> <p>The Plan promoted various recreational uses but does not identify the importance of developing strategies to monitor these uses and ensure that they are sustainable. Further, encouraging user groups to peer manage their activities, while helpful to some extent in dealing with conflicts, is not a practical or realistic solution to controlling and regulating recreational usage on public lands.</p> <p>The Plan speaks to strategies for achieving education and research objectives. Again, there are joint opportunities between the Region and Conservation Halton that should be recognized particularly where Conservation Halton has existing Visitor Centres and Outdoor Educational Centres.</p> <p>Under objectives for administration and management, the Plan recommends that Conservation Halton not be considered to manage the Halton Regional Forest due to differing Regional and Conservation Halton forest management goals and objectives regarding issues such as revenue generation, hunting and resource extraction. There is no explanation of what these differences are and frankly, the statement leaves us somewhat bewildered to say the least. Conservation Halton has the same goals and objectives</p>	<p>The plan will identify locations of other public lands, including those owned by Conservation Halton and will make recommendations for addressing concerns over property boundaries and cross-over uses.</p> <p>Several user groups have proposed peer monitoring to help educate users and control recreational activities. This approach will be included in the plan</p> <p>Regional bylaws 224-86 and 189-96 specify permitted uses. These by-laws may need to be amended.</p>

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		<p>in protecting and securing natural lands while allowing for compatible recreational opportunities.</p> <p>The Plan recommends that the Region hire a professional forester and look at short and long-term management objectives through the establishment of a Forest Stewardship Committee. What is not recognized is the need for day-to-day management of these lands. This applies to such basic needs as security; garbage pickup; repairs to gates, fences, signage and dealing with on-going management issues that occur regularly in looking after such natural lands. There is also the need to continually assess the lands from a risk management standpoint. Conservation Halton, as you are aware, has been maintaining these properties for the past several years with funding from the Region of Halton. The maintenance in relation to infrastructure improvements has been limited due to the Region's desire to control costs while waiting for the Halton Regional Management Plan to be completed. The Plan has identified a capital improvement program and anticipated costs but has not recognized or comprehended the reality of day-to-day costs associated with ensuring that these lands are managed properly for their protection and safe use and enjoyment by the general public.</p> <p>The Halton Regional Forest Management Plan provides significant information on the natural heritage features associated with the various forestry tracts, identifies key objectives and goals for their protection and does a good job in outlining appropriate silvicultural and management activities to ensure maintenance of the important forest attributes and their functions.</p> <p>What is difficult to understand is the failure of the Plan to recognize the bigger picture and relationship of other public lands aside from the Region's forestry tracts. Conservation Halton has close to 10,000 acres of mostly natural lands that should be looked at as complementing the Regional forestry tracts in regards to natural heritage objectives and providing for sustainable recreational opportunities. The reality is that Conservation Halton and the Region of Halton together have a significant land base of some of the most important natural lands in the region. While there may be some differences in policy with respect to the use of our respective lands, there is not a difference in goals and objectives between the two organizations for their long-term protection and management. Conservation Halton and the Region of Halton have been cooperating and working closely together in managing these lands with their respective expertise, experience and resources. It is hard to understand how it would be in the public interest to suddenly break this relationship.</p>	<p>A Capital plan was a requirement in the TOR for the management plan. The plan will discuss various approaches that the Region may wish to consider in managing the Forest.</p>
Grand River Conservation Authority	11/22/04	I agree that including an Access Management Zone into the structuring of the management areas would serve you well to establish a specific set of guidelines for activities taking place	Locations and permitted uses of recreational trails will be reviewed by the

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		<p>around the official trails through the Restricted Areas and elsewhere. Decommissioning already existing and well used trails is challenging and costly, and is usually not completely successful at keeping people off the trails unless a great deal of commitment is given to restoration, signage and perhaps enforcement afterwards. And even with these types of efforts in place, end results are not always satisfactory. In most cases, I would imagine that the damage caused by the presence of the trails within Restricted Areas has already had a significant effect in terms of disturbance and impact to the site. Therefore, re-routing the trails into areas that have not been previously disturbed by trails and increased activity, even within less sensitive areas would be counter productive. I would say that ensuring proper signage and trail maintenance on the existing trails combined with educating the trail users as to the significance of the area would have favourable results for the property manager and the trail users, while encouraging environmental protection and education.</p> <p>The wording of the changes made to the affected Tables is effective in acknowledging the purpose of the Access zones and describing proposed activities.</p> <p>One of the questions that comes to mind though, is the intention to encourage canopy closure over trails and reduce the width of trails. This situation would create a potentially hazardous situation for vehicles travelling through these corridors. In this case, it would be beneficial to classify the trails network based on vehicle access requirements and manage these trails respective of those needs, if this has not already been done.</p>	<p>Halton Forest Advisory Committee (HFAC) and forest users.</p> <p>Deleted: t</p> <p>We agree and will include this recommendation in the education strategies.</p> <p>We agree and will address the requirements for large vehicle access.</p>
Grand River Conservation Authority	12/08/04	<p>The following comments were made on the Draft Halton Regional Forest Management Plan dated October 2004.</p> <p>Comments are as follows:</p> <p>Overall, the Halton Regional Forest Management Plan is effective in demonstrating a commitment to responsible forest management and proper planning. The designation of Management Areas within forest tracts based on natural heritage features and sensitivity is an ideal method of allowing for an adaptive and flexible approach to management of the forest resource.</p> <p>A few suggestions:</p> <p>Section 4.2, Goal 1, Objective 1: Conserve Natural Heritage Attributes and Functions</p> <p><i>The description mentioned here implies that the use of pesticides and/or herbicides will be allowed where appropriate measures are taken to mitigate the risk of groundwater contamination, regardless of the management area designation. It would be appropriate to regulate the use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers based on management area designation and include these developments in a FMP Table.</i></p>	<p>We are reviewing management guidelines regarding pesticides and herbicides.</p>

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		<p>Section 4.2, Goal 1, Objective 2: Conserve and Enhance Native Diversity of Flora and Fauna and Key Forest Attributes and Functions</p> <p>The inventory completed for the Halton Regional FMP indicates that less than 1% of the area found in the Halton Regional Forest exists in the late seral stage of development. The FMP describes management activities that will preserve these areas currently identified as having Old Growth characteristics, however, there are no current targets set fourth within the FMP that promote the preservation and establishment of larger proportions of these important woodlands on the landscape level. It would be beneficial to establish target proportions (ie. percent area) of the Halton Regional Forest that could be left to perpetuate as Old Growth forests and managed toward this condition. The same theory would apply for Core Natural Areas and other significant habitat types.</p> <p>Section 4.2, Strategies for Achieving Natural Heritage Objectives</p> <p>Should include: Use only native seed and planting stock appropriate to regional and local seed sources to encourage the regeneration and establishment of healthy future forests.</p> <p>Section 6.1: Ecological Foundations for Silviculture</p> <p>The modification of approved and sustainable silvicultural systems is mentioned here in regards to the conservation of significant floral and faunal communities as well as habitat requirements and other important natural heritage features. It should also be noted that the presence of invasive exotic populations would have an impact on the silvicultural system to be implemented. In many cases, the most appropriate system for management of the native species on the site will be the least appropriate for controlling invasive exotic populations. Revenues obtained from previous timber revenue agreements may be used to offset the cost of reducing invasive exotic populations before the affected site undergoes silvicultural treatment resulting in the spread of unwanted vegetation and competition.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Appendix C</p> <p>It is difficult to assess the maps due to the opaque background colour of the Management Areas. The maps would be more effective with transparent hatching.</p>	<p>This is a good point. We will provide some targets for late seral forests and other significant habitat types.</p> <p>We agree and will add this recommendation.</p> <p>We agree and will note these recommendations in the plan.</p> <p>The maps will be changed.</p>
Town of Halton Hills	11/17/04	Town of Halton Hills (Town) Planning staff have reviewed the draft Halton Forest Management, dated October 2004. The draft plan was subsequently circulated to the Recreation and Parks department for further comment. Staff would like to note the following:	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The operating plan does not appear to identify regular monitoring and inspections related to the recreational uses within the forest tracts, specifically the Acton and Coulson Tracts located within Halton Hills. It has been the Town's experience that upon signing/promoting an appropriate use within an area, and/or building infrastructure to support that use, there should be a system of inspections put in place to address liability issues and control users (i.e. that trails function as intended and do not lead to other areas being compromised); • Staff is under the assumption that the Region will provide the capital and operating funding without support from the Town, and that costs may be offset through the sale of timber where appropriate, it may be prudent to provide this statement within the plan explicitly, possibly within the introduction; • We would like to identify these areas as being appropriate for public use, and ask that the plan advise as to if promotion of these spaces would take place, and when the promotion to the public would occur; • Within the Ten Year Capital Plan there was no allocation of funding, for the potential recruitment of a professional forester to implement the management plan, provided. Some clarification would be required as to the source of such funding; and • The plan would need to address some form of enforcement of parking within these areas, particularly as off-street parking issues are anticipated affecting surrounding private properties. A clarification on the enforcement authority would be helpful. 	<p>A section on Monitoring ecosystem health, recreational use, and other values will be added to the plan.</p> <p>Yes, the Region will provide the funding and timber sales will offset a portion of the costs.</p> <p>Given the sensitive ecology of the Halton Forest (HF) and its current size, increased use is not desirable. Therefore extensive promotion for public use is not planned.</p> <p>Yes, the professional forester funding will be part of the Region's operating budget not the capital budget.</p> <p>Parking areas will be shown on the maps.</p>
Town of Milton	11/23/04	<p>I think the section on Access in Table 2 would benefit from adding "parking lots", i.e. "Existing access trails, roads and parking lots (...)".</p> <p>The management guideline changes seem to be fine.</p>	<p>Parking areas will be included in the Access Zone</p>
Ministry of Natural Resources	11/08/04	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regarding core natural areas (page 7), an area with at least 4 hectares of 200-metre interior habitat could never be less than 30.7 hectares even in the most efficient though unlikely round configuration. 2. On page 11, it is not clear why porcupine dens have been identified as particularly key protection features. Flying squirrels include a species at risk and would probably be cuter, more tree-friendly mammals. 3. On page 12, in defining High Conservation Value Forest, a generalized reference to "other species at risk" is suggested in addition to Jefferson Salamander. 	<p>We will check our numbers and will make appropriate changes in the plan</p> <p>We agree. (But you have to check out the size of this porcupine den!)</p> <p>We are reviewing these recommendations and will revise the plan</p>

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		<p>4. On pages 13-14, it would be helpful if there was a stronger connection between the recreational and education goals. Promoting user awareness through education is important, especially with less passive forest users such as bicyclists, horseback riders and wild food harvesters. To reduce potential conflicts between users and reduce degradation of natural features, implementation of specific tract rules should be accompanied by education strategies.</p> <p>5. Table 2, Management areas. The final management area restriction for Jefferson salamander should probably await the results of recovery planning currently underway for this species. Crown land guidelines for an active northern goshawk nest call for a 50 m radius reserve and as additional 100 m radius modified management area where selection harvest with a March 1 – July 31 timing restriction must retain at least 70% canopy closure (active nests of red-shouldered hawk or Cooper’s hawk are given a 150 m radius reserve plus 21 ha modified management areas). Clarification is needed whether the rare plants referred to include the 65 unnamed ones noted on page 5 or just the three provincial rarities, as well as how they will be operationally identified. Definitions of significant habitat of Acadian Flycatcher and Cerulean Warbler would be helpful. Since butternut is now COSEWIC endangered, the plan should comment on the occurrence and recognize the special needs of this tree.</p> <p>6. Table 10, Forest types. Some forest type descriptions seem peculiar (non-standard) and in some cases (mixed, mixed plantation) not clear at all.</p> <p>7. Table 14, future activities. Apart from the significant habitats of species whose needs may be clarified through recovery plans, it is not clear why this plan cannot establish the system of “High Conservation Value Forest” areas and relate them to the management areas described in Table 2, rather than postpone it to later years when harvest operations will already be underway. Also, adoption of “international standards...as embodied in various Forest Certification systems” appears to be a rather vague activity.</p> <p>8. Section 8.2, Capital works. The environmental impact/suitability of proposed new parking lots and lookouts should be described (e.g. amount of tree removal). Table 17 shows four lookout locations while page 49 indicates three locations. On page 47, the meaning of the sign icon showing a tree and a wheelchair is not clear.</p> <p>9. Appendix A, page 2 – I am the forester for MNR’s Aurora District (covering the Greater Toronto Area), not “Halton-Peel District”, and the postal code should be L4G 3G8. MNR does promote resource stewardship through the Halton/Peel stewardship council (Greg Bales is the acting co-ordinator). Mike</p>	<p>accordingly</p>

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		<p>McMurtry is no longer at Aurora District Emma Followes is not the ecologist here.</p> <p>10. Appendix B, Glossary. The definition for basal area growth factor needs to have “growth” after “basal area” since a thinning would obviously reduce basal area initially. The definition for group selection system should refer to patches <0.5ha (rather than <0.8ha) to ensure good remaining stocking on at least half of each hectare and reduce the potential for confusion with patch clearcutting.</p> <p>11. Appendix C, Tract management area maps. The use of non-transparent colour pasted on air photo bases negated the value of these bases. The maps would be more useful if the management area overlay was transparent and the underlying forest types were identified.</p> <p>12. Appendix D, Five-year schedule and forest stand maps. The schedule table would be more helpful if the stand age and basal area (% or square metres/ha) to be removed were identified and some comment made on the feasibility (likelihood) of achieving the estimated annual revenues and expenses. The maps would be more useful if the forest type, age and hectarage were identified for each stand on each map.</p>	
Niagara Escarpment Commission	11/02/04	<p>1. Zoning. To comply with NEP policies the Plan must identify zones on the maps provided for the six tracts within the NEP area. Policies that will apply to these zones must be clearly stated in the Plan as applying to the six NEP tracts. An Access zone should appear at all existing and proposed parking areas.</p> <p>2. Level of Detail and Policy for Trails and Roads. Deferring decisions on trail expansions, upgrades, and closures would be a mistake. These decisions should not be not be deferred to later. This plan should clearly show what trails the Region has decided to keep open and what trails it intends to close. Closures and expansions should be shown on the Tract maps.</p> <p>3. Requirement for Development Permits: It is likely that development permits from the NEC will be required for new parking areas and trail construction. The Forest Plan must therefore show where these are to be constructed (trail location) and their capacity (e.g. number of parking spaces). If this detail is not provided in the Plan, the NEC will have no basis for considering or approving the construction. It is far better to seek approval for the size and location of these facilities in the Plan.</p> <p>4. Approval process: To avoid any delays down the road you should have a clear understanding of the approval process for confirming that your plans for the Escarpment tracts comply with the NEP. All NEP issues should be resolved prior to the Plan</p>	<p>We reviewed the section in the plan related to NEC and NEP policies.</p> <p>Decisions re: recreational trails will be made following discussions with Halton Forest Advisory Committee and forest users.</p> <p>Only resurfacing and repairs to culverts are proposed. Will these require permits from NEC?</p>

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		<p>going to your Regional Council. A conformity statement, signed by MNR, must appear in all copied of the final plan.</p> <p>5. Planning Horizon: The planning horizon for all Escarpment Parks is normally 10 years, not 20. While 20 years may be sufficient for forest management activities, it is too long a period to wait while other conditions (e.g. population pressures, use issues, new science, new Regional/Provincial policies) change. A review of the six Escarpment tracts should be initiated in 10 years.</p> <p>6. Fauna Inventory and Policies: While the plan captures birds and amphibians well, there is an obvious lack of information and policy direction for the management of mammals and fisheries. (see section 2.3)</p> <p>7. Trail Use Decisions: As much as possible these decisions should be made in this plan.</p> <p>8. Failure to Address Future Use Pressures: The Plan fails to address how the Escarpment Tracts will be managed to accommodate future use. Re-grading existing parking lots simply maintains the status quo. One could argue that these areas are already too small to accommodate current demand. Given the current and future growth numbers associated with the adjacent and outlying areas (Milton, Mississauga, Halton Region and Guelph) the Plan's response to these pressures is inadequate.</p> <p>9. Custodianship and Management Issues: Clearly one of issues of concern to Halton's residents and visitors is the inadequate level of custodial management of the tracts on a day-to-day basis. The Region seems to admit to a capacity problem in this area. Hiring a forester won't help with custodial activities such as trash clean-up, recurrent flooding problems due to nuisance beavers, prompt removal of blow down across trails, timely and efficient snow removal at parking lots during the winter months etc.) The Plan appears to downplay these issues, yet they are at the top of the list for many visitors. Halton needs to commit to an adequate budget and staff resources to ensure that these public places are managed to meet or exceed users' expectations.</p> <p>10. Regulation and Enforcement Issues: These need to be spelled out (e.g. under what laws and regulations will permitted/prohibited uses be enforced? Who will enforce them? Etc). Relying solely on "users" to self-police is a bit naïve. The public should understand how uses are determined and what appeal mechanisms, if any they have to question trail closures or use prohibitions.</p> <p>11. Relationship of Escarpment Tracts to Hilton Falls Conservation Area; This issue needs to be explored further, particularly with a clear statement of the differences between the</p>	<p>The plan contains a 20 year management plan and a 5 year operating plan. It is common practice to review goals and objectives when the 5 year operating plan is renewed.</p> <p>We are reviewing this section of the plan and will make appropriate changes.</p> <p>Decisions re: recreational trails will be made following discussions with Halton Forest Advisory Committee and forest users.</p> <p>Given the sensitive ecology of the HF and its current size, increased use is not desirable. The plan recommends acquisition of additional lands to increase the size of the HF. This will help to relieve some of the pressures for increased use.</p> <p>Regional bylaws 224-84 and 189-96 regulate forest uses. These bylaws may need to be amended. Enforcement will be a requirement. The Region will provide the funding for maintenance and timber sales will offset a portion of the costs.</p> <p>Improved signage, property boundary markings, education, and enforcement will be required to address issues of cross-over</p>

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		<p>two areas in terms of management approach (e.g. free use policy for Halton Tracts, prohibited access (fence) along Hilton Falls Border, multiple use of trails in Escarpment tracts, no intensive trail management or grooming etc. Also if the Region wants to clearly separate individual tracts and the names of these tracts from the current descriptions in the NEP, then these must be proposed now so that NEC staff can change the descriptions can be changed in the NEP.</p> <p>12. Land Acquisition: Normally, the park planning process includes a consideration of additional land purchases to increase the protection of core natural areas, to purchase “in holdings”, to expand trail systems, to make management more efficient, and to link natural areas, trails and greenways. It is curious why the Region has failed to address this issue, particularly given the current initiatives to create and protect more public spaces for the enjoyment of people in the Golden Horseshow. The Region should address this deficiency in the Plan.</p> <p>13. Monitoring: The Plan is very weak in terms of proposed monitoring of tract use, pressures, degraded areas, habitat change etc. How will this be done? Will there be annual “State of the Tracts reporting? Who will prepare the reports? Who will review them ?</p> <p>14. Vague Terms: Terms that say a particular use or activity “will not be encouraged” are weak, wishy-washy and do not give anyone a clear sense or certainty about whether or not the use will be permitted. Better to be clearer by saying “X use or activity will be prohibited”.</p> <p>15. Culverts and beavers: The state-of-the-art managing flooding across roads caused by beavers has advanced to the stage where this problem can be controlled effectively using specialized culvert designs. Simple culverts simply won’t do the job. Given the ongoing problems being experienced in the Britton and Robertson tracts, it is time for the Region to embrace this new technology to keep ahead of this chronic problem.</p> <p>16. Water Management: The Plan should be a comprehensive plan that deals with a broad array of management topics. In this regard, the Plan comes up a bit short in addressing water and fisheries management issues.</p> <p>17. Section 7.3: seems to missing some text.</p> <p>18. Priorities: Custodianship issues should receive top priority, as this has been an area of concern for many years. 2010-2015 is too late to be putting in the infrastructure that is needed to-day.</p> <p>19. Sizes of Parking Lots: should be specified. Will the existing lots be able to accommodate school vans and buses carrying</p>	<p>use.</p> <p>The TOR for the plan did not require that lands for future acquisition be identified. This is a management plan for the existing HF tracts.</p> <p>A section on Monitoring ecosystem health, recreational use, and other values will be added to the plan.</p> <p>We agree and will make the necessary changes in the plan.</p> <p>We agree and will recommend that the Region install beaver resistant culverts in those locations where flooding is occurring on the access roads.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>We don't plan to provide for buses</p>

