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Executive Summary


The Management Plan has been written in four sections: a **Background Report** which summarizes and synthesizes information on the natural and cultural heritage of the property and its current levels of development and public use; a **Development of the Revised Plan** section which describes the public consultation process and input received during plan review, as well as outlining the process and timeline for future plan review; a **Management Plan** which identifies long- and short-term goals for the management of the property, and priorities for implementation; and a **Business Plan** which provides a description and schedule of implementation priorities, coupled with projections of revenues and expenses over a five year period.

Background

Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area is a 26.1 ha (64.6 ac) property in Aurora, owned by the Ontario Heritage Trust and managed under a legal Agreement by the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority. This Agreement was originally signed in 1971, and renewed again in 1996 for the period through 2021. The Town of Aurora, in turn, has an Agreement with LSRCA to provide and maintain an eight hectare soccer pitch within the conservation area, as well as to provide other maintenance to the property.

In addition to the soccer pitch, the property also contains the Sheppard family house, the gatehouse, two maple syrup evaporator huts, a picnic pavilion, the Pefferlaw log cabin and approximately five kilometres of trails. The Sheppard family house, which was built in the early 1920s, has been designated a heritage building by the Town of Aurora.

This property was donated to the Province in 1971 by Reginald Sheppard, who wanted to ensure the property and its natural environment were preserved for future generations of Canadians. In 1979 the Conservation Authority developed the first management plan which directed the Authority to manage and conserve the natural quality of the lands, forest, water and wildlife of Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area, while developing for compatible recreational and educational use. Specific directions in that management plan included developing the recreational field, and establishing the picnic pavilion, a children’s play area, and a washroom facility.

In 2008, a review of the management plan was initiated. Plan review included broad based consultation with LSRCA staff, staff of partner agencies, and with the conservation area’s users.

Community input

Consultation has played an extremely important role in the review of the management plan. Consultation allows users an opportunity to reflect on their values and use of the property, changes they have seen in the conservation area and their community over the years and their visions for the property in the future.

Formal public consultation throughout the process has included a user survey in the summer of 2007, and workshops at the conservation area in the spring of 2008 and 2009. Additional consultation with LSRCA staff and informal discussions with conservation area users further informed the development of the management plan.
In 2008, the Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area Management Plan Steering Committee was struck to provide review and comment on the input received from the public, and to provide guidance in the development of the management plan. The steering committee consisted of:

- Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, Board representative – Councillor Evelina MacEachern;
- Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, Chief Administrative Officer – D. Gayle Wood;
- Ontario Heritage Trust, Manager of Conservation Services – Sean Fraser;
- Ontario Heritage Trust, Natural Heritage Team Leader – Tony Buszynski;
- Town of Aurora, Director of Leisure Services – Al Downey;
- Town of Aurora, Trails committee – Klaus Wehrenberg;
- Aurora Lions Club, President – Fred Bullen;
- Save the Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition, Outreach Coordinator – Susan Walmer;
- Windfall Ecology Centre, Program Director – Jennifer Atkinson

The Committee was supported by the following LSRCA staff:

- Director of Conservation Lands – Brian Kemp;
- Conservation Lands Planner – Bill Thompson;
- Conservation Lands Administrative Assistant – Wanda Black

**Management issues**

A few issues appeared to be top of mind for many of the users of Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area, including:

**Wildlife and forest management.** Many members of the public cautioned that management of the property should put the conservation of nature first, even if it means further restricting public use of the property. Particular requests included conducting a wildlife inventory, reducing forest management in the property, a commitment to leave any trees cut to decompose on-site, an assessment of the feasibility of reducing the number of recreational trails, and preventing the development of trails in the ravine.

**Public programming** has long been popular at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area, with the long running Maple Fest program being particularly popular. Requests were received to resurrect the maple syrup program, identify other public programs that could be provided, and to identify ways to improve the educational value of the property.

**Infrastructure** issues including providing public washrooms, and repairing existing infrastructure were also important issues

**Management goals and objectives**

After broad-based consultation with users of the conservation area, and other residents of the Lake Simcoe watershed, the Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area Management Plan Steering Committee developed the following goals and objectives for the conservation area:
Executive Summary

Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area will be managed to provide a functional example of Aurora’s natural and cultural heritage, including opportunities for education and outdoor recreation.

More specifically, LSRCA aims to:

- Maintain and enhance visitor use infrastructure to support a diverse and broad-based user group;
- Maintain and enhance habitat values for native flora and fauna;
- Provide visitors with a safe and enjoyable experience;
- Expand public programming to engage a broader cross section of the public;
- Provide an example of energy efficiency retrofits to heritage buildings; and,
- Improve the financial sustainability of the conservation area.

Management plan direction

Further to the goals and objectives described above, the Management Plan has identified the following projects and programs to address the management issues:

- Windfall Ecology Centre and the Ontario Heritage Trust will identify opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of the Sheppard house, while retaining its heritage character;
- The Conservation Authority will examine opportunities of partnering with the Town of Aurora and others to expand the programming provided in the conservation area;
- The larger evaporator hut and the Pefferlaw log cabin will continue to be upgraded to expand their use as public facilities;
- The Conservation Authority and the Town of Aurora will determine the feasibility of relocating an addition heritage building, the Petch log home, to Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area;
- Signs within the conservation area will be rationalized, to reduce redundancy, promote the natural aesthetic while in the forest, and improve the branding of the conservation area;
- The hiking trail network will be rationalized to reduce the need to remove hazardous trees, reduce direct and indirect impacts on wildlife and wildlife habitat, and promote a sense of remoteness and solitude in visitors;
- The Conservation Authority and its partners will increase maintenance and monitoring of the property to reduce the amount of litter and the number of off-leash dogs.

Business plan direction

The Business Plan identifies priorities for implementation, and provides a schedule for the period 2009 – 2013 coupled with projections of revenues and expenses over a five year period. Initial effort will be expended on refurbishing existing infrastructure such as the Sheppard family house, evaporator hut and log cabin, as well as examining opportunities to relocate the Petch log cabin to the conservation area. After existing infrastructure is refurbished, effort will be directed to rationalizing the trail system. Ongoing through this period will be development and expansion of nature-based programming for the public.

Preliminary projections of the cost to implement these projects and programs total approximately $250,000 as well as additional staff time (approximately 0.36 of a full time equivalent). Much of the revenue to offset these expenses will be generated from rental incomes from the houses, revenues from public events, and the ‘annual fee’ provided by the Town of Aurora. These will need to be supplemented slightly by additional funding from LSRCA’s member municipalities or other partners.
**Authority Resolution**

**Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area Management Plan**

At meeting No. BOD-06-09 of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority held on June 26, 2009 the following was adopted by the Board of Directors by Resolution BOD-098-09:

THAT Staff Report No. 35-09-BOD regarding the Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area Management Plan be received;

THAT the Management Plan and associated Business Plan be approved; and

THAT Conservation Authority staff continue to pursue funding and in-kind support to implement the recommendations of the Management Plan

**Town of Aurora Resolution**

**Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area Management Plan**

At meeting No. 09-28 of the Town of Aurora Council held on October 27, 2009, Council received and endorsed the Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area Management Plan
Section I: Background report

Introduction
Since 1951, Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) and its predecessors have provided a leadership role in the protection and restoration of the environmental health of the Lake Simcoe watershed. Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority is mandated under the provincial Conservation Authorities Act to “establish and undertake, in the area over which it has jurisdiction, a program designed to further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources other than gas, oil, coal and minerals”.

In order to meet this mandate the Conservation Authority works with government, non-profit, and community partners to support a number of programs including watershed-level modelling and planning; forestry and private land stewardship programs; and a system of conservation areas.

Conservation areas represent a significant resource for residents in the watershed and beyond and enhance the open space and outdoor recreation opportunities offered by local municipalities. The protection of these lands as well as access for public use is seen as one of the most important contributions the Authority makes to the communities it serves. As the watershed continues to urbanize the role of conservation areas and other natural areas in the landscape will become even more critical.

To date LSRCA has acquired over 1,350 hectares (3,335 acres) of conservation lands with the financial support of Regional and local municipalities, the province, membership-based conservation organizations, and private donations (Fig. 1). These lands include significant natural areas such as valleys, forests and wetlands which provide a range of recreational opportunities to the public, from strict natural heritage protection to more intensive recreational and educational facilities.

Acquired by the Ontario Heritage Trust in 1971 and managed by the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority since that time, Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area has provided the residents of Aurora various recreational and educational opportunities including hiking, nature appreciation, maple syrup demonstrations, soccer, and a summer camp for youth. Over the years, changes in staffing levels, infrastructure and user expectations have led to new challenges and opportunities in managing this conservation area.

The purpose of a conservation area management plan is to establish long- and short-term goals, and to develop strategies by which they could be achieved. They should be flexible enough to address unforeseen issues which may arise in the future and should be integrated with the overall goals and objectives of the Conservation Authority, as well as the landscape within which the property is situated.
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Legend

- **Conservation Areas**
- **Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area**
- **Watercourse**
- **Road**
Site location and brief description
The 26.1 hectare (64.6 acre) Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area is situated at 93 Industrial Parkway South in the Town of Aurora (lot 79 Concession I Whitchurch Township, York Region). Main access to the forested interior of the property is gained from Industry Street; the soccer pitch is accessed off Industrial Parkway South (Fig. 2).

The land and original buildings are owned by Ontario Heritage Trust and managed under a legal Agreement by the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority. This Agreement was originally signed in 1971, and renewed again in 1996 for the period through 2021. The Town of Aurora, in turn, has an Agreement with LSRCA to provide and maintain an eight hectare soccer pitch within the conservation area, as well as to provide other maintenance to the property.

The remainder of the property is primarily forested in nature, and supports approximately five kilometres of trails. A short section of the East Holland River also lays within the conservation area bounds. Town of Aurora open space is immediately adjacent to this property to the north and south along the river valley and a trail network connects to this larger green space system.

In recognition of the important local history features in the area, the Town of Aurora has recently proposed a Heritage Conservation District, which would include Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area, the Sheppard house, and the adjacent East Holland River valley.

Geology and soils
During the retreat of glaciers, melt water on the southern margin of the Lake Simcoe ice lobe pooled into a proglacial lake. This lake, called Lake Schomberg by geologists, allowed the accumulation of lacustrine clays in the area now occupied by Aurora and Newmarket. Before the ice age, this area was a drumlin field; as the lacustrine deposits accumulated, the drumlins became partially obscured. Some of the larger drumlins however can still be seen dotting the landscape, providing a slightly rolling topography with predominantly clay soils.

