Ministry of Northern Development,
Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry

Ontario

Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System Planning Manual (2021)

Boundary Bluffs Nature Reserve
Cover: Weaver Creek Falls

Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry

Cette publication hautement spécialisée, *Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System Planning Manual*, n'est disponible qu'en anglais conformément au Règlement 671/92, selon lequel il n'est pas obligatoire de la traduire en vertu de la Loi sur les services en français. Pour obtenir des renseignements en français, veuillez communiquer avec ministère du Développement du Nord, des Mines, des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts au 705-772-8754 ou susan.cooper@ontario.ca.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTIONS 7

Introduction **8**

I. Overview of the Niagara Escarpment 8

II. The Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System 8

III. Management of the Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System 8

IV. Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System Council 9

V. Purpose of the Manual 9

VI. Legislation and Policy Context for NEPOSS Planning 9

Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act (1973) 9

The Coordinated Land Use Planning Review 9

The Niagara Escarpment Plan (2017) 9

VII. UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve Designation **10**

VIII. MNDMNRF and NEC Roles and Responsibilities **11**

Introduction to Management Plans **12**

I. Management Planning Flexibility **12**

II. Management Plan Life Cycle **13**

III. MNDMNRF and NEC Engagement **13**

IV. Purpose of the Management Planning Process **14**

V. Plan **16**

VI. Design **17**

VII. Finalize and Endorse **18**

VIII. Implement, Evaluate and Learn **19**

STAGES 23

Stage 1: Scoping and Defining the Planning Project **24**

1.1 Initiate Management Planning and Terms of Reference 24

1.2 Define the Planning Project 26

1.3 Develop Purpose and Vision Statements 28

1.4 Consider Alignment with Other Planning Processes 29

1.5 Develop an Engagement Strategy 31

Stage 2: Information Gathering and Analysis **34**

2.1 Assemble Sources of Information 34

2.2 Identify Pressures 41

2.3 Analyze Values and Pressures to Develop Management Plan Priorities 42

2.4 Develop and Communicate Background Document 43

Stage 3: Developing Management Plan Direction **44**
3.1 Key Outcome and Options for Management Action 44
3.2 Identify Performance Indicators for Effectiveness Monitoring 46
3.3 Develop Management Objectives 48
3.4 Nodal Parks 50
3.5 Classification 52
3.6 Zones 54
3.7 The Bruce Trail 60
3.8 Communicate Proposed Management Plan Objectives, Park Classification and Park Zones 61
Stage 4: Finalizing the Management Plan **63**
4.1 Finalize Purpose and Vision Statement for Management Plan 63
4.2 Finalize the Draft Management Plan 64
4.3 Park and Open Space Development Concept 66
4.4 Management Plan Template 66
4.5 Initial Review 69
4.6 Communicate the Draft Management Plan 69
Stage 5: Endorsement and Approval **70**
5.1 Management Plan Approval Process 70
5.2 Management Plan Approval Process for Other Government Bodies that Manage NEPOSS Parks 73
Stage 6: Implementation **74**
6.1 Implementing the Management Plan 74
6.2 Releasing the Management Plan 74
6.3 Development in the NEPOSS 76
6.4 Demolition 80
6.5 Consideration of Provincial Heritage Properties 80
6.6 Land Acquisition and Land Disposal 80
Stage 7: Monitoring and Evaluating Management Plans and Initiating Management Plan Amendments **82**
7.1 Implementing Effectiveness Monitoring and Evaluating Management Actions 82
7.2 Management Plan Amendment Process 84
7.3 Revisions to the NEPOSS Planning Manual 87

REFERENCES, RESOURCES AND APPENDICES 88
References 89
Resources 90
Appendix A—Definitions 91
Appendix B—Terms of Reference Template 99
Appendix C—Engagement Resources 105
1. Engagement Strategy Template 105
2. Best Practices for Indigenous Engagement 106
3. Engagement Techniques 111
Appendix D—NEC Development Permit Process 112
Appendix E—Cultural Heritage Resources 113
Appendix F—Approval Statement Template 114
Acknowledgments 115

Tables

Table 1: NEPOSS Responsibilities 11
Table 2: Management Planning Process 21
Table 3: Considerations for Grouping or not Grouping Parks or Open Spaces 27
Table 4: List of Information Sources and Examples 38
Table 5: Examples of Possible Values and Pressures Relevant to NEPOSS Objectives 40
Table 6: Examples of How to Consider the Scope of a Value and Pressure 42
Table 7: Example of a Basic Risk Analysis Framework 43
Table 8: Example of a Basic Framework That Can Be Used to Identify and Prioritize Options for Management Action 47
Table 9: Example of How an Objective Statement Can Be Created Using the SMART Approach 49
Table 10: Example of a Management Plan Objective That Addresses One or More NEPOSS Objectives 50
Table 11: Parks and Open Space Classification 53
Table 12: The NEPOSS Zones 57
Table 13: Example of a Possible Outline Demonstrating Management Guidance 65
Table 14: Management Plan Template 67
Table 15: Example of Agency Review and Requirements for Proposed Development (Cheltenham Badlands Master Plan: 2018) 79
Table 16: Example of Using Data to Determine if the Management Objective Has Been Met 83

Figures

Figure 1: The Four Components of the Management Planning Cycle 15
Figure 2: Management Planning Flow Chart 20
Figure 3: Bruce Trail Map 62
Figure 4: Management Plan Approval Process 72
Figure 5: Process for Management Plan Amendments 85

Acronym Dictionary

ANSI	Area of Natural and Scientific Interest
BTC	Bruce Trail Conservancy
GIS	Geographic Information System
IAO	Ministry of Indigenous Affairs
LIO	Land Information Ontario
MECP	Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
MHSTCI	Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
MNDMNRF	Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry
NEC	Niagara Escarpment Commission
NEP	Niagara Escarpment Plan
NEPDA	Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act
NEPOSS	Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System
NHIC	Natural Heritage Information Centre
OHT	Ontario Heritage Trust
RPDPB	Resource Planning and Development Policy Branch
S&Gs	Standards & Guidelines
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound
SOLRIS	Southern Ontario Land Resource Information System
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Introductions

Dundas Valley Conservation Area

Introduction

I. Overview of the Niagara Escarpment

The Niagara Escarpment is a 725-kilometre ridge of fossil-rich sedimentary rock extending from Queenston on the Niagara River to the islands off Tobermory on the Bruce Peninsula.

The unique combination of geological and ecological features along the Niagara Escarpment results in a landscape unequalled in Canada. The *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act* (NEPDA) established a planning process to ensure that the area would be protected. From this emerged the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP), which serves as a framework of objectives and policies to strike a balance between development, protection and sustainable recreation.

The Niagara Escarpment is designated as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Biosphere Reserve. This biosphere reserve designation recognizes the Escarpment and the land in its vicinity as a nationally and internationally significant landform.

II. The Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System

The Niagara Escarpment Plan has a system of parks and open spaces, identified as the Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System (the NEPOSS). The NEPOSS has more than 160 parks and open spaces, which are often connected by the Bruce Trail. The NEPOSS provides opportunities for sustainable recreation and tourism, and plays a fundamental role in the protection of cultural heritage resources and the Escarpment's natural heritage and biodiversity. Natural areas in the NEPOSS also help to mitigate and improve resilience to climate change by providing green infrastructure, capturing and storing carbon and recharging aquifers.

III. Management of the Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System

Lands within the NEPOSS are owned and managed through the cooperation of NEPOSS agencies, which include:

- Conservation authorities
- The Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry
- The Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
- The Ontario Heritage Trust
- Parks Canada
- Transport Canada
- The Niagara Parks Commission
- The Royal Botanical Gardens
- Municipalities/cities
- The Bruce Trail Conservancy, and other public bodies that manage lands in the public interest.

In the management of their parks and open spaces, the agencies must comply with the NEP policies. This manual provides guidance to the agencies in the development of management plans and management of their parks and open spaces.

IV. Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System Council

The NEPOSS Council is composed of the agencies that are responsible for the management of public land in the NEPOSS.

The NEPOSS Council's purpose is to advance the NEPOSS objectives identified in Part 3 of the NEP. The NEPOSS Council was created in recognition of a need to foster dialogue on NEPOSS issues and improve liaison, shared resources and coordinated action among the agencies.

The NEPOSS Council also provides advice to the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (MNDMNRF) and the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) on NEPOSS policies, programs and the NEPOSS Council issues.

V. Purpose of the Manual

As per Niagara Escarpment Plan direction (Part 3.1.5.1 of the NEP), each park and open space within the NEPOSS is required to have an active management plan. The management plan provides direction for the protection of natural heritage features and areas, cultural heritage resources, supporting infrastructure and sustainable recreation.

The key objective of this manual is to provide guidance and a consistent approach for the development, implementation and maintenance of management plans. The manual should be read in conjunction with Part 3 of the NEP.

VI. Legislation and Policy Context for NEPOSS Planning

Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act (1973)

The legislative basis for the NEPOSS is the *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act (NEPDA)*. The purpose of the Act is as follows:

> To provide for the maintenance of the Niagara Escarpment and land in its vicinity substantially as a continuous natural environment, and to ensure only such development occurs as is compatible with that natural environment.

The Coordinated Land Use Planning Review

The NEPDA requires that the NEP be reviewed every 10 years. This manual has been revised to reflect the 2017 NEP policy review and update.