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		<p>students to these areas? Can the current size of the parking lots accommodate increasing use levels over the next 5 years? How will maintaining the current lot sizes solve parking and safety issues on adjacent municipal roads? Will the Region be enforcing parking violations on these roads when the parking lots exceed capacity?</p> <p>20. Mahon Tract: While a new parking lot is proposed for this tract, it does not seem to appear on the maps. Nor is the size given.</p> <p>21. Map Detail: All maps should clearly show existing and proposed roads, parking areas and trails, and the location of new developments (e.g. boardwalks, lookouts etc.). This includes trails that will be closed.</p> <p>22. Problems and Issues: While the Region states that there was much consultation with the public on the future management of these tracts, there is no summary presented in the Plan regarding what these issues were and how the Region has decided to deal with them. This would be a helpful addition and a reference for future monitoring and reviews to determine how well the Plan is working.</p>	<p>within the lots as the demand is not demonstrated or anticipated. Busses can access the Niagara Escarpment via the nearby Conservation Areas. At the PLC meetings and Open Houses we did not receive complaints about parking. The plan is to resurface and improve the capacity of existing lots without expanding the size noticeably. These Forest Tracts are not considered to be public parks and recreation use is expected essentially on a casual basis only. Parking violations will be enforced where appropriate.</p> <p>Maps are being revised.</p> <p>Chapter 3 and in particular section 3.2 discusses challenges and opportunities arising from the consultation process. Now that we have additional comments from public and technical agencies, we can provide additional details to this section of the plan.</p>

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Bruce Trail Association	11/08/04	<p>Page 7 <i>“Nineteen interested citizens were selected to participate on the PLC. “</i> Appendix A, page 4 & 5, The Public Liaison Committee Contact List only has 18 names.</p> <p>Page 10 <i>“ The use of native soil and rock material as a source of aggregate for trail surfacing should be prohibited, as this is detrimental to the preservation of the natural landscape. ”</i></p> <p>& Page 12 g) <i>“ Prohibit the use of on-site natural soil or rock materials as a source of aggregate for surfacing trails within the Forest Tracts.</i></p> <p>How is it possible to have a trail without using the native soil and rock materials as a part of the trail? What would be the surface of the treadway if not the native soil and rock that is already there?</p> <p>Where are the examples of this practice in the forest tracts that should be prohibited in the future?</p> <p>Page 19 i) <i>“ Regularly inspect trails for hazard trees and other hazards affecting public safety.”</i></p> <p>This could impose overwhelming liability onto Halton Region, particularly in conjunction with a program of installing man-made structures, boardwalks and lookouts. Interesting and instructive case is the tragic accident that occurred in the Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington on Friday November 5th, 2004 where high winds blew down a tree banch which struck and killed a 10 year old who was on a class field trip. Can Halton Region mitigate its liability by a “use at own risk” approach which presumably is the case at present?</p> <p>Page 21 Table 3 Management Area Guidelines <i>“RESTRICTED” & “PASSIVE” – “ Existing trails should be narrowed or boardwalked with railings where possible. ”</i></p> <p>There is only one existing trail that is in a Restricted Are and that is the Hilton Falls Side Trail in the Britton Tract. This trail is not a hiking trail as defined by either Bruce Trail standards or the TRCA trail standard given on page 48. In fact, the HFST trail uses an existing forest access road as its treadway.</p> <p><i>“MODIFIED” – “trails should have well defined edges (either railings or low borders).”</i></p>	<p>Thank you. We will update the list of PLC members in the final plan.</p> <p>We will revise the wording in plan. Intent is to prohibit use of materials from the forest for any resurfacing or reconstruction work.</p> <p>The Region will get a legal opinion on liability before implementing this recommendation.</p> <p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or</p>

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		<p>The purpose for having either railings or low borders is not clear. This is an impractical standard and does not conform to the illustration of the TRCA standard shown on page 48. A trail that is one meter wide with railing or low border on one or both sides is economically prohibitive to build and maintain. A one meter wide trail with railing on both sides would be unnatural to the landscape and provides as much enjoyment of the outdoor experience as walking a cattle chute.</p> <p>Page 22,24 & 25 <i>Table 4 Summary of Management Area by Tract Table 5 & Table 6</i></p> <p>The category, “Bruce Trail Corridor”, is a mistake. The portion of the Hilton Falls Side Trail that traverses the Britton Tract, following the forest access road as its treadway, was formerly the route of the Bruce Trail referenced in the NEPOSS guidelines, (page 23). Currently, this is merely a side trail that continues to be blazed and maintained by volunteers in the Toronto Bruce Trail Club. The Optimum route defined for the Bruce Trail no longer traverse through any of the Halton Regional forest tracts and the need for a secure routing through the Britton Tract ceased when a continuous route to the east of the 6th Line was secured in the late 1980s and affirmed by the construction of the iron bridge that spans the gap in the escarpment.</p> <p>Page 28 <i>Table 8 NEPOSS Activities and Facilities</i></p> <p>The Bruce Trail should not be treated as a special case activity; that is, granted special corridor status.</p> <p>Page 29</p> <p>Below Table 8 is a discussion of the permitted activities within each of the management areas; namely, RESTRICTED, PASSIVE & MODIFIED. The terms “spontaneous trail”, “wider trail”, “narrow spontaneous trail”, “existing trail” and “groomed cross-country ski trails” are all used without definition. In Bruce Trail terminology, a trail is a defined route, built and maintained in accordance with the standards established by the Bruce Trail Association, and is clearly marked in order to provide controlled access along the route of the trail. The Hilton Falls Side Trail a portion of which traverses the Britton Tract is the only “defined” or formalized trail.</p> <p>Page 45 <i>Table 17: 10 Year Capital Plan: Works</i></p> <p>Have the locations of the “recreation related work” been identified and mapped?</p> <p>Page 48 <i>Illustration of the TRCA Trail standard. (TRCA=</i></p>	<p>closure of any trails.</p> <p>Approved trails will then be placed in an “Access Zone” with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users.</p> <p>Thank you. We will make these changes in the plan.</p> <p>The term “recreational trails” will be used.</p> <p>This can be done during the recreational trail mapping and</p>

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		<p><i>Toronto and Region Conservation Authority?)</i></p> <p>This trail and treadway standard shown is applicable for hiking and “ungroomed cross-country skiing”. Table 8 lists other permitted activities such as horseback riding, mountain biking, off-road travel and “cross-country skiing – improved trails”. The TRCA trail standard is not wholly applicable for these kinds of activities.</p> <p>Appendix C Halton Regional Forest Management Areas by Tract</p> <p>Figure C2 (Britton Tract) – does not correctly show the Forest Access Road or Designated Trail. (See Appendix D, Halton Regional Forest Stand Map for the Britton Tract.)</p> <p>Figure C9 (Frank Tract) – This is NOT the Frank Tract, but a variation of the Britton.</p> <p>Figure C12 (Robertson Tract) – This is NOT the Robertson Tract, but a variation of the Britton.</p> <p>Figure C14 (Turner Tract) – This is NOT the Turner tract, but a variation of the Britton.</p>	<p>consultations.</p> <p>Boardwalks are usually used to provide access over wet areas. Within the restricted management areas. Where boardwalks are required to protect the ecology of the site, the more intensive recreational uses such as biking and horseback riding should not be permitted. If alternative surfacing such as culverts can be installed, then more intensive recreational uses could be allowed. These decisions will be made in consultation with the PLC and trail users.</p>
Caledon Cycling Club	12/09/04	<p>I am writing you on behalf of mountain bikers who ride in the area covered by your Halton Forest Management Plan to keep as many trails and areas accessible to mountain bikers as possible. I belong to the Caledon Cycling Club (CCC). The CCC is a not for profit organization consisting of approximately 250 members with a mandate to promote socially and environmentally responsible off road riding.</p> <p>Our club has worked closely with public and private landowners to gain access to trails and develop new off road cycling opportunities. We would like to help keep as many trails as possible open to off road cyclists. Currently we are developing new trails in conjunction with the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and have started the process with the Credit Valley Conservation Authority (CVC). The TRCA botanists and fauna experts have approved all of our trails. It is obvious to these conservation groups that there is room for both conservation and this form of recreation.</p> <p>Mountain biking as a form of recreation is beneficial in many ways such as: exercise benefits, low environmental impact, increased tourism, and higher conservation area revenues with low associated costs.</p> <p>There is no doubt that outdoor physical exercise has tremendous benefits and one objective of public use areas is to appeal to as many user groups as possible so why not keep as many trails open as possible? This will encourage not only a larger percent of the population to visit the area but also a greater</p>	<p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p> <p>Approved trails will then be placed in an “Access Zone” with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users</p>

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		<p>diversity of users as well. Mountain biking appeals to people of all ages. For example, members in our club range from age 10 to 70.</p> <p>Bringing more users to the conservation areas also means increased revenues. Mountain bike/hiking trails when properly constructed are low maintenance assets. The CCC has constructed approximately 10km of new trail on TRCA property and we maintain it at no cost to the Conservation Authority. In fact not only did we build the trails for free we then purchase over \$1500 worth of yearly trail permits to use the trails we make.</p> <p>After surveying 100 mountain bikers in Ontario, I found our trail habits are similar to mountain bikers in the US. Studies in the US show that mountain bikers are the largest or second largest trail user group in most areas. Mountain bike volunteer trail maintenance hours outnumber any other user group and are increasing. Our club alone did over 200 hours of trail construction and maintenance within the last year. So, maintaining the number of trails or increasing them should be a low expense activity if volunteer groups are accessed. There are several clubs in the area that would probably be able to provide trail construction/maintenance assistance. The International Mountain Bike Association has recently opened an office in Collingwood, Ontario and have experts that can also provide consulting services.</p> <p>Mountain biking has little environmental impact on properly constructed trails. Several studies have shown that the damage from a rolling mountain bike tire is the same or less than the impact of feet on the trail surface. Another environmental advantage of mountain bikers is their inability to travel off the trail. A mountain bike has certain limitations and is useless as a mode of travel off of a trail or road way. It is easy for pedestrians to leave the trail and travel into sensitive areas. The TRCA botanist that has worked closely with us is quite happy that once a trail is laid out the cyclists don't deviate from. This means trails can wind through areas that are environmentally sensitive. Also cycling as a mode of transportation is very quiet. Cyclists usually only make noise when stopped, so this form of recreation can exist with little disturbance to animal populations. This form of transportation can be so quiet that the largest problem is being in very close proximity to animals before they are aware of the cyclist. Trails can co-exist with sensitive environments because of the low impact, quiet nature of the equipment and the inability of mountain bikers to deviate from the trail.</p> <p>Mountain biking also leads to economic spin-offs for the local community. More trails will attract more visitors. More visitors means more local business which leads to more jobs and more public revenue. Trails and pathways also have a positive effect on nearby properties as homebuyers and business owners realize the value that such facilities bring to a community. This means overall greater enjoyment and economic benefit for the community at large.</p> <p>Please consider the increased value that more trails bring not only</p>	

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		to mountain bikers but to all trail users and the community when developing the Halton Forest Management Plan.	
Halton Outdoors Club	11/09/04	<p>As a group, we consider the forest an important asset to our community and the environment. We are therefore eager to see the forest tracts protected for future generations. It is good that this plan is underway.</p> <p>A. <u>Overview:</u></p> <p>The Halton Outdoor Club views the Halton Forests as an important environmental asset that should be protected for future generations. Any of our subsequent comments should be taken within this context. We consider our activities (cross-country skiing, hiking, snowshoeing, recreational cycling, in-line skating, kayaking, photography, and nature study) are passive and non-destructive as well as healthy for us and the environment. While we have some requests, our intention is to mitigate these if they in any way interfere with the long term health of the forests. We expect our requests will be consistent with the long term goal of sustainable development as well as healthy and safe use of the forests.</p> <p>B. <u>Detailed Comments and Requests:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We applaud and support your decision to ban snowmobiles and ATV's in the forests. 2. We also support your decision to restrict Equestrian riding to the Synder tract. 3. It was not clear as to how various incompatible uses of the forest trails would be accomplished without causing conflict with the multitude of users before your amended plan. For example, if the trails had been restricted to the guidelines on page 48 of the draft plan (one half meter trail and one meter clearance), skiing would be eliminated as Hikers, Snowshoers, Dog Walkers and Mountain Bikers would very quickly destroy the tracks. To solve this problem, the trail would need to be widened to the same distance as the Hilton Falls trails so that a track could be maintained at the side for walking, hiking, biking, ski skating and other uses. Since we did not think the user groups would be able to solve this logistics problem through cooperation, it was good to receive your amended plan for the trail system that seems to give us a solution. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would appear that the issue of narrow trails has been handled with the trails now established as 4 to 5 metres. This would allow a track on one side and a wider area next to it that could be used for a variety of activities. Will the Public Meeting have data as to where these trails will be located? <p>This also raises two additional questions:</p>	<p>Regional bylaws 224-84 and 189-96 regulate forest uses. These bylaws may need to be amended.</p> <p>We are reviewing permitted recreational activities. The plan will recommend that motorized recreational activities be prohibited.</p> <p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p>

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		<p>First, what will happen to the skiers and others who now connect with the Hilton Falls trail system? In the past they have just continued on to the forest trails and are likely to do so in the future (most are not our Club Members but the general public who are often on the trails for the first time). Those who frequent the area would possibly go “off” trail to get through to the forest trail as they have used these paths in the past.</p> <p>Secondly, with the change in the “passive” designation, how will this effect the variety of activities that could possibly conflict. We understood that Horseback riding would be restricted to the Synder tract. Is this not the case? Also, Mountain bikes used during the winter on the snow tend to rip up the trails for skiers, hikers and snowshoers. Anyone walking in the XC tracks also destroy the track.</p> <p>4. It is our understanding that shotgun hunting will be allowed in all tracts for a 5 day period every November and that Bow hunting is allowed in all tracts year round. It’s good that shotgun hunting is restricted to that time, but we are still unsure of why it is necessary. Why is bow hunting allowed all year? This would seem to us to be a safety problem for the rest of the users of the forest tracts.</p> <p>5. Signage: While signage for the handicapped is illustrated in the Draft, and trail head information will be given showing usage, what provision will be made for signage to let users know where not to walk and where they are permitted? For example, not to walk on ski tracks, not to venture into sensitive areas and “poop and scoop” signs?</p> <p>6. How will rules be enforced?</p> <p>7. Three potential nearby quarries. We understand that not only has Nelson Aggregates applied to extend their quarry, but Lowndes Holdings has submitted an application to establish a large dolostone quarry near Burlington’s northern boundary near Derry Road. In addition, an application has been received from Hanson Brick to establish a new quarry just north of Highway 407 on Tremaine Road. While the committee considered the expansion of the existing quarry did not pose a watershed problem, we would like to see more data on the potential impact of all three of these quarries (even though some are not a part or immediately adjacent to the forest tracts).</p>	<p>Approved trails will then be placed in an “Access Zone” with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users</p> <p>Regional bylaws 224-84 and 189-96 regulate forest uses, including hunting. Bow hunting is only allowed Oct. 15-31 and Nov., 6-31 2004 dates. This is a provincial regulation.</p> <p>Signs are usually placed at trail heads. Where certain activities may be restricted on specific trails, then signs indicating the permitted and non-permitted uses can be placed on these specific trails. All in consultation with the Halton Forest Advisory Committee and forest users.</p>
International Mountain Bicycling Association	12/10/04	I work for the Canadian office of the International Mountain Bicycling Association; an organization that represents 32,000 individual mountain bikers, 450 clubs, over 200 bicycle dealers, and an equal number of trail patrol groups.	