Much of Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area is underlain by Smithfield clay loams, becoming somewhat immature near the East Holland River valley; however, the northeast corner is underlain by Schomberg clay loams (Fig. 3).

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1 Based on Hoffman and Richards (1955) and Chapman and Putnam (1966)
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Figure 2
Sheppard's Bush Conservation Area

Legend
- Conservation Area boundary

Location Map

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Smithfield clay loam is imperfectly drained, having moderate to low external drainage and slow internal drainage. Topography is generally smooth and gently sloping with surface stones present in some areas. The soil along the East Holland River is an immature alluvial soil that shows little horizontal differentiation.

Areas underlain by Schomberg clay loam are gently rolling areas that are typically well drained. Areas occurring at the edge of the river valley have irregular steeply sloping topography and are very susceptible to erosion.

**Hydrology**

A small headwater tributary of the East Holland River passes through Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area (Fig. 3). This watercourse is spring-fed on the Oak Ridges Moraine and receives additional water from surface runoff and groundwater. Water quality within the conservation area is generally good and this stream provides habitat for species typical of coldwater systems. Further downstream, the stream joins with other tributaries of the East Holland River, which eventually drain into Cook’s Bay on Lake Simcoe.

There are no wells on this site. The water for the two houses is provided by the Town of Aurora’s municipal water supply.

**Climate**

Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area is in the Simcoe and Kawartha Lakes climatic region. Over the past twenty years, precipitation in Aurora has averaged 916 mm per year, of which an average of 766 mm occurs as rainfall. Average annual temperature over this period has been 7.7 °C, with average minimums of -12.3 °C (typically in February) and average maximums of 27.6 °C in July and August.

Climate change projections suggest that over the next twenty to thirty years this region may experience an increase in precipitation in the spring and fall (by as much as 5-10%), but a decrease of approximately the same amount in the summer. Average annual temperatures are also expected to increase in this time period, potentially by as much as 1 °C.

**History**

The natural features at this site and in this landscape have long influenced the settlement and human use of the area.

The fertile lacustrine soils in the area supported agriculture-dependent Huron settlements for centuries before European colonization, remains of which were found on the bank of the East Holland River near the present-day Conservation Area. As well, Natives maintained two long portages between Lakes Ontario and Simcoe which straddled present-day Aurora; the carrying place portage between the Humber and Holland Rivers to the west and

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2 Based on LSRCA stream monitoring data  
3 Brown et al. (1981)  
4 Based on Environment Canada’s Canadian Climate Normals database  
5 Colombo et al. (2007)  
6 Based on Miles and Co. (1878), Johnston (1963), and Aurora Heritage Committee (1985)
the Rouge-Holland portage to the east. Although no native settlements existed at the time of European immigration, some semi-nomadic Mississaugas were still encountered by the early settlers.

European settlement of the area began with the development of Yonge Street in 1794. Initially designed as a transportation corridor between Lakes Ontario and Simcoe, it allowed the surveying of lots and the settlement of new immigrants to the area. Given the relatively good soil here, and relatively poor soil to the south on the Oak Ridges Moraine, early settlement was particularly heavy in present-day Aurora and Newmarket. Almost immediately after the development of the road, farms in present-day Aurora were settled, with the first patents allocated in 1797.

One of these first settlers was Captain William Graham, a British officer serving in the colonies during the American Revolution. He came to Canada and settled on the lot which includes present-day Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area in 1794, with title granted in 1798. At that time Aurora was a predominantly agricultural area and remained so until about 1850 when an urban core started to develop around the Yonge-Wellington area. When the railway came to the area in 1853 growth expanded rapidly, with Aurora becoming incorporated as a village in 1863.

By 1866, Captain Graham’s lot was severed and the parcel which is now the conservation area was sold to James Lloyd. Charles Sheppard, one-time mayor of Aurora, purchased the land in 1919 and formed the 81 hectare farm and estate known as ‘Brooklands’ for his son Reg. Edwin Reginald (Reg) Sheppard operated Brooklands as a dairy farm through the 1920s, but ultimately sold part of the property to finance mineral explorations in northern Canada. In 1971 Reg Sheppard donated the land and family home to the Ontario Heritage Foundation (now known as the Ontario Heritage Trust). At that time, the planning and management of the property was turned over to the then South Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority at Mr. Sheppard’s request. An Agreement defining the roles and responsibilities of the Ontario Heritage Trust and the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority was signed in 1971, and renewed again in 1996 for the period through 2021. Since 2004, the Town of Aurora has had an Agreement with LSRCA to provide and maintain an eight hectare soccer pitch within the conservation area, as well as to provide other maintenance to the property.

In 1979, a Master Plan was developed for Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area, to direct the Conservation Authority in meeting their vision of the property as a preserved mature forest with compatible recreational and educational uses. This plan proposed providing maple syrup demonstrations in the Sheppard family’s sugar bush, developing the open field for additional recreational opportunities, building a children’s play area and washroom complex, developing an educational program for school groups, and working with the Town of Aurora to provide linkages to their adjacent open space.

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7 South Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority (1979)
Ecosystems

Much of the conservation area’s tableland is composed of sugar maple forests (Fig. 4). The area which supported the maple syrup demonstration was managed, at that time, as a sugar bush including selective harvesting to promote sugar maple dominance. Similar forest patches which were not part of the sugar maple demonstration have a greater diversity of forest species, including American beech, white ash, and red oak as well as a more fully developed mid-storey, including species such as round leafed dogwood, leatherwood, and chokecherry. European buckthorn is also widely spread throughout these forests.

Also present in the property are several old Scotch pine plantations which were planted approximately 70 years ago by the Sheppard family. A mid-canopy dominated by shade intolerant species such as red oak, black cherry, and silver maple has developed over the years, replacing in some locations the Scotch pine entirely. Under that canopy, more shade tolerant species including sugar maple, beech, white ash, and eastern hemlock are starting to become established.

Forests along the slope of the East Holland River ravine tend to be dominated by sugar maple and black cherry, with a subdominant component of ironwood and white ash. South facing portions of this slope tend to have a high proportion of eastern hemlock.

The East Holland River flood plain supports an ecosystem typical of regenerating farm fields including white cedar, sugar maple, peach-leafed willow, trembling aspen, black walnut, and Manitoba maple, colonizing under an older canopy of apple and hawthorn trees.

Eight hectares of Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area is managed by the Town of Aurora as a soccer pitch. It is bordered by a berm along Industrial Parkway which has been planted with scattered sugar maple, silver maple and blue spruce. Part of this area has been converted to artificial playing turf.

As is typical for urban forests, non-native species are relatively common at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area. European buckthorn and garlic mustard are particularly common, found throughout all the forested compartments and in relatively high density in the regenerating forest in the ravine. Additional common invasives include periwinkle and Japanese barberry, both of which are associated with hiking trails. A relatively new invasive species, dog-strangling vine, is beginning to appear in small numbers in the conservation area as well.

Wildlife

Wildlife found at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area reflect both the forested and urban nature of the property, including the mix of hardwood upland forests, mixed ravine forests, and mature conifer plantations. The connectivity provided by the adjacent municipal open space also promotes wildlife movement along the riverine corridor.

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8 Based on LSRCA (2008)
9 Based on LSRCA (2008)
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Relatively area-sensitive songbirds such as great-crested flycatchers, red-eyed vireos, pileated woodpecker and eastern wood-pewees can be found in the interior of the property. Around the periphery, the interspersion of forest and open habitat provides habitat for edge dwelling species such as black-capped chickadees, American robins, blue jays, northern cardinal, and American goldfinches.

The ravine along the East Holland River provides important breeding habitat for amphibians such as spring peepers, and migratory habitat for coyotes, deer and songbirds travelling further north for breeding habitat. The deeply incised nature and abundant forest cover also make this stretch of the East Holland River one of the best fish habitats in the Lake Simcoe watershed. Species typically found here are characteristic of healthy coldwater ecosystems, including brook trout, creek chub, mottled sculpin and slimy sculpin.

Development and infrastructure
The Sheppard family home, a maple sugar shack, log cabin, picnic pavilion, and four storage buildings are found in the central portion of the property (Fig. 5). The maple sugar shack and wood shed, as well as the nearby log cabin that was donated by the town of Aurora, and an older evaporator hut found further in the sugar bush, were all used by LSRCA in their maple syrup demonstrations. They now support the summer camp program.

The Sheppard family home was donated to the Ontario Heritage Trust with the property. In the early days of the conservation area, Reg Sheppard maintained a residence here. After he left the property, this building was leased to the public as a residential unit. Despite its use as a rental home, the building remains in outstanding condition and is an excellent example of the English Arts and Crafts style of architecture. Both Ontario Heritage Trust and the Town of Aurora have recognized the heritage value in this building; the ‘Brooklands estate’ has been designated of heritage value under Town Bylaw$^{10}$, and the property serves a central role in the Town’s proposed Heritage Conservation District. A second, smaller, house on the property (the ‘Gatehouse’) was initially constructed as a residence for the manager of the Sheppard family estate farm.

The property supports approximately five kilometres of trails, including a fitness trail with eight exercise stations. The relatively flat ground within the conservation area has allowed the development of several wide, flat trails which provide opportunities for individuals with mobility challenges to use the property$^{11}$.

The Nokiidaa Trail (Fig. 6), which links the communities of Aurora, Newmarket and East Gwillimbury, travels through the conservation area along the East Holland River. This multi-use trail provides links to the Town Hall, the Aurora Family Leisure Complex, the Aurora Community Arboretum, and Lambert Willson Park within Aurora. It also provides northern links to the Town of Newmarket and east-west links to the larger Oak Ridges Trail system. Access to the trail system is supported by a parking lot accessible from Industry St.

Infrastructure associated with the soccer pitch includes an area of artificial turf, fencing, light standards, and washroom facilities.

Ontario Heritage Trust, as the owner of this property, retains oversight on any repairs, additions, or removal of buildings at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area.

$^{10}$ Town of Aurora bylaw No. 4976-07
$^{11}$ Oak Ridges Trail Association (2006)
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Use levels

Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area has a small but dedicated user group\textsuperscript{12}, who tend to come nearly every day of the week, and many of whom have visited the property for 10 years or more. Many of the users are older adults, senior citizens, or young mothers who live nearby, and come to Sheppard’s Bush to hike, dogwalk, jog, picnic, or simply enjoy the peace and serenity while reading, meditating, or otherwise enjoying nature.

A second, although smaller, user group represents individuals who work in the area and come to Sheppard’s Bush during the day to eat their lunch, jog, or socialize with friends and coworkers.