The Niagara Escarpment Plan (2017)

Part 3 of the NEP provides direction for the NEPOSS. The NEPOSS focuses on environmental protection, education and compatible recreation. The NEP also confirms that the strength of the NEPOSS is dependent upon the cooperation of the agencies in complying with the policies of the NEP.

The intent of this manual is to provide a consistent application of park and open space planning and management policies. The NEP directs that all NEPOSS lands are expected to maintain an active management plan and demonstrate consideration of the NEPOSS objectives shown below.

NEPOSS Objectives

1. To protect the Niagara Escarpment's natural heritage resources and conserve its cultural heritage resources;
2. To provide opportunities for outdoor education and recreation;
3. To provide for public access to the Niagara Escarpment;
4. To complete a public system of major parks and open spaces through land acquisition and Master/ Management planning;
5. To secure a permanent route for the Bruce Trail;
6. To protect and enhance the natural environment of the Niagara Escarpment, including the protection of natural heritage and hydrologic features and functions;
7. To support tourism by providing opportunities on public land for discovery and enjoyment by Ontario's residents and visitors;
8. To provide a common understanding and appreciation of the Niagara Escarpment; and
9. To show leadership in supporting and promoting the principles of the Niagara Escarpment's UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve designation through sustainable park planning, ecological management, community engagement, environmental monitoring, research and education.

Part 3.1.1 of the NEP (2017)

VII. UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve Designation

In 1990, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognized the Niagara Escarpment as a World Biosphere Reserve. This designation identifies the Escarpment and land in its vicinity as a nationally and internationally significant landform.

Collectively, UNESCO Biosphere Reserves form an international network of sites of excellence that work to:

- Facilitate dialogue, showcase models of co-governance, and coordinate projects that bridge environmental, economic, social, and cultural divides;
- Foster reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples through land-based programs and stewardship;
- Provide local and scalable solutions to balance long-term conservation and sustainable use of natural resources; and
- Find effective ways for people and nature to thrive together.

UNESCO encourages collaborative efforts among the agencies to promote the sustainability of local economies and communities, as well as the conservation and stewardship of Escarpment ecosystems.

The NEP states that NEPOSS management plans will recognize that a park or open space is part of the Niagara Escarpment UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve and will include policies that recognize that designation.

Biosphere Reserve policy themes may include:

- Biodiversity conservation through establishing and expanding conserved and protected areas, protection of species and habitats.
- Consideration of sustainable community development.
- Climate mitigation and adaptation—monitoring and adapting to climate change.
- Reconciliation—building relationships and sharing knowledge with Indigenous communities and organizations.

Examples include:

- Conservation of biodiversity and natural heritage features through zoning.
- Identification of opportunities for sustainable recreation where appropriate.
- Promotion of educational information that recognizes the unique natural features of the Niagara Escarpment.

VIII. MNDMNRF and NEC Roles and Responsibilities

The MNDMNRF coordinates the development and administration of the NEPOSS. The NEC works collaboratively with the MNDMNRF to ensure that recreational activities and development within the NEPOSS are consistent with the NEP objectives and policies and the guidance of this manual. See Table 1 for a listing of the MNDMNRF and NEC NEPOSS responsibilities.

Table 1: NEPOSS Responsibilities

Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry	Niagara Escarpment Commission
Coordinate the development and administration of the NEPOSS	
Manage the development and revisions of the NEPOSS Planning Manual	Review and comment on the NEPOSS Planning Manual
Review and consider approval of the management plans and management plan amendments	Review and consider endorsement of the management plans and management plan amendments
Issue final decisions on NEC Development Permit appeals, when NEC decision has not been confirmed by the Ontario Land Tribunal	Receive and process NEC Development Permit Applications
Issue final decisions on NEP amendments	Review and process Applications for amendments to the NEP
Review and consider approval of climbing management plans	Review and consider endorsement of climbing management plans
Review and consider Nodal Park classification	Review and consider Nodal Park classification
Review addition and deletion of lands to the NEPOSS	Coordinate addition and deletion of lands to the NEPOSS
Advise the NEPOSS Council	Advise the NEPOSS Council

Introduction to Management Plans

The Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) requires that all agencies prepare management plans for the parks and open spaces they manage and/or own in the Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Spaces System (NEPOSS). In some circumstances, completing a management plan may also provide a NEPOSS agency with an exemption from the need for a Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) Development Permit. Unlike NEC Development Permits, management plans cannot be appealed once approved.

Management plans will provide Indigenous communities and organizations, the agency, the public, stakeholders, the NEC and the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (MNDMNRF) with the confidence that natural heritage features and cultural heritage resources are being protected and where appropriate, sustainable recreation and infrastructure are aptly placed.

A management plan is a strategic and long-term operational document that provides direction for the protection of natural heritage features and cultural heritage resources, supporting infrastructure and sustainable recreation.

As identified in the NEP, the terms *management plan* and *master plan* are used interchangeably. To provide clarity, this manual uses the term *management plan*.

When developing or updating management plans, this manual should be used in conjunction with the NEP and other relevant legislation and supporting guidelines, which provide:

- Additional direction and information about values and pressures analysis,
- Engagement approaches, and
- The development of planning documents.

I. Management Planning Flexibility

The management planning process described in this manual provides a consistent approach to management planning, while also allowing for flexibility. Each park and open space is unique. The management plan should reflect this by considering its:

- Location and landscape
- Natural heritage features and areas
- Cultural heritage resources
- Recreation opportunities
- Values and pressures
- Supporting infrastructure (existing and proposed), and
- Indigenous communities and organizations, the public and stakeholder interests.

This manual identifies opportunities to customize the management planning process to a range of characteristics and circumstances while meeting the requirements of the NEP policies. Each stage provides recommendations and examples of how to work through the management planning process.

II. Management Plan Life Cycle

The longevity of the management plan is determined by the agency. It's recommended that management plans be reviewed and evaluated annually. An annual review provides the agency with the opportunity to ensure that the actions are meeting the management objectives. It also supports the effectiveness of the implementation plan.

An amendment may be required to:

- modify existing development
- introduce a new activity or development
- introduce a new zone and/or adjust zone boundaries.

A management plan revision may be needed if significant updates are proposed or if the background information and zoning no longer reflect the current landscape of the park or open space.

III. MNDMNRF and NEC Engagement

Building on the Roles and Responsibility section in this manual, the MNDMNRF staff and the NEC staff should be engaged at key stages of the management planning process (see Table 2).

The MNDMNRF and NEC work collaboratively with the agency to ensure that the management plan is consistent with the objectives and policies of the NEP and the guidance of this manual.

IV. Purpose of the Management Planning Process

The purpose of the management planning process is to use a systematic and accountable way to identify and address management plan priorities for a park or open space.

An effective management plan will guide the protection, development and management of park or open space values and resources over the long term and will be used as an operational resource. The management plan describes how it supports the NEPOSS objectives and identifies site-specific management policies.

Management Planning Process Key Terms

Management Action: An action identified to address the pressure on a priority value.

Management Objective: A statement of intent describing how an action will be implemented over time/space to address the pressure on a priority value and the intended outcome of that action.

Management Plan Options: Options for management action and associated management objectives for those actions that are presented for decision-making purposes.

Management Planning Cycle: Includes the development and implementation of management direction, monitoring and examination and potential adjustments to management plan direction.

Management Planning Process: A term to describe the portion of the management planning cycle that includes scoping, information gathering and analysis, developing management options and finalizing management direction stages.

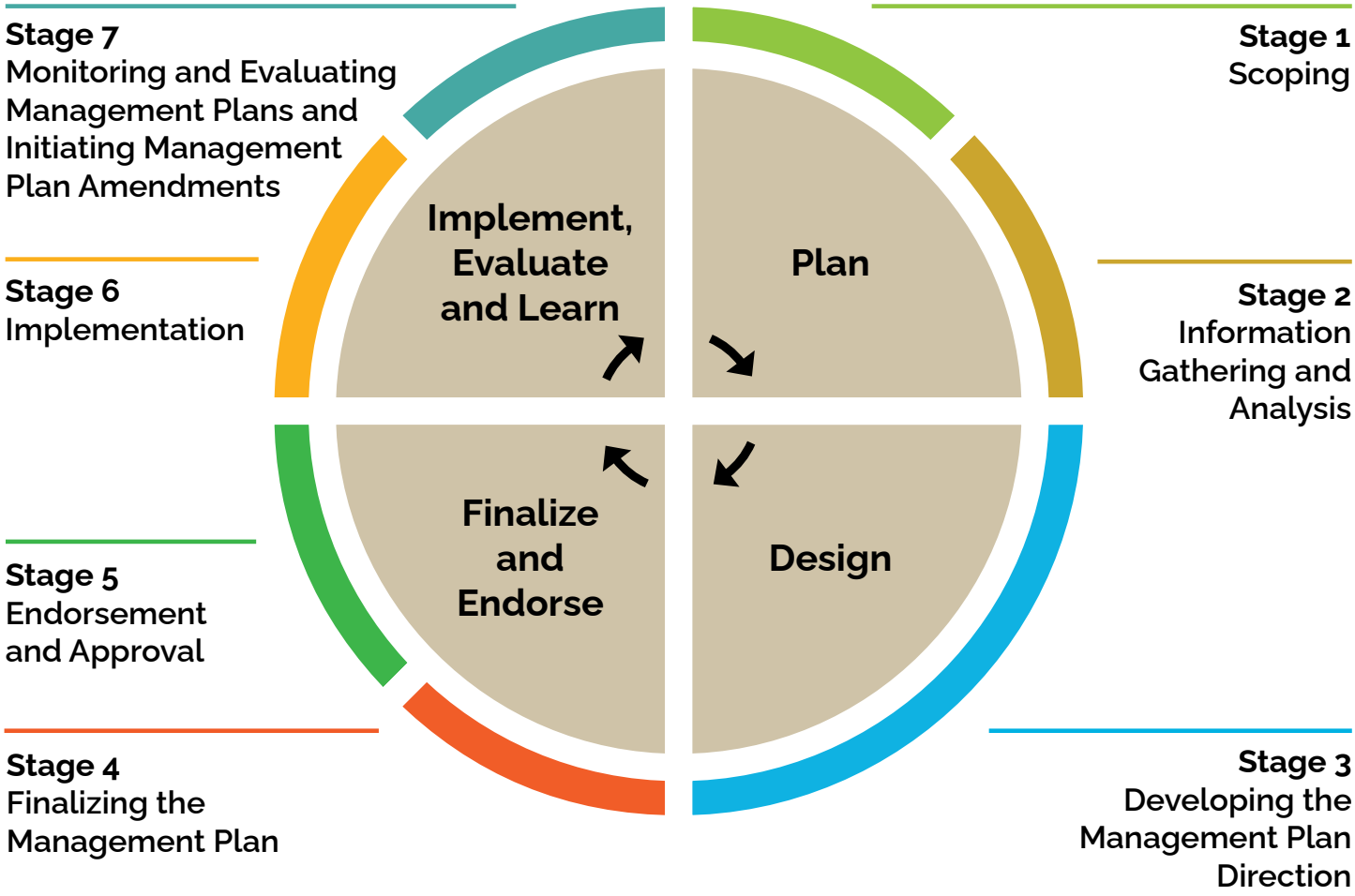
Management Priority: those values and associated pressures that have been identified as having the greatest need for management action.

