



**Belfountain Conservation Area Management Plan  
Public Information Session # 6  
Summary Notes**

**June 2018**

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**Introduction:**

The Belfountain Conservation Area (BCA) Management Plan was launched in 2014. The planning process was organized to concurrently build management considerations for Belfountain Conservation Area as a whole, while also considering site specifications for the dam and head pond, under the Environmental Assessment process. Aligning two separate planning processes added complexity to the project; however the benefit of doing both works concurrently outweighed challenges, and led to the completion of a holistic and balanced management plan approach.

CVC has worked with technical experts, hired consultants, community partners, and local residents to vision, refine and realize the goals for developing this Management Plan. The final iteration of the Management Plan has over 1000 comments integrated from stakeholders, partners, staff and the community. Feedback has been taken seriously, impacting policy changes, design considerations and operational practice.

The final iteration of the Management Plan was shared with the public, visitors, stakeholder, and agency partners throughout the spring of 2018. This report has been prepared to highlight the outcomes of public communications.

**Public Information Sessions:**

Throughout spring 2018, Information Sessions were held to share the final vision and concepts for Belfountain Conservation Area with the public and stakeholders. Information sessions were held to garner public perception on the final concepts, and solicit feedback prior to concluding the planning process and seeking final approval for the Belfountain Conservation Area Management Plan.

Public Information Sessions were held as follows:

Type	Date	Process	Resources
<p><b>On-Site Consultation</b></p> <p><i>Belfountain Conservation Area</i></p>	<p>May 27, 2018 June 10, 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with Park Visitors.</li> <li>Drop-in Booth with Visuals and Staff.</li> <li>Discussion Based.</li> <li>Share Vision and Concept Plans.</li> <li>Answer Questions.</li> <li>Receive Feedback.</li> <li>Discussions recorded in an Evaluation Spreadsheet.</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#"><u>Master Concept Plan Map</u></a></p>
<p><b>Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting</b></p> <p><i>Belfountain Community Centre</i></p>	<p>June 13, 2018</p> <p>(Separate Agency Meetings were also Held)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with Stakeholders and Partner Groups.</li> <li>Facilitated meeting with invitations.</li> <li>Information Presentation given.</li> <li>Open Discussion and Q&amp;A session.</li> <li>Share Vision and Concept Plans.</li> <li>Answer Questions.</li> <li>Receive Feedback.</li> <li>Discussion recorded through Meeting Minutes.</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#"><u>Minutes</u></a></p>
<p><b>Public Open House: Drop-In Session</b></p> <p><i>Caledon Ski Club</i></p>	<p>June 19, 2018</p> <p>2:00 – 4:00 pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with Public and Local Community.</li> <li>Open Invitation; advertised in newspaper, media release, email, website, social media, partner groups, flyers.</li> <li>Format included: Poster Review and Conversations with Staff.</li> <li>Feedback Forms were Available.</li> <li>Conversations and Staff Reflections were recorded through an Evaluation Survey.</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#"><u>Posters</u></a></p>
<p><b>Public Open House: Information Session</b></p> <p><i>Caledon Ski Club</i></p>	<p>June 19, 2018</p> <p>6:00 – 9:00 pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with Public and Local Community.</li> <li>Open Invitation; advertised in newspaper, media release, email, website, social media, partner groups, flyers.</li> <li>Information Presentation given.</li> <li>Format included: Group Q&amp;A; Poster Review and Staff Conversations.</li> <li>Feedback Forms were Available.</li> <li>Conversations and Staff Reflections were recorded through an Evaluation Survey.</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#"><u>Presentation</u></a></p>

The outcome of these sessions has been compiled and is presented in the sections below.

## **Context:**

The following information summarizes the context of the Management Plan that was provided to the public and stakeholders through speaking points and information presentations.

The Management Plan for Belfountain Conservation Area will have a 25 year horizon, making it critical that the vision for the property is relevant, achievable, strikes an appropriate balance between our objectives, and acknowledges the needs of the visiting public, our community neighbors and CVC operations.

Through the consultation process, and work with our technical leads it became evident that a set of key issues requiring mitigation exists. The plan approach acknowledged these key issues as drivers that must be further explored, studied, and actioned through the Belfountain Conservation Area Management Plan.

