

NORTH GWILLIMBURY FOREST ALLIANCE

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August 25, 2026

BY EMAIL: L.Curran@LSRCA.on.ca

Laura Curran
Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority
Newmarket, Ontario

Dear Laura,

Re: Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve Comprehensive Stewardship Plan Draft (August 2026)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the LSRCA's *Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve Comprehensive Stewardship Plan Draft* (August 2026).

The North Gwillimbury Forest Alliance's (NGFA's) top priorities for the Lake Simcoe Conservation Preserve (LSCP) for the next five years are:

1. The restoration of the North Tract's provincially significant wetlands (e.g., removal of invasive species, planting native trees and vegetation); and
2. Upgrading existing walking trails to permit public access to the North Tract's provincially significant wetlands and the Varney Tract's old growth forests.

Our specific submissions with respect to the draft *Plan* are provided below.

Opening Varney Tract Walking Trail

We support the *Plan*'s proposal to: "Remove hazards from the gravel farm laneway off Varney Road to support safe access to the western side of the Varney Tract." [pages 38 and 44]

We also recommend that a short extension to the existing laneway be created to link this trail to existing trails in the Arnold Matthews Nature Reserve.

We recommend that both these projects be completed in 2027.

Proposed New Trail in North Tract

We support the *Plan*'s proposal to create a north-south trail in the North Tract from the Deer Park School to the North Gwillimbury Park.

We recommend that this new trail be completed in 2028.

Opening Existing Walking Trails in North Tract

We recommend that some of the [existing walking trails in the North Tract](#) be upgraded to support safe and environmentally appropriate access to the North Tract's provincially significant wetlands to the east of the proposed new north-south trail, consistent with the approach taken in the [North-South Environmental's Opportunities and Constraint Mapping memorandum](#) (February 17, 2023).

We recommend that some of these trails be open to the public in 2028.

Queensway Tract

The Queensway Tract consists of prime farmland that is currently used to grow corn and/or soybeans.

The *Plan* proposes to use the northern section of this tract to create:

1. An outdoor education area for school groups and other users [page 39]; and
2. An All-Persons Trail, incorporating fully accessible trail design principles and user engagement to provide immersive experiences for all users [page A5]

We do not believe that this corn/soybean field, which is adjacent to the airfield of the Keswick Model Aircraft Club, is the best location for an outdoor education area or an immersive experiences trail.

We recommend that the outdoor education area and the All-Persons Trail be located in the North and/or Varney Tracts.

Editorial Suggestions for *Comprehensive Stewardship Plan Draft Report*

1. The map of the LSCP and the Arnold Matthews Nature Reserve [page 2] is missing two of the Arnold Matthews Nature Reserve's tracts. Specifically, the Deer Park Annex Tract at the south-east corner of Deer Park and Metro Roads; and the Meredith Tract at the far eastern end of Bouchier Street, next door to the LSCP.
2. The "History of Preserve Lands" [page 4] should note that in December 2019, in response to a request from the North Gwillimbury Forest Alliance, the [Local Planning Appeal Tribunal, amended the Town of Georgina's Official Plan by designating more than 99% of the Maple Lake Estates' lands as an "Environmental Protection Area"](#). As a result, the Town of Georgina was legally obliged to amend its Maple Lake Estates zoning

bylaw to prohibit development on these lands. It is a consequence of the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal's decision that the developer sold the North Tract, as well as its adjacent properties to the Government of Ontario. It is also important to note that the Minister's Zoning Order did not transfer the lands to the LSRCA, an MZO does not have the power to do that. The MZO and the transfer to the LSRCA were two separate though roughly concurrent actions (the lands were transferred in March 2022, but the MZO was made in April). The date error for the MZO occurs again in section 3.1.1 [page 8].

3. The "Opportunity and Constraints Mapping" section [page 15] should note that the [North-South Environmental report](#) found that the existing walking trails in the North and Varney Tracts could be upgraded and opened to the public in an environmentally responsible manner.

Yours sincerely,



Jack Gibbons
Chair