The management planning cycle includes four key components with corresponding stages (Figure 1). These components are:

- Plan
- Design
- Finalize and Endorse
- Implement, Evaluate and Learn

Within each stage are several steps that further break down the management planning cycle (Table 2).

Figure 1: The Four Components of the Management Planning Cycle



V. Plan

Planning is one of the most time-consuming components of developing a management plan. The planning phase is an iterative process. Although the purpose, vision and scope may be developed in the Scoping Stage, the team can circle back and "check in" on a regular basis as new information becomes available and/or as planning priorities are identified. The information gathered during these stages (Scoping and Information Gathering) will inform the planning priorities for the management plan.

Stage 1

Scoping

- Create the draft purpose, vision and scope of the management plan.
- Develop Terms of Reference that outline the planning process and guide the planning team.

Stage 2

Information Gathering and Analysis

- Collect information on values and pressures.
- Identify and rationalize management plan priorities.
- Circle back to the purpose, vision and scope and confirm that they align with the management plan priorities.
- Develop a Background Report that documents the values, pressures and the management plan priorities.
- Include how the management plan priorities were identified.

Consider Engagement: Agencies may wish to share their Background Report with a broader audience. Consider reaching out to Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders and the public to share progress to date and receive input for consideration.

VI. Design

Design is a critical component of management planning as it requires the planning team to rely heavily on the scoping and information identified in the planning phase. The design phase is complex, time-consuming and requires the planning team to stay in scope and rationalize their decision-making process. This phase develops the course of action to achieve key outcomes for management plan priorities. This work is summarized in management objectives that will allow the planning team to evaluate the success of their management plan over time.

Stage 3
Developing Management Direction:

Part A
Identify key outcomes and options for action

- Using the management plan priorities identified in the planning phase, define key outcomes for each management plan priority.
- Create management plan options to achieve the key outcomes.
- Select the preferred option for the action for each management priority, considering important variables such as feasibility and resources.

Stage 3
Developing Management Direction:

Part B
Consider performance indicators and develop objective statements

- Develop a management plan objective that identifies each management plan priority, the desired key outcome, the preferred option for action and the performance indicator that will measure that action over time.
- The management plan objectives will be included in the draft management plan.

Stage 3
Developing Management Direction:

Part C
Develop park classification and zoning

- Based on information collected in Stages 2 and 3, identify or confirm the park classification.
- Consider if the park would be a good fit for a Nodal classification.
- Based on information established in Stage 2 (management plan priorities) and Stage 3 (key outcomes, performance indicators and management plan objectives), identify and design zones within the park where activities will be permitted or restricted.
- The planning team should circle back on the purpose, vision and scope prior to finalizing the management plan.

Consider Engagement: Agencies may wish to share their preferred options, management plan objectives, park classification and zones with Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders and the public.

VII. Finalize and Endorse

Stages 4 and 5 represent the finalization of a management plan. These stages incorporate the purpose, vision, management objectives, information gathered and analyzed, classification and zoning to develop a draft management plan. The draft management plan is then reviewed by the MNDMNRF and the NEC for initial comments prior to the formal approval process and public circulation.

Stage 4

Finalizing the Management Plan

- Complete the draft management plan and circulate to the MNDMNRF and NEC for initial review.
- Incorporate received comments and finalize the management plan.

Stage 5

Endorsement and Approval

- Submit the final management plan to the NEC for endorsement and the MNDMNRF for approval.
- Obtain signed approval statement for the final management plan.

Consider Engagement: Agencies may wish to share their "final" draft management plan with relevant Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders and the public. This is critical if there has been earlier participation during the planning process.

VIII. Implement, Evaluate and Learn

The implementation and evaluation stages allow agencies to learn from information gathered from performance (monitoring) indicators and to make appropriate changes (plan amendments).

Stage 6
Implementation

- Upon finalizing the management plan, the agency will begin implementing the plan objectives and actions.
- Work plans are often developed to assist the implementation of management plans.
- Work plans can be a useful tool to allocate resources to management plan objectives, for a fiscal year or over multiple years.

Stage 7
Monitoring and Evaluating Management Plans and Initiating Management Plan Amendments

- Monitoring management plan actions using performance indicators is a critical component of implementing a management plan.
- Over time, monitoring performance indicators will allow the agency to evaluate the effectiveness of their management plan objectives and review the course of action for plan amendments and future revisions.