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		<p>Our mission statement is to "<i>create, enhance, and preserve trail opportunities for Canadian mountain bikers</i>", and it is in this light that I would like to address the recreational aspects of the Halton Regional Draft Forest Management Plan.</p> <p>As you are well aware, the Halton Regional Forests have been enjoyed by mountain bike enthusiasts for more than 20 years. In particular, the tracts bordering Hilton Falls Conservation Area - the Britton, Currie, Mahon, Robertson, and Turner tracts – hold special interest for mountain bikers, and trail users of all types.</p> <p>The attraction is several kilometers of narrow, challenging, rocky singletrack that is readily accessible from all of Southern Ontario's population centres – Toronto, Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo, London, Guelph. The landscape's rugged features make it a destination for those seeking a slow-speed, technical challenge; yet, the option of the smoother forest roads makes these tracts a draw for families also. Indeed, it is not uncommon to see families or groups of various skill levels enjoying a ride together - each person choosing the trail experience that best suits his or her skills.</p> <p>As someone who represents hundreds, if not thousands, of Ontario mountain bikers, I have some concerns about the recreational aspects of the draft management plan.</p> <p>To begin, while it appears that the authors of the draft plan do not intend to exclude mountain biking as a legitimate form of trail use, it is not clear how or where mountain biking is to be accommodated. To be specific, the statement</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“Low-impact, non-motorized recreational activities are considered to be compatible with one another and are generally consistent with the broader goal for conserving the natural heritage features and functions” (pg. 8),</p> <p>is inconsistent with the statement, made later on pg. 13, that says</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“Some recreational activities, such as mountain-biking and horseback riding, could potentially cause localized impacts on trails that might affect other uses of the trails.”</p> <p>Furthermore, the latter statement is unfounded. The draft plan provides no explanation of what these localized trail impacts may be, or how they differ from those caused by other forms of passive recreation.</p>	<p>Thank you for pointing this out. Inconsistencies in wording and intent will be revised.</p>

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		<p>Attached is a summary of the scientific research completed on the natural impacts of mountain biking, as compared with other forms of non-motorized trail use. To date, there is no empirical evidence to support that mountain biking causes greater, or significantly different, environmental impacts from hiking, and as such, mountain biking should be treated similarly in the management plan.</p> <p>If trail user conflict is a concern, it is not addressed at all in the draft. We at IMBA like to refer to user conflict as “goal interference”, and we specialize in trail design and construction techniques that mitigate goal interference between trail users. If mountain biking is being singled out because of concern over user conflict, this should be addressed in the management plan, with solutions for accommodating all of the current forms of recreational trail use.</p> <p>Another red flag raised by the mountain bike community relates to the lack of specifics regarding the treatment of the individual trails within the management plan. Under the section <u>Objectives for Recreation</u>, the second objective <u>Manage Access To and Through the Forests</u>, identifies the need to map and review each of the undesignated trails “with the consultation of stakeholders”.</p> <p>While these intentions are good, it seems that, at minimum, an inventory of the “spontaneous” trails should be taken, and the maps updated, before the draft management plan gets passed. In addition, a clear method for gathering stakeholders’ input on these specific trails should be outlined, with opportunities for public awareness and involvement scheduled. Mountain bikers want to know where and when these trail assessments are going to be made, and how they will be able to participate.</p> <p>The best thing you can do to create a successful trail management plan is involve the trail users. You’ve made a fantastic attempt at doing this via the Public Liaison Committee; however, two years has passed since the committee last met regularly, and the state of recreation in these forests has changed. Mountain bikers are afraid that the plan will go ahead with no consideration for these changes, and that decisions will be made without opportunity for public comment.</p> <p>Mountain bikers on the whole are a very resourceful and energetic group of people who want to see what’s best for the forest, as well as preserve their riding opportunities. There are many ways that they can be a resource in the planning and management process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail identification and trail history • GPS data collection • Volunteer Trail Patrol • Trail stewardship and maintenance 	<p>Recommendations regarding recreational uses and ecosystem impacts will be based on the best available science.</p> <p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p> <p>Approved trails will then be placed in an “Access Zone” with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible riding education <p>I would like to volunteer IMBA as a means of communicating with local mountain bike clubs and individuals, and as a tool for organizing public involvement.</p> <p>Finally, as a trail specialist who provides education and advice to land management agencies across North America, I have concerns about certain trail building methods identified in <u>Table 3: Management Area Guidelines for the Halton Regional Forest</u>. In particular, the requirement of “railings or low borders” to define the trail, is a poor management technique, not to mention one that would likely result in an increase in water-based trail erosion.</p> <p>The TRCA implemented the installation of “low borders” following the completion of a 1996 trails management plan. We are now working with the City of Toronto and volunteer trail user groups to dismantle these structures and come up with more sustainable trail solutions.</p> <p>In addition, capital for trail surfacing has been allocated for four of the five tracts that are of interest to mountain bikers. Again, the lack of specifics is what concerns me. First, without a complete inventory of the trails that are out there, how could this be an accurate allocation of funds? Second, I would recommend that you consult a trail specialist before dumping a large sum of money, and a large quantity of surfacing material on any given trail.</p> <p>If the trail is has not been designed or created in a sustainable manner to begin with, the surfacing may only augment existing problems, and in the worst case scenario, result in issues of safety (the Dundas Valley Trails are a useful example).</p> <p>In conclusion, on behalf of Ontario mountain bikers, I am asking for a reexamination of the recreational aspects of the Britton, Currie, Mahon, Robertson, and Turner tracts in the Halton Regional Draft Forest Management Plan. In addition, I am offering our services in any way that might enhance the trail management approach within the plan.</p> <p>**Reference: Natural Resource Impacts of Mountain Biking: A summary of scientific studies that compare mountain biking to other forms of trail travel**</p>	<p>The plan will recommend that user groups assist the Region by “peer managing” their activities.</p> <p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p> <p>Approved trails will then be placed in an “Access Zone” with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users</p> <p>Thank you for providing this reference. We are reviewing these and other reference materials for all recreational activities.</p>
Orienteering Ontario	12/08/04	As president of Ontario Orienteering, I have asked some members of the organization to prepare a letter outlining our concerns and support for the plan. It will be delivered shortly. I would also like to thank	Orienteering would appear to be a

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		<p>the committee for acknowledging at the meeting that orienteering was missed in the report as an long time activity in the Halton Regional forests.</p> <p>As a resident, I am concerned with the proposed fencing that is to encompass the forests. I feel this would be a waste of money. It would restrict free flow of the wildlife through the forest, hinder access by residents that are adjacent to the forest trails and disrupt the nature beauty of the area. The money would be better spent purchasing more adjacent property to existing forests, increase the green space that would help spread out the wildlife and provide more recreational opportunities for the citizens of Halton.</p> <p>I agree that a forest management plan is needed and hope that the silviculture plan restricts the forest practices to consider all uses of the forest. I have experienced in some areas of Ontario through the sport of orienteering forests that have been rendered unusable for over ten years due to poor harvesting practices. These areas (one is south west of Cambridge) also experienced a lose of certain types of nesting warblers due to the destruction of habitat reduced recreational use opportunity.</p>	<p>compatible use. We are reviewing permitted recreational uses for the final plan</p> <p>The plan will be revised. Fencing will be undertaken where and as required.</p> <p>Silvicultural management in the Halton forest will follow Provincial guidelines for best management practices in Southern Ontario forests.</p> <p>Following a thinning operation there will be limbs and tops (slash) left on site to decompose naturally. The benefits of leaving woody materials on site following thinning are well documented.</p> <p>Thinning will be carried out according to a schedule outlined in the 5-year operating plan. There are numerous areas that are not scheduled for thinning during the first 5-year period.</p>
Orienteering Ontario	12/08/04	<p>There are three reasons for this letter, which I will discuss in detail below. Specifically, the reasons are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To point out the long history of orienteering in Halton Region, and to ensure that orienteering is included on the list of approved recreational activities in the Plan. With this in mind, I have included evidence of our past use of the forests. 2) To explain that orienteering is an international sport which has consistently adhered to sound environmental practices. I will present evidence of this at both the international and local levels. We have been “good citizens” in our dealings with the local Conservation Authorities. 3) To inform you of our plans to host the North American 	

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		<p>Orienteering Championships in October 2006 in forests covered by the Plan. We have been working on this event for some time, and have already spent in excess of \$15,000. We are specifically requesting permission to work with the Region and the new Halton Regional Forest Stewardship Committee so that this event can proceed.</p> <p>I am an Associate Professor of Wetland Ecology, Hydrology and Restoration at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. I wholeheartedly support the development of a sustainable management plan for Halton's forests that aims to conserve and enhance natural heritage features and functions, while permitting compatible recreation, education, research and silviculture activities. I have been orienteering for almost 30 years and in fact, my first orienteering event was in 1976 in the Robertson Tract of the Halton Forests. The opportunities to enjoy and respect nature at such a young age through the sport of orienteering had a large impact on my career choice. I have over 15 years of wetland science knowledge, and for the last 8 years have been developing plans to restore and rehabilitate impacted wetlands and watersheds. As such, I am in a good position to provide an overview of the controlled and environmentally sustainable activity of orienteering.</p> <p>1) Orienteering: A long history of recreational use of Halton's Forests</p> <p>Orienteering has a long and rich association with the forests in Halton Region. With the co-operation of Conservation Halton (Halton Regional Conservation Authority), orienteering clubs in southern Ontario have hosted many events over the past 35 years. In the early 1970's the first orienteering maps were produced of the Hilton Falls area. The Toronto, Golden Horseshoe, and Guelph Gators Orienteering Clubs have all developed orienteering maps of the Halton Regional Forests, and we estimate that over \$150,000 has been spent by our non-profit clubs to produce these detailed maps. In the mid 1970's the first Ontario provincial orienteering championship was held in these forests, and in 1978 the first Canadian National Orienteering Championship was held at Hilton Falls Conservation Area and surrounding Halton Agreement Forest Tracts. More recently, the Eastern Canadian Orienteering Championships were held in this same area. The Golden Horseshoe Orienteering Club has been awarded the honour of hosting the 2006 North American Orienteering Championships in this area, which I will discuss in more detail below.</p> <p>Orienteering Ontario and its member clubs acknowledge and support the goals of the Halton Regional Forests Draft Management Plan, as the sport of orienteering is compatible with</p>	<p>Thank you for providing the following information. It will be useful as we prepare the final plan.</p>

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		<p>the Management Plan's goals. After all, the sport of orienteering depends on the existence of healthy, unfragmented natural areas in southern Ontario. However, the recreational activity of orienteering has been omitted from the Draft Management Plan. As historic users we are asking that orienteering be added to the list of appropriate recreational activities proposed for the Halton Regional Forests. Orienteering is compatible with any other approved recreational activity in the forest, and will not affect nor be affected by other recreational users.</p> <p>In the draft Management Plan, it is proposed that forest user groups be formed to represent different recreational activities, and to make recommendations on forest use and behaviour codes. Orienteering Ontario is already in place to act in such a role, and has established a set of environmental guidelines for our events. We look forward to continuing to work in co-operation with Conservation Halton, as well as the Region and the new Halton Regional Forest Stewardship Committee.</p> <p>The Canadian Orienteering Federation (COF) is covered by a national liability insurance policy which provides coverage of \$2,000,000.00. This policy includes protection for landowners for potential property damage caused by orienteers. All members of clubs and provincial organizations are covered under this policy and no participant can partake in an event unless he/she is a member of an orienteering club. To become a member, one must complete a form which includes a waiver clause which must be signed by the participant or by a guardian in the case of juniors. Note: There has never been a claim of any kind by a participant, a landowner or by an organizer in the history of COF.</p> <p>2) Orienteering: A Sport that adheres to sound Environmental Practices</p> <p>As background information, this section provides a brief summary of the sport of orienteering and its adherence to sound environmental practices.</p> <p>Orienteering: The Activity</p> <p>The sport of orienteering is most popular in Europe where many thousands of people take part in a single event. Competitors navigate to a series of locations that are marked on a detailed map. There are approximately 500 orienteers in southern Ontario, and Orienteering Ontario and its member clubs have surveyed over 100 maps. Orienteering events take place throughout southern Ontario and Orienteering Ontario is active in similar review processes and management plans in these areas as well. The events usually involve about 50 people, occasionally as many as 100. Every few years a large event (such as the upcoming 2006 North American Championships) is hosted with about 200 people. At each event there are typically many different courses (maps with marked locations that the person must visit) designed for beginners and for experts, with varying lengths and levels of difficulty. It is not uncommon to have three generations of a family attempting different courses at the same event. At large</p>	

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		<p>events there are often over 10 different courses, meaning that a limited number of participants travel between the same two points in the forest, usually taking different routes. Participants do not traverse terrain indiscriminately but consciously and subconsciously select the most energy-effective microroute. This means avoiding bushes, plant clumps, logs and piles of litter, preferring instead firmer and usually bare patches on which to place the feet. Moreover, participants seldom follow the same route, so there is little or no impact to the forest. As such orienteering is a sport that does not lead to the creation of spontaneous trails. Orienteers often use designated trails during an event, but events are so infrequent that there is no conflict with other trail users. When traveling on trails, orienteering is essentially the same activity as hiking or trail running.</p> <p>Orienteering: A Controlled Activity Orienteering is a ‘controlled’ activity in that we do not permit people to do the sport unless it is part of an official event hosted by certified Canadian Orienteering Federation officials. It is rare for any one area to be used for more than one or two official events per year, as the challenge of orienteering increases when participants are less familiar with the terrain. We designate environmentally sensitive areas, private land, and non-designated trails as out-of-bounds on our orienteering maps to control where participants can and can’t go. Our maps are in electronic format so that we can update them easily, for example, if we are informed of the location of a new Northern Goshawk nest that should be avoided. We also approach all adjacent landowners. Property boundaries have been accurately surveyed onto our maps and we do not permit people to use land that we have not gained permission to use.</p> <p>Orienteering: An Environmentally Sustainable Activity Orienteering Ontario and its member clubs are committed to an environmentally sustainable sport and have developed the following strategies to ensure lasting relationships with landowners:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We have a set of standard guidelines for conducting and executing events in order to minimize or eliminate environmental impact. 2. We have developed procedures for the avoidance of environmentally sensitive areas such as nesting areas and sensitive wetlands. 3. We have asked our membership to come forward with ideas / views on how to address environmental issues. 4. We are actively gaining and/or strengthening current and potential contacts within Conservation Authorities, Ontario/Canada Parks and other environmental bodies both to 	

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		<p>learn about new strategies in conservation and to promote the sport.</p> <p>5. We update all landowners of potential events long before the season begins. All landowners are contacted for permission to use the area for every event.</p> <p>Orienteering Ontario and its member clubs have been working under these environmental guidelines for many years. In addition, we have worked closely with various Conservation Authorities, respecting the NEPOSS policies for events taking place within the Niagara Escarpment Plan area. We look forward to working in cooperation with the new Halton Regional Forest Stewardship Committee.</p> <p>With my environmental science knowledge and contact with the International Orienteering Federation Environmental Officer, I have collected many scientific studies on the activity of orienteering and its impact on the Environment. All of the studies demonstrate that orienteers do little short-term and no lasting environmental damage to any area that they use. In Europe, where some of the largest orienteering events in the world are held (>10,000 participants), studies have been conducted by Orienteering Federations along with the Government Departments for Environmental Sciences. The results of these studies have shown that little, if any; permanent damage is done to any plant life.</p> <p>For example, the Danish Orienteering Federation reports that races with less than 100 entrants do not cause problems to the environment (not even during early spring) and therefore do not need to be restricted. Germany and France have rules stating that events with more than 100 participants should be limited to one such event in a given tract of forest in the spring. In Ontario, most orienteering events have about 50 participants, further divided into smaller groups of competitors traveling several different race courses.</p> <p>Orienteering Ontario and its member clubs applaud Halton Region's effort to protect wildlife habitat, particularly for threatened species such as the Jefferson salamander. Studies have shown that the biggest risks to salamanders are forest fragmentation, traffic on roads and physical barriers such as gravel trails or impenetrable fences.</p> <p>Wetlands are not used as checkpoint locations and crossing these sensitive ecosystems is not permitted. These areas and other sensitive areas are marked out-of-bounds on the maps and officials on the race course enforce this. Orienteering is a low impact sport and we do not impact existing trails nor do we create new trails. We are aware of the sensitivity of certain terrain and particular species (nesting birds, deer, salamanders). We avoid the salamander breeding period and courses are designed so that large animals are not affected. We do not host events at night in this</p>	

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		<p>region due to safety issues and also to avoid disturbing the nocturnal activity of salamanders and other animals. If a course connecting areas must pass through a sensitive area, it does so only on designated official trails. Our course planner shows the course to Conservation Authority or Regional planners prior to hosting the event to ensure that all environmental concerns have been taken into consideration. This is a process that we have followed for many years when requesting permission to use the Halton Agreement Forests.</p> <p>Mr. Bruce Duncan (former staff ecologist and now Chief Administrative Officer) of the Hamilton Conservation Authority attests to the environmentally sustainable activity of orienteering "We have consistently found that events are well organized and do not result in damage to our Conservation Area. The Dundas Valley Conservation Area is one of Hamilton's largest and finest environmentally significant areas. Your club has always been aware of that and holds events outside of nesting seasons in order to reduce any damage to negligible levels. The club has also set up orienteering courses that are useful to our outdoor education programs. We have enjoyed a very positive relationship for over 25 years with the Golden Horseshoe Orienteering Club with benefits going to both organizations. We look forward to continuing this tradition."</p> <p>Orienteering: Partners in Forest Safety Orienteering Ontario and its member clubs are pleased with our association of more than 30 years with various groups in southern Ontario including Conservation Halton and Halton Region, but we would like to leverage our unique knowledge and experience to do more to benefit communities and forests. For example, a few years ago the Golden Horseshoe Orienteering Club was able to assist the Ancaster Fire Department in locating a major forest fire in the Dundas Valley Conservation Area. Club members used their maps to show firefighters how to get their equipment into a major fire in the east end of the Dundas Valley.</p> <p>Many orienteers have an intimate, detailed knowledge of the forests of southern Ontario and are always available to assist in search and rescue. The Golden Horseshoe Orienteering Club has just completed a search and rescue map for the Dundas Valley Conservation Area in Hamilton. Signage on trails has been used to identify locations for search and rescue. The club did this project for the Hamilton Conservation Authority free of charge, and is currently developing a similar map for the forests in and north of the Hilton Falls Conservation Area. We are eager to work with the new Halton Regional Forest Stewardship Committee on this and future projects.</p> <p>In a recent article in the Hamilton Spectator, this partnership between orienteers and the Hamilton Conservation Authority was acknowledged. In the article entitled "Orienteering club coordinates Dundas Valley map for easy search and rescue", the Hamilton Conservation Authority Director of Land Management, Mr. Tony Horvat, stated "On occasion, people have serious</p>	

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		<p>accidents or get lost. This system will be extremely helpful in enabling people to know where they are in the valley." Also Paul Piett, Dundas Valley Park Superintendent, added "We can call on them [the Golden Horseshoe OC] for assistance when someone gets very lost and they're always glad to help us."</p> <p>3) Orienteering: 2006 North American Championships</p> <p>The Golden Horseshoe Orienteering Club has been awarded the honour of hosting the North American Orienteering Championships in the Halton Region in October 2006, and has already invested more than two years of planning into this event. The event will see approximately 200 participants from across the continent running in a host of age classes on 8 distinct courses. Again, despite the high profile of the event, we minimize the impact to the forest by spreading participants out over multiple courses using different checkpoints and routes.</p> <p>This event continues the tradition of quality orienteering events hosted by Golden Horseshoe Orienteering Club (GHO) in the area. In recent years GHO has hosted two Ontario Championships in the Hilton Falls Conservation Area and adjacent Halton Agreement Forest (2001 and 2003), and in the spring of 2004 they hosted a 25 km "Adventure Run" – a team based orienteering event – that crossed through these areas in part.</p> <p>On each of these occasions we have sought, and received, the proper approvals from the Conservation Authority and from Halton Regional Council. GHO will be submitting a formal request to Halton Regional Council in the coming weeks for approval for their North American Championships plans. Given that this event follows in a pattern already well established, and that a significant financial and planning time effort has already been expended by the club on this event, we are expecting that in good faith approval for this event will be granted as it has for past events.</p> <p>In summary, Orienteering Ontario and its member clubs appreciate and support the implementation of a sustainable management plan for Halton's forests that aims to conserve and enhance natural heritage features and functions, while permitting compatible recreation, education, research and silviculture activities. We respectfully ask the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be included on the list of approved recreational activities in the Halton Regional Forests Management Plan; • To continue our long history of adhering to sound environmental practices in our sport through a close working association between Orienteering Ontario and the new Halton Regional Forest Stewardship Committee; <p>To receive, as soon as possible, specific permission to work with</p>	

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		Halton Region and the Halton Regional Forest Stewardship Committee in planning the 2006 North American Orienteering Championships in the Halton Regional Forests, as considerable time and money has already been, and continues to be, invested in this event.	