The Management Plan Drivers include:

- Impaired riverine and aquatic habitat.
- Safety of the Dam and related infrastructure.
- Increasing and poorly accommodated regional visitation.
- Lack of appreciation and investment in the Mack Park cultural heritage features.
- Vehicle traffic, unsanctioned parking.
- User conflicts and unfocused visitor experience.
- Aging and insufficient facilities and services for visitors.
- Lack of sustainable revenue for upgrading and maintaining capital investments.
- Lack of formal connection to the local community or local tourism.

The success of the Plan will be measured by how well it responds to the drivers that sparked the need for a new management plan.

The proposals that are seen in this Plan strike the right balance between the protection and restoration of the environment, the preservation of the park's history, and the experience and enjoyment of visitors.

The last public consultation session for the BCA Management Plan was held in June 2016. Since that time, CVC staff have been carefully reflecting on the feedback received, and filling data gaps by undertaking additional studies. The concluding result is the formulation of a management plan that addresses key issues, while also delivering on high quality park experiences.

Some highlights of the actions taken to complete the Management Plan include:

- Completing the Environmental Assessment for the Dam and Headpond, and beginning detailed design of the new natural channel to protect water quality, stream health and fish habitat.

- Working with the Town of Caledon to study the cultural heritage of the park, leading to the Designation of the Mack Park features under the Ontario Heritage Act. Heritage Designation ensures protection of the features, and influences the public realm design to respectfully reflect the heritage of the park in interesting and exciting ways.
- Undertaking detailed Servicing studies (water and wastewater) to ensure that the park will have no impact on the water supplies of the village or on the environment, especially the West Credit River.
- Looking outside of the park gates and exploring options to address village traffic and parking issues, including working with the Town of Caledon, Region of Peel and OPP on traffic management, bus management and on off-site parking lots and shuttling options.
- Undertaking a regional tourism review to see how the park is part of a regional market and how it can support local businesses and local tourism that is complimentary to the Town of Caledon's priorities.
- Taking concrete measures to address crowding and user conflict issues, by implementing a new "No Group Picnicking" policy that prohibits large group picnics and places 30 minute timeframes on all other picnicking activity.

Through smart, beautiful and innovative design, along with thoughtful and precise policy, this plan will balance visitation and protection. CVC staff have dedicated their time and energy into creating a plan that, we believe, has struck the right balance.

For further details on the Management Plan process, please refer to the CVC website: <https://cvc.ca/enjoy-the-outdoors/conservation-areas/belfountain-conservation-area/belfountain-conservation-area-management-plan/>

For material downloads from the June 19 Public Open House, please visit the following link:

<https://cvc.ca/enjoy-the-outdoors/conservation-areas/belfountain-conservation-area/belfountain-conservation-area-management-plan/consultation/public-information-session-june-23-2016-2/>

### **Facilitator Comments:**

Staff documented topics of conversation, feedback, and general reflections on the consultation process after each event. The following information summarizes the feedback

and impressions that were documented by staff from the varying public information sessions.

Overarching, a positive consensus exists showing that the vision and concepts of the Management Plan were well received. It was noted that compared to feedback received earlier in the process, this consultation series had a more optimistic tone. Staff reflections show confidence that the public, stakeholders, visitors and partners understand the changes that are being proposed and are supportive of the direction that management for Belfountain Conservation Area will take. It is understood that the majority of people who participated in the consultation process are happy with the Plan. They see the balance that is being applied across multiple objectives and have noted that the directions being presented are well designed, thoughtful and include smart policy.

It is noted that contention still exists, especially as regional issues like traffic, parking, noise, security and tourism are perceived to have a dramatic impact on the lives of local residents. Many in the community acknowledge that Belfountain Conservation Area is not the sole source for these challenges; however a direct tie does exist between the quality of life for those in the community and the implications of park management at Belfountain Conservation Area. Staff conversations document that the majority of participants believe that the Management Plan shows a proactive approach to site management; however it is acknowledged that that the Plan will not solve all of the community's issues, nor could it ever.

It is also noted that even though there is support for Plan implementation, some feel that the proposed timeline is too far away, or there is skepticism regarding funding. Visitor capacity is another noted area of concern. Staff documented the frustration felt by members of the local community based on the sheer volume of visitors that enter the Town and the Conservation Area. Requests for capacity limits were heard, along with requests for reservation systems, quotas, and more parking enforcement. Metrics to measure and evaluate visitor use, numbers and patterns will be built into the scope for project evaluation.