Figure 2: Management Planning Flow Chart

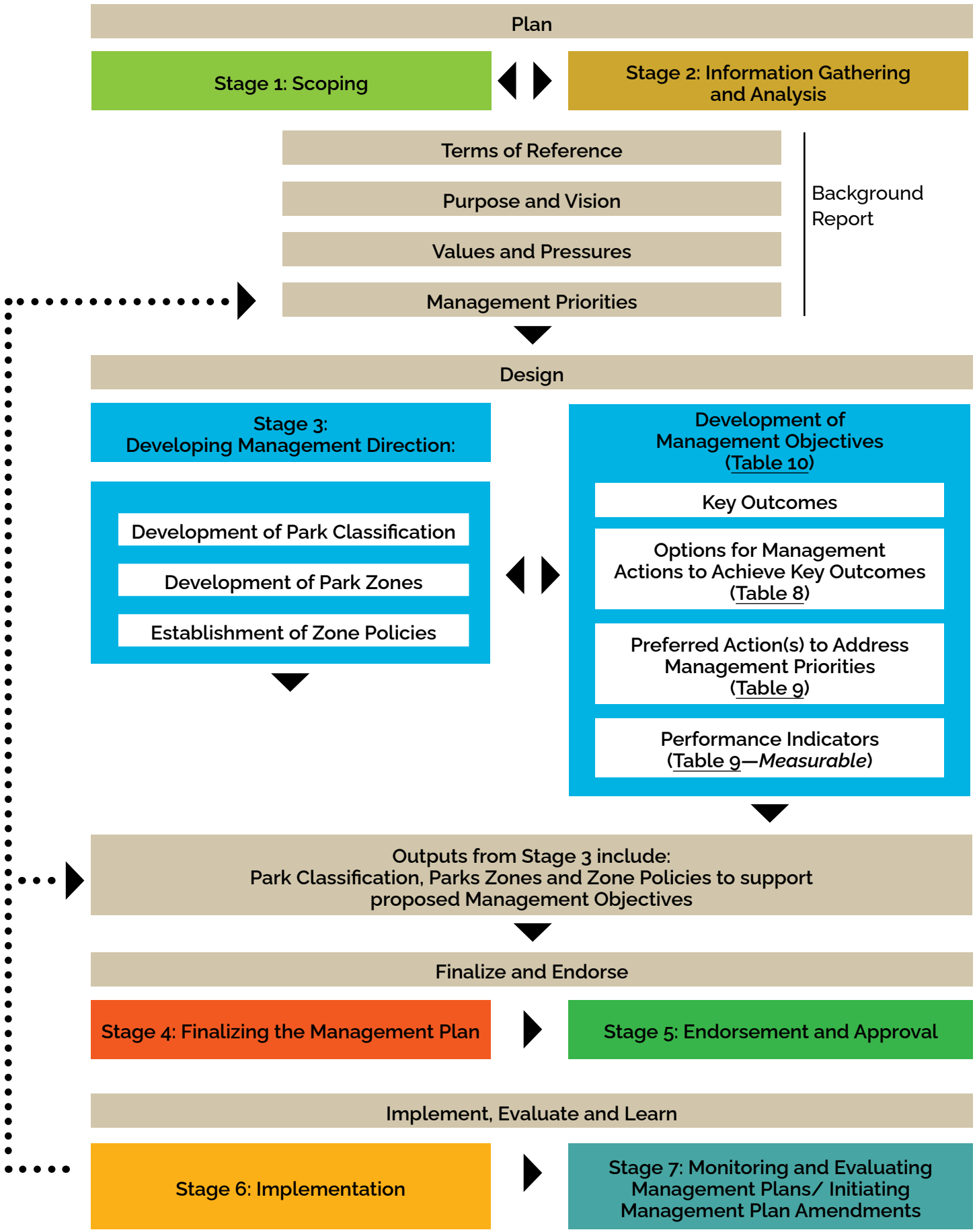


Table 2: Management Planning Process

Component	Management Planning Stage	Key Actions	Document Developed	MNRF and NEC Engagement
Plan	**1 Scoping**	• Initiate management planning • Identify planning team • Review existing information • Define the planning project • Determine if grouping applies • Determine complexity level • Develop draft vision and purpose statements • Consider park classification • Consider Nodal Park classification • Consider alignment with other planning processes • Consider park development concept • Consider NEC Development Permit exemptions • Develop an engagement strategy	Terms of Reference Engagement Strategy	Provide direction on initiating the management planning process • Grouping • Complexity • Classification • Nodal Park classification • Alignment with other planning processes • Development Concept • NEC Development Permit exemptions
	2 Information Gathering and Analysis	• Assemble sources of information • Identify and analyze values and pressures • Identify management plan priorities • Consider park development concept • Develop and communicate background document	Background Document	Review and provide direction on the background document
Design	**3 Developing Management Direction**	• Develop management objectives • Confirm park classification • Confirm Nodal Park classification • Develop park zoning • Consider Bruce Trail placement • Consider park development concept • Develop management plan options • Identify effectiveness monitoring requirements • Communicate management plan options	Management Plan Options	Review and provide direction on: • Classification • Nodal Park • Zoning • Bruce Trail placement • Management plan options

Component	Management Planning Stage	Key Actions	Document Developed	MNRF and NEC Engagement
Finalize and Endorse	**4 Finalizing the Management Plan**	• Finalize purpose and vision statement • Finalize management plan policies • Develop park development concept • Finalize the draft management plan • Circulate draft management plan to NEC and MNDMNRF for review • Incorporate NEC and MNDMNRF comments • Submit for internal agency review/ approval	Draft Management Plan	Review and provide direction on the draft management plan

	5 Endorsement and Approval	• Submit management plan for:
		  • Endorsement by the NEC
		  • Approval by the MNDMNRF
			Final Management Plan	Consider final management plan for endorsement and approval

Implement, Evaluate and Learn	**6 Implementation of the Management Plan**	• Develop work planning • Initiate management plan implementation • Consider development activity and required NEC Development Permits • Implement park development concept	Work Plan	NEC to review proposed development that may require a NEC Development Permit
	7 Monitoring and Evaluating Management Plans/Initiating Management Plan Amendments	• Implement effectiveness monitoring • Evaluate management actions • Consider management plan amendment process	Management Plan Amendments (as needed) Reporting on monitoring (as needed)	NEC and MNDMNRF to consider proposed amendments

Stages

Stage 1: Scoping and Defining the Planning Project

This stage involves:

- Initiate management planning
- Identify planning team
- Review existing information
- Define the planning project
- Determine the planning area and complexity
- Determine if grouping applies
- Develop vision and purpose statements
- Consider alignment with other planning processes

Documents Developed

- Terms of Reference
- Involvement strategy

Scoping identifies the main opportunities and issues to be addressed and the proposed time frame to complete the management plan.

Scoping also helps define what the project will and will not deliver (i.e., what is in or out of scope) and influences the project's success.

1.1 Initiate Management Planning and Terms of Reference

1.1.1 Terms of Reference

The terms of reference is an effective tool that will guide agencies through the planning process. There is no requirement to publish or externally consult on the Terms of Reference; however, initiating a community or stakeholder advisory committee may be helpful at this stage if the planning process and/or anticipated issues are complex.

The Terms of Reference may contain the following content:

- Planning team membership, roles and responsibilities
- Existing information
- Planning context, including:
  - Planning area
  - Level of planning complexity (e.g., development considerations)
  - Where alignment with other planning processes is possible
  - Engagement approaches.

The Terms of Reference may also include a project schedule detailing specific tasks and timelines for staff, and a budget outlining costs and resourcing for the project.

Terms of Reference Resource:

- Appendix B Terms of Reference Template

Cootes Paradise Sanctuary

1.1.2 Identify Planning Team

A planning team should be identified for all planning projects. For the purpose of this document, the planning team is defined as a group representing the agency whose members work collaboratively to develop a management plan for a park or open space. The planning team is responsible for completing the work associated with the planning process.

The planning team brings skills and expertise, such as:

- Knowledge of the NEPOSS planning process
- Specific knowledge of the park or open space (e.g., values and pressures)
- Technical skills, such as analytical and Geographic Information System (GIS) skills
- Knowledge of ecological processes and functions, and
- Knowledge of the operation of the park or open space and associated issues.

Using an integrated approach, the planning team would typically include (but is not limited to):

- Planner
- Biologist or ecologist
- Landscape architect
- GIS technician
- Park or open space manager
- Team lead.

While all team members may not be involved in every step of the process, the above composition is recommended as a minimum to ensure that various perspectives and expertise are represented throughout the planning process and can be engaged as needed. The planning team membership and roles can be documented in the Terms of Reference.

An Advisory Team (part internal and part external) may provide additional expertise, specific knowledge and/or regulatory insight and may include:

- MNDMNRF Program staff
- MNDMNRF District staff
- NEC staff
- Municipal/city representative
- Indigenous community and organization representative
- Stakeholder representative(s) (e.g., local naturalist club, climbing club).

It should be noted that this is a guidance document; it is the agency's prerogative to develop an Advisory Team.

Early engagement with regulatory agencies (e.g., conservation authority, municipality/city, NEC, and the MNDMNRF) may be beneficial to discuss the management planning process (e.g., classification, grouping, and complexity), proposed development and activities, and existing issues. Developing an Advisory Team will depend on the park or open space and what is being proposed.

1.1.3 Review Existing Information

Reviewing existing information will help the planning team define the planning project. Examples of information may include:

- Existing management plan and any subsequent adjustments and/or amendments
- Maps of the area
- Best available aerial photography or imagery
- Information from best informed people.

The formal assembly of background information begins in Stage 2 and continues throughout the management planning process. The Scoping Stage will guide and support the information gathering phase of Stage 2. The Scoping Stage and the Information Gathering Stage are often completed at the same time. See Table 4 on page 38 in Stage 2, Information Gathering and Analysis, for a list of information sources and examples.

1.2 Define the Planning Project

1.2.1 Determine the Planning Area

Determine which parks or open spaces are included in the planning project. The planning area is the extent of the boundary/boundaries of the park and/or open spaces, including recommended additions and/or deletions.

1.2.2 Consider if Grouping Applies

The concept of **grouping** allows for the development of a management plan for multiple park(s).

As part of defining the planning project, the planning team should look at whether grouping is appropriate. Grouping may take one or two approaches:

1. **Single management plan for multiple parks:** Development of one management plan, as part of one planning project that applies to more than one park or open space.
2. **Multiple management plans for multiple parks:** Development of separate management plans, as part of one or multiple planning projects, that apply to each park or open space.

Grouping can help build efficiencies in the management planning process by:

- Streamlining engagement
- Lowering project costs
- Reducing redundancy and work efforts and
- Potentially facilitating landscape level planning.

Identify the extent of the park or open space (including location and boundary maps) in the Terms of Reference. In the case of a grouped management plan, identify all parks or open spaces and provide the rationale for grouping in the Terms of Reference.

Considerations for grouping or not grouping are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Considerations for Grouping or not Grouping Parks or Open Spaces

Grouping Parks or Open Spaces	Not Grouping Parks or Open Spaces
Connectivity—parks or open space in proximity or with a shared boundary Ownership—although grouping may occur between one or more agencies, consideration should include agency approval processes and land management protocols. Environmental—common environmental features, ecological functions or same eco-district Community of interest—common public or stakeholders, issues, values, uses Administrative—complementary classification and similar zoning schemes Management intent—common management policies Level of service Complexity—similar level of planning complexity	Complexity—different or multiple issues, high profile or high level of contentiousness Isolation—physically, ecologically or socially distinct from other protected areas Management intent—distinct management policies Timing—potential risk that one park or open space may compromise progress of other grouped parks or open spaces areas

1.2.3 Determine the Preliminary Planning Complexity

The planning team should determine the complexity of the project. Components that may influence the level of complexity include:

- Resource management
  - Potential for impact on earth science, life science, natural heritage features and areas, cultural heritage resources or other values
  - Potential for human or natural pressures
  - Potential or existing need for active management of values
- Proposed or existing development and/or activities
  - New decisions may be required to deal with complex issues/proposals
  - Potential for impact on adjacent landowners
  - Need for new or revised zoning
  - Potential for impacts to values
- Existing values and pressures
- Level of Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholder and public interest
  - Recreational uses with many different user groups
- Indigenous communities and organizations interests and values are known, unknown or undocumented
- Conflicting park uses.

