

MORAINE MANAGEMENT

Introduction

The natural area in Niagara Falls known as the treed moraine is an important local, regional and international landscape that forms the backdrop to the Horseshoe Falls and Queen Victoria Park. The area encompasses the forested slope between Clifton Hill and Dufferin Islands which separates the commercial development at the crest of the moraine from Queen Victoria Park. The moraine is a complex and aging landscape that has changed over the years and is in need of rehabilitation.

Purpose

A Moraine Management Plan was undertaken by The Niagara Parks Commission in 1999. It provides a comprehensive management and maintenance strategy which will enable The Niagara Parks Commission to proactively protect and enhance the moraine in cooperation with adjacent stakeholders.

In order to achieve the objectives of the Moraine Management Plan, this policy has been developed.

The rationale for the policy can be found within the Moraine Management Plan Management Handbook, February 2000 and the Technical Background Document, October 1999.

Background

The objectives of the Moraine Management Plan:

- To create a vision statement for the moraine, from which management principles and policies can be developed, supported and implemented,
- To address all of the issues and opportunities to the general acceptance of The Niagara Parks Commission and stakeholders
- To proactively interface and build consensus with the moraine top developers and other stakeholders
- To inventory and analyze the moraine identifying special features, species and/or characteristics
- To assess the moraine relative to the identified issues
- To recommend a management plan that maintains/stabilizes/enhances the treed moraine with the support of stakeholders
- To recommend an economical maintenance regime that improves the ecology, stability and appearance of the moraine

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- To recommend a series of implementation projects that will address immediate and short-term physical issues/opportunities along the moraine; and
- To comment upon the public ownership/control of the moraine and suggest ownership transfer methods.

Policy:**1. Aesthetic and Ecological Character of the Moraine**

The natural heritage features and functions of the moraine will be protected from incompatible maintenance practices or development. Proposed maintenance, or development that results in land use change, on the moraine or within 100 metres of the toe and/or top of slope, must demonstrate that the undertaking will maintain or enhance the native natural heritage features and functions of a healthy, stable, ecologically diverse, forested slope.

2. Protection of Slope Stability along the Moraine

The setback from the top of slope should be calculated based on the 3:1 slope from toe of slope, plus an additional 6 metre setback for erosion access for all undertakings at the top of the moraine slope in the absence of a geotechnical study. If a geotechnical study demonstrates that a smaller setback is acceptable, that setback shall be at least 15 metres.

3. Maintaining the Moraine and Setback Zones

The Niagara Parks Commission will encourage partnerships and/or agreements with the owners of portions of the moraine not under NPC control and other adjacent landowners, to acquire the responsibility of ongoing management on the moraine and in the setback zones.

4. Evaluating Proposed Works on or Adjacent to the Moraine

All work proposed on the Moraine or in setback zones must demonstrate that the work is consistent with the goals of the Moraine Management Plan and its Factors as determined through a two-stage evaluation process. A report should be prepared for review by NPC that details the methods

employed to satisfy the goals as well as an implementation strategy, including funding and necessary partnerships where applicable. The first-stage evaluation includes the consideration of the following

THREE PRIMARY FACTORS:Ecological Diversity Goal

Replace non-native species with native species and enhance the diversity of species in the plant communities that will diversify wildlife habitat.

Aesthetics Goal

Protect and enhance the continuous and contiguous appearance of the moraine as a natural forest landscape.

Slope and Erosion Goal

Undertake measures to stabilize creep and eliminate local point source erosion in order to minimize maintenance and provide for long term slope stability.

PRIMARY GOAL SATISFACTION IS REQUIRED PRIOR TO ANY DISCUSSION OF TRANSFORMATIONS RELATIVE TO THE SECONDARY FACTORS.**Secondary Factors Include:**View Management Goal

Transform the moraine landscape through the replacement of plant materials so that the visibility of the Horseshoe Falls from important receptors is considered and improved.

Access Management Goal

Protect and enhance the landscape of the moraine from uncontrolled pedestrian access, discourage the unsafe use of the moraine and provide sufficient safe and comfortable alternative access routes across the length of the moraine.

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Seepage Control Goal

Undertake measures to minimize the maintenance that results from seepage, and use the groundwater to enhance the aesthetics and biodiversity of the toe of slope area.

Education/Interpretation Goal

Produce and disseminate education/interpretive material about the moraine's natural and cultural heritage and management.

Original Signed

John Kernahan,
General Manager

PARKS**Tree and Bench Donation**

It is the policy of The Niagara Parks Commission to consider formal requests for tree and park bench donations where there is historical significance or where, in the opinion of staff, the donation would otherwise serve as an enhancement to the overall park landscape.