Staff notes also point to the level of detailed information that was being requested through consultation. On the one hand, it was felt that providing concept plans was a risk, as these are not final designs, and they were misinterpreted during the consultation process. On the other hand, it is agreed that using the concept plans, even without materiality, was necessary to share the future vision for Belfountain Conservation Area. Based on public perception and the detailed questions asked regarding site design, it is clear that further public communication will be required after detailed design is complete. Recommendations were also recorded to further consider options for future community involvement related to fundraising or project work (ie. building stone walls).

With regards to future consultation, staff are in agreement that the approach taken was useful. The appropriate level of information sharing was achieved, while also allowing for open and honest communication with vested members of the public. Future consideration towards meeting timing will be made, to better accommodate both staff and public travel times and work hours. Sentiment received from members of the public show that an appropriate level of engagement was achieved through the Belfountain Conservation Area Management Plan. CVC is seen as a positive outlet for community engagement, and is encouraged to continue working with regional partners and the community.

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

The following section provides answers to the most frequently asked questions during the consultation period.

### **1. What is CVC doing to Protect the Environment at Belfountain Conservation Area?**

Protection of significant natural features and functions is a CVC priority. Every aspect of the Plan considers the environment, and even where development is identified, considerations to reduce impacts and incorporate environmentally sustainable design have been made.

- At a property level, zoning directs where recreation, operation and protection activities should be focused; more than 90% of BCA is zoned as nature reserve.
- Restoration and stewardship projects are identified, including the removal of the headpond, tree planting and habitat improvement projects.
- The development of an invasive species management strategy is a Plan direction.
- Natural Heritage Interpretation, to give visitors can gain an appreciation of the site, is a Management Plan directive.

### **2. What is CVC doing to manage the cultural resources at BCA?**

The conservation and celebration of BCA's cultural resources is an objective of the Plan. CVC recently worked with the Town of Caledon for heritage designation. The Management Plan includes:

- Direction to develop a Conservation Plan that outlines a monitoring and maintenance schedule for Mack's Park features.
- Directions for mitigation measures, when a cultural feature needs to be removed or modified (e.g. the headpond).
- Opportunities for interpretation and educational programming focused on BCA's history.

- Approach to integration of Mack's style and English Picturesque Landscape style into site design.

### **3. What impacts will development have on local water supply?**

No impacts are expected. CVC undertook a study to determine the impacts of a new visitor centre with a new water and wastewater management system on neighbouring wells. The study, conducted by a third party, determined that no impacts related to water quantity are anticipated, resulting from the fact that CVC's water supply well is considered to be low capacity and there is limited communication between the bedrock aquifer and the natural seep and spring features.

Additionally, CVC is taking a 'One Water' approach to servicing. The 'One Water' approach incorporates innovative and sustainable designs for rainwater and stormwater harvesting, and grey water recycling.

The Approach includes strict conservation targets of 5 litres per visitor (compared to the industry standard of 20 litre per visitor), and will incorporate flow balancing to manage peak and seasonal usage patterns. The 'One Water' approach incorporates progressive wastewater technology, including pre-treatment, computer controls, redundant capacity and minimization of leaching bed.

Water management, under the solutions outlined in the Belfountain Conservation Area Management Plan, are looking towards No-Net Impacts, in addition to managing well supply and servicing, the policy will also include strict nitrogen reduction targets to protect Brook Trout and river quality.

### **4. Aren't you just encouraging more people to come to the park with all these new changes?**

Visitation is increasing and is being driven by demographics and recreation trends, not by Park offerings. This is consistent with trends across the GTA and Ontario; and heightened by the close proximity to Peel growth areas. We are proposing to better manage visitation and its impacts, to reduce impact on the environment, historical features and the community through thoughtful policy and wise investment in better visitor infrastructure.

Examples of this include new boardwalks to keep people on trails, parking system and fees to encourage shorter stays and more turn over, establishing a new natural channel to benefit the river and fish habitat, and developing new facilities to manage water and wastewater.

We aim to create a better visitor experience, while also reducing the impacts of visitation. With these investments, we can protect what is important about Belfountain Conservation Area and better manage site operations.