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P. Allen	11/25/04	<p>1) Need to work with trail users re re-routing (if necessary) of trails.</p> <p>2) I'm interested in being ore involved e.g. Stewardship committee, Trail Planning.</p>	
P. Allen	12/02/04	<p>I attended the open House recently and found it extremely useful and informative. The presentations were well done (except for the strange yellow background of the presentation!).</p> <p>You may remember that I attended the last meeting of the PLC as a guest of Mike West. I am a neighbour of Mike's, and sit on the Nassagewaya Community Consultative Committee of which Mike was the chair. As you may know, Mike passed away very recently, which is a great loss to our community. If you are looking for someone to replace Mike on the PLC, I would be happy to attend in his place (I can't possibly replace Mike!). I live very close to the Acton and Finney tracts, and I use the trails regularly, mostly as a responsible mountain biker.</p> <p>I have reviewed the Draft Plan, and below are my comments.</p> <p>Section 4.1. I agree with the Vision</p> <p>Section 4.2: Goal 1 - agreed.</p> <p>Section 4.2: Goal 2:</p> <p>Objective 1: I am uncomfortable with linking "mountain biking" and "horseback riding" when it comes to trail impact. As was pointed out at the open house discussion, research shows that impact from mountain biking is similar to the impact from hiking. Horseback riding would seem to be more damaging (and note that I also own a horse farm - we do not ride our horses in the forests).</p> <p>I do agree with the formation of user groups to represent the activities and to evaluate their use of trails as stated.</p> <p>Objective 2: I agree that evaluation of trail closures should be undertaken with the consultation of stakeholders. I would add that if trails have to be modified, the preferred order of modification would be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. construct boardwalks (if appropriate) 2. re-route locally 3. replace with a new trail outside of the sensitive area with same start and end points 4. close trail, but replace with a new trail to preserve total 	<p>Thank you for your comments and suggestions.</p> <p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p> <p>Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users</p>

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		<p>trail length (if start and end points are in sensitive areas)</p> <p>Reference to "spontaneous trails" will be removed (as I understand from the Open House). I take this to mean that any and all trails are part of the existing legitimate trail system and all will be evaluated in the same way using the same criteria.</p> <p>Objective 3: I agree that user groups should be formed to peer manage activities.</p> <p>Section 4.2: Goal 3 - agreed</p> <p>Section 4.2: Goal 4 - agreed. I would also add a statement about purchasing additional lands (both adjacent and non-adjacent to existing tracts) to improve the continuity and enlarge the region-owned forests in general.</p> <p>Section 5.1. I agree in general, subject to my previous statements. In Table 3, I agree with boardwalks, but disagree with railings on boardwalks, and I disagree with trails with "well defined edges" (not necessary).</p> <p>In general (as you can see), I am in agreement with the plan - some details as I've mentioned above need to be clarified and/or resolved. I think the plan is an excellent piece of work, and everybody involved must be applauded for doing a very good job.</p>	<p>Thank you.</p>
P. Appleton	11/25/04	<p>Greater education is needed in researching the impacts of mountain biking, scientific research now shows its impact equal to or less than hiking. This however is not reflected in current management plan.</p>	<p>We are reviewing the scientific literature on impacts of various recreational activities on forest ecology.</p>
M. Badyk	11/18/04	<p>Where the heck did the term spontaneous trail come from? Spontaneous to whom? We in the mountain bike community have been riding them for almost 20 years. I can give you a trail by trail break down if you want. I'm primarily referring to Britton/Robertson/ Mahon/ Turner. If you would like to get another perspective on these trails I will offer my services to lead you or anyone else through there and give you the rundown on how and why these trails came into existence. No, I didn't build any. They were there long ago.</p> <p>I will mention in advance that there are a lot of very displeased mountain bikers who have wind of the proposed changes to the tracts mentioned above. You should expect some very vocal opposition to the document at the open house. Many bicyclists consider Britton/ Robertson/ Mahon/ Turner to be one of the finest riding areas in Southern Ontario. They are not going to yield access peacefully. Yes, some trails are in bad locations from an environmental/ecological perspective and</p>	<p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p> <p>Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users</p>

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		<p>should be closed. However, to label all of them as merely spontaneous is frankly ludicrous. The cycling community is not overly interested in riding gravel roads - there are enough of those available and an abundance of rail trail of the same nature. The small narrow trails are an attraction to many, myself included. We bicyclists consider them to be a precious resource.</p> <p>With some positive engineering, many of these trails could be made sustainable. One thing that was not available when the committee was first struck were experts on trail construction. Just this past summer the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) opened their first Canadian office in Collingwood. The staff, prior to opening the office, have spent the past 3 years travelling around North America showing bicyclists, hikers, equestrians and even motorcyclists how to properly construct trails and how to re-engineer existing trails to make them sustainable. They have a great deal of knowledge of how to make trails work in sensitive areas (much of it gained in California). If you would like IMBA to make a presentation to the committee I will be happy to arrange it. They are not just bicyclists. They are trail builders, period. They can help if you are interested.</p>	
M.Badyk	12/09/04	<p>I am worried that the Draft Plan is a "done deal". I'm concerned that the authors of the Draft Plan will be unwilling to re-open it to properly deal with the recreational aspects of the Halton Region Forests. I would like some assurances from you that revisions will be discussed and implemented. Further to that, what is the procedure regarding the Draft Plan in the near future?</p> <p>I've received much communication from members of the local mountain bicycle community since the Public Open House. There are a great many concerned people. They are looking to me to provide some qualified input on their behalf. As such, my comments are very detailed and unfortunately quite long. I hope that you and others on your staff have time to review them.</p> <p>As I have mentioned in my comments I am willing to facilitate discussion between Halton Region and the mountain bicyclists. If I can be of service please don't hesitate to contact me.</p>	<p>The draft plan is anything but a "done deal". We made this very clear at the Open House and we were very clear about the process we will follow in mapping and identifying approved recreational trails.</p>
M. Badyk	12/09/04	<p>Some of the descriptions of forest type are a bit simplified. I would suggest a perspective over the last millennia, especially with respect to Pre-European contact, might be useful to some. Forests are not static – they do change through time, both as a natural process and as a result of human actions. We are currently seeing only one type of forest that has existed on these properties. The Halton Region area has had many different types of forest over the past several thousand years. I would suggest this document as a general overview of this issue - http://www.naturewatch.ca/Mixedwood/plants/plants2.htm</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments</p> <p>The companion document to this management plan "A Profile of the Halton forest" provides a very detailed natural heritage assessment.</p>

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		<p>In the light of environmental change to come; we will likely see another type of forest sometime in the future. I would suggest that K. A. Armson's "Ontario Forests – A Historical Perspective" could supply some needed background material.</p> <p><u>Subsection 3.2 Challenges and Opportunities</u></p> <p>Paragraph 3 – I raised the point in several of the meetings that the inclusion of phrases such as "Low-impact, non-motorized recreational activities are considered to be compatible with one another and are generally consistent with the broader goal of conserving the natural heritage features and functions." have a much broader impact than one would think. Taken at face value it seems fine. However, it should be noted that mountain bicycles are not included in the context of the phrase later in the Draft Plan. Therefore this phrase is misleading and should be reworked or deleted.</p> <p><u>Goals and Objectives – Goal 1, Part 2 – Conserve and Enhance Native Diversity</u></p> <p>I am troubled by the implication of this section that "a good forest is a managed forest". Due to human impacts, and some natural influences (e.g. browsing by white-tail deer), we have had certain patches of forest develop on the tracts in question. From my</p>	<p>Section 2 of the management plan is only intended to be a summary of some of the key natural heritage features in the Halton Forest.</p> <p>Forests are indeed dynamic and the Halton Forest is in a period of succession to older climax ecosystems. This is embodied in many of the recommendations contained in the management plan such as promoting succession to late seral forests, continued conversion of plantations to native mixedwoods, and management areas designed to conserve the natural functions of the forest and wetland ecosystems.</p> <p>We are addressing this inconsistency in the final plan.</p> <p>The plan provides a thorough discussion of silvicultural systems that are recommended for the Halton Forest. The benefits of good forest management are</p>

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		<p>knowledge of the upland hardwood stands I question the need for any management, even though a low level is suggested in the Draft Plan. These stands have developed on their own during the past 100 years with minimal or no management. It would seem to me to be an unnecessary cost to the Region to actively manage these stands, and also I would argue that individual-tree selection is still invasive.</p> <p>For the mid-tolerant species, it is debatable whether or not this is a naturally occurring forest community. I would suggest that only areas with a significant number of mature white pine would be in need of active management. White pine, which was a dominant component of the Halton Regions forests prior to European settlement, is worthy of protection and enhancement. A forest community of oak, basswood and yellow birch is not a rare commodity. I would like to see low impact silviculture (cutting of undesired trees, no removal of wood, no use of any heavy equipment) as the only mandated type to be permitted.</p> <p>The discussion regarding the Draft Plan is that it is important to maintain habitat for rare species. My question is this; will the rare species (which in all cases are not trees) be enhanced or diminished by active forest (tree) management? I do not believe that a strong case has been made in the Draft Plan linking these two items.</p> <p>Objectives for Recreation</p> <p>I object to the inclusion of the sentence that mountain biking “could potentially cause localized impacts on trails that might affect other uses of the trails.” There is no scientific evidence presented in this document that shows that recreational mountain bicycling is having an impact on the trails within the Forest</p>	<p>well documented and the plan provides references in support of this discussion. The Halton Forest is a middle-aged forest with the majority of natural stands in the 60-70 year age class. Most of the natural stands (hardwoods and mixedwoods) likely originated following clearcut logging in the 1920’s – 1930’s. The plantations are 30-50 years old and were established to restore degraded landscapes after farming was abandoned. The proposed silvicultural management will occur on less than half of the area of the Halton Forest – mainly in the Modified and Modified/Passive management areas. The initial silvicultural management will be in the conifer plantations and will help to encourage natural regeneration thereby enhancing species diversity and providing diverse habitats for wildlife.</p> <p>The management plan will contain a brief review of the scientific and technical literature on impacts of recreational activities.</p>

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		<p>Tracts. Based on email communication from Mr. Attack it would seem that Gartner Lee et al have not even ventured on to these trails until quite recently (November 18, 2004 email). I would suggest that they then have very little idea of the state of the trails within these tracts. I would also ask as to the qualifications of the people reporting on the condition of the trails in the Nov. 18 email. My definition of a trail is 1m wide or less. The mountain bike community does not consider the forest access roads to be trails – they are roads. As such, what has been identified here is a user conflict, not an environmental issue.</p> <p>User conflicts regarding mountain bicycles are not a new thing in Ontario. To simplify a very complex issue, it is well known that many environmentalists and other non-bicycle trail users simply do not want to share the trails. The claim is often presented that “trails are damaged by mountain bicycles”. Time after time this has been refuted. Ultimately the real reasons for their objections are revealed – a) they look like they’re going really fast and I’m afraid of being hit b) they look funny c) they scare the animals because they’re noisy d) they scare me because they come up behind me really quietly e) they’re often young males riding the bicycles. There is often very little merit to these objections. Again, they don’t wish to share the trails.</p> <p>There is a reason why the Halton Region and Southern Ontario mountain bicycle community comes to ride in the various tracts (the Britton, Robertson, Turner, Mahon and Currie Tracts being the most desirable). It is because of the challenging terrain. The broken rock on the narrow trails is the feature. Riding a smooth forest trail is not why people are using the tracts. In fact, soil, often the object of much discussion surrounding trail erosion, would ideally be absent for many of the enthusiasts. Since they are riding rough trails it is physically impossible to go fast. Mountain bicyclists often look different simply because of the protective equipment that they wear for safety. Yes, compared to a hiker they look funny. Mountain bicycles are quiet. They are non-motorized. They can scare animals and pedestrians simply because they are quiet. The solution is easy – require the bicycles to have a bell installed.</p> <p>The last point (e) in my list requires more explanation. The demographics of mountain biking indicate a typical age of between 19 and 39, and mostly male. There is a challenge or thrill element that is sometimes present but it is far from universal. For myself, now in my late 40’s, it is my chosen means of exercise and to enjoy the forest (that is when I’m not hiking – I hike quite a bit). Many other bicyclists would be similar to me. However, when a pedestrian sees a couple of funny looking young males, the pedestrian often feels threatened. I personally don’t know why, but it has been reported to me. I would suggest that the bicyclists are there for the same reason as the pedestrians – to enjoy the forest. It’s just that their means of enjoyment is different and just</p>	<p>We are aware of most of the recreational trails in the Halton Forest, having encountered them during our intensive natural heritage inventories. We are also aware of additional trails that have been created during the 2 year hiatus in this management planning process.</p> <p>The recreational trails will be mapped using GPS technology. The locations and permitted uses of the trails will be reviewed by the Region in consultation with the Halton Forest Advisory Committee and forest users.</p> <p>A Forest Access Management Area has been added to the system of management areas (Restricted, Passive, Modified). Approved recreational trails will be added to the Forest Access Management Area.</p>

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		<p>because they are young does not imply that they are a threat. Mountain bicycles are often the chosen means of outdoor activity for young people. As such, the young should not be discriminated against.</p> <p>I raised this issue at the last PLC meeting that I attended – the PLC is the old mandating to the young what they can or cannot do. If the desire of the young is to visit the Halton Region Forests on bicycle then some effort should be made to address their needs. This aspect has been overlooked in the Draft Plan. There are no hordes of young bird watchers or fern pressers in the forests. However, there are lots of young mountain bicyclists. If Halton Region is able to get these young people to appreciate the value of the forests, then a large group of citizens will be willing to work towards the long-term goal of keeping the forests intact.</p> <p>To return to a previous point, since I have very little evidence that the producers of this plan ever visited all of the trails on these tracts, I would be remiss if I didn't suggest that Halton Region not pay the firms in question until these trails are studied and added on to the base maps supplied with the report. The recreational use of these trails was known and identified as an issue for this Draft Plan from the outset. Why Gartner Lee et al chose to ignore this is beyond me. It seems like they took the easiest and cheapest way to prepare the Draft Plan, which I believe was the use of aerial photographs combined with some specific site visits. This was yet another issue repeatedly identified at the PLC meetings and they chose to ignore it rather than to address it.</p>	<p>This comment is disappointing to the study team as Mr. Badyk, as a member of the PLC, had access to the terms of reference for this study and was a party to the progress of the study. The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the management plan did not request detailed trail mapping. As this was a competitive bidding process, we are required to submit bids based on the TOR. The emphasis of the study has always been, and will continue to be the maintenance of the natural heritage features and functions provided by the Halton Region Forest. Recreation was never the focus of the study and was never intended to be. The Region and the study team went out of their way to attend additional PLC meetings and to arrange additional outings into the forest in order to satisfy requests from the PLC. At no time was the "cheapest way to</p>

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			<p>prepare the Draft Plan” the primary goal. We were able to map the forest access roads from aerial photographs and follow this up with ground-truthing. This is a common technique in forest management planning. Every road in the forest and most trails have been walked by the foresters or the biologists during data collection on which the Profile of the Halton Region Forest is based, arguably one of the most complete inventories ever undertaken in support of forest management. However most recreational trails are not visible on aerial photographs and require ground level mapping. Since the Plan was undertaken, additional trails have formed that reflect the increased use of the forest by all uses. We have proposed mapping the recreational trails using GPS however the budget for the management plan does not allow for trail mapping at this time. Trail mapping will be one of the first activities to be carried out when the plan is implemented.</p> <p>The focus of the Plan was the maintenance of the natural heritage features and functions provided by the Halton Region Forest. The use of the Forest was important within this study as sources of impact to the rich</p>

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		<p style="text-align: center;">Goals and Objectives – Goal 2, Part 2 – Manage Access</p> <p>Any report that is supposed to deal with the entire forest management issue in Halton Region should take into context all of the resources that exist in the forests under review. As noted in the previous points above, I do not believe that this was done. The narrow trails (denoting trails other than forest access roads) have been tagged with term “spontaneous”. Despite a long history of trail study (my B.Sc. thesis in 1978 was “The Impact of Recreational Hiking Upon Trail Side Vegetation”) I have never encountered this term before. At first I was puzzled. This later turned to anger. I consider the term spontaneous to be ludicrous. It reduces the value of these trails greatly, especially when they are considered to be a precious resource by many, including the mountain bicycle community. I raised this point at several of the PLC meetings, yet my concerns seem to have been simply ignored in the Draft Plan.</p> <p>My first question is this – If the producers of the Draft Plan haven’t seen these trails how do they know if they’re spontaneous or not? Again, it seems an easy way out. I will give one example from personal experience. On the north west corner of the Britton Tract a trail comes into the Tract. Under the Draft Plan it would be labeled spontaneous. It is in fact an un-maintained portion of 5th Line. Since I have considerable experience with air photo interpretation I can easily distinguish outside the border of the Britton Tract. It comes from the northwest and then makes a 90-degree turn to the east as it enters the Tract. The remnants of an early settlement stone fence are evident if one visits the spot. Rather than being spontaneous, this trail actually pre-dates the forest access roads. Many of the other “spontaneous” trails have a similar sort of story. If these trails were properly mapped at the outset, then the various members of the Public Liaison Committee could have provided valuable input about the history and the significance of them.</p> <p>I have been bicycling the trails in the Britton, Robertson, Turner, Mahon and Currie Tracts for 20 years now. Most of the trails were in existence back then. A few new trails (in the past 10 years) have been created in the aforementioned tracts by mountain</p>	<p>biodiversity and landscape functions provided by these tracts. Mr. Badyk is describing a recreational study, and perhaps this is warranted given the level of concern. Mr. Badyk’s anger regarding the term “spontaneous” is a surprise to the study team who attended all of the PLC meetings and Open Houses, as it was a way of describing the road and trail system that currently exists on the properties regardless of their historical origin. It is beyond the scope of the Plan to engage Mr. Badyk regarding the impact of trails on natural heritage. The team was impressed with the presentations provided at the last Open House, and clearly, with proper management, a healthy trail system can be maintained. Unfortunately, there are many users who do not adhere to the management systems promoted by the Associations, and trails that do create an impact to the Forest do occur. As a result of the level of concern, and the generous offers being made to the Region to assist in trail identification and trail maintenance, the recommendation has been made in the plan to ensure that trails are properly mapped, and that their future uses, including possibilities for closures, rests with</p>

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		<p>bicyclists, equestrians, and cross-country skiers. I would agree with the term spontaneous in this case. However, a blanket application of the term spontaneous is unfounded.</p> <p>Although I was not at the Open House in November, it was communicated to me that various mountain bicyclists have offered their services to map the existing trails. I would like to repeat that offer formally as the representative of the bicycling community on the PLC. Others and myself are well versed in the use of GPS and we could quickly and easily provide data about these trails. We would do this as a volunteer service to Halton Region. We feel that this needs to be done to foster discussion about the future of these trails.</p> <p>I disagree with the sentence on Page 14 that “The Halton Regional Forest has a well-developed infrastructure of trails and access roads that are available for recreational use.” There is an un-linked smattering of trails and roads that have not been properly engineered for recreational use. The construction of trails, at least properly, has only come into it’s own in the last few years. Before trails are closed or re-routed sound trail construction techniques must be applied. Again, and I’m afraid I’m over emphasizing the point, if we had a proper inventory of all of these trails it would be an easier task to accomplish.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Goals and Objectives – Goal 2, Part 3 – Promote Responsible Recreational Use</p> <p>I again object to the mountain bicycling being described as a higher intensity activity. Scientific evidence shows that the impact of mountain bikes is the same as hiking and much less than horseback riding. We consider bicycles to be a low intensity activity. Many jurisdictions that permit mountain bicycling on their public lands consider it to be a low intensity activity. I raised this point at several of the PLC meetings and again my input was ignored.</p> <p>There is a suggestion in this section of the need to peer manage our chosen activity. I would like to offer my services to organize a meeting between Halton Region staff and the mountain bike community to create a mountain bicycle user group to facilitate this. I have a great deal of experience in this aspect and I will gladly volunteer my time to bring it to fruition.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Goals and Objectives – Goal 3 – Provide Opportunities for Education and Resource</p>	<p>the Region in consultation with the Forest Advisory Committee and forest users.</p> <p>Thank you. The management plan recommends that user groups be encouraged to peer manage their activities. Given the relatively small size of the Halton Forest and its sensitive natural heritage features, it is incumbent on all users</p>