REQUESTS

1. All requests to donate toward trees and benches must be made in writing to the Executive Director of Parks.
2. Where such donations are in association with another feature or project (e.g. landscape project, historical commemoration, etc.) the request shall be considered together with the other feature (s) or project. See also Policy CPM-02-05 regarding Plaques.

GENERAL

1. A charge of \$2500 for each bench and a charge of \$500 for each tree shall apply, subject to increase at the discretion of Niagara Parks to cover material/wage increases.
2. The final wording of all affixed labels shall be subject to approval of the Executive Director of Parks, and under no circumstances will such wording provide for direct or implied commercial advertising. Tree labels shall contain the common and scientific name of the tree. Individual tree and bench labels shall contain the words "In honour of" or "In memory of" as deemed appropriate by the donor and the Executive Director.
3. Selection and placement of tree (s) and bench (es) shall be at the sole discretion of the Parks Department. Due to the extended lead time (i.e. up to and beyond a year) in acquiring suitable tree specimens or benches and installation, and the seasonal nature of best planting times for given species of trees, donors may opt to donate toward and dedicate pre-existing, non-dedicated benches or tree specimens subject to Niagara Parks approval.
4. All donated trees and benches become the property of The Niagara Parks Commission and are subject to removal or relocation at the sole discretion of the Commission. The label, tree or bench shall not be replaced if vandalized. If the tree dies within warranty of the nursery supplier, a suitable replacement shall be made.

PARKS**Tree and Bench Donation**

5. From time to time, Niagara Parks may offer specific opportunities to donate for the supply of multiple benches in a particular landscape (e.g. Niagara Parks Botanical Garden Rose Garden) or for a given grove of trees (e.g. Roberts Street Gateway Grove). In such instances, a record of the donation shall be kept, but no labels shall be affixed to the individual benches or trees. A general plaque indicating such a group donation may be placed near the donated benches or trees at the discretion of the Commission (e.g. Sakura Committee donation).

6. At the sole discretion of the Commission, direct in-kind donations of trees suitable for planting may be accepted. No individual labels shall be affixed to such donated trees.

REVOCATION

This policy revises CPM-09-02.

ORIGINAL SIGNED

John Kernahan
General Manager

BACKGROUND

Geocaching is an outdoor activity that is similar to a treasure hunt. The goal of the activity is to find hidden containers known as caches or geocaches using a portable satellite navigation device called a Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver. Individuals who practice this activity (generally referred to as cachers or geocachers) place a cache in an outdoor location and post the cache's latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates on the Internet. Other geocachers then use their GPS devices to download the coordinates and cache descriptions from the Internet in order to find the caches. Once the participants have found the cache, they may log their findings on the Internet.

There are a number of different types of caches. Physical caches include a logbook, pencil, and trade items (small objects left in the caches for geocachers to trade with one another such as toys and key chains). Another type of cache is an earth cache, which highlights an area's unique natural features. More information regarding different types of caches and geocaching in general can be found at www.geocaching.com and www.earthcache.org

POLICY

Geocaching activities may be permitted on lands of The Niagara Parks Commission (NPC) provided they are in keeping with the provisions of this policy; they are in full compliance with the Niagara Parks Act and its regulations, and they have been approved by the Parks Naturalist, or designee.

1. When placing or seeking a cache, geocachers must travel on marked and maintained trails in natural areas or in publicly accessible areas (e.g. picnic areas) at all times. All caches must be accessible from the trail, no more than 1 meter from the side of the trail, or be within the public area. If marked and maintained trails do not exist, geocachers must check with the NPC Parks Naturalist or designee. All caches must be external to any building or structure on NPC lands.
2. Trade items are permitted in caches provided they are family friendly such as toys or key chains. An educational message or story about the cache's specific location or about the historic site or natural features of the location must be included. These messages will encourage a focus on the special natural or cultural features of the cache location.

A cache shall not contain a trade item which attracts wildlife or is potentially harmful to humans, wildlife or the environment. A cache shall not contain food, alcohol, firearms, drugs, dangerous items, adult items or any other items deemed unacceptable by NPC.