### **5. Why are you increasing the parking lot size?**

The new parking lot will provide safe parking for more vehicles and provide an access and turnaround for emergency vehicles. Conservation area visitors will continue to be able to walk into the Hamlet to browse and purchase goods/services.

### **6. How Many More Parking Spaces are being Added?**

There will be 34 new spaces added to the parking lot. The parking lot has been reconfigured and will take over the space of the current septic system. The septic system is being dramatically upgraded, and will be relocated closer towards Pinnacle Street. The new parking lot will be built following sustainable design principles, and materials that are most relevant for site management.

### **7. Why doesn't CVC close the gates to Belfountain Conservation Area once the parking lot is full?**

Belfountain Conservation Area can accommodate more visitors than its parking capacity, and CVC staff work manage parking lot turn-over.

Visitors can legally park on the local streets within the Hamlet to visit the local businesses and Belfountain Conservation Area. Tourists are often customers of both local businesses and visitors to BCA, so it is important to consider potential impacts of altering parking arrangements on local businesses. CVC will continue to work with and inform visitors to ensure that they are parking in safe, legal locations.

### **8. How is CVC going to deal with visitor impacts? What is the carrying capacity?**

Impacts associated with visitor activities are, for the most part, limited to the 2 ha day-use area. Due to the steep terrain, visitors rarely venture off trail (where sensitive natural features and habitat are located), and disturbance is generally limited to the landscaped area, which has served as a park for more than 100 years. Visitor impacts to the natural environment at BCA include riparian erosion, invasive species and trail erosion; all issues that will be dealt with through the Management Plan.

CVC is not assigning an absolute limit on the number of people allowed in Belfountain Conservation Area at one time. Capacity depends on a number of variables, including weather, visitor activity, visitor demographics, and the length of time of a visit. Instead, we are focusing on restoring natural features, designing park infrastructure to reduce impacts, and using policies and landscape design to encourage shorter visits and appropriate activities.

CVC staff will continue to manage the site at their discretion, redirecting visitors to other areas as they see fit. Once the new wastewater system is in place, it will be used as a tool to continuously gauge servicing needs and inform park capacity.

### **9. When will CVC close the gates and not let any more people in?**

CVC is taking an adaptive management approach to visitation based on its anticipated limitations associated with septic servicing of the washroom facilities.

We are in the process of designing a new, innovative and environmentally sustainable wastewater management system, which will have a maximum capacity. The new system will likely include a shallow buried trench system that captures waste on peak days and has a time-release mechanism allowing slow infiltration over the next several days. The system will be continually monitored and when it nears maximum capacity, additional visitors will be redirected.

### **10. Why don't you implement a reservation-only system?**

A reservation-only system has recently been adopted by Parks Canada in a few national parks, and it is not off of the table for Belfountain Conservation Area.

Information about how people use BCA, once the Plan is implemented, is required to inform a reservation system. Metrics related to the average length of stay, visitor distribution and activities, and programming use are required before designing a reservation system. Implementation of a reservation system in the near term, may be possible, but highly unlikely. Near-term installation would only occur if the hardware can be maintained or reused after park redevelopment. If not, the return on investment over 1-2 years prior to park redevelopment would not justify the expense.

Network coverage and accessibility, as well as additional resources to develop a reservation system are also key considerations.

## **11. What are the plans for the new visitor centre?**

Final Designs are still in development. It is expected to be 5000 – 6000 square feet.

The space will be split into three components:

- Visitor Amenities (e.g. washrooms)
- Staff Facilities (e.g. office)
- Flexible Programming Space (e.g. interpretive displays, events)

CVC is interested in working with local businesses to provide concession items or other services as needed; we are not looking to compete with or draw customers away from local business enterprises. Sales will include food and artisanal wares/goods. Transactions will be completed at a small concession area, a gift shop is not being considered.

Design precedents include:

- Green Design Principles and Sustainable Practices
- Safe Harbours and Species at Risk Sensitivity
- Minimizing Disturbance and Compensatory Plantings
- Dark Skies Policies
- Sympathetic to Heritage Designation

For example: The building will be designed with low rooflines, mimicking Mack's original cottage. A false chimney will be integrated to honour the historic design of the cottage, while also providing a habitat feature for Chimney Swift. Natural materials and large windows will be incorporated as design features, ensuring that the building fits the natural landscape, and grounds expectations for the visitor experience.

