

HANLON CREEK INTERIM PLANNING STUDY FEBRUARY 1975

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EXTENT OF PLANNING UNIT

All of the areas indicated by the city's district plans as Open Space; Quasi-Public Open Space; Conservation Area School Sites and Conservation Authorities' Regulated Area have been grouped together in order to identify a "planning unit".

Note: The entire 116 acres comprising the Kortright Waterfowl Park, including the 20 acres of upland cultivated field on the south side of Niska Road, was designated as Quasi-Public Open Space in the City of Guelph 1975 in the Southview Planning District 8 Plan.

CONCEPTUAL PLAN

The concept envisioned at this stage is one of a passive recreational nature. The sociological study conducted in 1971 as part of the Hanlon Creek Ecological Study indicates that the unmet recreational needs of Guelphites fall into two major categories (1) those that can be met by provisions of more, natural open spaces with more diversified uses and some outdoor entertainment; and (2) those that can be satisfied by more facilities for active and passive water sports. Since the Guelph Dam and Reservoir project north of the city will satisfy most unmet needs in the second group, more thought has been given to those activities contained within the first group as a basis for a program of the Hanlon Creek Area.

All of the activities listed thus far are perhaps ancillary to what the area is best suited, which is simply walking through a natural area. The boundaries of the "planning unit" have been defined on a watershed or floodline basis. Thus, most of the ecological processes inherent in its form are present in varying degrees. Simply stated this means that there is a tremendous interpretive potential in the area.

In order to facilitate these activities, a trails system has been laid out that not only allows pedestrian movement between activity zones, but also brings people in contact with the natural features and life forms that make the area what it is. The layout and development of these trails at the site plan level should be carefully studied with an emphasis on details in order to maximize the interpretive

potential as well as providing the esthetic qualities observable to the person on foot. In addition, they should be designed to allow for cross-country skiing in the winter.

FUTURE OF KORTRIGHT WATERFOWL PARK LANDS

The future of Kortright Waterfowl Park is of a major concern to the Conservation Authority at this time. Located at the confluence of Hanlon Creek and the Speed River its function is very important with regard to other activities planned for the watershed.

The objectives of Kortright Park and the research facilities located there are admirable in their own right, however that actual physical facilities, as well as the current financial situation of the waterfowl foundation leave something to be desired. There is no question as to the value of such a facility to the municipality in terms of both education and recreation.

Except for the water resources in the area it cannot be stated that it is an ideal habitat for waterfowl propagation. In terms of ideal habitats the site is poor, or fair at best. Recognizing these facts, it is proposed that the area come under a new concept for its use and management. The concept envisioned is one of a zoological park. The natural features in the area range from cedar swamps to cultivated upland fields. It is quite conceivable to establish and maintain an area that would function with a greater variety of species than now exist.

The City of Guelph may or may not see a zoo as part of their recreational and cultural activities, however, if the proposal is adopted in principle, this “zoological park” should be maintained and limited to species that are relatively native to Ontario. Furthermore, such a facility should be designed to ensure a “naturalistic” setting for both wildlife and people. Many of the features embodied in the Metro Toronto Zoo could be applied in a mini scale to this site.

As stated previously, waterfowl propagation is an admirable endeavour, however, the provision of adequate habitat is much closer to the natural scheme of things.

Note: The recommendation of a change in function for the Kortright Waterfowl Park was first made in the 1968 Preliminary Report on the Hanlon’s Creek Basin by Kilborn Engineering. This report stated “The park at present serves a very useful function for conservation and waterfowl

management. It is considered it can continue to serve conservation purposes very well but in a modified form. It is proposed that there should be a gradual phasing out of intensive waterfowl research and management and a gradual change over to a general nature centre or zoological centre, retaining some waterfowl operations.”

SUMMARY OF LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

The conceptual plan for recreation and land use as outlined herein is one that satisfies a broad range of passive activities while maintaining a high respect for the natural environment.