Over 90\% of visitors to Sheppard’s Bush live in Aurora. Although Aurora has always been the primary point of origin for visitors to the conservation area, Maple Fest used to bring in hundreds of other users from throughout the Greater Toronto Area, many of whom did not otherwise visit this or other conservation areas\textsuperscript{13}.

Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area also participates in Aurora’s annual Doors Open event, provides facilities for the Town of Aurora’s Halloween haunted forest, the Aurora Lions Club pancake cookout, an occasional wedding, and the Conservation Kids summer nature program. The Conservation Kids program is a day camp which provides children between the ages of 7 and 12 a chance to spend a week in a natural setting participating in activities such as hiking, orienteering, wilderness shelter building, nature exploration, natural arts and crafts, and other activities. This program is run through the Town of Aurora Leisure Services department and staffed by LSRCA.

The Queen’s York Rangers, a Primary Reserve Regiment of the Canadian Forces based in Aurora, makes use of the conservation area periodically for casual training purposes. Limited to one weekday evening per month, these training exercises are intended to provide training opportunities for reservists on relatively unfamiliar terrain. Similarly, Sheppard’s Bush played a role in the emergency response scenario that the Department of National Defence held in Aurora in December 2007. In all cases, notification of military use of the property is provided at entrances, and the use of ammunition, pyrotechnics, motorized vehicles, or the damage or destruction of trees by military personnel is prohibited.

Landscape influences

No protected area can be effectively managed without an understanding of the influences of the surrounding landscape on its features, species, ecosystems and user levels.

The East Holland River, which has been identified as the most polluted river in the most populated subwatershed in the Lake Simcoe watershed, flows through Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area. However, at this point near its headwaters, it remains in excellent condition and provides habitat for temperature- and pollution-sensitive brook trout. The landscape upstream of the conservation area has been designated as a Natural Linkage Area under the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan\textsuperscript{14}, providing some measure of protection for the watercourse. Between the conservation area and the Oak Ridges Moraine plan area the river is further protected by Open Space designation under the Town of Aurora Official Plan\textsuperscript{15} and LSRCA floodplain regulations (Fig. 7).

\textsuperscript{12} Sharma (2007)
\textsuperscript{13} South Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority (1979), Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (2002)
\textsuperscript{14} Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (2002)
\textsuperscript{15} Town of Aurora (1996)
Much of the river valley between Vandorf and St John’s Sideroads is a mosaic of public lands including the Vandorf woodlot and Aurora Community Arboretum as well as the conservation area. This mix of habitats and extensive north–south corridor provides greater wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities than could be provided by the conservation area alone.

Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area itself is located entirely within Aurora, and experiences pressures typical of urban natural areas. Since its acquisition by OHT, increased intensity of land use in the surrounding landscape appears to have led to an increase in invasive species in the forest and a decline in the diversity and abundance of breeding birds\textsuperscript{16}.

The expanded population in the Town of Aurora has also led to an increase in user levels and user impacts over the years. The extensive use of this property has led to an increase in unofficial trails through the forest; in 1979 there were 3 km of trails in the property, as of 2008, this has expanded to over 5 km.

These urban pressures will only increase over time as Aurora has been designated as one of Ontario’s Places to Grow\textsuperscript{17} and is expected to experience a 50% increase in its population in the next 20 years. Much of this growth is slated for the area between Bayview and Leslie Streets, within easy access of the conservation area for individuals living and working in this area.

\textsuperscript{16} LSRCA (2008)
\textsuperscript{17} Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal (2006)
Section II: Development of the revised plan

Introduction

Eight years after its acquisition, the first management plan was written for Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area. This plan provided direction for the South Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority to manage the property as a recreational and educational facility, while ensuring environmental protection.

Since that time, many changes in the use, public expectations, and natural features have come about; however no formal review of the conservation area management plan was undertaken until 2008.

The formal management plan review undertaken in 2008 and 2009 included workshops with LSRCA staff and conservation area users. The establishment of the Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area Management Plan Steering Committee, with representatives of Ontario Heritage Trust (the landowner), LSRCA, the Town, Windfall Ecology Centre, Save the Oak Ridges Moraine, and the Aurora Lion’s Club provided additional resources to assist in the completion of this project.

Consultation with conservation area users has been an important part of the management plan review. Consultation allows users an opportunity to reflect on their values and use of the property, changes they have seen in the conservation area and their community over the years and their visions for the property in the future. This consultation, as well as focused consultation with LSRCA technical, education and field services staff has provided much of the direction in the current proposed management plan.

Public Workshop, May 2008

On May 25, 2008 a public workshop was held at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area to engage the public in the plan review process. After advertising in local papers, in the conservation area, and by sending written invitations to neighbouring landowners and other interested stakeholders, a dozen people attended the workshop.

**IMPORTANT VALUES OF THE CONSERVATION AREA HELD BY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS**

**AESTHETICS**
- Peace and tranquility
- Quiet, peaceful, safe
- Opportunity for reflection
- A great “gateway” from the busy life we all live
- Fresh air
- The sense of remoteness
- One can get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and commune with nature
- It hasn’t been commercialized
- Natural, not manicured
- The natural, unpaved trails
- An area for creative and recreative action

**NATURE**
- The opportunities for spiritual renewal when interacting with nature
- Wildlife
- Being surrounded by nature
- Green space in the heart of an urban area
- The opportunity to observe natural plant associations and seasonal changes
- The trees are lungs cleaning the air

**USE**

- Free
- Accessible
- Our history of visiting, our family has visited for several generations now
- A safe place to walk
- Options for leisurely strolls or more vigorous walks
- Nature appreciation and education
- Good place for leisurely hike in the shade
- What a lovely place to hike, stroll, just ‘be’
- It’s a place for school children to learn about nature
- Something for everyone, sports fields, playground, workout spots, walking trails
- The sports fields, and the number of users that draws in
- The maple syrup demonstration

**ISSUES WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS WISH ADDRESSED**

Attendees at the workshop were asked to identify issues that, if addressed, could improve users’ experiences at Sheppard’s Bush, and potential actions to resolve those issues. After brainstorming, attendees were given stickers numbered 1 to 5, and asked to identify which should be the highest priorities to be addressed in management planning (5 being highest, others decreasing in priority; note that score is not intended to ‘total’ to anything).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>forest management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>allow natural processes (e.g. succession) to occur in the forest</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don't remove or sell timber from this forest</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leave standing dead trees in the forest</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don't cut trees on the slope</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>programming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bring back Maple Fest or other festivals</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bring back educational component</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organize regular hikes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>train us to be better environment watchers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trails</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>let some trails naturalize</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provide cross country skiing</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wildlife</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conduct wildlife inventory</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hold fishing events</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prevent fishing in the east holland river</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>develop policy to provide safety to wildlife</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provide public toilets</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work with partners to repair infrastructure</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retrofit existing outhouses</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communications and partnerships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improve communications with partners</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other issues which came up during the discussion, but were not ranked by the attendees included:
- Keep planting trees
- Hold tree planting days
- Plant apple or other fruit trees
- Don’t plant trees, allow them to seed in naturally
- Do not plant trees in areas of grassland habitat
- Sleighing days in the winter
- Some areas should remain pristine, not have trails
- Enhance habitat, even at the expense of people
- Dogs on a leash please
- Provide cross country skiing trails
- No dogs on cross country skiing trails
- Consider Sheppard’s Bush and Vandorf woodlot as one property
- Policy should be to restrict trails to the top of bank area
- Trails should come second to ecology
- Manage forested areas around trails less
- Need to balance conservation and accessibility
- Ensure the safety both of users and the trails
- Remove the fitness equipment
- The conservation area should become part of the cultural landscape of the community
- Need to ensure we get input from neighbours, perhaps through a questionnaire
- Rely on partners when times are tough
Get regular input from local ecologists and conservationists
- Make sure neighbours don’t encroach on the property
- Clarify the park closure sign
- Provide a café at southwest end of soccer fields
- Don’t provide infrastructure if it can’t be sustained
- Signage board in parking lot
- Fix picnic pavilion
- Alternative energy demonstration site
- No additional artificial turf field

Overall, the general sentiment during the discussions seemed to indicate that the natural values of the conservation area should be maintained above all else, the participants even went so far as to suggest that some trails should be closed and allowed to naturalize.

Much of the discussion about public involvement centred on the cancellation of the popular Maple Fest program, but also included requests that we examine other opportunities for public education or festivals. A few comments came forward that suggested we engage the public, either as volunteers or through service clubs, in fund-raising and property management.

Public workshop, April 2009

A second public workshop was held on April 19, 2009 at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area to provide the public with an opportunity to review the draft plan and provide feedback to the steering committee. After sending news releases to local papers, posting notices on the LSRCA and Town of Aurora websites, and in the conservation area, as well as sending written invitations to the 84 groups and individuals on the Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area mailing list, 10 participants attended the workshop.

After a summary presentation about the conservation area and the draft management plan, participants were invited to provide their feedback and constructive criticism on the draft plan. Responses from the group included the following:

TRAILS:
- Some discussion about the need to clear the trails in the winter
- General acceptance about the appropriateness of closing some of the trails

VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT:
- A caution that it would be virtually impossible to eradicate invasive species from the property
- A question about the necessity of removing some of the non-native species, particularly European buckthorn, and their value for wildlife
- A request that we “clean up” the forest by removing some dead and dying trees and downed woody debris
- Do not remove cut trees from the property, pull them off the trail, then let them decompose on site

ENFORCEMENT AND PERMITTED USES:
- The issue with off leash dogs is not as bad as it used to be
- Problematic dogs are a minority, but they do require control on all dog walkers
- The proposed restrictions on dog walkers seem reasonable
- We should be prepared to fine people for littering
- We need to assert our presence better, and “deeper” in the park
- There is a perception of abandonment in the property
- Kids congregate in some areas in the park; a concern was raised about their activities

**MARKETING:**
- Don’t market the property too aggressively. Let people find their own way here
- We need to be cautious about sign pollution
- Provide better signs on Wellington directing people here
- Provide more information to allow people to navigate the trail system
- Cross promote our conservation areas better

**PITCH LOG HOME:**
- There was some discussion about the use it would be put to at Sheppard’s Bush. Others felt its preservation was important enough to relocate it even if unused
- There was some discussion about the costs, and who would foot the bill. Some participants indicated that the $108K budgeted was a small price to pay to preserve something irreplaceable

**WASHROOM FACILITIES:**
- Continuing to rent port-a-potties is not cost effective over the long term
- Waiting to provide flush facilities would be preferable to providing outhouses
- Washroom facilities should be tied into an upgraded tile bed at the Sheppard House, or to municipal sewage when they become available