## **12. Will there be weddings held at the visitor centre?**

Yes, weddings will be permitted. Weddings will not be a priority event for CVC at Belfountain Conservation Area. The Tourism Opportunities Assessment helped scoped the framework for weddings, and these are not being pursued as a major component of programming. Park experience will take precedent over private events; CVC will not compromise the visitor experience in order to accommodate private events (ie. private events will not be considered during peak periods if they increase traffic congestion, parking issues or could negatively impact the visitor experience).

### **13. What is CVC doing to manage after hours use and improve site security?**

A safe and secure site is a key consideration of the Management Plan. Trespassing, afterhours activities and vandalism are concerns in BCA, as well as in the Hamlet. Solutions to prevent and deter these activities include:

- The front entrance gate will be moved closer to the road to improve sight lines and deter parking after hours.
- With the development of the new visitor centre, staff will be onsite year-round and better able to monitor and manage after-hours use and unsanctioned activities.
- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles will be integrated into site design. CPTED principles include: natural surveillance (improving visibility and sight lines); natural access control (placement of features such as entrances, exists and lighting, to control access); and natural territorial enforcement (creating a sense of ownership).
- Open communication with the OPP, neighbouring landowners and local community to monitor and prevent trespassing and illegal activities.

Illegal activities will be dealt with seriously and handled as a matter of priority.

### **14. Is the Park going to be closed for development, and for how long?**

Yes. Implementation will take place over two phases, first construction of the Natural Channel, followed by infrastructure upgrades and landscaping across the day-use portion of Belfountain Conservation Area. A two-year window for implementation is expected.

Ground breaking is hoped to take place in 2020; a detailed communications plan will be developed prior to implementation. Timelines may vary depending on funding securement. BCA park operational needs and regulation surrounding timing windows for development will also factor into scoping the implementation timeframe.

### **15. Will infrastructure mimic historic precedents?**

Yes. Designs will be sympathetic to the Heritage Landscape. Design inspiration will celebrate Mack's Park follies and the English Picturesque Landscape. Sustainable design principles will also be integrated.

The concept plans do not show materiality, detailed design work is still required to fully realize the vision for integrating historic precedents.

**16. Can you explain how busses will be dealt with in the new parking lot?**

The new parking lot configuration does allow a turning radius for school busses, as school groups are an integral component of CVC's environmental education objectives.

Tour busses are not promoted or permitted at Belfountain Conservation Area. Tour busses may come unannounced, and are turned away at the gate; this has been a practice for the past few years.

**17. What is being considered for Shuttle Busses?**

Discussions are still ongoing, but CVC is working with the Town of Caledon and other tourism partners to brainstorm workable ideas.

For example: Shuttle hubs for pick-up and drop-off have been scouted near Hwy 10 and Charleston Sideroad. Ideas have been generated to look at both a back-and-forth shuttle to BCA, and a circuit shuttle that includes other stopping points. A fall colour tour may be another feasible option. Feasibility assessments are still required, as we need to look at the economics, community benefits and market appetite for such an offering. Cost won't be the only driving factor for decision making, as we can look for off-sets and partnerships.

**18. How will you mitigate garbage and litter?**

Belfountain Conservation Area will have full time staff on site. Garbage and site maintenance will be a routine duty and an important component of site care.

**19. Is the Picnic Policy change working?**

In terms of magnitude, yes, we have seen a shift. Changes to the reservation system, promotions and site management have begun to re-direct this user group to Terra Cotta CA and Island Lake CA. Staff are having challenges deterring all users; and we are working through our needs to maintain customer service standards, protect staff from undue risk and uphold the policy change.

## **Next Steps:**

Final development of the Belfountain Conservation Area Management Plan will be completed in 2018. CVC staff will be seeking approvals from the CVC Board of Directors in August 2018, with final approval from the Niagara Escarpment Commission and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry expected later in the year.

Further work is ongoing to finalize detailed design of the concept plans, with future public communication on the outcomes of this work expected for early 2019.

Reference materials for the Belfountain Conservation Area Management Plan can be accessed on CVC's website at:

<https://cvc.ca/enjoy-the-outdoors/conservation-areas/belfountain-conservation-area/belfountain-conservation-area-management-plan/>

Further requests for information or comment can also be sent directly to Credit Valley Conservation via:

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