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		<p>One of my usual complaints about the tree people (my derogatory term for those in the silviculture business and botanists in general) – they always forget about the geology and landforms in the areas in questions. I take students to Hilton Falls Conservation Area many times each year. There are some interesting trees and some animals but to be honest the real reason is to study the results of the end of the last Ice Age (eroded meltwater features) combined with some excellent, if not world class, karst features (eroded limestone). These features extend in to the Britton, Robertson, Turner, Mahon and Currie Tracts. It would be a great disservice to the scientific community if these features were excluded from study.</p> <p>Goals and Objectives – Goal 4 – Provide Efficient and Effective Administration Objective 1</p> <p>I'm curious. The Draft Plan mentions that it is not recommended that Conservation Halton manage the Tracts due to differing forest management and goals and objectives. Why aren't these differences elaborated? It would be useful to know what the differences are and why the authors object to Conservation Halton. My next question as a taxpayer would be - If we hire a forester, isn't this a duplication of services and an unnecessary taxpayer expense? Followed by – Couldn't Conservation Halton do the job in a more cost effective manner since they are already working in the area and they possess vehicles and equipment to accomplish much of what is being considered in the Draft Plan? I'd like to know the answers to all of these.</p> <p>Objective 5</p> <p>Monitoring is a long-term task. I definitely agree. If so what is an annual budget for such monitoring? Could members of the general public play a role? I'd like to see more discussion on this point. A hired forester is not necessarily going to be able to provide input on such aspects as recreation, and they will also be an expense to Halton Region.</p>	<p>to work together to ensure that the natural heritage of the forest is protected and that the recreational experiences of all users is positive.</p> <p>We agree. The Niagara Escarpment is one of the most significant geologic features in Ontario. If Mr. Badyk will refer to the Profile of the Halton Forest he will note that landform, terrain, and soils were very important components of the ecosystem analysis. It was the understanding of the study team that members of the PLC had reviewed this document. The plan does not intend to exclude scientific study and education for the Halton Forest. Research is proposed as a permitted activity in all Management Areas while education is proposed for the Passive and Modified Management Areas.</p> <p>The plan will identify various options that the Region may wish to consider for providing the required professional expertise in implementing the management plan. This was an issue that was discussed in some detail by the PLC and is based on their recommendation.</p> <p>Yes, the public does play a role in monitoring (recreational use, unauthorized activities) in other public forests in Ontario.</p>

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		<p style="text-align: center;">SECTION 5 – MANAGEMENT AREAS</p> <p>Rather than dealing with this section piece by piece I will deal with it in its entirety. There are many concerns that have been expressed to me by the mountain bicycle community based on their attendance at the November Open House.</p> <p>I don't think that many mountain bicyclists would object to the Management Area designation of Restricted. Contrary to what many might believe, mountain bicyclists consider themselves to be environmentally friendly. If a trail needed to be closed to protect the vernal ponds that Jefferson Salamanders nest in, and that information was put on a sign at the former trail head (rather than a bicycle with a red slash across it), few would complain and they would stay out. This management designation covers a good portion of the Britton, Robertson, Turner, Mahon and Currie Tracts. Besides, no matter how a trail can be engineered it likely should not be built at all in an area of wetland or wet organic soils.</p> <p>The biggest disagreement we have is with the Management Area designation of Passive. This includes a vast amount of the aforementioned tracts. The term from Table 3 is "not encouraged". Yet hunting and machines for silviculture are? This simply does not seem right. Again, there is no scientific basis for the exclusion of mountain bicycles as such. Essentially, if mountain bikes are excluded from designated passive areas then we are largely excluded from the tracts, period.</p> <p>As Passive and Restricted are the dominant management area designations in the Britton, Robertson, Turner, Mahon and Currie Tracts the remaining land available to us will be severely limited. We have been using these trails for a long time and we do feel a sense of ownership. The trails need to be properly studied and put into the context of the management and preservation goals.</p> <p>On another point, the Bruce Trail as mentioned in the NEPOSS guidelines should not apply to the Britton Tract. This is a side trail only, and not the main trail. The intent of the NEPOSS is to secure a route for the continuous main trail. The main path is further south along the Escarpment edge. The side trail in question is poorly designed and constructed and in my opinion it should be closed. It should not receive official recognition in Draft Plan and it should not be indicated on Figure C2. This elevates it, through recognition, to a status that it doesn't deserve.</p> <p>Page 25 – Objective to convert conifer plantations to native deciduous and mixed woodlands</p> <p>I disagree with this objective. To begin, it is not generally known what the original forest in this area was. There are some hints (e.g. fossil pollen studies carried out for many years at Crawford Lake Conservation Area) but they are far from definitive. There is also</p>	<p>Please refer to response above regarding the approach that will be followed in reviewing trail locations and permitted uses.</p> <p>Yes, thank you. We have changed this.</p>

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		<p>the suggestion that deciduous forest (also known as Carolinian Forest) is a native forest community to many of the forest tracts. There is little evidence for this. Using the map below (from http://www.carolinian.org), the area in which the forest tracts occur is at best fringe deciduous. As well, the indicator species of a deciduous forest are largely absent (http://www.carolinian.org/SpeciesHabitats_RepSpecies.htm).</p> <p>My personal assessment is that because of the site limitations (thin soils and the elevation of the Niagara Escarpment) mixed woodlands should be the only objective. Since issues such as deer browsing and their impact on understory regeneration have not been addressed in the Draft Plan, there is a good chance that attempts to re-create the forest in someone's vision may prove to be a costly and possibly futile undertaking.</p> <p>If I may take off my science hat and put on my mountain bicycling helmet, the conifer plantations are of great desirability for the narrow trails that we enjoy. The carpet of needles provides good drainage and the shade provided by the pines is also welcome. Since the understory is largely absent, there is little chance that rare or endangered species will be affected. I believe that some narrow trails in the wetland areas should be closed. To make up for these closures it would be advantageous to have the conifer plantations intact so that new trails could be constructed. There is little natural regeneration of the conifers occurring on these sites. In time they will die and eventually be replaced by other common trees from the surrounding mixed woodlands. I raised this point at the PLC and it seems to not have been considered. Allowing trail use and not removing the conifers would present Halton Region with a very low capital expenditure.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SECTION 6 – SILVICULTURAL MANAGEMENT</p> <p>After having read this section several times I'm forced to make one conclusion. This section has been created by silviculturalist and essentially presents a silviculturalist make-work project. I've danced around in mind over the wording and I feel it is harsh. However, I also feel that it is necessary. If this is the objective of Halton Region then fine, but I feel that there has been an over-emphasis on this aspect of the Draft Plan primarily to the detriment of effort that should have directed towards the outstanding recreational issues.</p> <p>Rather than the term "enhancement" I feel that what is being proposed is "disturbance through enhancement". Much of what is being proposed is quite radical. Although the intentions are noble, I envision a forestry work crew in the woods happily cutting down trees. Yes, this is a simplistic view, but from my personal experience good intentions often fall by the wayside when the actual forestry crew gets into the woods.</p>	<p>Please refer to previous response regarding silvicultural management.</p> <p>One of the objectives of arranging the site visit to the York Regional Forest was to provide PLC members with an opportunity to observe for themselves the approach to</p>

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		<p>Here are two examples. The first is in Hilton Falls Conservation Area. Just north and slightly east of the reservoir, a section of forest was “enhanced” by the removal of maples to allow better red oak regeneration. Although the access road was just metres away, the forestry crew used heavy equipment in the tree stand and made a fine mess. Especially of note was the destruction of many of the oak saplings and seedlings that were supposed to be enhanced. The second is from the Main Tract of the Dufferin County Forest. Enhancement of a red pine plantation was to be done. A well-used trail ran through this plantation. We were assured that the trail wouldn’t be disturbed. Instead it was obliterated. We couldn’t even find it. The response from the forestry crew was that they had to disturb it to get their machines turned around. However, that excuse didn’t explain why slash was left all over the trail. I fear the same fate for many of the tree stands and trails in the various tracts.</p> <p>I would also like to echo the input of many of the other committee members in not feeling comfortable with the concept of producing any sort of yield from the tracts. The biomass should be left there to decay. Nutrients are returned to the soil and the downed trees become homes for a variety of wildlife.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SECTION 7 – FIVE-YEAR OPERATING PLAN</p> <p>Table 14 – perhaps overly ambitious. Too much emphasis on silviculture. No solutions for outstanding recreational issues.</p> <p>Table 15 – my same comments as in Section 6 apply – too ambitious, too much expense and too much management</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SECTION 8 – THE CAPITAL WORKS</p> <p>Table 17 – the cost of fencing is ridiculous. Does this need to be done as suggested? Do the properties need to be fenced in their entirety? Can savings be realized through the construction of fences only where needed? What is the impact of fencing on wildlife movement?</p> <p>Parking Lots – one ongoing problem in rural parking areas is the illegal dumping of refuse. By increasing the size of the existing parking lots I feel that there will also be an increase in the amount of illegal dumping that will take place. This is already happening to a degree at the southern entrance to the Britton Tract on 6th Line. By increasing the size of the lots it will be easier to get a truck in and out. There is nothing in the Draft Plan that details the cost of ongoing waste removal, either illegal waste or simply the emptying of garbage cans.</p>	<p>silvicultural management that is proposed for the Halton Forest, the type of machinery used, effects on the soils and residual trees, and effects on the road systems. From the largely positive feedback received from many PLC members who attended the site visit, we proceeded to develop the recommendations for silvicultural management in the Halton Forest. Good forestry practice involves protection of other values including recreational trails during harvesting operations. It is a common practice to require that logging slash be removed from any roads and trails when the operations are completed.</p> <p>We agree and are now recommending fencing only where required and only after consultation with neighbouring property owners.</p> <p>This issue will be addressed in the plan.</p> <p>We are reviewing these</p>

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		<p>Forest Road Repairs – Simply, why? Is it to make it easier for the silviculturalist to access the forest for their work? Motorized vehicles are not allowed on these roads so why do they need to be radically improved? The need to get emergency vehicles into the tracts has not been demonstrated. How many emergencies have the forests had? Have there been any fires? I just don't see the need for this expense and the data is not there to justify it. The flooding is temporary and related only to spring runoff combined with the activity of beavers. Silviculture management should not be taking place in the spring because of the sensitivity of many nesting species (e.g. salamanders, birds).</p> <p>Trail Surfacing Categories 1 and 2 – simplistic at best. Expenditure has been listed for trail study. As I have said in my comments above, this work should have been completed prior to the production of this Draft Plan. There was an outstanding recreational issue regarding these trails. This was known from the outset of the PLC meetings. How can budgeting for capital works be done when the authors don't even know what is there? I do not know what the details of the contract between Halton Region and Gartner Lee et al, but it seems obvious to me that the contract should have included an inventory of trails along with the inventory of the forest stands. This has not been good value for the expense paid by Halton Region.</p> <p>As well, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority Trail Planning and Design Guidelines are hardly definitive. There are much better documents available today. The International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) trail construction manual (just published this summer) is available. It includes precise information on the design, construction and maintenance of recreational trails for a wide variety of users.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CONCLUSION</p> <p>I regret to inform you that I cannot endorse the Draft Plan in its current state. I feel a true sense of betrayal that the issues of recreation that I raised through many PLC meetings were simply ignored without recognition or cause in the Draft Plan.</p> <p>Further, I feel that there is a strong bias from the authors towards an ambitious, and I fear expensive, forest management plan. The fact that the Gartner Lee et al are in the business of silviculture is evident. I don't think that it is a malicious intent, but I come away with the impression that they worked in the areas that they knew well and tended to avoid those areas with which they were uncomfortable. After spending hours at PLC meetings presenting the case for recreational mountain bicycling, identifying a user conflict, and providing possible remedies, my input is not visible in the Draft Plan. To use a hackneyed phrase, I may as well have been talking to a wall.</p>	<p>sections of the plan.</p>

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		<p>Halton Region needed a Management Plan for their forests. It is natural to turn to a company with forestry expertise to produce this. Unfortunately expertise in forestry does not necessarily translate to expertise in recreation. If one was to visit the Services Page on the Gartner Lee web site (http://www.gartnerlee.com/services/), there is no mention of recreation expertise. As a Forest Tract user, and as the representative of the local mountain bicycle community on the PLC, I must protest the current Draft Plan and respectfully ask that it be changed to reflect the desire of many bicyclists to continue to use the trails in Halton Region where environmentally appropriate.</p> <p>Since a recreational trail use issue has been identified so clearly and so passionately by so many, I request that Halton Region not adopt the Draft Plan until such time as an inventory, assessment and discussion of all trails within the Halton Region Forests has been completed, and the Draft Plan revised accordingly.</p>	
D. Bick	11/25/04	<p>I'm a cyclist & have spent many years boasting to people about our trails. When biking, I truly appreciate the choice we've been granted to use the trails & greatly support preservation of the forest. I hope that after completion of the study, we find a common ground that allows us to maintain use of "off-shoot", single track trails moving forward, I believe there is an opportunity to better mark trails.</p> <p>My interest is in maintaining the existing access to trails for equestrians. Increased population growth traffic, proposed quarry changes with heavy vehicle traffic make the roads an unsafe proposition for riders, particularly younger riders. There is a decided lack of respect for shared use on the roads by traffic against cyclists, pedestrians + equestrians. I'm prepared to work to establish guidelines on usage, seasonality of usage, code of conduct, etc.</p>	<p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p> <p>Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users</p>
G. Boychuk	11/25/04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notice of process not effective. Found out about process Nov. 25 - Tracts hard to place, no key plans. Colours not used effectively, PPS existing trails not shown. - Not enough weight given to access/recreation. - 'Passive' definition too subjective. MTB is no less 'passive' than hiking. - How many MTBr's represented on PLC? <p>One PLC member does not represent the majority</p>	<p>The key map is being revised to make the tract locations more visible.</p>
G. Boychuk	11/26/04	<p>I've been to, and run a few PICs in my day, and I thought it went fairly well. I was reassured by the IMBA rep's confidence in the process and I do hope she and/or other cyclists continue to be well represented and heeded, which brings me to my concerns:</p>	<p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p>

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		<p>The high percentage of cyclists, ~90%, and expectations/concerns voiced at last night's meeting didn't seem to be reflected in the management/operation plan. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dave insisted residents and users will make the final decision how the resource is managed but the procedures, prerequisites and rules governing those decisions are stacked heavily against accommodating cyclists. • The <i>restricted</i> areas range widely and indiscriminantly, (understandably), effectively cutting off the opportunity for continuous trails, unless corridors are permitted. • The <i>passive</i> areas do not permit cycling although there is evidence and studies indicating cycling is no more intense nor has more impact than hiking. This prejudice should be eliminated. • The remaining <i>modified</i> areas are small and will suffer from increased pressure. <p>Taken together, there is reason to worry that a majority user, cyclists, will not have their interests properly addressed in the plan.</p> <p>Please also consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTB riding is legitimate and growing in popularity. • Most MTB riders are environmentally responsible and can act as stewards by dissuading those hikers and riders who are not. • MTB riders will likely use the trails in any case. <p>Finally, a good plan accommodates all legitimate users to the point that rules make sense and do not require draconian enforcement measures. I hope my concerns are unfounded and the IMBA rep's confidence is well placed.</p>	<p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p> <p>Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users</p>
N. Cornwell	11/09/04	<p>We see deer quite often and deer signs everywhere, but I would not call the numbers a problem. We have had no damage to out gardens (which are extensive) in the 10+ years we have been here. The activity is mostly due to the fact that the creek runs through out property, there are apple trees (food) on the west side of the First Line and there are a number of very protected spots that the deer like to camp in.</p> <p>I find it frustrating that each year I cannot even walk my own property without fearing for my safety. Just last week (Nov. 4th @ 5pm) I was standing down by our stream and a shot gun went off not 50 yards from my position. The hunter must have been on my property as it extends the other side of the creek. I yelled and whistled but did not get a response.</p> <p>If these people want to take over our property for five days a year, then let them pay all our taxes for five days a year. I know that it's not the locals hunting here, my petition proved that.</p>	<p>Regional bylaws 224-84 and 189-96 regulate forest uses, including hunting. Shotgun and bow hunting in the Halton Forest are only permitted during the controlled deer hunt. This is a provincial regulation.</p> <p>There may be some portions of the forest where fencing is required to ensure that property boundaries are respected.</p>

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		<p>This area is just too built up to ensure safe hunting. And with the (approx. 120 acre) Snyder tract surrounded by private land it is also too easy for a hunter to wander onto private property, as I have experiences many times.</p> <p>Not to diminish an individuals right to hunt, perhaps a motion to restrict hunting to areas of sufficient size (say 500+ acres) could be considered. Personally I don't think hunting south of the 401 should be allowed with the number of private homes in the area.</p> <p>This is such a delicate issue and needs to be addressed from the safety standpoint, as I found when I tabled the petition. Does an individual group have the right to endanger the general public? I don't think so. The activities have to be responsible and acceptable to all parties.</p>	
N. Cornwell	11/08/04	<p>I have just had a look at the draft Halton Forest Plan and see that the prospect of getting the hunting stopped behind our properties looks slim.</p> <p>There are numerous references to hunting as being acceptable (alongside other recreation activities) and also, most disturbing, is Conservation Halton's stance that due to "differing Regional and Conservation Halton forest management and goals..." that CH would not take over day to day management of these agreement forests.</p>	<p>Regional bylaws 224-84 and 189-96 regulate forest uses, including hunting. Shotgun and bow hunting in the Halton Forest are only permitted during the controlled deer hunt. This is a provincial regulation.</p>
N.Cunningham	11/24/04	<p>If trails are going to be closed in sensitive areas, make new trails around the areas. Appreciate access roads being available for all uses.</p>	<p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p>
D. Daniell	11/25/04	<p>I have been a weekly user of the above tracts, mostly for mountain biking, over the last 10 years. I am also a Biologist that can understand the need for concern in sensitive areas. Over the last 10 yrs, I have seen a healthy respect for keeping the trails the way they are i.e. not widening trails or increasing number of trails.</p> <p>Trails also need to be better marked. We always come across lost hikers, bikers etc.</p>	<p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p>
D.Daniell	12/08/04	<p>I have some suggestions that may help preserve the integrity of the Agreement Forest, specifically Tracts: Britton, Robertson, Mahon, Turner, Currie.</p> <p>I am an avid mountain biker that uses these Tracts weekly. Over the past ten years, I have not seen an increase in the number of "spontaneous" trails. The number of these trails continues to stay the same, but over the same time period, the number of cyclists has certainly increased. As you know, most of these cyclists reach these Tracts via Hilton Falls Conversation Area.</p>	<p>Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users</p> <p>The Region will discuss these</p>

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		<p>My suggestion is to increase the number of available trails within the Hilton Falls boundaries. This would give cyclists many more options to stay within the boundaries of the conservation area, and thus spending less time in the Agreement Forest. Each cyclist pays a daily use fee of \$6.00. Most of the people I cycle with, pay a \$95.00 annual fee. Most weekends, the parking lot at Hilton Falls is full of cyclists. Why not use this money to help increase the number of trails within the park.</p> <p>A second concern raised, at the Open House, was the building of "stunts" for mountain bikers. I completely agree that these can be dangerous and a liability for Halton Region. To help control this, why not build proper "stunts" within Hilton Falls C.A. The International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA), who were present at the Open House, have years of experience in this area. This would help eliminate the need for people to build their own stunts in the Agreement Forest.</p> <p>The reality is that some mountain bikers will always use the spontaneous trails, even if there are no biking signs everywhere (we see this on the Bruce Trail). This certainly would not do anything to protect the environment. If more options were available to cyclists, there would be less chance of over-use in endangered areas. I see Hilton Falls C.A. as a great place to develop, thus cutting down on the numbers in the Agreement Forest.</p>	<p>recommendations with Conservation Halton.</p> <p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p> <p>Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users</p>
G.Darnel	11/24/04	<p>I am a mountain biker who uses the Halton Hills park and agreement forest trails quite often, including trails in the agreement forest. I have not had a chance to study the plans fully, but I understand that some trails I (we) currently ride may fall into zones which may be designated as protected zones in the future. The rationale for the protection of these zones is, from my understanding, based on the need to protect and preserve sensitive flora and fauna. The problem I see with the resulting closing of trails, however, is that it is very difficult to enforce, and I know mtn bikers may be inclined to just ignore these, especially if it blocks access to preferred trails. Would it be possible to preserve access to these trails by building ground level bridges (i.e. board walks) over the areas where protection is deemed necessary? I am sure that trail users (mountain bikers) could be organized to assist in the building of these board walks, if material can be supplied by the conservation authority. Alternatively, a voluntary fee could be requested of trail users (mountain bikers) when they pay for their trail pass, to help cover material costs.</p> <p>In general, I understand the need to preserve and protect areas in the park because of sensitive vegetation, and animal life. However, realistically, to help achieve this measure of protection, mountain bikers need either alternate access to the same trails that are closed off while protecting those parts of the trail which are sensitive, or alternate trails altogether, which are comparable to those that were closed off.</p>	See above.