**PROGRAMMING:**
- Provide a day to re-acquaint people with Sheppard’s Bush
- Upgrade fitness course
- Expand recreational features in the soccer field (e.g. Frisbee golf)
- Be careful about drawing in too many people and causing impacts to park and wildlife
- Maple syrup is an important part of Canadian heritage, and should continue as a program

**VOLUNTEER DAYS:**
- Tap into high school students looking for community service hours
- Questions about the dates scheduled
- Roughly 1/3 of participants said they would participate on volunteer days

**OTHER COMMENTS:**
- Strike a local advisory committee to maintain communication with user group and address some of the outstanding issues / assist with implementation

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**Steering committee**
Since March 2008, the Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area Management Plan Steering Committee has directed the development of the Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area management plan. This committee has met periodically to review input received from the public and from LSRCA staff, to examine the costs and benefits associated with potential management directions, and to provide recommendations on the final management plan. This plan will then be forwarded to the LSRCA and OHT Boards of Directors for formal approval.
The steering committee consisted of:
- Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, Board Representative – Evelina MacEachern;
- Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, Chief Administrative Officer – Gayle Wood;
- Ontario Heritage Trust, Manager of Conservation Services – Sean Fraser;
- Ontario Heritage Trust, Natural Heritage Team Leader – Tony Buszynski;
- Town of Aurora, Director of Leisure Services – Al Downey;
- Town of Aurora, Trails Committee – Klaus Wehrenberg;
- Windfall Ecology Centre, Program Coordinator – Jennifer Atkinson;
- Save the Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition, Outreach Coordinator – Susan Walmer;
- Aurora Lion’s Club, President – Fred Bullen

The committee was supported by the following LSRCA staff:
- Director of Conservation Lands – Brian Kemp;
- Conservation Lands Planner – Bill Thompson;
- Conservation Lands Administrative Assistant – Wanda Black

Future evaluation and review of management plans
The current management plan consists of two parts: a Management Plan which provides long- and short-term goals for the management of the conservation area, and a Business Plan which provides a description and schedule of implementation priorities, coupled with projections of revenues and expenses over a five year period. At the end of each five year operational period, both the Management Plan and the Business Plan will be evaluated to determine their continued relevance to conservation area operations. If it is determined that either of these plans is outdated, they will be reviewed and updated. LSRCA may also opt to update the management plan and / or business plan outside the five-year review period if necessary. Plan evaluation will include an assessment of the property’s ecological integrity, management effectiveness, financial situation, as well as a review of the relevance of stated goals and objectives.

LSRCA will continue to collect monitoring data on the health of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area. This will include aquatic resource monitoring sites, invasive species inventories, breeding bird and other wildlife inventories, and data required for forest management plan updates. This will be supplemented by data on changes in infrastructure and user levels to determine how management of the conservation area and development in the local landscape has impacted the ecological integrity of the conservation area.

Management effectiveness of the conservation area will be evaluated by assessing to what extent the objectives of the conservation area have been met, the adequacy of staffing resources and infrastructure, and to what extent expected outcomes (e.g. increases in visitor use, advancement of LSRCA mandate) were achieved. This assessment will include surveys of the users of Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area, as well as interviews with core staff

The Business Plan evaluation will include an assessment of real revenues and expenses over the five-year operational period, and a comparison to projected revenues and expenses. This evaluation will be used to refine the Business Plan for the succeeding five-year period.

The results of these evaluations will be provided to a steering committee made up of either the major partners contributing to the management of the conservation area, or a sub-committee of the LSRCA Board, to determine plan review needs. If the committee determines that the goals, objectives, challenges or infrastructure needs have changed substantially, one or both parts of the plan will be reviewed. Major revisions to the management plan,
including those that address complex issues, would further restrict public use of the property, or would require substantial investments in infrastructure will include broad-based public consultation and approval of the plan by the LSRCA Board. Amendments to resolve less complicated issues may be made without broad-based public consultation, but would be subject to Board approval. Updates to the Business Plan to identify, prioritize, and resource implementation needs for the successive five year operational period will not require public consultation.
Section III: Management Plan

Introduction
This Management Plan provides the basis and long-term direction for the management of Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area. It is based on an identification of the constraints and capabilities provided by the property (Section I), and extensive public and internal consultation (Section II).

Goals and objectives
Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area will be managed to provide a functional example of Aurora’s natural and cultural heritage, including opportunities for education and outdoor recreation.

More specifically, LSRCA aims to:
- Maintain and enhance visitor use infrastructure to support a diverse and broad-based user group;
- Maintain and enhance the ecological integrity of the property, including habitat values for native flora and fauna;
- Provide visitors with a safe and enjoyable experience;
- Expand public programming to engage a broader cross section of the public;
- Provide an example of energy efficiency retrofits to heritage buildings; and,
- Improve the financial sustainability of the conservation area

Permitted uses
Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area is managed to provide the public with an enjoyable experience in a naturally and culturally significant setting. To ensure such an experience, some potential uses of the property have been prohibited by a Provincial Regulation under the Conservation Authorities Act, as authorized by the Ontario Heritage Trust (see Box 1).

A recent user survey indicates that most visitors to the property do have an enjoyable experience and tend to be long-term dedicated users of the conservation area. Comments received from the public indicate that the property is valued for the quietness and accessibility of the property, and the friendliness of fellow users.

Experience of LSRCA staff over the years re-enforces the results of this survey. Users of the conservation area tend to be quite vigilant about the state of the property, and often take an active role in its maintenance, including removing garbage from trails while hiking.

Comments during that user survey and the public consultation period indicated that the major factors detracting from a positive experience of the property are off-leash dogs and litter.

LSRCA, in partnership with the Aurora Lion’s Club, Windfall Ecology Centre and Save the Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition, will coordinate twice annual volunteer events to remove garbage from the trails and elsewhere in the forest.

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18 Sharma, 2007
LSRCA will better enforce regulations prohibiting off-leash dogs in Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area, through a combination of education and enforcement. LSRCA will modify existing regulations signage to include interpretive information regarding the impacts of household pets on wildlife, and identifying the available off-leash park available in Aurora. A similar message will be provided to residents of the Town through local media. LSRCA staff (including enforcement staff) will increase their presence in the conservation area, and will continue to partner with municipal bylaw enforcement officers to better enforce regulations prohibiting off-leash animals.
### Box 1. Prohibited uses at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area.

Permitted and prohibited uses of LSRCA’s Conservation Areas are defined by Provincial Regulation under the *Conservation Authorities Act* (O. Reg 112/90)*.

The following uses of Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area are **prohibited**:
- defacing, removing or damaging any property;
- cutting, removing, injuring or destroying a plant, tree, shrub, flower or other growing thing;
- removing or destroying any soil or rock;
- littering;
- bringing an animal into the Conservation Area which is at large (i.e. not on a leash), makes excessive noise, or disturbs other people;
- horseback riding;
- being abusive, insulting or threatening or making excessive noise or disturbing other persons.

The following uses are permitted by **permit only**:
- hunting or trapping;
- possessing or igniting fireworks;
- camping;
- making an excavation;
- possessing, shooting, discharging or using a spring gun, air gun, firearm, slingshot or any archery equipment;
- erecting, painting or affixing a sign or notice;
- selling or offering for sale an article or service;
- fund raising;
- advertising or carrying on a business or enterprise;
- conducting a public performance of any kind, or bringing equipment for public entertainment into the conservation area;
- conducting a public meeting or doing anything that is likely to cause persons to congregate;
- using a boat;
- starting or maintaining a fire;
- bringing an animal other than a cat or dog into the Conservation Area;
- operating an all-terrain vehicle, an off-road vehicle or a motorized snow vehicle
- remaining in the conservation area after the posted times.

* This table is a summary of rules only. For further detail refer to the full regulation; available online at [www.e-laws.gov.on.ca](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca)
Boundary management

LSRCA will retain surveys of the boundaries of the conservation area on file, and will ensure that all boundaries are clearly marked, and fenced as necessary. LSRCA will inspect boundaries semi-annually for encroachments. As necessary, LSRCA will implement a program to resolve and remediate impacts from boundary encroachments in partnership with the conservation area’s neighbours. This program may include community education, letters, site visits, and community clean up days where necessary.

The East Holland River corridor, of which Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area forms a part, is an important ecological and recreational corridor, providing connectivity from the Oak Ridges Moraine, through Aurora, and further north. The area between Vandorf Sideroad and St John’s Sideroad is a mosaic of publicly owned lands and includes the Vandorf woodlot, the Aurora Community Arboretum, Aurora Family Leisure Complex, Lambert Wilson Park and Aurora’s leash-free park; all of which are connected by recreational trails. LSRCA Conservation Lands staff will work with managers of these lands to coordinate the management of the East Holland River corridor to promote ecological integrity and non-motorized recreational opportunities.

The Town of Aurora’s proposed Sheppard Estate / Holland River Valley Heritage Conservation District incorporates Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area, as well as the East Holland River corridor between Vandorf Sideroad and Wellington Street. LSRCA will work with the Town of Aurora to incorporate natural heritage considerations in the development of the Heritage Conservation District Plan.

Infrastructure management

LSRCA will maintain existing, and may develop additional, infrastructure at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area to support the goals and objectives described in this management plan. The conservation of features of heritage significance will be guided by the principles of Parks Canada’s Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places19. The addition or expansion of infrastructure will be restricted to areas of open space (i.e. non-forest). Any infrastructure improvements would be subject to a site assessment to mitigate detrimental impacts on the values of the conservation area, as well as the requirements of the Environmental Assessment Act, the Ontario Heritage Act, regulations under the Conservation Authorities Act and other relevant legislation, and would be subject to approval by Ontario Heritage Trust. All new infrastructure will be designed and constructed to meet the standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act as they become available.

TRAILS

Trails at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area will be designed, constructed and maintained to balance the requirements of recreational infrastructure and habitat values for native flora and fauna. LSRCA will endeavour to meet this challenge by providing both ‘major’ and ‘minor’ recreational trails, and by closing some existing official and non-sanctioned recreational trails (Fig. 8).

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19 Parks Canada, 2003
This product was produced by the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and some information depicted on this map may have been compiled from various sources. While every effort has been made to accurately depict the information, data / mapping errors may exist. This map has been produced for illustrative purposes only.

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Major trails will be designed, constructed and maintained to a standard such that users with mobility restrictions (such as those reliant on wheel chairs or walkers) can make use of them, and to a standard such that they can support periods of high use such as the Maple Syrup or Haunted Forest programs. This will include maintaining grades less than 3%, a maximum surface pitch of 2%, a minimum width of 2.5m, cleared to a height of 2.5m, with a trail base composed of crusher fines over a layer of 2” gravel. Major trails will be inspected monthly for trail condition and barriers (e.g. washouts, hazard trees, and downed woody debris).