Practical considerations that may also influence planning complexity include:

- Grouping parks or open spaces or alignment with other applicable planning processes
- Change to land use designation or classification.

The level of planning complexity may influence the number of engagement opportunities. It should be noted that planning complexity is not necessarily related to operational issues such as staffing levels or budget.

1.2.4 Development Concept Consideration

The planning team may also want to consider the park and open space development concept for their management plan. This concept is a summary of the future condition of the park and open space that describes the long-term development outcomes. These outcomes can include development efforts such as infrastructure development that are identified either before or as an outcome of the planning process (e.g., Stage 2—Information Gathering and Analysis).

Planning teams are encouraged to consider the complexity of the planning project in Stage 1. This will inform the Terms of Reference and ensure the resources and engagement opportunities required for a planning project are understood. This also reduces the likelihood that the level of complexity may need to change.

NEC Development Permit and Exemption Resources:

- Review Section 6.3 (Development in the NEPOSS) and Appendix D (NEC Development Permit Process)
- Review the Regulation: Ontario Regulation 828/90
- Contact the Niagara Escarpment Commission

1.3 Develop Purpose and Vision Statements

At this point in the planning process, the planning team should identify the preliminary purpose and vision statements. The purpose and vision statements will be revisited in Stage 4—Developing Management Direction of the management planning process to confirm the final direction of the management plan.

Developing the preliminary purpose and the vision at this stage helps to focus the information collection, analysis and discussion during subsequent stages on the most important values and pressures in a park or open space.

1.3.1 Purpose Statement

The **purpose statement** describes why the park or open space was established and how it contributes to the NEPOSS.

When developing the purpose statement, consider the following:

- Does a purpose statement already exist?
  - If so, does it reflect the intent of the park or open space? (Consider the classification and description in Appendix 1 of the NEP)
  - Is it still relevant?
- Why was the park or open space created and what is its role in the NEPOSS?
  - What earth science features, ecosystems, landform-vegetation associations, natural, cultural, recreational or Indigenous site values contributed to the creation of or are present in the park or open space?
  - What ecosystem functions exist in the park or open space that may contribute to the integrity of the ecosystems at various scales (landscape, community or species)?
  - What direct use, indirect use and non-use values does the park or open space provide?
- Were partners involved in the creation of the park or open space? If so, did they have specific reasons for its protection?
- Is there anything unique or distinctive about the park or open space (e.g., natural heritage features and areas or rare communities or species)?
- If grouping, what do all the parks or open spaces have in common (i.e., why were they grouped—ecological, social, economic or administrative reasons)?
- If grouping, each park or open space may have different purpose and vision statements.

An example of components that may form part of a purpose statement:

- Represents an old-growth hemlock forest
- Establishes a long-term ecological research site
- Provides sustainable traditional outdoor heritage activities
- Provides sustainable recreation opportunities, including an established trail network such as the Bruce Trail and mountain biking.

1.3.2 Vision Statement

The **vision statement** builds on the purpose statement and provides additional perspective on the park or open space and its desired future state. The vision statement should reflect the unique components specific to the park or open space.

When developing a basis for the vision statement, consider the following:

- Does a vision statement already exist from a previous planning exercise?
  - If so, is it still relevant?
- What is the current condition of the park or open space and its values? Have values been affected under previous or current management direction?
- Are there any advisory groups or partners that have a vision of the desired state of the park or open space?
- Are there any interested Indigenous communities and organizations or stakeholders or people who may have an interest and should be involved in developing the vision statement?
- What ecological, cultural, social or economic perspectives may be relevant?

An example of the components that may form part of a vision statement:

- Long-term protection of natural heritage features and biodiversity
- Opportunities for and management of existing recreational activities, land uses and traditional uses of the area in a sustainable manner.

Bruce Peninsula National Park

1.4 Consider Alignment with Other Planning Processes

Alignment means meeting the requirement of the park or open space planning process and other applicable processes through different planning mechanisms at the same time. Consider whether there are other process requirements that could be aligned with the management planning process, which may include but is not limited to:

- NEC Development Permits
- NEC Development Permit Exemptions
- Municipal or conservation authority permits
- Planning Act requirements
- Boundary adjustments
- Conservation land tax incentive program
- Managed forest tax incentive program
- Environmental assessments
- Cultural Heritage assessment (if required, in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Heritage Properties).

Note: A NEC Development Permit must be obtained prior to any other approvals.

The alignment of processes may have many benefits, including:

- Streamlining engagement of Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders and the public
- Ensuring appropriate decisions are made simultaneously
- Lowering project costs
- Expediting the management planning process.

Two key principles apply when aligning processes:

- Planning material (e.g., notices, advertisements) should state if alignment of processes is occurring.
- The requirements of all processes (e.g. legislative, policy, regulatory) must be met.

In some cases, it may not be beneficial to align the planning processes. Careful consideration of what could be aligned should take place to avoid substantial increases to project complexity or the potential for processes to be delayed. Processes that will be clear and easy for the public to understand should be used.

Caledon Hills Bruce Trail

1.5 Develop an Engagement Strategy

Part 3.1.5.2 of the NEP directs NEPOSS agencies to undertake consultation (herein referred to as engagement) during the management planning process, and to consider comments received in the development of the management plans. The planning team should, in advance of engagement, discuss where, when and how engagement may take place. This advance planning can be documented in an engagement strategy, which will help the planning team create a transparent, balanced and meaningful approach to engagement.

Engagement Resources (Appendix C):

- Engagement Strategy Template
- Best Practices for Indigenous Community and Organization Engagement
- Engagement Techniques

Developing and implementing an engagement strategy creates opportunities for Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders and the public to participate and provide input in the management planning process. Such input is an important part of planning during Stage 2, Information Gathering and Analysis, as well as during Stage 3, Developing Management Direction.

Engagement needs are unique and should be designed to meet the needs of the planning initiative. The number and type of engagement opportunities may be determined by the level of planning complexity. While engagement may take different formats (e.g., online surveys, open houses, workshops), each should provide open and transparent opportunities for input and access to planning process information.

An engagement strategy may include:

- Intended audiences
- Anticipated audience interests and concerns
- Projected schedule of engagement
- The approaches and tools to reach the intended audiences
- Potential partnerships and opportunities for collaboration
- Milestones and associated timelines.

Cootes Paradise Sanctuary

For agency planning teams, the main benefit of gathering input and exploring different viewpoints is to help make balanced planning decisions that support the sustainable long-term management direction of the park or open space.

Consistent communication also builds strong relationships, which are critical for the implementation and long-term success of planning initiatives.

The objective of engagement is to provide opportunities for meaningful input from Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders and the public using the following strategies:

- Providing opportunities for engagement throughout the planning process
- Providing opportunities to review planning documents
- Facilitating opportunities to incorporate diverse viewpoints and knowledge about parks and open spaces by:
  - Understanding the interests of Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders and the public related to the planning project
  - Promoting understanding of NEPOSS areas
  - Building relationships and support for the planning process
  - Providing feedback on how the results of engagement have been considered.

1.5.1 Identifying Potential Audiences

A wide range of audiences may be interested in the planning process and may include:

- Parties involved in the management of the park or open space
- Interested stakeholders and local user groups (e.g., schools, colleges, universities, local interest groups, local outdoor recreation clubs)
- The Bruce Trail Conservancy
- Commercial operations potentially affected by the park or open space
- The immediate community—people who live in, near or around the park or open space (suggest contacting residents within 120 metres of the park or open space to be in alignment with the NEC Development Permit circulation)
- Local elected officials (City/Town Councillors)
- Approval authorities and planning agencies, such as:
  - Niagara Escarpment Commission
  - Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry
  - Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries (MHSTCI)
  - Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks (MECP)
  - Upper- and lower-tier municipalities
  - Local conservation authorities.

1.5.2 Consider Anticipated Interests

Based on the list of potential audiences, brainstorm known and potential interests and concerns. This information can come from a variety of sources, including:

- Information analysis throughout the planning process
- Previous engagement activities
- Environmental scans
- Evolving and emerging trends in parks and open spaces
- Issues that arise in other parks and/or on the adjacent landscape.

Consider the following list of possible planning topics:

- Values and pressures associated with:
  - protection
  - recreation
  - natural or cultural heritage appreciation
  - commercial use
  - scientific research
  - Indigenous community and organization interests
- Potential development and infrastructure proposals (e.g., campgrounds, visitor centres, trails)
- Planning processes and permit requirements
- Potential resource management (e.g., management of wildlife populations)
- Adjacent land uses
- Social, economic, cultural and environmental concerns
- Potential conflicts between audiences.

Anticipating reactions will help to gain an understanding of the audiences and determine effective and appropriate engagement approaches specific to each audience.

1.5.3 Early Engagement

Early engagement may occur prior to initiating a planning project during the scoping stage. It is intended to help gather information, determine interests and build a foundation of communication and help identify appropriate engagement approaches.

Early engagement may be appropriate in the following circumstances:

- Where there have been previous commitments
- Where there are specific interests in a park or open space
- To seek expertise.

Early engagement is determined by the agency and the unique management plan circumstances.

1.5.4 Comment Management

Throughout engagement, all discussions with and comments received from Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders and the public should be recorded, along with:

- Comment contributor (e.g., community resident, stakeholder) and when it was received
- How input was considered during the decision-making
- If and how input was incorporated into management direction
- The rationale for whether input was incorporated or not.