Source	Date	Individual Comments	Consultant Analysis and Recommendations
M. De Gauchy	11/25/04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is "profile" report on the web? - Note that walking/skiing are not necessarily compatible uses in winter – footsteps and dog poop are annoying to ski over - Beavers can wreak havoc to trails – there are ways to divert their activities from trail areas. 	<p>The Profile report is too large for the website.</p> <p>Yes, we will be recommending that the Region install beaver resistant culverts where flooding is a problem.</p>
T. Desjardins	11/27/04	I am a frequent user of the agreement forest area. Mainly in the form of mountain biking. It is a beautiful area appreciated by all users. I appreciate the need to protect the flora and fauna within the bounds of this forest. I only hope that there is consideration for alternate trails when other areas are set aside in the interest of preserving the natural life within the projected protected areas.	<p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p>
T. Durdon	11/25/04	Recreational use of these lands is of a much higher importance to me than you indicate. I work in a factory (way too many hours), and need a natural area for stress relief. I agree that it shouldn't develop into a park like setting and much remain natural. Check scientific data available. Mountain biking is not high impact use of land as indicated in this report. The current level of "spontaneous" trails seems appropriate.	Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users
G. Ellis	11/25/04	Would like to see existing hiking & mountain biking opportunities to be maintained (not expanded!) as much as possible while providing for protection of the existing natural environment.	
S. Ferriman	11/26/04	<p>I stopped by last night to review the proposed changes to Hilton but had to leave early due to a four month old German Shepherd that seems to require more attention than a 5 year old child. From what I can gather, we, the mountain biking population have become our own worst enemies with the increase in the number of trails we have added over the years. Regardless of how well we treat our forest and most of us do, it is obvious that we may be causing harm to the creatures that have inhabited our riding area long before we ever climbed the first rock.</p> <p>However I could not help but think of all the money being spend on reviewing a situation which, lets be honest, once implemented would and will be very difficult to enforce. You can put up all the signs or fences in the world but if people want to use the forest for whatever reason they</p>	<p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks,</p>

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		<p>choose then that's what they will do. Perhaps our time and finances would be best utilized with educating the population and even establishing areas where families/people could visit the forest and actually see what they are destroying. Nothing sends a clearer message than a visual representation of the issues at hand. To simply cut off sections to the general populous will only add fuel to the fire and encourage people to venture into the restricted areas to see what all the interest is about.</p> <p>I, myself have been riding the Kelso/Hilton trails for years now and had no idea that we were treading on areas which house species that we could be pushing towards extinction. With some new knowledge of our riding environment and it's inhabitants then we should be able to make adjustments to how, when or where we ride into specific sections so as not to cause problems for the creatures that live there and at the same time still be able to enjoy the area that we have grown so fond of over the years.</p>	<p>seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p> <p>Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users</p>
R. Fine	11/30/04	<p>I am writing this email in order to express my concern that areas of the Halton Agreement forest might be designated as out of bounds for mountain bikers.</p> <p>I regularly ride in these forests with my 16 year old son. There are very few places with suitable trails for this kind of riding, and the loss of this location will dramatically reduce our riding options.</p> <p>It seems strange to me that hunting will be allowed while biking will be discouraged. This is indeed a perverse set of values.</p> <p>I believe that bike riding should be encouraged. It is a sport which appeals to people over a wide range of ages and is not only a good way to keep fit, but also allows riders to experience and appreciate the beauty of the forest.</p> <p>I hope that my letter and letters from many other mountain bike riders will help to convince the planning department to maintain mountain bike access to the forest.</p>	<p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p> <p>Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users</p>
M. Fogt	11/26/04	<p>Some fellow mountain bikers and I attended your open house last night (Thursday, Nov. 25th), and I just wanted to offer my congratulations to you and the various consultants you have been working with for your apparent willingness to seek out and listen to input from the people who use the trails.</p> <p>I was impressed with the degree to which you have all gone to ensure that everyone who will be affected by the proposals will have a voice, including that which has no voice.....the forest itself.</p>	<p>Thank you.</p>

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		<p>Contrary to what might be perceived by some in the public, mountain bikers are not all a bunch of rampaging lunatics who tear a swath through anything that lies before them. The very large majority of us are people just like you.....people who love the forest and seek to ensure it's treasures are protected.</p> <p>I want to assure you that most mountain bikers are very well versed in trail preservation, and certainly know better than to cut the "spontaneous trails" we heard so much about during the discussions.</p> <p>I wonder how we can be sure that those trails were initially made by mountain bikers. While it is possible that these trails have been ridden on, how can we know for certain that another user group didn't make them first? It is also quite difficult for people new to the forest to know what is an authorized trail, and what is not.</p> <p>As an avid hiker and backpacker, I also see trails where bikes are not allowed and do not travel. Places like Killarney P.P., Algonquin P.P., Frontenac P.P., etc.etc. I have seen the impact on these lands where only one user group, hikers, are able to venture. It is clear that hikers are no less of a high impact trail user than mountain bikers are.</p> <p>As your concerns for the trail use center around the impact various user groups have on the forest, I ask you to consider the way each of these groups typically travel on the trails.</p> <p>Horses- Extremely high pressure exerted on the trail surface. Usually leaving deep hoof prints, and piles of dung on the trail. When turning around, such a large animal requires a wide space to maneuver and can trample surrounding vegetation. A horse may eat the surrounding vegetation when it's hungry.</p> <p>Hikers- Often walk off trail to examine surrounding areas, and may trample vegetation or habitat for the forest's resident species. Are sometimes known to drop water bottles. (I believe that we can identify hikers as the source of this trail trash as mountain bikers use dedicated water bottles that fit very securely into water bottle cages or backpack mounted hydration packs that don't fall off. The bottles I'm finding and removing from the trail are of the disposable plastic variety.)</p> <p>Orienteering- A group who had a small presence at the meeting, but may have a large impact due to the nature of their activity. If their goal is to make their way through the forest using traditional navigational methods, it stands to reason that they will spend the majority of their time travelling off-trail altogether, possibly putting the sensitive areas of the forest at risk.</p> <p>Cyclists- Travel single file on singletrack trails, effectively keeping the path traveled to a mere sliver of the forest's surface</p>	<p>We are reviewing all recreational activities and potential impacts on the forest ecology.</p> <p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p> <p>Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users</p>

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		<p>area. They stay on the trails, and normally don't gather in areas other than trail intersections where the area is large enough to accommodate them.</p> <p>I realize that I might be coming across as anti-everything but cycling.....that is not my intention. What I'm trying to express to you is my concern for the "tag" that seems to be affixed to cyclists as destructive users of the forest.</p> <p>We are a user group like any other.....most of us are responsible, caring individuals to want nothing more than to see the forest preserved and protected. The small number of those who are less than conscientious about their impact on the forest is represented in every activity, and I hope that you'll not place all the blame at the feet of cyclists alone.</p> <p>On a final note....I encourage you to take advantage of the resources offered by the representatives of IMBA. They have a wealth of experience in the field of trail maintenance and design for low impact on the forest.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. IMBA has provided a number of useful suggestions.</p>
M. Fogt	11/26/04	<p>I feel that the goals of the management plan are commendable, but I'm concerned about the degree to which the plan intends to restrict mountain bike access. Considering how much of the trails are over rock, its hard to believe that they have much impact on the terrain and the plants and animals living there.</p>	<p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p>
W. Fogt	11/25/04	<p>I believe there should still be contiguous trail access for mountain biking to allow a transversing route within the tracts, though I do agree the most sensitive areas should be avoided. The proposed management plan which allows biking only in the "modified" status sections looks too fragmented and restricts the biking to small confined areas. Making riding too impractical.</p>	<p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p> <p>Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users.</p>
M. Gallina	12/01/04	<p>I am a member of G.O.R.B.A. (Guelph Off Road Bike Association). I am writing in regards to the Halton Regional Draft Forest Management Plan.</p> <p>I will be very brief trusting that you have received many letters from mountain bike clubs/enthusiasts. It would be a shame to see any exclusion of mountain bike activities from the above mentioned parcel of land. I hope in your planning the voice of the many mountain bike clubs and its members will be heard.</p>	<p>See above.</p>

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C.Gibbard	11/25/04	My concern is that the roads aren't as safe as what they were. The trails are the only place that we can ride safely.	
C. Hammell	12/07/04	<p>I am writing to you from Waterloo, ON, where I am president of the Waterloo Cycling Club/Flying Dogs. We have more than 300 members, many of whom have mountain bikes and enjoy having variety in the places where they ride for recreation. The WCC promotes safe and responsible cycling, and respect for the environment. The Club is affiliated with the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA), and endorses their work in creating and preserving excellent riding opportunities.</p> <p>As an individual, and as a voice representing members of the WCC, I urge you to reconsider the inclusion of mountain biking as a healthy and stimulating form of recreation in the Halton Regional Draft Forest Management Plan.</p> <p>The agreement forests around Hilton Falls Conservation Area are a riding destination for mountain bikers across Southern Ontario. We greatly value the use of these areas, which are well suited to our pursuits. Their loss to the mountain biking community would be grievous.</p>	See above.
D. Harvie	12/10/04	<p>I have read the above-noted Plan and, as a former Oakville resident who has frequently enjoyed the tracts of the Halton Agreement Forests since 1960 as a hiker and mountain biker, I have a number of observations.</p> <p>The first goal of the plan – to conserve the natural heritage and functions – is laudable. Of course, the easiest way to achieve this – to restrict access completely – is neither possible nor desirable. However, it has been my experience that spending money on capital improvements such as trail enhancement, boardwalks, signage, parking, and waste receptacles can actually increase the threat to sensitive areas by encouraging much greater use of the resource.</p> <p>I suggest that, to some extent, this has been the fate of the adjacent Hilton Falls Conservation Area which requires considerable management and resources to avert the impact of the hordes that its infrastructure now attracts. I certainly remember it as much more pristine, less fragile area before its designation as a conservation area.</p> <p>Frankly, in the 40 years that I have been visiting the Britton, Robertson, Turner, Mahon and Currie tracts, I have witnessed very little detrimental impact to the forest. Some of the trails have become a little more permanent over that period, and a few others have appeared. Other than that, to the inexperienced but observant eye, little has changed - even with increased use by horses, mountain bikes and hikers.</p> <p>At the risk of sounding reactionary, I would recommend leaving well enough alone except where existing use actually threatens unique forest attributes. In those cases, minimal trail closures or</p>	<p>Good suggestions.</p> <p>All recreational trails will be mapped in</p>

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		<p>diversions should suffice. Other restrictions shouldn't be necessary and the addition of capital "improvements" will tend to diminish the character of the resource. There are very few natural areas in Halton Region and the Greater Toronto Area that remain accessible to the public. Unimproved, they are a treasure that shouldn't be tampered with unless it can be demonstrated that their survival is at risk.</p> <p>Finally, the tables comparing the differing goals and guidelines of the Halton Regional Forest Management areas with the Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System zones made it very difficult for me to determine what your consultants are actually proposing for each of the tracts. Specifically, which trails are to be closed or restricted. Perhaps they could prepare simple tract-by-tract maps that indicate what they propose to do with the existing trails within each tract. That will permit interested parties to participate in the process on an informed basis.</p> <p>These forests are not parks keep the stunts biking away from them. These are more commercial venture or can be accommodated at Kelso. Good presentation pleased with what I heard.</p>	<p>2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p> <p>Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users</p>
K. Hincks	11/25/04	I would like to express my gratitude for your impetus with the Halton Forest PLC after our unavoidable hiatus.	Thank you
JP Jarvis		<p>As became apparent with the attendance and interest at the meeting on November 9th the Committee is committed to the project even after a 2-year plus recess. We are each current with the Draft Report of 2004 and dedicated to the task of determining the course of this vital resource for The Region of Halton into the next century.</p> <p>To reiterate the views presented at the previous meetings, field trips, visitations and Open House as well as what was gleaned from the meeting earlier this month ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee unanimously supports the formal management of the Halton Regional Forest with the singular goal of habitat improvement to propagate wildlife and protect the surface and ground water. • It is also a strong feeling that the exclusive control and management of the Forest is ceded to the Region with the stewardship and day-to-day tasks accomplished by a qualified forester. I understand this vital responsibility will be decided through the bid process and would encourage the arbiters to involve Silv-Econ in all aspects, including bidder. • The Draft report describes in detail the scientific and 	<p>Paul: Thank you for your comments.</p> <p>The PLC has been most helpful throughout the management planning process. We look forward to working with the Halton Forest Advisory Committee and forest users over the coming months.</p>

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		<p>environmental aspects as recommend by the various consulting firms who authoured the studies. The PLC has deliberated at length the detail and again unanimously endorses the Draft Report and the scheduled activities for initiation over the next 1-5 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PLC also agreed that the recreational usage of the Halton Forest be tailored to subscribe to the objectives in the Draft and recognizes the Regions residents requirement for outdoor activity best be accommodated by the Regional Conservation Authority with their current programs and property locations and not impinge on the Halton Forest as the end objectives are diametrically opposed. 	
H. Judd	12/07/04	<p>My family and I have been hiking, biking and cross country skiing at Hilton Falls for two years now. We have an annual pass for the Halton Conservation areas. We also like to hike and bike on the agreement forests (Britton, Currie, Turner, Mahon and Robertson Tracts) around Hilton Falls.</p> <p>I am very concerned about the potential plans to limit the access to certain tracks of land that we currently enjoy. Almost all the trails that we ride and hike on are very sturdy. They are generally speaking very rocky and I cannot imagine that we are inflicting any form of wear and tear. As informed cyclists and hikers we stay on the trails and away from the wet areas.</p> <p>Any land closures would concentrate activities in areas that are much more populated like Hilton Falls and Kelso. Closing trails would likely have more of detrimental effect on existing bike friendly trails, as the shear volume would widen existing trails. Increased traffic will only result in additional land use conflict.</p> <p>The impacts of a mountain bike on the local ecosystem must be small compared to the affects of the quarries in the area. The use of selective logging to fund forest management activities would certainly have more of an effect on the environment than cyclists and equestrians. In the past Hilton Falls has worked with cycling clubs to fabricate bridges and control cycling traffic. We must all share our resources, plan and work together to protect the environment for future generation to enjoy.</p>	<p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p> <p>Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users</p>
P. Lambrick	11/25/04	<p>Proper forestry management does include controlled cutting. These plan include hunting. As an agriculturalist these tract are large and will have a great effect.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Shotgun and bow hunting will be permitted during the fall controlled deer hunt.</p>
M.E. Leeder	11/25/04	<p>Restrict hunting to Halton Residents only, to people who have a stake in the region, should you continue to allow hunting.</p>	<p>We are reviewing all</p>

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		In areas where shared use and cyclists have alternate access to trails, ie horses not permitted, designate those trails for equestrians only. We are currently more restricted as to where we are permitted to go.	recreational activities. All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005. Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails. Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users
C. Levin	11/25/04	My concern has always been restricting equestrian use of forests. I have been riding in these forests for 25 years. I fear that as the city moves closer we will loose access to these beautiful trails. This is of great concern as the roads get paved & the traffic heavier & faster we will always respect the seasonal restrictions. I believe that there should be an educational seminar that teaches all disciplines RESPECT for one & other. We are loosing access to conservation areas to bikers. I believe this should also be a concern for Halton. We (most equestrian that I know pay yearly fees to access these lands). We are no longer allowed to use these areas first due to the danger & speed of the cyclists and second the thought that horses destroy & "dirty" the trails. Manure is fertilizer – nutrients for the soil. Hunting should be restricted in areas with multiple homes backing on to the forest. I.e. Snyder Tract.	See above.
E. Lewin	11/25/04	My concerns are most cyclists are not from Halton Region and they do not respect other users	
P. Lubbe	11/25/04	I agree with keeping the populus out of the forest. I agree by making access limited is a good way to insure limited access. I am a mountain biker and love the sport because of the nature I get to enjoy. Keeping the masses out by restricted (available) access would be the main method. Minimizing gravel roads would be key.	
M. Martini	11/23/04	Gorba is an active well organized off road cycling club with over 200 members would like to see the agreement forest along with other tracts of land be left open to mountain bikers as well as the other user groups (non motorized) Within the club there are 20+ season pass holders and as a club we post rides at Hilton no less then 20 times a year.	