Minor trails will be designed, constructed and maintained such that they meet the needs and interests of the majority of hikers and dog walkers while providing a more intimate interaction with the forest habitat and minimizing impacts on native species and ecosystems. They will be maintained to a minimum width of 1.5 m, cleared to a height of 2.5 m, with a base of compacted soil. Trip hazards and wet areas along trails will be managed by topdressing with wood chips as necessary. Multi-use trails will be inspected monthly for trail condition and barriers (e.g. washouts, hazard trees and downed woody debris).

Some trails at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area will need to be closed to reduce unnecessary impacts to wildlife, reduce the need to remove hazard trees, and to promote a sense of solitude amongst trail users (Fig 8). Non-sanctioned trails scheduled to be closed will have brush piles erected at trail access points. Where necessary, native vegetation will be planted and sanctioned trails will be re-defined to reduce visibility of newly closed trails. Previously sanctioned trails slated to be closed, as well as major trails slated to be converted to minor trails, may require removal of aggregate base and introduction of native plant species. Where possible, trail closures will be done with the assistance of volunteers from the community. Trail closure will also include the erection of interpretive signage allowing trail users to know that trail closure is intentional, rather than the result of a lack of maintenance.

The slope along the East Holland River will be maintained as a ‘no use’ zone to prevent erosion and disturbance to wildlife. Trails along the slope will be limited to the existing major trail connecting to the Nokidaa trail, and a new minor trail connecting to the Nokidaa trail to the north of the conservation area (Fig. 8). Particular effort may be necessary to control the spread of non-sanctioned trails along this slope, including introducing brush piles, planting native vegetation, and/or signage.

LSRCA will continue to monitor the property to ensure additional non-sanctioned trails are not created. If new non-sanctioned trails appear, they will be closed as described above. No additional trails will be created without an assessment of public benefit, and a site assessment to mitigate detrimental impacts on the values of the conservation area.

Benches will be provided and maintained at strategic locations along the recreational trails. Benches will either permanently affixed to a concrete slab and constructed of metal with a wooden top, or moveable and constructed entirely of wood.

Signs
Signs at the main entrances to the conservation area (i.e. from Industry St and Industrial Parkway south) will be maintained to identify the name of the conservation area, its donation by Edwin R Sheppard, and the logos of the Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT), LSRCA, and the Town of Aurora.

Secondary entrance signs will be provided at all other sanctioned trail entry points to the conservation area. These signs will identify the name of the conservation area and the management partnership between OHT, LSRCA, and the Town of Aurora, as well as providing a brief summary of rules and regulations. Signs may also be posted on the gates flanking the laneway from Industrial Parkway identifying the tenants in the Sheppard House as well as the partnership between OHT, LSRCA and the Town of Aurora.
Interpretive kiosks will be erected in the Industry St and Industrial Parkway parking lots. These kiosks will include maps of trails at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area, as well as other recreational areas and trail systems accessible from the conservation area, rules and regulations of the conservation area, upcoming events, and information on the natural and cultural heritage values at the property. The kiosks will also include locations to provide trail maps or brochures and donation boxes for the public to contribute to the management of Sheppard’s Bush. LSRCA will modify existing regulations signage to include interpretive information regarding the impacts of household pets on wildlife, and identifying the off-leash park available in Aurora. The information on these signs will replace information on some of the existing signage scattered throughout the property; such signs will be removed after the installation of the kiosks. Additional interpretive signs may be erected on structures in the conservation area, describing their cultural heritage values, on an as-needed basis.

Annual maintenance to ensure the upkeep of these signs and clearing vegetation to ensure their visibility will be undertaken as necessary.

**SHEPPARD FAMILY HOUSE AND GATEHOUSE**

LSRCA will continue to maintain the Sheppard family house as an example of significant cultural heritage in the Town of Aurora, and will continue to manage lease agreements for it and the gatehouse.

The Sheppard House has been leased to Windfall Ecology Centre and Save the Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition to increase public use of this facility and to provide these organizations with office and public meeting space. As part of the lease agreement, the tenants and LSRCA have committed to investing in capital upgrades to the building, including upgrades which will improve its energy efficiency and reduce its carbon footprint. Similarly, the entrance gates from Industrial Parkway South will be restored. As owner of the property, OHT approval will be required for any such repairs or alterations prior to their implementation.

When existing leases on these two buildings cease, LSRCA will endeavour to lease to tenants whose mandate complements the goals and objectives of the conservation area, and whose tenancy would promote the public benefit of these buildings. Preference may be given to lessees who are registered charities, to allow LSRCA to access property tax exemptions available under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

**OTHER BUILDINGS**

LSRCA will maintain and upgrade the other buildings on the premises to support public use of the conservation area. The maple syrup evaporator has been removed from the large evaporator hut. This building, and the Pefferlaw log cabin, will continue to be conserved and upgraded, to make them functional to a wider user group. Priority upgrades will include improved lighting (both natural and electric), increased electrical outlets in the evaporator hut, a subfloor in the evaporator hut woodshed, and the purchase of tables and chairs. If interest dictates, and resources permit, LSRCA may consider upgrades to one or both of the buildings to expand their use into the shoulder and winter seasons, including improvements to heating and insulation.

The Sheppard family evaporator hut and picnic pavilion will be maintained to a standard such that they continue to support both organized and informal public use.

LSRCA, OHT and the Town of Aurora will examine the feasibility of relocating the historic Petch log cabin to Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area. Subject to the approval of OHT, this, or other heritage buildings, may be transported to this property, pending financial sustainability and an assessment of the heritage and structural integrity of the building, and its potential contribution to public programming. The relocation of any infrastructure would be subject to a site assessment to mitigate detrimental impacts on the natural and cultural
heritage values of the conservation area. If new buildings reduce the amount of lawn available for the summer camp program, additional lawn will be established in an area currently underlain by aggregate (Fig. 8).

At such a time as municipal sewage services become available at Sheppard’s Bush, LSRCA will pursue funding to provide flush washroom facilities for public use.

COMMUNITY GARDEN
LSRCA will allocate a portion of the lawn which currently has limited public use for the development of a community heritage garden (Fig. 8). This garden will be made available for members of the local community who wish to grow chemical-free vegetables. Preference may be given to those who wish to grow heritage varieties. To the extent possible, this garden will be designed in a way reminiscent of the original landscape design for the Brooklands estate.

MAINTENANCE
The Town of Aurora will continue to provide maintenance to the soccer pitches, parking lots, trails, laneway and lawns as per the existing Agreement with LSRCA. The parking lots and laneway will be maintained with a gravel base, to promote the rustic aesthetic of the property. Major trails as marked on Figure 8 will be maintained with a surface of crusher fines to support their relatively high use, including reducing soil compaction and improving drainage.

Garbage cans will not be placed in the Industry St parking lot, to reduce the amount of residential garbage collected at Sheppard’s Bush. Garbage cans will continue to be provided to users of the conservation area near the picnic pavilion.

LSRCA, in partnership with the Aurora Lion’s Club, Windfall Ecology Centre and Save the Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition, will coordinate up to four volunteer work days annually to remove garbage from the forest, control invasive non-native plant species, and undertake trail maintenance.

Vegetation and wildlife management
Forest management at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area will include the removal of hazard trees as necessary, as well as management to promote habitat values for native flora and fauna. Minor additional harvesting may be permitted to support a demonstration maple syrup program, or heating the log cabin should firewood produced by hazard tree removal not supply these needs. Any trees cut, or debris falling naturally, not used for firewood, will be removed from trails or parking lots as necessary, but left on-site to decompose.

The ravine along the East Holland River valley in particular will be managed to support wildlife habitat, including minimizing tree cutting to the extent possible. Specific direction regarding forest management is provided by a Forest Management Plan (2007 – 2016), which identifies the appropriate silvicultural techniques to manage the forest for recreational use and wildlife habitat. Updates to that Forest Management Plan shall be consistent with the goals and objectives for the property as identified in this Conservation Area Management Plan.

LSRCA will also manage the property to control the spread of non-native invasive species, with particular effort directed to invasive plants in the initial stages of becoming established on the property. Management will include

\(^{20}\text{Guidelines for the identification and removal of hazard trees is provided by the LSRCA hazard tree management strategy}\ (\text{LSRCA, 2009})
annual inspections of the spread and dominance of non-natives. Any aggressive invasive species\textsuperscript{21} will be controlled using recommendations based on the best available science. Where necessary LSRCA, in partnership with the Aurora Lion’s Club, Windfall Ecology Centre and Save the Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition, will coordinate twice annual events to control widespread aggressive invasive plant species.

**Programming**

Sheppard Bush Conservation Area’s proximity to population centres, and the visitor use facilities on-site, makes it an excellent location for conservation-based public programming. LSRCA will further develop this potential by upgrading the facilities and making them available for reservation to the public.

LSRCA will continue to partner with the Town of Aurora to provide the “Conservation Kids” summer camp program, and will examine opportunities to expand this partnership to other programs such as interpretive hikes and wildlife identification workshops as interest dictates and resources permit. Other Town programs, such as the Haunted Forest, may be hosted at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area.

The maple syrup infrastructure at Sheppard’s Bush provides an excellent opportunity for maple syrup based interpretive programs, as had been conducted by Reg Sheppard for years before donating the property to the Province. LSRCA will pursue partnership opportunities to re-instate a maple syrup program at Sheppard’s Bush.

Sheppard’s Bush may also be home to programming provided by Save the Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition and the Windfall Ecology Centre. These organizations also have mandates for public education, and the facilities at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area provide a centralized location for such programming.

The facilities at the conservation area will also be made available to other organizations wishing to undertake meetings, workshops, or public programs. Reduction in facility rental fees may be provided in exchange for in-kind or funding support for upgrades to visitor use facilities.

The soccer pitches at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area will continue to be made available for use through the Town of Aurora.

LSRCA will discourage high volume public events in the forest during the critical wildlife breeding period in May and June.

**Marketing**

LSRCA will improve the marketing of Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area, through the development of trail maps, brochures, and an enhanced page on the LSRCA website outlining the natural and cultural heritage values at the conservation area.

LSRCA and its partners will also market the public educational and recreational programming on an as-needed basis.

**Revenue generation**

Reservation fees for use of the picnic pavilion, evaporator hut and log cabin will be required. LSRCA will set the fees at a level commensurate with similar recreation areas elsewhere in the Golden Horseshoe. Fees may be

\textsuperscript{21} As defined by Urban Forest Associates Inc (2002)
revised on an annual basis to ensure fair market value is being received. LSRCA may provide discounts for use of the facilities to community groups who assist in the upgrades to these facilities.