Bruce Peninsula National Park

1.5.5 Engagement Information to be Included in Planning Document

A summary of engagement should be included in the management plan, including:

- Information made available for public review
- Dates and location of public meetings (e.g., virtual town hall meetings, workshops)
- Participant summary (e.g., number and type of participants, such as community residents and stakeholders)
- Summary of key issues
  - Brief issue description
  - Range of solutions and alternatives that were considered
  - Issue outcome (e.g., agreed solution/no change if appropriate)

It is important to focus on the key issues, what people had to say about them, and how the management plan considered those concerns.

1.5.6 Scoped Engagement

Circumstances that may require future engagement include:

- Management plan implementation
  - NEC Development Permit
  - New or removed activity or use
- Proposed amendment (if required)
- Management plan revision.

Future engagement may be with all known participants or be scoped to those who have an interest in or will be affected by a proposed change.

Stage 2: Information Gathering and Analysis

This stage involves:

- Assemble information sources
- Assess information quality
- Identify and analyze values and pressures
- Identify management plan priorities
- Develop and communicate Background Document

Documents Developed

- Background Document

2.1 Assemble Sources of Information

Effective planning and management of parks and open spaces is dependent on the quality of the information collected to inform the management planning process. It is important that the information used to make planning decisions is the best available. What this means is that the information collected needs to be the most defensible, reliable, verifiable and representative information available at a point in time.

This stage of the management planning cycle is indispensable as it provides the background information and rationale used to make management planning decisions.

Queenston Heights

To inform a management planning process, information gathering is carried out over several stages of the management planning cycle, including:

Information Review (Stage 1)	Uses information to inform the scope of a management plan and to develop a Terms of Reference.
Information Gathering (Stage 2)	Advises the management planning process. Gathers and assesses information for relevance and identifies data gaps. Initiates a benchmark in the management planning process to allow planners to circle back and assess the baseline condition of values over time.
Effectiveness Monitoring (Stage 7)	Supports ongoing monitoring throughout the life of the management plan upon its implementation. Provides information on how well the management plan is meeting the identified management objectives.

2.1.1 Importance of Scope

A management planning process is only as effective as the information used to develop it. As such, a significant component of the process is ensuring that the information gathering stage is appropriately scoped. The scoping exercise (Stage 1) sets the framework for the type of information required to inform management plan decisions. Having the appropriate scope for information gathering also helps to ensure that resources used are being allocated efficiently and effectively.

In all management plans, regardless of complexity, the project scope needs to be drafted before information is collected. In turn, information needs to be collected before management plan priorities and objectives are made.

The scope of the management plan (planning area, complexity, purpose and vision statement) is used to establish the parameters within which information gathering will take place.

2.1.2 Determine Information Requirements

The information gathering stage can often be the most complicated part of the management planning process. Knowing what information to collect, when and where are critical questions. Information collected at this stage of the planning cycle serves to:

- Identify gaps and needs around data collection (e.g., what's missing?)
- Identify the natural, cultural, recreational and economic values associated with the park or open space, and determine which are within the scope of the management plan (what is important in the planning geography?)
- Identify what are the pressures (what might impact our values?)
- Inform management objectives (Stage 3)
- Define baseline conditions against which agencies can monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of management objectives (and make adaptations to the management plan as required)
- Provide information to Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders, and the public through a background document (Stage 2).

Bruce Peninsula National Park

Information used for management planning purposes should be defensible, reliable, verifiable and representative.

Focusing information needs can be complicated; however, it will help identify what information is the most relevant and will best support the planning project. In focusing information sources, consider the following questions:

- What is the purpose/vision of the park and/or open space (refer to the Scope Stage)?
- What types of known ecological, social or cultural heritage resources and values are represented?
- What are the adjacent land uses and potential pressures within the area?
- What is the ease of access (e.g., road, water, other) to the area?
- What are the main recreational or traditional uses of the area?
- What new recreational uses are being proposed?
- What type of infrastructure currently exists?
- What new infrastructure is being proposed?
- What are the social and economic benefits of the area and how might that impact management?
- What might be the impacts of climate change on the area?

2.1.3 Spatial Information

While the focus of the planning effort is on the park or open space, the planning team may also want to consider the broader landscape within which the area is situated. Some information may apply across the landscape, dependent on or independent of administrative boundaries (e.g., watersheds). This information can be used to describe activities on adjacent lands that may have impacts (positive or negative) on parks and open spaces, or that can be affected by activities within the park or open space. Compiling spatial information may also be key for future land securement opportunities.

2.1.4 Temporal Information

The duration of the management plan for the park and/or open space should be considered in the scoping exercise. Since many ecological, social, economic and cultural processes can occur over time, it is important to consider the temporal scale of the information required to inform a management plan (e.g., past and future surrounding urban development).

2.1.5 Assemble Information Sources

The planning team will be required to assemble and consider information at a variety of scales (spatial and temporal) as well as from a variety of sources.

Table 4 provides a list of various information sources that can be accessed.

Crawford Lake Conservation Area

Table 4: List of Information Sources and Examples

Information Source	Description/Example

Planning Resources	• Any existing management plan direction, including administrative updates and amendments
	• Applicable legislation, regulations and policy—consider what the policy context is and document any possible permitting requirements
	• Land use policy/planning documents (e.g., NEP, municipal official plans)
	• Natural Heritage Reference Manual
	• Niagara Escarpment Commission
	  • Development Permit Applications
	  • Visual Impact Guidelines
	• Ontario Heritage Tool Kit
	• Regional management direction (e.g., watershed management plans)
	• Significant Wildlife Habitat Technical Guide and Ecoregional Criterion Schedules

Data Resources	• Aerial photographs and/or imagery • Monitoring or research results, past and ongoing (e.g., academic, Environmental Non-Government Organization) • Make a Map: Natural Heritage Areas application • Natural Heritage features (e.g., wetlands, Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest) • Ontario Ecological Land Classification System • Species of conservation concern occurrences (Natural Heritage Information Centre) • Southern Ontario Land Resource Information System (SOLRIS) • Tourism Regions Ontario (Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries (MHSTCI) • Registered archaeological sites that may be close to the property (via MHSTCI)

Local Information Resources	• Citizen science data (e.g., iNaturalist, eBird, field naturalist)
	• Cultural Heritage Resources can be found at:
	  • municipal heritage registers
	  • archaeological management plans
	  • local archives
	  • public libraries
	• Local universities (e.g., University of Waterloo)
	• Studies of social and economic benefits (e.g., visitor use surveys)
	• Viewshed studies
	• Watershed studies

Community/ Stakeholder Resources	• Discussions with local Indigenous communities and organizations • Public and stakeholder input and interests • Naturalist groups, “friends” groups, trappers, hunters, anglers, non-government organizations, conservation authorities, conservation officers etc.

When compiling research results, the locations of known sensitive species and archaeological features observed and recorded should not be mapped or precisely identified in a publicly available document as per the requirements of the MNDMNRF and MHSTCI.

Note: Before any files or documents are made available to the public, their content should be thoroughly screened to ensure that data about known sensitive species and features is not included.

2.1.6 Assess Information Quality

Assessing the quality of the information gathered is an important part of the planning process. Missing or low-quality information may trigger the need to collect additional data. By reviewing the information sources gathered, the planning team can determine what the limitations of the information may be (e.g., unverifiable, outdated). While there is substantial information available for planning purposes, not all the information may be appropriate or required to make planning decisions.

A series of questions can be asked by the planning team to assist in determining the appropriateness of the data that has been assembled:

- Why was the information collected?
- When was the information collected?
- How was the information collected? (e.g., incidental or standardized methods)
- How was the information used? (e.g., issues data collection was addressing)
- At what scale was the information captured? Note that data collected at a scale that is different than the scale of the planning needs could lead to misleading conclusions and/or inappropriate decisions.

2.1.7 Identifying Values and Pressures

Collecting and analyzing information on values and pressures goes hand-in-hand. It is critical that the planning team collaborate during this step to provide in-depth knowledge and ensure that values and pressures are relevant to the scope of the management planning process (Stage 1).

2.1.8 Identifying Values

Values is a term used in a planning context to identify those features and activities that are important from an ecological, cultural, economic or social perspective.

When identifying values, the planning team should ensure that the values relevant to the management planning process are within the scope of the management plan. A planning area can have hundreds of values identified, so it is critical that the planning team is cognizant that the values collected correspond to the scope of the management plan. Planning teams are sometimes caught in the cycle of perpetual data collection, which can stall a management plan, particularly if the scope has not been well established early in the planning process (Stage 1).

Values may also include future outcomes that contribute to the park and open space development concept. The development concept may not exist yet, but there may be intention within the planning process (e.g., known infrastructure needs).

There are two types of values:

1. Tangible—values that are a discrete attribute or feature, such as a species occurrence, unique geological feature, public land access, cultural heritage resource, critical infrastructure or a recreational feature (e.g., the Bruce Trail).

2. Intangible—values that are conceptual, such as an experience, mental and physical health benefits of outdoor activity, or values that are spiritual in nature.

To assist in planning for parks and open spaces within the NEPOSS, values can be broken into categories relevant to the NEPOSS objectives (Table 5).

