

Analysis of background documentation on land acquisition for the Niska Lands

Prepared by Hugh Whiteley February 2026

Major omissions in City of Guelph documentation of background information on land acquisition for Niska Lands

- No mention of growing province-wide visitor interest in Kortright Park in 1960's as background for City Council actions regarding Kortright Park.
- No mention of City Council decision in 1965 to expand city boundary to include Kortright Park and to take charge of landuse planning for the park.
- No mention of the city-commissioned 1968 Preliminary Report on Hanlon's Creek Basin that recommended an 845-acre conservation area be established to protect the creek and the functioning of the Kortright Waterfowl Park and to provide nature-based recreation.
- No mention of City Council decision of January 1970 to form the recommended 845-acre conservation zone in Hanlon's creek and to request GRCA to join the city in a project to acquire the land needed for the conservation area.
- No mention of the February 1970 decision of the GRCA to join with the City of Guelph in the Hanlon's Creek Land Acquisition project to acquire land for the Hanlon Creek Conservation Area.
- No mention of the City of Guelph request of October 1970 to the GRCA to initiate land purchases in the Hanlon Creek watershed. A request for purchase of 42 acres from the Hanlon estate was made in May 1971.
- No mention of the 1972 Hanlon Creek Ecological Study that confirmed the validity of the decision to set aside an 845-acre conservation area for nature-based recreation in the Hanlon Creek watershed.
- No mention of the 1973 City of Guelph parks and recreation concept plan that shows all of the Kortright Parks lands to be within the city's open space network.
- No mention of the 1975 Southview District 8 Plan that gave Open Space Designation to all the lands of the Kortright Waterfowl Park.
- No mention of the 1975 Hanlon Creek Interim Planning Study that identifies the functioning of the Kortright Waterfowl Park property as being very important to Hanlon Creek Conservation Area as a whole. The study

recommends the Kortright Park lands be transformed from a wildfowl propagation centre to a general nature reserve featuring native Ontario wildlife.

- No mention of the August 1975 resolution of Guelph City Council requesting the GRCA to investigate the possible acquisition of the Kortright Waterfowl Park under the Hanlon's Creek Land Acquisition project.
- There is mention of the April 1976 City of Guelph Council resolution requesting the GRCA to purchase the Kortright Waterfowl Park lands but no mention that the terms of the request are that the purchase be made under the Hanlon's Creek Land Acquisition project.
- No mention that a Master Plan for the Hanlon Creek Conservation Area was adopted by Guelph City Council on September 17 1979. The Master Plan called for the whole of the Kortright Waterfowl Park lands to be transformed to a naturalized nature reserve, with specific mention that cultivated upland fields were included in this naturalized parkland.
- No mention of the 1997 Greenway Vision and Plan adopted by City Council that identifies the Kortright Waterfowl Park as a major open space element.
- No mention of the GRCA Background Briefing Document of December 2014 that identifies that land purchased at the request of the City of Guelph for the Hanlon Creek Conservation Area is to be managed by the city as parkland at the city's expense.

False information contained in City of Guelph documentation of background information on land acquisition for Niska Lands

In the city's Niska Parkland webpage in subsection Land use restrictions and zone changes it is stated that

the GRCA purchased 44 acres of land on Niska Road in 1971 and the 116-acre Kortright Waterfowl Park in 1977 to support the Hespeler Reservoir as a flood control project

This statement is false and misleading. The documentation on these two purchases contained in the authorizing resolutions for the purchases in the GRCA minutes, in the ledger of land acquisition for the Hanlon Creek Land Acquisition

project, and, in the case of the 1977 purchase, the Minister of Natural Resources letter authorizing the purchase and the GRCA press release, all state that the purchases were made to further the Hanlon Creek Conservation Area.