LSRCA will develop a donations and naming policy for its conservation areas. The policy will identify facilities and programs that will be eligible for sponsorship, donations required, and ways naming can be incorporated tastefully into a natural setting.

Any revenue generated at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area will be retained for use in this and other conservation areas in the Lake Simcoe watershed. Any surplus revenues from this property will be dedicated to other conservation areas which do not generate revenue, to a conservation area stabilization fund to support the area in years with decreased revenue, or will be used to support LSRCA’s land securement program.

**Local advisory committee**

LSRCA will establish a Local Advisory Committee, made up of LSRCA staff, users of Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area, Town of Aurora staff, and managers of other public lands in the East Holland River corridor. This committee will meet periodically to assist in the implementation of this management plan, and to promote cross-boundary management, including issues related to ecological integrity, recreation accessibility, and conflicts between users.
**Introduction**

The purpose of a conservation area management plan is to establish long- and short-term goals for the management of the property, and identify priorities for implementation. The Business Plan component is a description and schedule of implementation priorities, coupled with projections of revenues and expenses over a five year period.

In addition to revenues and expenses, this business plan will identify potential funding sources and will provide guidance for LSRCA management in implementing the Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area management plan.

**Management plan goals and objectives**

After broad-based consultation with users of the conservation area, partners in its management, and other residents of the Lake Simcoe watershed, the Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area Management Plan Steering Committee developed the following goals and objectives for the conservation area:

*Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area will be managed to provide a functional example of Aurora’s natural and cultural heritage, including opportunities for education and outdoor recreation.*

More specifically, LSRCA aims to:

- Maintain and enhance visitor use infrastructure to support a diverse and broad-based user group;
- Maintain and enhance the ecological integrity of the property, including habitat values for native flora and fauna;
- Provide visitors with a safe and enjoyable experience;
- Expand public programming to engage a broader cross section of the public;
- Provide an example of energy efficiency retrofits to heritage buildings; and,
- Improve the financial sustainability of the conservation area

To these ends, priorities for investing in capital and programming for the period 2009 – 2013 have been identified (Table 1).
### Table 1. Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area management plan implementation priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Add storage units, tables and chairs to evaporator hut</td>
<td>Add storage units, tables and chairs to evaporator hut and log cabin to increase natural lighting</td>
<td>Add lighting and electrical system in evaporator hut</td>
<td>Continue closure of selected major trails</td>
<td>Management plan evaluation and review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate transfer of Petch log cabin to Sheppard’s Bush</td>
<td>Establish lawn in front of picnic pavilion, Petch cabin if necessary</td>
<td>Add subfloor to evaporator hut woodshed</td>
<td>Continue conversion of selected major trails to minor trails</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue Sheppard house retrofits</td>
<td>Upgrade lighting in Pefferlaw log cabin</td>
<td>Upgrade lighting in evaporator hut</td>
<td>Expand programming in partnership with Town and others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand programming in partnership with Town and others</td>
<td>Establish redundant and problematic non-sanctioned trails</td>
<td>Expand programming in partnership with Town and others</td>
<td>Establish community heritage garden</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve marketing of conservation area</td>
<td>Repair fences as necessary</td>
<td>Review and expand programming with Town and others</td>
<td>Begin closure of selected major trails</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiate volunteer clean-up days</td>
<td>Review and expand programming with Town and others</td>
<td></td>
<td>Begin conversion of selected major trails to minor trails</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise sign standards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin closure of redundant and problematic non-sanctioned trails</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create new minor trail loop, and new loop to Nokiidaa trail to the north</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Estimated revenues and expenses for materials and supplies to implement Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area management plan priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenues (cash)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipal special capital</td>
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<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facility rentals</td>
<td>$32,000</td>
<td>$32,000</td>
<td>$32,000</td>
<td>$32,000</td>
<td>$32,000</td>
<td>$160,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town of Aurora</td>
<td>$8,250</td>
<td>$2,300</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
<td>$3,700</td>
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<td>$21,200</td>
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<td>Events and user fees</td>
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<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total revenues</strong></td>
<td>$43,250</td>
<td>$37,300</td>
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<td>$38,700</td>
<td>$42,450</td>
<td>$201,200</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Revenues (in-kind)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Aurora</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Windfall Ecology Centre</td>
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<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
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<td>Aurora Lions Club</td>
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<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total in-kind</strong></td>
<td>$8,000</td>
<td>$19,000</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>$48,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>$15,800</td>
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<td>$13,750</td>
<td>$14,450</td>
<td>$19,950</td>
<td>$77,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programming</td>
<td>$1,250</td>
<td>$1,250</td>
<td>$1,050</td>
<td>$1,050</td>
<td>$1,050</td>
<td>$5,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital development</td>
<td>$25,200</td>
<td>$31,500</td>
<td>$22,500</td>
<td>$20,900</td>
<td>$19,050</td>
<td>$119,150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
<td>$10,300</td>
<td>$9,200</td>
<td>$9,300</td>
<td>$9,400</td>
<td>$47,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenses</strong></td>
<td>$51,250</td>
<td>$56,300</td>
<td>$46,500</td>
<td>$45,700</td>
<td>$49,450</td>
<td>$249,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance</strong></td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Historic Revenues

Revenues to support the development, operation and maintenance of Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area have traditionally come from four major sources (Figure 9): rental of the picnic pavilion and other outbuildings, rental of the houses, an annual contribution from the Town of Aurora, and income generated by the annual Maple Fest programme. In addition, levies from our municipal partners provide the critical base funding to employ staff and provide administration.

\[\text{Figure 9. Historic revenues at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area, displayed by revenue source, from 2002 - 2007}\]

Facility Rentals

The picnic pavilion at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area is available to the public, both as a free facility, and by reservation for use by groups. As of 2008, LSRCA charged $60 for reserving the picnic pavilion; however reservations of this facility have been minimal.

House Rentals

The rental of the two historic structures on the property, the Sheppard family house and smaller gatehouse, both help ensure their preservation, and provide an important source of revenue for the operation of Sheppard’s Bush
Conservation Area. Revenues from the properties dropped significantly during 2006 however while the larger house was unoccupied.

**MAPLE FEST**

The annual maple syrup program at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area provided income, through the sale of product and registration fees. Despite this revenue however, staffing and other costs outstripped revenues each year, and in 2006 the program was cancelled.

**TOWN OF AURORA**

As per the Agreement signed in 2004, the Town of Aurora makes an annual contribution to LSRCA to support the operation of this property (at a base of $2000 per year with a $50 annual increase). This is in addition to the maintenance they provide to the property on an in-kind basis, which has been estimated at a value of $7000 annually. These contributions will continue for the lifespan of the current Agreement (2008 - 2012).
Budget projection

The budget projection model provides a five-year financial outlook for Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area. The model compares the conservation area’s most consistent source of funds with projected one-time and recurring costs. As depicted below (Table 3), Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area’s current budget projection suggests that without additional revenues, income will be slightly less than sufficient to offset operating expenses, and that current staffing levels will be insufficient to meet the objectives of the management plan.

Table 3. Projected surplus (shortfall) in funding and staffing to implement the Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area management plan, for the period 2009 – 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenues</td>
<td>$44,350</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
<td>$45,250</td>
<td>$45,500</td>
<td>$46,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses</td>
<td>$51,250</td>
<td>$56,300</td>
<td>$46,500</td>
<td>$45,700</td>
<td>$49,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>($6,900)</td>
<td>($11,300)</td>
<td>($1,250)</td>
<td>($200)</td>
<td>($3,300)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Projected revenues
To address the projected funding shortfall identified in this business plan, LSRCA will need to attract new sources of funding and in-kind support. Opportunities for such may include municipal special capital, a greater reliance on volunteer partnerships, and expanded partnerships with the Town of Aurora and Windfall Ecology Centre.

Any net revenues generated at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area will be retained for use in this and other conservation areas in the Lake Simcoe watershed. Any surplus revenues from this property will be dedicated to other conservation areas which do not generate revenue, to a capital reserve fund to support the area in years with decreased revenue, or will be used to support LSRCA’s land securement program.

Municipal special capital
Special capital funding from LSRCA’s partner municipalities will remain an important part of the funding formula for Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area. Municipal special capital will contribute to future assessment and review of the management plan.

Ontario Heritage Trust
Periodically, Ontario Heritage Trust may have capital funds available to conserve and restore the features of conservation significance on the property. An additional fund, the Heritage Garden Conservancy Program, may be able to assist with the development of the community heritage garden, if it is developed in a way reminiscent of the original landscape design.

Town of Aurora
LSRCA’s partnership with the town of Aurora will continue to be an important one in managing Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area. Maintenance of the soccer fields, parking lots and trails has been estimated at a value of $7000 annually, and reduces LSRCA’s staffing obligations in this conservation area. An expansion to this partnership may include funding the relocation of the Petch log cabin, and assistance with new conservation area signs.

Rental income and user fees
Rental incomes from the two houses on the property are another vital source of revenue in managing the conservation area. This rental income allows the Authority to invest in capital improvements to the houses and other structures on-site and to establish a reserve fund to off-set the costs of large, non-annual maintenance expenses.

When existing leases on these two buildings cease, LSRCA will endeavour to lease to tenants whose mandate complements the goals and objectives of the conservation area, and whose tenancy would promote the public benefit of these buildings. Preference may be given to lessees who are registered charities, to allow LSRCA to access property tax exemptions available under the Ontario Heritage Act.

The other outbuildings, including the large evaporator hut and the Pefferlaw log cabin will be made available to the public for reservation. While upgrades are being implemented to these buildings they will be made available for rent at the same price as the picnic pavilion. During this time period, reservation fees will be set at $60 per

As described in Ontario Heritage Trust, 2007
day per facility for families or not-for-profits, and $500 per season, plus $1 per participant for for-profit corporations.

As upgrades to these facilities proceed, they will become more attractive and functional, and LSRCA anticipates increasing reservations of these facilities. After the period of initial re-investment has ended (anticipated in 2012), the fee structure will be revised to ensure that they remain at a level commensurate with similar recreation areas elsewhere in the Golden Horseshoe. Similar revisions may occur upon the review of this business plan in 2014, and annually thereafter.

**WINDFALL ECOLOGY CENTRE**

The Windfall Ecology Centre is taking a leadership role in researching and fund raising for energy efficiency retrofits to the Sheppard family home. Funds they have raised from outside sources, as well as capital investments LSRCA will be making, will be earmarked to improve energy efficiency in the Sheppard family house. Similar contributions to upgrades to the large evaporator hut and Pefferlaw log cabin may help improve the suitability of those sites for public use.