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		<p>As a club we indorse trail closer and as a club put in hundreds of hours yearly in trail maintenance and hold clinics to promote proper trail edict.</p> <p>As a user group we are forever defending and fighting for places to enjoy ourselves.</p>	
W. McIlveen	12/09/04	<p>Here are my comments relating to the October 2004 draft Halton Regional Forest Management Plan. I have focused my review on the proposed actions rather than the background details. Some comments are specific and some are general.</p> <p>Page 18. Last paragraph with list – Hiring a professional forester to implement the management plan. I have very severe reservations about this. I have yet to see a forester undertake any such activities without his/her bias in favour of lumber production becoming the dominant factor. The forests should not be managed for timber production but should be retained as ecological preserves. The forests should be allowed to follow natural successional processes without any human intervention. Thinning should simply not be allowed.</p> <p>The plan has entirely too much emphasis on active management of forests. I have no problem with the classification system into Restricted, Passive and Modified groups. I do not agree with the levels of active intervention for forest management and timber production. The only forest or tree cutting that should be acceptable is staged removal of the conifer plantations and the cutting of genuine hazard trees. Cutting of plantations should be considered in light of the use of such stands for nesting of Northern Goshawk. Wholesale cutting of such stands will remove the existing breeding opportunities for this species. Forest production under the guise of removing hazard trees was practiced in Conservation Halton properties (i.e. large numbers of trees were cut that were well removed from any pathways where people might be present). I would not want to see a similar thing happen in the Regional Forests.</p> <p>I am not aware on any location where perimeter fencing is warranted. This should reduce the proposed management costs.</p> <p>Viewing platforms should be kept out of the Nature preserve areas. Such structures would only encourage high numbers of visitors and thereby defeat the attempted purpose of protecting these features. Spelunking by the general public should be kept out of the Nature Reserves for similar reasons</p> <p>I do not favour the use of the Regional Forests by either mountain bikers or horseback riding. That being said, I am expecting that these activities will be allowed. If that occurs, an agreement between the biking community should be made. That community should be charged with the responsibility of policing itself with reports made annually to the Region of Halton, with annual</p>	<p>The HF will greatly benefit from appropriate silvicultural management. The plantations are not natural. Silvicultural management will help to restore native vegetation to these sites.</p> <p>Silvicultural management will follow Provincial guidelines and best practices for Southern Ontario forests, including provisions for protecting nesting sites for raptors.</p> <p>The plan will recommend that perimeter fencing be considered only where warranted and in consultation with adjacent landowners.</p> <p>The term Nature Reserve is not used in the plan. I assume the reference is to the Restricted Management Areas. We are reviewing the recommendations for observation towers.</p> <p>Involving the forest users in actively monitoring recreational uses is an excellent suggestion.</p>

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		<p>renewal of the agreement subject to performance in the previous year. New paths should not be permitted and riders should be restricted to established roads. No stunt jumps should be permitted because these afford tripping hazards. From my personal experience, it must be acknowledged that bikers that I have met in the Regional Forests have been quite mannerly, signalling their approach and been quite friendly, thanking people for getting of the path, etc.. This is in decided contrast to the bikers using Kelso where the riders, almost to a person, could be classed at best as totally ignorant in their very rude behaviour. I hope this latter group never gets into the Regional Forests.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Most Critical Items Missing from the Plan</p> <p>Fire Management – With the advance of climate change, it can be expected that drier weather will prevail. This may lead to changes in the forest composition. With drier conditions, the threat of fire increases. With increased use of the forests by the public, the probability of fire also increases. While fires in deciduous forests are less likely, this potential problem should not be dismissed. Policies on fire management or prevention need to be incorporated into the forest management plan. Certainly, a system of access roads in the forest needs to be maintained to allow fire fighters access to the forests.</p> <p>Introduced Pests – Many non-native species of plants, animals and micro-organisms are present in Ontario and many of these can be found in the Halton County Forests. Most of these are relatively innocuous but others present considerable challenges and competition for native species. Of particular concern are those organisms that attack the native species. Chestnut Blight and Dutch Elm Disease have radically changed the forest composition by destroying their host species. Currently, Beech Bark Disease is attacking American Beech. The Butternut Canker has caused the host tree to be relegated to an “endangered” status. Other organisms will soon be found affecting the forest. Of special note, the Emerald Ash Borer can be expected to reach Halton within a few years and this will lead to the decimation of all ash species in the forest. Plans for removal and management of ash trees attacked by this pest need to be considered within the present plan. Release of unwanted pets in the forests and associated water bodies is also a concern and needs to be addressed.</p> <p>Wild Food Collection – There will surely be increasing pressures from the general public to take wild foods from the County Forests in Halton and elsewhere. For example, this includes basic removal of organisms via collection of plants (and animals) for planting in home gardens, for making arts and crafts objects, and for pets. It also includes collection of organisms such as mushrooms and specialty foods. Species that attract the interests of the health food industry will also come under pressure. I personally have encountered people who have been collecting</p>	<p>Excellent comment. Developing a fire management strategy is beyond the scope of the current plan. However, it can be made a component of the management work to be undertaken during the first 5-year operating period.</p> <p>We will add a section on monitoring forest health with recommendations for managing non-native invasive species and introduced pests.</p> <p>The gathering of edible plants by the public (and also commercial interests) is a problem in other municipal forests.</p> <p>Unauthorized removal of any flora or fauna from the HF will be prohibited. Enforcement is another issue. The suggestion to involve forest users in monitoring activities in the forest is a good one and will help to educate members of the public about permitted and non-permitted uses.</p>

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		plants for their personal medicinal use. I have observed many people collecting mushrooms for food in other County Forests and frequently they go out collecting mushrooms for many days a year. In the United States, studies have been undertaken to manage such activities. Policies that deal with this concern need to be developed for Halton County Forests, preferably in a manner that is consistent with other jurisdictions.	
O.Mendel-ovitz	11/24/04	I am a patron of both Hilton Falls and the Agreement Forest and have been one for over 5 years now. Those tracts of land mentioned above have become a haven for me and my colleagues for all that time. Many others have been enjoying those trails for even longer than I have. I believe that the lands should be preserved for the sake of the ecology, the wildlife and to maintain the natural beauty of the location, however I also strongly believe that mountain bikers and horse riders should be allowed access to the trails.	All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005. Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails. Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users
J. Mowbray	11/25/04	Speaking from personal experience, I know that the mountain bike riders have treated the forest well, have been very careful to minimise our footprint on the land, and have even blocked off trails from time to time in order to allow for trail regeneration. We also have been staunch supporters of the conservation areas, either purchasing season's passes or parking in the main lot and paying the entrance fees to the park. Ironically, the damage to the forest comes from the dirt bike riders and ATV riders who tear through the forest on their large, knobby tires. They will continue to do their damage regardless of whether or not they are welcome or allowed in those areas.	
M.Newton	11/25/04	I urge you to strongly reconsider the banning of horses and mountain bikes on the trails. Not only will you be alienating your strongest supporters, but you will also be reducing the funding we provide to the municipality in order to help maintain the upkeep of the park lands. Perhaps a good solution to the situation would be to add the agreement forest into the jurisdiction of the conservation area. I'm sure local volunteer groups would be happy to help maintain the trails and lands.	Following the recommendations from the Public Liasion Committee, the Halton forest will be retained and managed as Regional property. All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.

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		<p>It should be recognized that not only are there the 675 (approx) HRF hectares, but the Region also contains forest within Conservation Halton and the NEC.</p> <p>I'm very concerned about the possible restriction to horse back riding as I have used these trails for over 20 years. We have always shared these trails with a variety of uses, and have used only marked trails. In an area such as rural Milton, where there are a number of hobby farms + horses I feel it would be detrimental to limit the use of many forested trails. If we are no longer able to use the forest trails, we will be forced to ride on road sides. With the increased population density in Milton, and therefore, more traffic, this would clearly be an accident waiting to happen. There are many Regional Forests in this area (eg. York Region and Durham Region) where horses are permitted to use trails along with other users.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We also use the trails for hiking, walking dogs, cross country skiing and snow shoeing. - Even areas marked 'modified' <u>may</u> include horse and mountain biked. <u>May</u> also implies <u>may not</u>. <p>Much of Britton/Robertson are marked Restricted or Passive – will horses still be allowed on the current Fire Access Roads? This needs to be stated more clearly in the Management Plan.</p>	<p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p> <p>Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users</p>
O. Ostapiak	11/25/04	<p>My understanding is that single-track mountain biking has an impact to vegetation similar to hiking. Therefore, I would urge you to consider it in the list of allowed "passive" activities. If indeed there are some very sensitive areas, I wonder if building light wooden bridges (such as the 5 Bridges Trail in Hilton Falls) could accommodate mountain bike traffic and preserve the forest floor.</p> <p>It seems to me that considerable revenue is generated from trail passes issued to people mountain biking. Rather than closing trails outright, I would rather see licenses issued to mountain bikers contingent on attending a seminar on environmental issues and our responsibilities as trail users.</p> <p>I believe that seminars, trail maintenance work parties and self-policing would be reasonable and popular alternatives to closing these trails.</p>	<p>We are not recommending user fees at this time.</p> <p>We agree and will be recommending that user groups "peer manage"</p>
J. Ratcliffe	11/25/04	<p>Singletrack mountain bike tracks for which the above tracts are "famous" need only be 12" wide – may we not 'save' these trails at least to some degree, in passive or even restricted areas to maintain attractive loops and decent length trails?!</p> <p>Question whether mountain biking is any tougher on trails than 30 person group of hikers (common on weekends).</p>	<p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or</p>

Source	Date	Individual Comments	Consultant Analysis and Recommendations
			closure of any trails. Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users their activities.
R. Reinholt	N/A	<p>Section 2.1 "thin soil" versus shallow soil, should specify what thin soil is < 1 metre and be consistent with p.10 Section 4.2 Objective 1 which states <i>shallow soil</i></p> <p>Section 2.2 White ash is <i>Fraxinus americana</i></p> <p>Section 4.2 p.10 "relatively thick soils: should this not be referred to as <i>overburden</i></p> <p>Section 4.2 p.11 Objective 2. should describe the diameter/size of a "large canopy opening"</p> <p>Section 5.1 Table 4 Summary of Management Area by Tract should specify <i>hectares</i></p> <p>Section 6.1 1st paragraph should wind not be listed last, I would think the others have been more dominant in the past, in shaping the forests we see today</p> <p>Section 6.2 Second paragraph last sentence, <i>Regen of these species...through silviculture management</i>, should we specify <i>what</i> silviculture management or is it specified and I have missed it?</p> <p>Section 8.2 p.48 Recreational Related Work \$100 per (<i>lineal</i>) metre</p>	R. Reinholt: Thank you for your comments. We will make the necessary changes to these sections in the plan.
M. Schmidt	11/25/04	<p>I agree with the restricted zones, as long as no one be permitted. However I disagree that mountain biking is not permitted in passive areas, there are examples of mountain bike use in sensitive areas all over the world.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As close as Toronto in the Don Valley mountain bikes are permitted in environmentally sensitive areas. There are other examples I can provide. - As a professional trail builder and designer. I am concerned with some of the trail construction technics, if you boarder trails you will trap water. Water will cause trail erosion. Please see the "Trail Solutions" book available from the International Mountain Bicycling Association. - Mountain biking has been present in the forest for more than 20 years, this has become a destination for cycling from all over Ontario. 	<p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p> <p>Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with</p>

Source	Date	Individual Comments	Consultant Analysis and Recommendations
		Having been part of several plans this has been by far the best	management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users
D.Seto	11/25/04	<p>I would like to see the plan make use of</p> <p>1) the most up to date data on impact of mountain biking</p> <p>2) Volunteer efforts from the cycling community – not only for input on planning, but also to implement. Cyclists have a long history of active participating in the preservation and management of natural lands. We will organize maintenance and work parties, provide educational + monitoring trail GPS mapping, and so on.</p> <p>I have been involved in organizing many of these activities. Please contact me. I would like to contribute materially to the preservation + improvement of the forest.</p> <p>I would like finally to congratulate the planning done by the region. This draft plan is one of the most comprehensive + best executed I have seen.</p>	Thank you
J. Shikaze	12/08/04	<p>I am writing to express my concern about the plans to close some of the trails in the Agreement Forests of Halton Region to Mountain Biking. I am a new resident of Oakville. One of the reasons I chose this area is the proximity to the multi-use trails. My family enjoys cycling and hiking and we use the trails often.</p> <p>The trails in this region are well maintained and very sturdy. I cannot imagine that cycling is significantly affecting the trails. The trails are narrow and have not been widening over the last few years. Most of the trails are rocky which helps to reduce wear. Hopefully a solution can be found that will continue to allow mountain bikers access to the trails. If the trails were to be closed, other Mountain Bike trails such as Kelso would see an increase in use that would accelerate widening and wear, potentially creating new land use conflicts.</p>	<p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails. Approved trails will then be placed in an “Access Zone” with management guidelines as recommended by <u>HFAC and forest users</u></p>
L. & R Silva	11/25/04	<p>1) Concern about fencing tracts – re cost and access by land owners who back onto tract. Please don't block us out. We are good stewards because it is our backyard.</p> <p>2) Concern about proximity of shot-gun hunting.</p>	<p>The plan will recommend fencing where required in consultation with adjoining property owners.</p> <p>Shotgun and bow hunting will be permitted during the fall controlled deer hunt.</p>
T.Smit	11/24/04	I just wanted to voice my concern over the proposed change for these trails. I think it would be a real loss for the mountain biking community to lose access to these trails and I believe they are a	See above re recreational trails.

Source	Date	Individual Comments	Consultant Analysis and Recommendations
		great source of recreational enjoyment for this community as well as others.	
E.Smith	11/26/04	<p>The Agreement Forests within Halton Region have been used for recreational mountain bike riding for close to 20 years.</p> <p>As a mountain bike rider who uses the Agreement Forests around Hilton Falls, I would like to add my voice to those people who are concerned about the possibility of trail closures, specifically those trails referred to in your report as "spontaneous". None of the mountain bikers of my acquaintance would be so irresponsible as to deviate from existing trails. We also make every effort to be safe and courteous with their fellow trail-users. Unfortunately we always seem to be battling a bad reputation.</p> <p>Please keep our wishes in mind when you decide on the future of the agreement forest trails.</p>	See above re recreational trails.
A. Sokell	11/26/04	<p>I have just received the news about the reclassification of the lands that make up the Hilton Falls trail system. As a user and season pass holder for the last 5 years for both Hilton and Kelso, I am deeply concerned about the possible restriction of trail usage. Myself, and a group of regular riders have been enjoying the variety of trails offered at Hilton, and the feeling of being in absolute wilderness, are equally concerned. The average ride produces siting of wildlife, and rarely other users. The sheer size of the trail system has allowed usage to have minimal erosion and generally negligible wear on the trails, unlike Kelso. I would like to express my concern in that regard to concentrating trail usage over a smaller area, which would increase environmental damage, coupled with additional funds that would be required for maintenance of those trails.</p> <p>As a conscientious rider, I regularly remove dead fall from trails, move loose stones, etc., pick up litter, and I generally care about the trails that we enjoy. Hilton appears to have that same sentiment from its other users, as generally, it is the cleanest riding area I have been. I would urge that these things are to be considered when determining the best course of action is for Hilton Falls going forward. As a taxpayer in Oakville, I gladly encourage the use of my tax dollars for upkeep and maintenance of local trail systems, and as a long time seasons pass holder, I continue to enjoy Hilton on a weekly basis.</p> <p>I would even welcome an increase in season pass prices, if it would assist in the decision to leave Hilton Falls the pristine riding location that I have learned to call my favorite local spot.</p>	<p>This management plan is for the tracts in the Halton Region Forest, property which is owned by Halton Region and portions of which are adjacent to the Hilton Falls CA.</p> <p>Within the Halton Region Forest there are numerous recreational trails.</p> <p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p> <p>Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users</p>
O. Sokolovic	11/27/04	I sincerely hope that the region will still be open for mountain biking as it has been for the last 20 years. I have been using trails at Hilton Falls and Kelso for the last 5 years, and was taking advantage of the yearly pass. This activity was extremely	See above.

Source	Date	Individual Comments	Consultant Analysis and Recommendations
		important for me for both physical fitness and mental recharge. Please, Please keep the area accessible to mountain biking.	
R. Stewart	11/25/04	As an avid mountain biker I'm saddened and " very " confused as to why Hilton Falls is being considered closed down for our sport. Has anyone done an environmental study as to what " supposed " damage we do on these trails?? , I have been riding on there for approx. 18 years and have always thoroughly enjoyed the unique riding experience there.	This management plan is for the tracts in the Halton Region Forest, property which is owned by Halton Region and portions of which are adjacent to the Hilton Falls CA.
A. Stiehl	12/01/04	<p>I'm not sure what the issue is here whether it be environmental or a conflict between hikers and or others groups, I can honestly not see what harm we are doing. Please get back to me and let me know what I have to do to be able to continue using this area.</p> <p>As for the Mountain biking, my family have been using this area for over 20 years and my two sons grew up on their mountain bikes when they were 6 years old and are still now 20 years later mountain biking and hiking the forests.</p> <p>I see no reason not to ride some of the sensitive areas if we create trails that will impact the area minimal. The salamanders can live with us using a small trail through their area. I have yet to see one of these guys and I think we should visit them once in a while otherwise why should we talk about them if they can't be seen. Are they invisible?</p>	<p>Within the Halton Region Forest there are numerous recreational trails.</p> <p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p> <p>Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users</p>
P. Stone	11/28/04	<p>I attended the open house yesterday on the draft plan for the Halton Region Forests. I am an avid cyclist and have a great interest in the continued use of these trails for cycling. I had a few comments to share and I know that you were asking people to give you comments. I am speaking only of the Hilton Falls "Agreement" Forest and not the other smaller forests that are spread out around the area.</p> <p>First of all, I am a Mechanical Engineer and not or Botanist or Biologist or Forester or anything along those lines so you'll have to excuse me if I make any errors but I am concerned with the two tables that Dale made in her presentation. The one table seemed to be a survey of trail users indicating which recreation activities they use the trail for. From the look of the data (the fact that there seemed to be quite a discrete number of answers - 10%, 20%, 30% etc.) it suggests to me that there was a small sample of people in</p>	

Source	Date	Individual Comments	Consultant Analysis and Recommendations
		<p>this survey - perhaps only 10 or 20. Of the respondents it appeared that there was only 1 or 2 cyclists.</p> <p>I can assure you with great certainty that cyclists definitely do not make up only 10% of the trail users. I would suggest that cyclists are in fact the most prevalent users of the forest. On a summer's day I could easily bump into 3 or 4 groups of cyclists that are in groups of 3 or 4 or as many as 10 or more. On the same day you would be lucky to find two groups of 2 hikers on the same day. That is my observation.</p> <p>I would suggest as well that a better approach to determining the trail users would be to study the users that were there rather than counting people who attend a meeting or submit forms. By this I mean actually counting at a few entrance points to the forests (4th and 6th line parking lots) the number of users to use the forest over a certain time period. If that is not practical, even a simple drive by of the parking lot and counting the cars that have bike racks on them would show you that there are a lot of cyclists in there (although that method is flawed since some people, like myself, transport my bike in the truck and not on a bike rack and you can often get 3 or 4 cyclists carpooling).</p> <p>The situation only becomes more skewed to cyclists when you consider evenings and early mornings. Cyclists have lights and ride at night frequently (half of the rides that I do in a year are with lights) but hikers do not, in my experience, hike very much in the dark.</p> <p>In the winter, the number of hikers and cyclists is drastically reduced but the ratio of cyclist to hikers is even larger than in the summer. A very limited number of skiers ski the gravel roads but there are very very few cross country skiers that venture into most of the smaller rockier trails. We joke that only the skiers that are mad at their skis actually ski there. Through most of these trails in the winter you can see from prints in the snow that there was, say, one hiker that went through in the last week, or say, one skier that went there in the last 3 weeks but many cyclists.</p> <p>I have never seen an orienteerer there, I've actually only seen horses on the main gravel road once, I've seen snowshoers once, and I saw a dogsled once. I have never seen a hunter or bird watcher, or any other type of user. I have seen 10's, perhaps low 100's of hikers and thousands of cyclists.</p> <p>The second graph that I had a comment about was the one that showed that the average respondent thought that cycling was only "moderately appropriate" (I forget what the actual wording was). I have been cycling in these tracts for years and can honestly say that I have not seen any damage to the forests or trails caused by cyclists. The cyclists probably are largely responsible for keeping the trails from growing over (because the hikers only use the trails</p>	<p>These are interesting statistics. Thank you.</p> <p>The plan will include a section on monitoring forest health and recreational uses. Your suggested approach to monitoring recreational uses is a great idea!</p> <p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p>