Table 5: Examples of Possible Values and Pressures Relevant to NEPOSS Objectives

NEPOSS Objective	Example of Values	Example of Pressures
To protect the Niagara Escarpment's natural heritage resources and conserve its cultural heritage resources	• Natural heritage values • Archaeological resources or areas of archaeological potential • Built heritage resources • Cultural heritage landscapes • Spiritual values • Ecosystem services • Protection from natural hazards (e.g., flooding, erosion)	• Development pressure • Incompatible land uses • Climate change
To provide opportunities for outdoor education and recreation	• Scenic landforms • Hiking/fishing • Mental and physical health benefits of being outdoors • Education and visitor centres	• Development pressure • Cost of outdoor recreation/ education opportunities
To provide for public access to the Niagara Escarpment	• Parking • Boardwalks • Trails	• High visitation • Incompatible land uses
To complete a public system of major parks and open spaces through land acquisition and master/management planning	• Lands adjacent to other NEPOSS or natural areas • Lands that feature Niagara Escarpment resources, cultural heritage resources, and/or recreational opportunities	• Increasing land prices • Competing land uses
To secure a permanent route for the Bruce Trail	• Bruce Trail access	• Landowner opposition • Increasing land prices • Competing land uses
To protect and enhance the natural environment of the Niagara Escarpment, including protection of natural heritage and hydrologic features and functions	• Ecological processes • Hydrological processes • Ecosystem services	• Climate change • Development (e.g., hardened surfaces, fragmentation)
To support tourism by providing opportunities on public land for discovery and enjoyment by Ontario's residents and visitors	• Tourism features and attractions (e.g., skiing, festivals) • Supporting infrastructure (e.g., visitor centres, parking lots, washrooms)	• Development pressure • Overuse, degradation of natural areas • Incompatible land uses
To provide a common understanding and appreciation of the Niagara Escarpment	• Spiritual values • Educational value • Traditional knowledge • Ecosystem services (e.g., mental/ physical health)	• Competing land uses • Development • Nature disconnect

NEPOSS Objective	Example of Values	Example of Pressures
To show leadership in supporting and promoting the principles of the Niagara Escarpment's UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve designation through sustainable park planning, ecological management, community engagement, environmental monitoring, research and education.	• Natural heritage values • Educational values • Research values • Traditional knowledge • Community development • Tourism features and attractions	• Competing land uses • High visitation

2.1.9 Priority Values

Priority values, both tangible and intangible, are the most significant to the park and open spaces.

Priority values may often be associated with the rationale behind why the lands were initially identified for protection, or how the area could contribute to the NEPOSS. Priority values are those values that are critical in contributing to the vision and purpose of the NEPOSS and should be at the core of the management planning process (e.g., management objectives and actions).

2.1.10 Competing Values

In some cases, values may compete or conflict with one another, with one value acting as a pressure on the other (e.g., a natural value such as cliff face and talus slope, and a recreational value such as rock climbing). In the case of competing values, planning teams will need to consider both from the perspective of the value and the pressure. Values and pressures should always be reviewed from the perspective of the purpose and objectives of the NEP, the NEPOSS objectives and other relevant legislation and regulations as well as the scope (vision and purpose) of the management plan being developed.

2.2 Identify Pressures

Pressures is a general term that is used in a planning context to identify any natural disturbance or anthropogenic activity or facility (including associated activities) that negatively impact a value.

When considering pressures, it is important to remember that they can be both tangible (e.g., erosion, overuse of trails, high park visitation) and intangible (e.g., disconnect with nature). To assist in planning for parks and open spaces within the NEPOSS, pressures can be broken into categories relevant to the objectives of the NEPOSS (Table 5).

As with values, it is important to ensure that pressures identified are relevant to the management planning process and are within the scope of the management plan. This becomes clear when considering the underlying cause of a pressure. Underlying causes should be considered and documented, as they have implications for the development of management actions (Table 6). For example, development may be an identified pressure on the value "natural cover" (Table 6). The underlying cause of development may be population growth and urbanization, which, though accurate, may be too far outside of the scope of the management plan for a management action to address. In this case, reconsidering the scope of the value and pressure would be recommended.

Table 6: Examples of How to Consider the Scope of a Value and Pressure

Priority Value	Priority Pressure	Underlying Cause	Possible Management Actions to address Pressure
Hiking Trail	Degradation of trail and surrounding habitat by increased visitation. Introduction of invasive species.	Soil compaction, root exposure, and erosion due to overuse. Off-trail visitor use.	Close trail Educate visitors Create new trail Close sections of trail Create trail borders
Natural Cover	Development	Population growth and urbanization	Scope of pressure too large to recommend management action (not feasible for a management action within the management plan to address population growth and/or urbanization).

2.3 Analyze Values and Pressures to Develop Management Plan Priorities

Once a list of values and associated pressures have been identified, this information needs to be examined to determine which values and pressures will become priorities for the management plan. A variety of methods exist for the prioritization of values and pressures. One of the most common methods is to complete a risk analysis. An example of a basic risk analysis framework using a ranking process can be found in Table 7.

A risk analysis allows planners to systematically evaluate values and determine the risk posed to those values as a result of the pressure identified. This is done by considering the impact (extent/severity/magnitude) of the pressure and the likelihood of that pressure occurring.

In many risk analyses, impact and likelihood are ranked from very high (catastrophic/certain) to low (insignificant/rare). At the end of the analysis, those priority values with pressures identified as having the greatest risk may be used by planning teams to develop a list of management plan priorities. Non-complex planning projects will typically have limited numbers of management plan priorities. The number of management plan priorities generally increases with the complexity of the project.

A risk analysis also functions as an effective tool to prioritize when there are limited resources or competing management priorities. It is in the planning team's best interests to rationalize why certain management priorities are being addressed first, particularly when there are competing priorities.

It is important to note that the planning team may have a good idea of what the management plan priorities will be prior to the information gathering stage (e.g., management board interest, stakeholder issues). It is still a good idea to complete a risk analysis to have a documented rationale to support those management plan priorities, and to provide information to guide the next steps in the management planning process.

Table 7: Example of a Basic Risk Analysis Framework

		Impact of Pressure on Value (Extent/Severity/Magnitude)				
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Likelihood of Pressure on Value	Certain	Moderate risk	High risk	High risk	Very high risk	Very high risk
	Likely	Moderate risk	Moderate risk	High risk	Very high risk	Very high risk
	Possible	Low risk	Moderate risk	Moderate risk	High risk	High risk
	Unlikely	Low risk	Moderate risk	Moderate risk	Moderate risk	High risk
	Rare	Low risk	Low risk	Low risk	Moderate risk	Moderate risk

2.4 Develop and Communicate Background Document

In some scenarios, particularly for complex planning processes, the information gathered and pressures and values analysis may be compiled into a background document. A background report is not required; however, it is encouraged as a useful tool to communicate information on values and pressures, and to provide rationale regarding how management plan priorities were established.

A background document allows easy access to the information that has been collected and examined to support the development of management plan priorities and to provide the rationale for the development of management objectives (Stage 3). Easy access to this information is also relevant for future management planning direction when considering amendments or revisions to the management plan (Stage 7), as well as for communication (e.g., engagement), particularly in situations where there is a high level of interest and/or contention.

In some cases, it may be relevant to communicate/share a background document with interested Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders and the public prior to progressing further in the planning process. The background document should be directed to the MNDMNRF and the NEC for review (see Table 2: Management Planning Process).

Stage 3: Developing Management Plan Direction

This stage involves:

- Determine key outcomes and options for management action
- Identify performance indicators for effectiveness monitoring
- Develop management plan objectives
- Consider Nodal Park classification
- Consider park classification and zoning
- Consider Bruce Trail placement
- Communicate proposed management plan objectives, park classification & park zones

Documents Developed

- Management Plan Options

This stage of the planning process allows the planning team to use the management plan priorities that were identified in Stage 2. The next step in the management planning process will be to use this information to develop management objectives and establish the park classification and zones that will form the basis of the draft management plan.

3.1 Key Outcome and Options for Management Action

The next step in the management planning process is to determine what the key outcomes are for the management plan priorities, and what actions will be taken to achieve those outcomes.

A **key outcome** refers to the desired conclusion of a management plan priority, when a pressure on a priority value has been addressed. A key outcome can be achieved through the implementation of an effective management action.

Each management plan priority should have a key outcome identified, which can be documented (Table 8) to inform the management objective-setting process.

Actions can be identified through a step-by-step process that builds on the information gathered in Stage 2 and identifies possible actions to achieve a key outcome for a management plan priority (Table 8). Taking a systematic approach to identifying actions allows the planning team to:

- Consider relationships between values and pressures
- Demonstrate transparency in decision-making
- Rationalize decisions through documentation
- Communicate complex topics.

Evaluation of the proposed actions will ensure they use resources effectively, support sound management practices and assist in prioritizing actions as options. When evaluating actions, consider the SMART (**Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound**) approach as a general guide:

Kelso Conservation Area

SMART Guide	
Specific	Can the action be clearly defined?
Measurable	Is the action measurable in qualitative or quantitative terms to determine effectiveness over time/space?
Achievable	Is the action achievable within available resources (e.g., funding, staff, technology)?
Relevant	Is the action relevant to the underlying cause of the pressure; to the target audience? Is the action linked to management practices and is it scientifically credible?
Time-Bound	Is the action sensitive to changes within the appropriate time frame (e.g., horizon of the management plan)?

In many cases, a suite of management actions is considered prior to selecting a preferred management action to achieve a key outcome. Options may be required if a management plan is complex or contentious and/or resources are limited. Options, particularly for complex planning processes, allow the planning team and external audiences to select the best management action to address a management plan priority. Table 8 demonstrates how to consider options for management actions.