**AURORA LION’S CLUB**

Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area has been home to an annual pancake breakfast fundraiser for the Aurora Lion’s Club since the early 1970s. Over the years the Lion’s have contributed a portion of these proceeds to LSRCA to support the operation of the conservation area, and were instrumental in building the picnic pavilion in 1978. The Lion’s Club may also be able to contribute to continued upgrades to the conservation area, including scheduled upgrades to the outbuildings, and in volunteer clean-up days.

**VOLUNTEERS AND DONATIONS**

Interested volunteers from the community may become available to assist LSRCA in trail stewardship, invasive species management, and semi-annual garbage cleanups. The Aurora Lions Club and Windfall Ecology Centre have committed to assisting with these events.
Expenses
Operational expenses at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area can be divided into five broad categories: administration, programming, capital development, maintenance, and resource management (Figure 10).

![Figure 10. Historic expenses at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area, displayed by functional area, from 2002 – 2007.](image)

ADMINISTRATION
Administration of Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area includes the general administrative duties that support and enhance the operations of the conservation area, including communication and marketing, human resource management, budget formulation and tracking, and oversight of procurement and contracting activities. This functional area also includes payment of municipal property taxes.

Priorities for this functional area include improved marketing of the conservation area and a review of the management plan and business plan in 2013. The major cost in this functional group however is the municipal property taxes, which will continue to be the case for the five year operational period (Table 4).
Until 2005 the Programming functional area included an annual maple syrup program; however the program was ultimately cancelled as it consistently operated at a loss. Currently, programming at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area is primarily provided in partnership with the Town, and include a conservation-focused summer camp, the Halloween Haunted Forest, and Doors Open Aurora.

Priorities for this functional area include re-establishing a demonstration maple syrup program and additional nature-based programming, and establishing a series of volunteer days (Table 5). In the past, the workload associated with this functional group was handled by LSRCA staff; however in the future, partnerships will become very important in achieving programming goals. LSRCA will continue to provide the venue for public programs, but will continue to rely on partnerships with the Town of Aurora or other outside service providers to provide some of this programming. LSRCA will also continue to examine opportunities to deliver programs directly.

The Sheppard House tenants are an example of such a partnership. Windfall Ecology Centre has a series of workshops planned to share their experiences in retrofitting heritage homes and the STORM coalition provides programs for school children on moraine ecology and appreciation. Similarly, Aurora’s Environmental Advisory Committee is developing a program to promote environmental leadership in York Region high school students. The facilities at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area provide a centralized location for programs such as these.

### Table 4. Projected expenses to achieve administrative needs identified in the Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area management plan, for the period 2009 – 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009 $</th>
<th>2010 $</th>
<th>2011 $</th>
<th>2012 $</th>
<th>2013 $</th>
<th>Total $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>$15,800</td>
<td>$13,250</td>
<td>$13,750</td>
<td>$14,450</td>
<td>$19,950</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan evaluation and review</td>
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<td>$5,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Facility reservations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Property taxes</td>
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<td>$11,500</td>
<td>$12,200</td>
<td>$12,700</td>
<td>$57,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved marketing</td>
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<td>$250</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Donation box</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enforcement</td>
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<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Admin</td>
<td>$15,800</td>
<td>$13,250</td>
<td>$13,750</td>
<td>$14,450</td>
<td>$19,950</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5. Projected expenses to achieve programming needs identified in the Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area management plan, for the period 2009 – 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009 $</th>
<th>2010 $</th>
<th>2011 $</th>
<th>2012 $</th>
<th>2013 $</th>
<th>Total $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programming</td>
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<td>$1,050</td>
<td>$1,050</td>
<td>$1,050</td>
<td>$5,650</td>
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<td>Nature programs</td>
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<td>$250</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maple Fest</td>
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<td>$400</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer days</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>$600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Programming</td>
<td>$1,250</td>
<td>$1,250</td>
<td>$1,050</td>
<td>$1,050</td>
<td>$1,050</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Capital Development

Investments in capital development at Sheppard’s Bush have increased in recent years, as existing infrastructure ages and repairs or replacement become necessary. Much of the investment has been in improvements and
upgrades to the small and large houses on the property, however in 2008 a much needed repair to the roof of the picnic pavilion was completed.

Priorities for capital development in the period 2009 – 2013 include upgrading the outhouse, log cabin, large evaporator hut, and Sheppard house, as well as potential additions to the property of a second log cabin and a community heritage garden, and revision to the signage (Table 6). All new capital development will be designed and constructed to meet the standards of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* as they become available.

Upgrades to broaden the functionality of the evaporator hut include replacing the existing windows with units which will open to allow cross ventilation, replacing the ventilation shutters from the evaporator with windows to increase natural light, improving the lighting and electrical system, adding locking storage units, adding a subfloor to the woodshed, replacing the door between evaporator hut and woodshed, and purchasing collapsible tables and chairs.

Upgrades to the Pefferlaw log cabin include: replacing the existing windows with units which will open to allow cross ventilation, insulating the floor, replacing the existing fluorescent lights and replacing the ceiling. If interest dictates and resources permit, LSRCA and its partners may examine opportunities to improve heating in the Pefferlaw log cabin.

As part of the lease agreement for the Sheppard family house, the tenants and LSRCA have committed to investing in capital upgrades, including upgrades which will improve its energy efficiency and reduce its carbon footprint. As an initial step in this process, Windfall Ecology Centre commissioned a study to determine the best way to address these issues, and have identified a number of projects ranging from increased insulation to the development of geothermal heating. As owner of the property, OHT approval will be required for any such repairs or alterations prior to their implementation.

In addition to the above, LSRCA will undertake a major rehabilitation to the trail system at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area (Fig. 11). Over the course of the five year operational period, LSRCA will close and rehabilitate the non-sanctioned trails through the forest and rationalize the official trail network to provide a combination of high-use major trails and lower use minor trails, while reducing the total number of trails at the conservation area. This rehabilitation program will be phased in over a number of years to reduce impacts on conservation area users.

Development to new and upgrades to existing facilities will be undertaken or supervised by Field Services staff. Funding to support capital improvements will come in part from LSRCA and in part from its partners. Upgrades to the Sheppard House particularly will be supported by funds raised by Windfall Ecology Centre as part of their demonstration of energy efficiency retrofits to heritage buildings. Similarly, upgrades to the outbuildings may be supported by funds raised by Windfall Ecology Centre as well as by the Aurora Lions Club and other community partners.
**MAINTENANCE**

The maintenance functional area at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area includes all activities that prolong the lives of the conservation area’s diverse assets. These activities include repair work, preventive maintenance, and general upkeep of the grounds and trails. Since 2004 much of the general upkeep to the conservation area, including maintenance of lawns, trails, and parking lots has been provided by the Town of Aurora under an Agreement with LSRCA on an in-kind basis.

LSRCA’s maintenance priorities for the period 2009 – 2013 include periodic property inspections for trail condition, litter, invasive species, hazard trees, and boundary encroachments (Table 7). Where necessary LSRCA, in partnership with the Aurora Lion’s Club, Windfall Ecology Centre and Save the Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition, will coordinate volunteer work days in April and October to remove accumulated garbage from the trails and forest.

**Table 6. Projected expenses to achieve capital development needs identified in the Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area management plan, for the period 2009 – 2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital development</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trail construction, repair</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
<td>0.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head of Trails</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benches</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>0.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaporator hut</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log cabin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$3,500</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petch relocation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.04</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawn</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Community heritage garden</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>Capital reserve fund</td>
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<td>0.22</td>
<td>$12,100</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>$22,500</td>
<td>0.31</td>
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<td>Total Capital development</td>
<td>$25,200</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>$31,500</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>$22,500</td>
<td>0.31</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Table 7. Projected expenses to achieve maintenance needs identified in the Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area management plan, for the period 2009 – 2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maintenance</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Property inspections</td>
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<td>0.01</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>0.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fence repair</td>
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<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hazard tree removal</td>
<td>0.02</td>
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<td>0.02</td>
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<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wood pile reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washroom maintenance</td>
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<td>0.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grounds and trail maintenance</td>
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<td>$7,000</td>
<td>0.08</td>
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<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure maintenance</td>
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<td>$2,150</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>$2,200</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 11
Schedule of trail system modification

Legend

Proposed trail system
- to be closed
- to be converted to minor trail

Remaining trails

Existing features

Sheppard’s Bush boundary

Watercourse

Location map

The information depicted on this map has been compiled from various sources. While every effort has been made to accurately depict the information, data / mapping errors may exist. This map has been produced for illustrative purposes only. For the most current wetland boundaries please contact your local Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources District Office.

LSRCA DRAFT printed 2008.
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Resource Management functional area refers to the management of natural heritage features in the conservation area. Activities include inventory and monitoring of native and non-native plant and animal species, forest management and the conservation and restoration of wildlife habitat where appropriate. Current environmental monitoring will be ongoing, and will be supplemented with additional terrestrial wildlife monitoring. Volunteer work days will also be coordinated to help control the spread of aggressive invasive species and reduce the amount of garbage deposited in the forest.

This functional area uses various permanent and seasonal technical staff of the Authority to meet the diverse workload requirements. The additional workload will also be accomplished with LSRCA technical staff with assistance from interested volunteers where available, coordinated by the Conservation Lands Planner or Director of Conservation Lands. Where necessary LSRCA, in partnership with the Aurora Lion’s Club, Windfall Ecology Centre and Save the Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition, will coordinate volunteer work days in May and August to control widespread aggressive invasive plant species.
Implementation schedule

2009

Administration

Property taxes
- Continue to pay municipal property taxes
- Director of Conservation Lands will be responsible to ensure taxes paid
- Estimated cost: $10,500
- Funding source: facility rentals (100%)

Improved marketing
- Develop and print a Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area trail map brochure
- The Conservation Lands Planner and Corporate Communications will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $3000
- Funding source: Town of Aurora (50%), event revenues (50%)

Donation box
- Construct donation boxes for the Industry St parking lot
- Field services will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $300
- Funding source: Town of Aurora (100%)

Programming

Support programming at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area
- Rent portable outhouses for events provided by outside service providers
- Additional misc. expenses
- The Conservation Lands Administrative Assistant will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $650
- Funding source: event revenues (100%)

Volunteer work days
- Provide refreshments, gloves, garbage bags, etc
- Garbage removal (April, Oct)
- Invasive species removal (May, Aug)
- The Conservation Planner will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $600
- Funding source: event revenues (100%)

23 Expenses related to materials and staffing have been treated as separate items. Staffing needs summarized on an annual basis.
Local advisory committee
- Periodic meetings of the local advisory committee
- The Director of Conservation Lands will be responsible for achieving this objective