3. Geocachers must pay all fees where applicable.

4. Caches must be placed so that they do not disturb natural (e.g. vegetation, soil) and/or cultural resources. No digging or disruption of the ground is permitted when placing a cache.
5. Prior to placing a cache on NPC lands geocachers **must** apply for cache placement authorization from the Parks Naturalist (contact: parksnaturalist@niagaraparks.com). Geocachers are required to complete and submit a “Cache Information Form”, attached as Appendix “A” and also available at www.niagaraparksnature.com. If requested, geocachers may be required to meet with the Parks Naturalist to discuss the proposed location of their cache.
6. Cache containers shall be:
 - 6.1 Watertight [*i.e. plastic container with sealable lid*]
 - 6.2 Made of material that will withstand wind, rain, frost and other natural elements
 - 6.3 As small as possible
 - 6.4 Neutral-coloured so that they do not stand out in the natural environment.
7. Cache containers that have been used for food are not permitted as odours could attract wildlife.
8. Caches shall include the following:
 - 8.1 A logbook (in a sealable bag to protect it from humidity);
 - 8.2 A pencil and an approved pencil sharpener; and,
 - 8.3 A “Note For Cache Finders” (attached as Appendix “B” and also available at www.niagaraparksnature.com) that includes the following:
 - a) an educational message about the cache’s specific location
 - b) clear message about the requirements of the Niagara Parks Act and its regulations
- available at <http://www.niagaraparks.com/aboutus/aboutus.php>
 - c) clear message about trade items and directing finders not to leave trade items that may attract wildlife
 - d) instructions for people who find the cache by chance
 - e) the cache’s GC# and Name to confirm that the correct cache has been found; and,
 - f) Niagara Parks staff contact information and the cache owner’s name and/or screen name and contact information in the event that the cache is in need of maintenance or needs to be removed from its location.

9. Geocachers are encouraged to assist NPC with its stewardship responsibilities such as abiding by the “cache in, trash out” (CITO) practice which contributes to the maintenance of our Parks lands. For more information about this clean up practice, please refer to www.geocaching.com. Geocachers are also encouraged to visit the Leave No Trace website at www.leaveustrace.ca. This website offers helpful principles for planning safe and environmentally respectful outdoor recreational activities.
10. NPC may request that a cache be removed if any provisions of this policy are not adhered to. If the cache owner does not remove the cache as requested, NPC will notify the local geocaching administrator to request immediate removal and delisting of the cache in question.
11. NPC shall have the authority to monitor and limit the number of caches in specific locations on its lands.

This policy and further information is posted at www.niagaraparksnature.com and www.geocaching.com.

This NPC policy is based upon the Geocaching Guidelines of Parks Canada which were approved and adopted in September 2007.

Original Signed

John Kernahan
General Manager

APPENDIX "A"

CACHE INFORMATION FORM

Name:	
Geocacher Name:	
E-Mail Address:	
Telephone Number:	
Cache GC# <u>and</u> Name:	
Type of Cache:	
Cache Coordinates (<i>in WGS84 Datum</i>): (Note: UTM NAD83, if possible, too.)	
Description of Cache Location: <i>Remember: Geocachers must stay on marked trails only. It is important to provide details regarding which trail to travel on and where to park.</i>	
Educational Message:	

CACHE AUTHORIZATION

APPROVED

NOT APPROVED

Explanation: _____

Signature: _____ Title: _____ Date: _____

NOTE FOR CACHE FINDERS

Welcome to this location within the lands of The Niagara Parks Commission!

Congratulations! You have found (insert Cache GC#) identified as (insert Cache Name).

Please sign the logbook.

If you have found this cache by chance, please feel free to sign the logbook – but make sure you replace the container in the exact location you found it and in such a way that it is not plainly visible to visitors who are not looking for it.

(Insert site/area-specific educational message or story related to The Niagara Parks Commission.)

Trade items, such as toys or key chains, are permitted in caches provided they are family friendly. A cache shall not contain a trade item that attracts wildlife or is potentially harmful to humans, wildlife or the environment. A cache shall not contain food, alcohol, firearms, drugs, dangerous items, adult items or any other items deemed unacceptable by The Niagara Parks Commission (NPC).

Also be aware that the following must be adhered to in accordance with the Niagara Parks Act and Regulations:

- no removal, damage or harm to any wildlife, plant or animal;
- no damage or defacing of any Parks properties, structures, signage, etc.;
- no dog or other animal is permitted to be at large on Parks property (must be under control eg. leashed);
- no littering or dumping any material within the Parks;
- no fires, camping or overnight parking are allowed without Parks permission or supervision;

For the complete Niagara Parks Act Regulations (Regulation 829/90), please refer to www.niagaraparksnature.com.

The Niagara Parks Commission has approved this cache. If you have any questions about this cache or about geocaching within this jurisdiction please contact parksnaturalist@niagaraparks.com.

Cache Owner Name (or User Name):

Additional Information: www.geocaching.com and/or www.niagaraparks.com