Source	Date	Individual Comments	Consultant Analysis and Recommendations
		<p>close to the parking lots and the main gravel roads) and because the cyclist are the dominant user. I can also say that I have never seen a salamander (or any other wildlife) on the trail and since most of the trails are so rocky you have to look at the trail pretty closely and I don't think I would miss seeing them if they were there.</p> <p>I live in Guelph and most of the people that I ride with are in Guelph and they could not attend the open house. I suspect that the majority of the other trails users are locals.</p> <p>It is true that it is a beautiful forest and it needs to be preserved. I hope that we can all work together and find a well balanced solution to the various issues. I think that you will find that the cyclists are quite interested in being involved and working with you to help in any way they can.</p> <p>It has come to my attention that mountain biking at Hilton Falls is under re-evaluation. The areas under review include: Britton Tract, the Robertson Tract, the Turner Tract, the Mahon Tract, and the Currie Tract.</p> <p>This comes as a disturbing development to mountain bikers and recreationalists who have enjoyed cycling the singletrack of Hilton Falls (and Kelso) for many years.</p> <p>Hilton Falls is recognized by the recreational community as one of the premier mountainbike destinations within easy driving distance of Toronto, Hamilton, and Kitchener-Waterloo (etc.). Their use by mountainbikers is one that combines funding opportunities for the park, riding opportunities for the users, and a low impact activity that enables users to enjoy nature in an ecologically sustainable manner.</p>	<p>Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users</p>
M. Tiessen	12/09/04	<p>My hope is that mountain bikers will continue to be able to enjoy Hilton Falls (as they have done for about 20 years) for many more years to come.</p> <p>I was forwarded an email regarding the Hilton Falls forest management plan, and unfortunately I was not able to attend the open house. I use the back area of Hilton falls for a number of activities, including hiking, skiing, snowshoeing and mountain biking. I am a responsible biker, and I can see no reason why biking may be discouraged in these areas. Generally speaking, bikers and other users get along well, so I can not understand the</p>	<p>See above re recreational trails.</p>

Source	Date	Individual Comments	Consultant Analysis and Recommendations
		logic of limiting access to a large area of low usage. Even within the Hilton Falls park, where the number of hikers and bikers is far greater, there does not seem to be a issue with sharing the trails. Also, as responsible trail users, many mountain bikers volunteer their time in useful activities, such as trail marking, clean ups and maintenance. Further to this, having a large and growing trail network is good for the community image. Other bikers from across the province regularly tell me how great our trails are. I would like to have my voice heard on this issue, and I would appreciate being included in future meetings.	
R. Trant	11/29/04	<p>Please take into consideration the many mountain bikers who enjoy these trails. Please hear our voice keep these trails open for us to responsibly enjoy.</p> <p>Everything looks pretty straightforward to me but I do have a concern regarding spontaneous trails being closed. I think most trails you are referring to are the ones made by people who use the tracts for mountain biking etc. What about the small trails made by individuals who own property adjacent to the tract? This would affect me personally and about maybe two or three other neighbors whose properties also are adjacent to the Snyder tract. These trails are only used by our immediate families to access the tract. Can some sort of concession be made for us property owners? A suggestion would be, if the tract is completely fenced perhaps we could be given the choice of paying for a gate that would be kept locked and only we would have a key to open it in order not to lose our accessibility to the tract. If these trails are completely cut off to us that would mean we horse people would be forced to ride our horses along #3 Sideroad to First Line, north on First Line to Campbellville Rd. and then along Campbellville Rd. to the parking area. Campbellville Rd. can be very busy with fast moving traffic. Believe me, nobody does the 60 km speed limit along there. This is the beauty of being able to access the tract without having to ride your horse along busy roads, and this is the main reason we bought this property seven years ago. I have been told this approach has been successful in other conservation type areas.</p>	<p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p> <p>Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users</p>
T. Vanden Heuvel	12/03/04	<p>No stunts! Regardless of insurance</p> <p>Are the draft report or the maps shown on the boards available on-line ?</p>	<p>Yes, the reports are on the Halton Region website.</p>
F. Waddell	11/19/04	<p>I ask that you re-examine the recreational aspect of the 5-tracts bordering Hilton Falls conservation area & that cyclists be included in the trail assessment & designation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IMBA (the Int'l Mountain Biking Assn) has many resources & programs that we'd like to make available to the planners & the committees involved in the management plan : - National Mountain Bike Patrol Program - Trail Care crews & trail building schools - Trail design, construction & maintenance expertise, along with dozens of volunteers who would like to help! - Library of trail resources, etc. 	<p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or</p>

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			closure of any trails. Approved trails will then be placed in an "Access Zone" with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users.
L. Wells	11/25/04	Also a concern with regards to borders/rails on trails, & classification of mountain biking as non-passive. We hope that this terminology & the trail buildings practices (that involve rails) will be reviewed before the final management plan is released.	We are reviewing the recommendations regarding trail construction.
C. Wilkinson	12/09/04	<p>As a resident of Halton and a recreational user of the Region's forests, I am taking this opportunity to submit my comments on the Halton Regional Draft Forest Plan. Generally, I believe that the plan sets the right direction for the Region's management of the 14 sites. However, I do believe that there are several facets of the plan that require attention.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Identification of Species at Risk</p> <p>The Halton Regional Draft Forest Plan ("the plan") does not adequately identify species at risk that inhabit or utilize the 14 tracts of forest. While the plan does list many species, it does not properly identify their legal status. This omission can have serious negative planning implications, particularly in a setting such as a hearing before the Ontario Municipal Board.</p> <p>For example, references are infrequently made to the status of species as designated by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). While important in principle, these designations carry little legal weight in the context of Halton's regional forests as the federal <i>Species at Risk Act</i> is almost exclusively limited to federal lands.</p> <p>All species that have been identified under Ontario's <i>Endangered Species Act</i> should be explicitly listed. Further, any species identified in the Ministry of Natural Resources' "Species at Risk in Ontario List" (March 2004) should be explicitly identified. These designations are the primary mechanisms to trigger the application of the relevant sections of the Provincial Policy Statement under Ontario's <i>Planning Act</i>. For example, this identification may be of particular relevance in assessing development applications on adjacent properties.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Identification of Fauna: Mammals</p> <p>The plan does not identify any mammals that inhabit or depend upon these forest tracts. Obviously, there are mammals (e.g., deer, coyotes, foxes, etc.) in these areas. These species should be considered in assessing compatible recreational activities, in addition to determining appropriate silvicultural methods.</p>	<p>The species at risk are have been identified in the Profile of the Halton Forest. This is a companion document to the Management Plan.</p> <p>These have been identified in the Profile of the Halton Forest</p>

Source	Date	Individual Comments	Consultant Analysis and Recommendations
		<p style="text-align: center;">Incompatible Recreational Uses: Hunting</p> <p>One of the central purposes of the plan is to protect the natural heritage functions and features (e.g., biological diversity, etc.) found in these 14 areas. However, the plan appears to allow hunting as an appropriate recreational use in all but one area (i.e., the Cox Tract).</p> <p>Hunting is a consumptive and exclusionary recreational activity. The very purpose of hunting is to kill fauna, thereby negatively impacting the natural heritage features and functions of these sites which is counter to the bulk of the plan. Allowing hunting is clearly also counter the fact that most of these sites are within a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve and nine tracts are located within Environmentally Sensitive Areas identified in the Region's Official Plan.</p> <p>Further, the allowance of hunting detracts from the values associated with almost every other form of recreational use that is listed in the plan. It is also exclusionary as it will prevent other users from using these sites when hunting is taking place based on safety issues.</p> <p>The plan does state that "restrictions are proposed for some activities such as hunting." It is not apparent what these restrictions are, nor to which specific sites they apply. If these "restrictions" are simply adherence to regulations made for open seasons under Ontario's <i>Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act</i>, it should be clearly stated. Hunting should be prohibited with the enactment of by-laws if necessary.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Incompatible Recreational Uses: Snowmobile and ATV use</p> <p>The plan makes little reference to this issue, other than stating that "snowmobile and ATV use will not be encouraged in any management area/zone." It is unclear whether this activity is prohibited and, if so, if it is prohibited in all the sites. As with hunting (see above), there is a well-documented literature in the ecological sciences that demonstrates the serious environmental impacts of these activities and their fundamental incompatibility with areas intended for natural heritage protection.</p> <p>Further, in a recent class action lawsuit a municipality was found financially liable by the court for the noise impacts caused by snowmobiles on municipal trails; this fact alone should cause the Region of Halton to carefully weigh the risks of allowing such recreational activities on its properties. Mechanized forms of recreation should be prohibited.</p>	<p>Regional bylaws 224-84 and 189-96 regulate forest uses, including hunting. Shotgun and bow hunting in the Halton Forest are only permitted during the controlled deer hunt. This is a provincial regulation.</p> <p>Yes, we need to make it clear that motorized recreational uses will be prohibited.</p>

Source	Date	Individual Comments	Consultant Analysis and Recommendations
		<p style="text-align: center;">Compatible Recreational Uses: Dog-sledding</p> <p>This recreational activity should be recognized in the plan as it does occur in some of the 14 sites. Non-mechanized and non-consumptive forms of recreation should be encouraged.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Education / Research</p> <p>The plan states that only “limited research activities” should occur in restricted areas. Given that these areas contain the most ‘valuable’ or rare elements of natural heritage, it is these very areas that should be studied the most. These areas are most at risk and serve as indicators of environmental features and function.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tree Planting</p> <p>The plan makes passing reference to this issue. At a minimum, this section should clearly state that only native seed-stock from this eco-region shall be used in any of the 14 sites.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sustainable Timber Management: Revenues</p> <p>There does not appear to be any discussion of whether silvicultural treatments will generate revenue and whether such revenue will be dedicated to the management of these sites.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Identification of Significant Woodlands</p> <p>The plan fails to acknowledge whether any of these sites are considered as “significant woodlands” under the Provincial Policy Statement under Ontario’s <i>Planning Act</i>. Given that this plan is almost entirely devoted to forests under municipal control, this serious omission must be remedied.</p>	<p>Dog sledding would seem to be a compatible use. Dog sledding is permitted in other municipal forests in S. Ont.</p> <p>Research <u>is</u> permitted in Restricted areas. Should be non-destructive and non-invasive.</p> <p>Agreed. We will state this in the final plan.</p> <p>Some silvicultural treatments (e.g. commercial thinning) are expected to generate revenues. The revenues will help to offset other management expenses.</p> <p>The forests have been designated as Significant Woodlands by the Region. We will make appropriate wording changes to the plan.</p>
L. Woolner	11/25/04	I question where mountain biking fits in with “passive use” provided care is taken to minimize impacts to the national resource & the recreational trail resource.	<p>All recreational trails will be mapped in 2005.</p> <p>Consultations with the Halton Forest Advisory (HFAC) Committee and forest users will determine the need for each trail and where necessary re-location, surfacing/boardwalks, seasonal restrictions, or closure of any trails.</p> <p>Approved trails will then be placed in an “Access Zone” with management guidelines as recommended by HFAC and forest users.</p>

Halton Regional Forest Draft Management Plan Public Open House
Milton Memorial Arena Lions Hall
Date: Thursday November 25th, 2004
Time: 6:00-9:00 pm

Reminders and Introductions (Paul Attack)

- Written comments will be received until December 10th, 2004.
- By filling in the information on the Open House sign-in sheets, you will be added to the mailing list.
- The Draft Halton Regional Forest Management Plan can be viewed on Halton Region's website.

Presentation (6:00 pm)

- Dale Leadbeater and Dave Puttock presented background information, rationale, process and the major components of the Draft Forest Plan.

Question and Answer Period

(1) Clark (Resident) asked for input about how to be involved with the Forest Stewardship Committee.

Dave: This is under the responsibility of Halton Region, but it is likely that the composition of the PLC committee will stay the same for the duration of this process.

Paul: A Terms of Reference will be developed that will provide more information on this.

Clark voiced his concern about the demographics of the committee.

Paul: There is a system that the Region uses that ensures there is proper representation

(2) Fred Newton (Resident/forest user) asked if recreational uses would be permitted in restricted areas?

Dave: Yes, access roads will definitely be permitted in these areas. The recommendation is that the Forest Stewardship Committee and the Region identify the uses for those trails.

(3) Rob (Resident/forest user) asked for clarification about what is meant by "high intensity"

Dave: This refers to the level of impact of the activity. The appropriate uses need to be identified by the user groups.

Rob: Why do cycling trails need to be improved (i.e. low borders)?

Dave: We are now receiving similar comments and are in the process of making those types of revisions and the wording will be changed.

Rob voiced his concern that these types of changes will reduce the desirability of trails and would hate to see trails that were 8 feet wide and gravel as has been the case in Kelso.

(4) Garry Waddel: What do you mean by fencing?

Dave explained that the state of fencing was assessed. There may be a need for fencing for adjacent landowners. Fencing needs would be further assessed on a case-by-case basis.

(5) Bill McIlveen: Bill raised three points that he would like to be considered in the Management Plan:

- 1. Fire Management- global warming is making these forests more prone**
- 2. Introduced pests**
- 3. Wild food collection**

Dave: We will consider better monitoring to address these issues.

(6) Peter Appleton (Cyclist): Have you investigated the scientific data on uses/impacts of cycling and other “passive” activities (i.e. hiking)? According to Peter, there are reports from the University of Guelph that dispel the belief that cycling is a higher impact activity.

Dave: We want this kind of feedback from users. What we are most concerned about is the creation of new trails (stunts).

(7) Dave (resident of Hamilton): Well Done! Dave congratulated the consulting team on employing an effective process. He noted that it is difficult to find the perfect balance. Dave comes here because the Dundas Valley has been paved.

(8) Laura (Mountain Biking Association): Will provide any resources such as impact studies and any other resources that may be needed. Laura asked if “recreational” and “spontaneous” trails are the same thing?

Dave: All trails that aren't roads are recreational trails. “Spontaneous” is a term used in forestry.

(9) Annette (Resident/ Orienteering): Stated that she is a forest user, not strictly a trail user. Annette would like to establish a clear line of input. She is concerned that the trails are already on their maps, so she would like notice in advance if there are to be trail closures.

(10) Leigh Booth (TRCA): Brought resources to leave with Dave and Dale. He stated that mountain biking is not as detrimental as people think, as mountain bikers don't stay in one place for very long, so there is less impact.

(11) Mark (Resident- near Snyder Tract): Why is hunting permitted? Mark noted allowing hunting brings in a whole new group of people for one week of the year and hunters generally show less respect for the forest.

Dave: The Plan reflects Provincial hunting regulations. Hunting is not permitted where the municipality has passed a bylaw in these areas.

(12) Mike Schmidt (Mountain Biker/Professional Trail Builder): Mike also has a study that compares hiking and biking. He also brought a trail

building book/manual. According to Mike, people in his group have received training in trail building and can provide assistance for the forest tracts. Mike asked, why is cycling not permitted in passive areas?

Dave: We will consult users for the appropriate uses of the trails.

- (13) Ken (Halton Off-road Cycling Association): Why is the Region worried about structures (jumps, ramps) in the forest? There are ways to make this work. There is a trend to put stunts in areas where people have the option of going.**

Dave: Issues of stunts has been reviewed by insurers for the Region and there is a liability for the Region.

- (14) Peter Lambrick(Farmer): Stated his support for allowing hunting. Without hunting, there would be extensive damage to his crops as a result of an increase in deer populations.**

- (15) Peter Allen (Mountain Biker): What are the specifics for the consultation process from this point on?**

Dave: The first step is to map/GPS all the trails. Consultations will be needed and built into the 5- year Operating Plan.

Peter: The Plan will not state that any trails will be closed?

Dave: That is correct.

Dale: The hiatus has been a good thing, as it has given us new insights. We will use the comments from tonight and sit down with the Region to come up with another draft to go before Council, which is another opportunity for input.

- (16) J.P Jarvis (PLC): John Paul made the following points**

- **There are 17 members on the PLC who represent all groups.**
- **Biking has been well represented in the committee.**
- **J.P stated that “this is not a park, this is a forest”.**
- **The tour (led by Dave Puttock) of the York Region Forest for the PLC, was impressive and showed new opportunities for forests.**
- **We don’t want to attract new people to these forests.**
- **J.P supports hunting, as there have been many deer sightings that pose a dangerous risk.**
- **Every interest group has been represented, so bikers don’t need to worry about being heard. “You bikers have to police your own folks”.**

- (17) Margy de Gruchy (Ecological Consultant): What is the process for working with Conservation Halton?**

Dale: We have a representative from Conservation Halton on the Technical Advisory Committee, as well as from MNR and all municipalities.

Are the impacts of beavers considered? There are new measures to deter beavers.

Dave: The impacts of beavers have not been specifically considered, but we would want to use the best technology we could.

- (18) **Anne Taylor (Resident near Robertson Tract; Horse Farm owner;carriages): Anne stated that it is no longer safe to ride on country roads. There are limited options for horse-back riders, so trails must be kept open. Anne voiced her concern about hunters from outside the area who do not know the boundaries. The trespassing charges are only a few dollars.**

Dave: Access roads are recommended to be maintained and repaired to reduce trespassing.

- (19) **Mountain Biker: Do Silviculture operations use horse logging?**

Dave: Horse logging is not used. Horse logging is not as low impact as you would think. The typical system for plantation thinning will be used.

Dale: Horses are a big source of non-native invasive species, whereas equipment can be cleaned.

Mountain Biker: Forestry equipment can cause more damage than hikers.

Dale: Forestry is very focused as the machines are in and out quickly, and then allow recovery.

Dale: Restricted areas do not mean "no-go", but they are a tool to be used to learn specifically why the area is sensitive. Refer to Profile Report to learn about sensitivities.

Dave: Forest thinning might be row removal with some selection thinning.

Harvesting is beneficial for the forest and is done in the winter time.

- (20) **Annette (Orienteering): What is the recovery period after harvesting?**

Dave: Advanced regeneration will be released as a result of the harvesting. This depends on seed availability.

Annette: Do you seed?

Dave: Most areas are adequately stocked (meaning enough seed). Planting would be considered where there is no natural seed, but this is not likely in the Halton Regional Forest.

- (21) **Melanie Newton (Horse-back rider): Would like to see that forest access roads in passive areas could still be used for recreation.**

Dave: The Plan has been re-thought since it was written two years ago. This point will be in the final plan.

End 9:15 pm

Halton Regional Forests Draft Management Plan Open House

November 25, 2004

Milton Lions Hall

Results from Comment Sheet

Total Number of Responses: 32

1) What are the tracts that you visit most often?

Tract	Responses
Britton	23
Cox	7
Robertson	24
Mahon	16
Tuner	15
Currie	15
Snyder	8
None	3

2) How would you categorize your use of the Halton Regional Forest?

Rating	Responses	Percentage
Frequent	28	88%
Occasional	1	3%
Rare	0	0%
No Use	1	3%
N/A	2	6%
Total	32	100%

3) I support the vision, goals and objectives of the Halton Regional Forest Management Plan

Rating	Responses	Percentage
1 - I do not agree	0	0%
2	3	9%
3	5	16%
4	15	47%
5 - I agree	6	19%
N/A - No Answer	3	9%
Total	32	100%

4) I agree with the criteria, rationale and guidelines for the management areas.

Rating	Responses	Percentage
1 - I do not agree	4	13%
2	4	13%
3	8	25%
4	9	28%
5 - I agree	4	13%
N/A - No Answer	3	9%
Total	32	100%

5) I agree with the intensity of use proposed for each tract as identified in the management matrices.

Rating	Responses	Percentage
1 - I do not agree	5	16%
2	7	22%
3	11	34%
4	4	13%
5 - I agree	2	6%
N/A - No Answer	3	9%
Total	32	100%

6) I agree with the sustainable timber management approach for the Halton Regional Forest.

Rating	Responses	Percentage
1 - I do not agree	0	0%
2	4	13%
3	6	19%
4	7	22%
5 - I agree	11	34%
N/A - No Answer	4	13%
Total	32	100%