Capital development

Trail upgrades
- Install interpretive kiosks in parking lots on Industry St and Industrial Pkwy
- Closure of two problematic minor trails and numerous orphaned trails and creation of two preferable minor trails (Fig 11)
- Field services will be responsible for achieving this objective, with assistance from Conservation Lands Planner and Corporate Communications
- Estimated cost: $6500
- Funding source: Town of Aurora (100%)

Outbuilding upgrades
- Add folding tables and chairs and storage cabinets to evaporator hut
- Field services will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $4000
- Funding source: facility rentals (75%), Aurora Lions Club (25%)

Petch log cabin
- Assess feasibility of relocating Petch log cabin to the conservation area
- Director of Conservation Lands will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Funding source: Town of Aurora and development proponent

Capital reserve fund
- Transfer to a reserve fund for long-term capital maintenance expenses
- Director of Conservation Lands will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $14,700
- Funding source: facility rentals (100%)

Maintenance

Grounds and trail maintenance
- Annual workload to maintain trails, lawns and parking lots
- Town of Aurora provides this service on an in-kind basis
- Estimated value: $7000

Capital maintenance
- Annual workload to maintain capital assets
- Field Services will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $2000
- Funding source: facility rentals (100%)
**Staffing requirements**
- Field services: 0.3 FTE (2008 complement 0.0 FTE)
- Conservation lands planner: 0.2 FTE (2008 complement 0.3 FTE)
- Director of Conservation Lands: 0.1 FTE (2008 complement 0.0 FTE)
- Enforcement officer: 0.1 FTE (2008 complement 0.0 FTE)

**2010**

**Administration**

**Property taxes**
- Continue to pay municipal property taxes
- Director of Conservation Lands will be responsible to ensure taxes paid
- Estimated cost: $11,000
- Funding source: facility rentals (100%)

**Marketing**
- Reprint Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area trail map as necessary
- Director of Conservation Lands will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $250
- Funding source: Town of Aurora (100%)

**Programming**

**Support programming at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area**
- Rent portable outhouses for events provided by outside service providers
- Additional misc. expenses
- The Conservation Lands Administrative Assistant will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $650
- Funding source: event revenues (100%)

**Volunteer work days**
- Provide refreshments, gloves, garbage bags, etc
- Garbage removal (April, Oct)
- Invasive species removal (May, Aug)
- The Conservation Planner will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $600
- Funding source: event revenues (100%)

**Local advisory committee**
- Periodic meetings of the local advisory committee
- The Director of Conservation Lands will be responsible for achieving this objective
**Capital development**

**Trail upgrades**
- Closure of three problematic minor trails (Fig 11)
- Install 2 benches near evaporator hut
- Field services will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $900
- Funding source: Town of Aurora (100%)

**Outbuilding upgrades**
- Replace windows in log cabin and evaporator hut
- Add skylight to evaporator hut
- Insulate floor in log cabin and install wood stove
- Field services will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $12,500
- Funding source: Windfall ecology centre (96%), event revenues (4%)

**Petch log cabin**
- Establish lawn in gravel area in front of Petch cabin
- Field services will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $6000
- Funding source: facility rentals (100%)

**Capital reserve fund**
- Transfer to a reserve fund for long-term capital maintenance expenses
- Director of Conservation Lands will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $12,100
- Funding source: facility rentals (80%), event revenues (10%), Town of Aurora (10%)

**Maintenance**

**Fence repair**
- Repair holes in fence along north side of property
- Field services will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $1200
- Funding source: facility rentals (100%)

**Grounds and trail maintenance**
- Annual workload to maintain trails, lawns and parking lots
- Town of Aurora provides this service on an in-kind basis
- Estimated value: $7000

**Capital maintenance**
- Annual workload to maintain capital assets
- Field Services will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $2100
- Funding source: facility rentals (100%)
Staffing requirements
- Field services: 0.2 FTE
- Conservation lands planner: 0.1 FTE
- Director of Conservation Lands: 0.1 FTE
- Enforcement officer: 0.1 FTE

2011

Administration

Property taxes
- Continue to pay municipal property taxes
- Director of Conservation Lands will be responsible to ensure taxes paid
- Estimated cost: $11,500
- Funding source: facility rentals (100%)

Marketing
- Reprint Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area trail map as necessary
- Director of Conservation Lands will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $250
- Funding source: event revenues (100%)

Programming

Support programming at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area
- Misc. expenses to support programming
- The Conservation Planner will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $450
- Funding source: event revenues (100%)

Volunteer work days
- Provide refreshments, gloves, garbage bags, etc
- Garbage removal (April, Oct)
- Invasive species removal (May, Aug)
- The Conservation Planner will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $600
- Funding source: event revenues (100%)

Local advisory committee
- Periodic meetings of the local advisory committee
- The Director of Conservation Lands will be responsible for achieving this objective
**Capital development**

**Trail upgrades**
- Closure of two major and one minor trails (Fig 11)
- Install two benches overlooking East Holland River ravine
- Field services will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $9600
- Funding source: facility rentals (50%), Town of Aurora (50%)

**Outbuilding upgrades**
- Improve lighting and wiring in evaporator hut and log cabin
- Put subfloor in evaporator hut woodshed
- Field services will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $3000
- Funding source: facility rentals (100%)

**Community heritage garden**
- Partner with the community to establish a heritage garden
- Install shed, faucet, work up ground
- Field services and the Conservation lands planner will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $3000
- Funding source: facility rentals (50%), event revenues (50%)

**Capital reserve fund**
- Transfer to a reserve fund for long-term capital maintenance expenses
- Director of Conservation Lands will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $6,900
- Funding source: facility rentals (100%)

**Maintenance**

**Grounds and trail maintenance**
- Annual workload to maintain trails, lawns and parking lots
- Town of Aurora provides this service on an in-kind basis
- Estimated value: $7000

**Capital maintenance**
- Annual workload to maintain capital assets
- Field Services will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $2200
- Funding source: facility rentals (100%)

**Staffing requirements**
- Field services: 0.2 FTE
- Conservation lands planner: 0.1 FTE
- Enforcement officer: 0.1 FTE
Administration

Property taxes
- Continue to pay municipal property taxes
- Director of Conservation Lands will be responsible to ensure taxes paid
- Estimated cost: $12,200
- Funding source: facility rentals (100%)

Marketing
- Reprint Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area trail map as necessary
- Director of Conservation Lands will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $250
- Funding source: event revenues (100%)

Programming

Support programming at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area
- Misc. expenses to support programming
- The Conservation Lands Administrative Assistant will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $450
- Funding source: event revenues (100%)

Volunteer work days
- Provide refreshments, gloves, garbage bags, etc
- Garbage removal (April, Oct)
- Invasive species removal (May, Aug)
- The Conservation Planner will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $600
- Funding source: event revenues (100%)

Local advisory committee
- Periodic meetings of the local advisory committee
- The Director of Conservation Lands will be responsible for achieving this objective

Capital development

Trail upgrades
- Closure of two major trails (Fig 11)
- Install two benches along recreational trails
- Field services will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $6,000
- Funding source: Town of Aurora (60%), event revenues (30%), facility rentals (10%)
Capital reserve fund

- Transfer to a reserve fund for long-term capital maintenance expenses
- Director of Conservation Lands will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $14,900
- Funding source: facility rentals (100%)

Maintenance

Grounds and trail maintenance

- Annual workload to maintain trails, lawns and parking lots
- Town of Aurora provides this service on an in-kind basis
- Estimated value: $7000

Capital maintenance

- Annual workload to maintain capital assets
- Field Services will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $2300
- Funding source: facility rentals (100%)

Staffing requirements

- Field services: 0.1 FTE
- Conservation lands planner: 0.1 FTE
- Enforcement officer: 0.1 FTE

2013

Administration

Property taxes

- Continue to pay municipal property taxes
- Director of Conservation Lands will be responsible to ensure taxes paid
- Estimated cost: $12,700
- Funding source: facility rentals (100%)

Marketing

- Reprint Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area trail map as necessary
- Director of Conservation Lands will be responsible for achieving this objective
- Estimated cost: $250
- Funding source: event revenues (100%)

Plan evaluation and review

- Initiate 5 year review of management plan and business plan
• Conservation Lands Planner will be responsible for achieving this objective, with assistance from Director of Conservation Lands, and Field Services
  • Estimated cost: $5000
  • Funding source: municipal special capital (100%)

**Programming**

**Support programming at Sheppard’s Bush Conservation Area**

- Misc. expenses to support programming
- The Conservation Lands Administrative Assistant will be responsible for achieving this objective
  • Estimated cost: $450
  • Funding source: event revenues (100%)

**Volunteer work days**

- Provide refreshments, gloves, garbage bags, etc
- Garbage removal (April, Oct)
- Invasive species removal (May, Aug)
- The Conservation Planner will be responsible for achieving this objective
  • Estimated cost: $600
  • Funding source: event revenues (100%)

**Local advisory committee**

- Periodic meetings of the local advisory committee
- The Director of Conservation Lands will be responsible for achieving this objective

**Capital development**

**Capital reserve fund**

- Transfer to a reserve fund for long-term capital maintenance expenses
- Director of Conservation Lands will be responsible for achieving this objective
  • Estimated cost: $19,050
  • Funding source: facility rentals (80%), Town of Aurora (13%), event revenues (7%)

**Maintenance**

**Grounds and trail maintenance**

- Annual workload to maintain trails, lawns and parking lots
- Town of Aurora provides this service on an in-kind basis
  • Estimated value: $7000

**Capital maintenance**

- Annual workload to maintain capital assets
- Field Services will be responsible for achieving this objective
  • Estimated cost: $2400
- Funding source: facility rentals (100%)

**Staffing requirements**
- Field services: 0.1 FTE
- Conservation lands planner: 0.3 FTE
- Director of Conservation Lands: 0.1 FTE
- Enforcement officer: 0.1 FTE
References

Aurora Heritage Committee. 1985. *A place in time: Aurora's first century of settlement*. Aurora Heritage Committee, Aurora ON.


Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority. 2009. Hazard tree management strategy (draft)

Miles & Co. 1878. *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of York and the Township of West Gwillimbury and Town of Bradford in the County of Simcoe, Ont*. Toronto, ON.


## Appendix 1. Detailed projected expenses to achieve management plan objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Administration</strong></td>
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<td>Plan evaluation and review</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Admin</strong></td>
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<td>Nature programs</td>
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<td>$600</td>
<td>$600</td>
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<td>Evaporator hut</td>
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<td>Pefferlaw log cabin</td>
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## Appendix 2. Detailed projected revenues to achieve management plan objectives

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