Kelso Conservation Area

3.2 Identify Performance Indicators for Effectiveness Monitoring

Effectiveness monitoring describes spatial and/or temporal monitoring programs that can be implemented to determine if management actions are effective in achieving management objectives (e.g., addressing the underlying cause of the pressure on a value and reducing the likelihood of risk).

Monitoring programs often focus on monitoring the condition of a value (e.g., presence/absence of a species over time, annual visitor attendance, seasonal use of infrastructure) or the status of a pressure (e.g., erosion due to trail use) in association with the implementation of an action. To do this, a monitoring program is built around a performance indicator that can be measured over time to observe if a management action is effective and if management objectives are being met.

Building in a way to monitor the effectiveness of management actions using a performance indicator is good planning practice. The planning team should consider if and how the effectiveness of management actions can be monitored, along with the level of resources required to support monitoring. Table 8 provides an example of a basic framework that considers performance indicators in the identification of options for management action, under the category "Measurable." Other more specific considerations for identifying performance indicators that are used in an effectiveness monitoring program include:

- Literature and best available information to support the monitoring program
- Spatial/temporal extent of the monitoring program (e.g., area where monitoring will take place, duration of the monitoring program)
- Data management and analysis required
- Specific skill set required (e.g., GIS analysis, statistics, specific ecological/geological knowledge)
- Resources to support monitoring (e.g., staff time, financial support).

The information generated from effectiveness monitoring will be used to inform the planning process about how successful a management action has been at achieving its intended outcome. It is important that an effectiveness monitoring program is defensible, reliable, verifiable and representative.

Table 8: Example of a Basic Framework That Can Be Used to Identify and Prioritize Options for Management Action

Priority Value	Hiking trail
Priority Pressure and Key Outcome	Degradation of trail and surrounding habitat. Key outcome is to slow and reverse degradation of trail and surrounding habitat due to overuse.
Underlying Cause(s)	High use and off-trail hiking causes soil compaction, root exposure, and erosion.
Risk	High likelihood of pressure on value, high impact of pressure on value = very high risk

Evaluate Proposed Actions using SMART					
Specific	**Measurable (Performance Indicators)**	**Achievable**	**Relevant**	**Time-Bound**	**Suitable Option**
Proposed Action: Educate visitors (e.g., do not go off trail, impacts of trail use)					
Clearly defined	Survey visitors (for understanding). Monitor habitat recovery over time (3 years).	Yes, resources would be required for education and monitoring tools (e.g., signs, education programs, surveys).	Action is supported by literature. Action allows for cautious (monitored) continued trail use.	Yes, can be completed within the timeframe of the management plan.	**Preferred Management Action**
Proposed Action: Temporarily (seasonally) close trail from use					
Not clearly defined; communication required to explain why trail is not closed or opened permanently.	Yes, can monitor habitat recovery over time.	Yes, some cost may be needed for education/signs.	May not address underlying cause off-trail hiking (soil compaction, root exposure and erosion) and would result in lost recreational opportunities and reduced visitation.	Yes.	Not an option if recreation is a main management objective.
Proposed Action: Reroute portions of trail to more appropriate location					
Somewhat clearly defined: new trail location would need to be rationalized.	Yes, monitoring over time of new and old trail components, recovery of old trail habitat.	Costly (trail construction and monitoring); would require alternate locations and rationale to support those locations.	Would address some issues of underlying cause at old trail location; may result in similar issues with new portions of trail depending on location selected.	Possible—would take time to select and rationalize new trail components and build.	Possible Management Action, but likely not feasible.

Evaluate Proposed Actions using SMART					
Specific	**Measurable (Performance Indicators)**	**Achievable**	**Relevant**	**Time-Bound**	**Suitable Option**
Proposed Action: Relocate entire trail					
Somewhat clearly defined: new trail would need to be rationalized.	Yes, monitoring over time of new trail and recovery of old trail habitat.	Very costly (new trail construction and monitoring); would require alternate locations and rationale to support those locations.	Would address issues associated with old trail location; may result in similar issues (underlying cause) with new trail depending on location selected.	Possible—would take some time to select and rationalize new trail location as well as build new trail.	Not an option (cost).
Proposed Action: Install infrastructure (e.g., fill, culverts, boardwalks)					
Clearly defined.	Yes, monitoring trail use over time and recovery habitat as a result of infrastructure.	Very costly depending on area (size, location) and type infrastructure.	Would address underlying cause: literature shows that installing trail infrastructure can have significant benefits for habitat by reducing impact.	Possible, would take some time to install new infrastructure.	Not an option (cost).
Proposed Action: Do nothing (status quo)					
Clearly defined.	Can continue to monitor trail over time.	Yes.	Does not address underlying cause.	Yes.	Not an option.

3.3 Develop Management Objectives

A **management objective** is a clear statement of intent that describes and rationalizes an action that will address a pressure on a value.

Management objectives can be high level (e.g., NEPOSS objectives) or they can be specific to values and pressures; for example:

- Values that represent the reason a park and open space system was created (e.g., outdoor recreation such as hiking, skiing)
- Species and their habitat
- Indigenous or cultural heritage value
- Sustainability of recreational activities (e.g., hiking trail maintenance)
- Opportunities for recreation and economic benefits
- Specific information needs (e.g., research) associated with the park and open space system
- Opportunities for education and public outreach.

An example of how a specific management objective can be created and rationalized is provided in Table 9. In this example, information collected in Stage 3 (Table 8) can be built upon using the SMART approach (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) to create a management objective that identifies:

- the value,
- the pressure to the value, and
- the intended action that will be taken.

The objective also identifies the performance indicator that will be used to ensure effectiveness of the management action.

Table 9: Example of How an Objective Statement Can Be Created Using the SMART Approach

Priority Value	Hiking trail
Priority Pressure and Key Outcome	Degradation of trail and surrounding habitat due to overuse. Key Outcome is to slow and reverse degradation of trail and surrounding habitat due to overuse.

Evaluate Proposed Actions using SMART					
Specific	**Measurable (Performance Indicators)**	**Achievable**	**Relevant**	**Time-Bound**	**Example of a Management Objective Statement**
Preferred Action: Educate visitors (e.g., do not go off trail, impacts of trail use)					
Clearly defined.	Survey visitors (for understanding). Monitor habitat recovery over time (3 years).	Yes, resources would be required for education and monitoring tools (e.g., signs, education programs, surveys).	Action is supported by literature. Action allows for cautious (monitored) continued trail use.	Yes, can be completed within the timeframe of the management plan.	To address erosion and trail degradation, over the next 3 years, implementation of a trail education program and improved signage will inform park visitors about the potential impact of use on trail ecosystems. An education program will support the prevention of erosion, soil compaction and root exposure while allowing for continued trail use within the park and open space. **Effectiveness of the education program will be monitored over 3 years through visitor surveys and habitat recovery monitoring.**

There are nine NEPOSS objectives for parks and open spaces identified in the NEP (Part 3.1.1), five of which are referenced in Table 10. Objectives for the management plan should be consistent with and address one or multiple NEPOSS objectives.

Table 10: Example of a Management Plan Objective That Addresses One or More NEPOSS Objectives

Relevant NEPOSS Objective	Management plan objective statement (from Table 9)
To protect the Niagara Escarpment's natural heritage resources and conserve its cultural heritage resources.	To address erosion and trail degradation, over the next 3 years, through the implementation of a trail education program and improved signage. These initiatives will inform park visitors about the potential impact of use on trail ecosystems. An education program will support the prevention of erosion, soil compaction and root exposure while allowing for continued trail use within the park and open space. Effectiveness of the education program will be monitored over 3 years through visitor surveys and by monitoring habitat recovery.
To provide opportunities for outdoor education and recreation.	
To provide for public access to the Niagara Escarpment.	
To protect and enhance the natural environment of the Niagara Escarpment, including protection of natural heritage and hydrologic features and functions.	
To support tourism by providing opportunities on public land for discovery and enjoyment by Ontario's residents and visitors.	

3.4 Nodal Parks

Nodal Parks are focal destination areas that promote the Escarpment's unique landscape diversity by providing orientation, education, interpretation and/or recreation opportunities.

3.4.1 Nodal Park Classification

The Nodal Park classification should be considered when a management plan is being developed, amended or revised. Information gathered in the Background Document (Stage 2) should be used to provide rationale for Nodal Park classification. When looking for criteria to support classification, consider how the area contributes to the Escarpment's unique landscape diversity (see Geographic Representation), provision of orientation, education, interpretation and/or recreational opportunities (see Unique Nodal Parks). A Nodal Park classification may be considered for a Natural Environment, Recreation, Cultural Heritage, Escarpment Access or Resource Management Area park or open space.

Considerations may include:

- Is there an opportunity to provide orientation, education, interpretation, and/or recreation?
- Can the park support moderate to high visitation?
- Is there existing infrastructure to support the visitation?
- How will visitation impact natural heritage features and cultural heritage resources?
- How are or will these resources be protected/conserved?
- What design modifications may be considered to minimize the impact of natural heritage features and cultural heritage resources?

3.4.2 Unique Nodal Parks

Each Nodal Park is unique. Nodal Parks may vary in their delivery and support of orientation, education, interpretation and/or recreation. The Nodal Park should reflect this, with consideration to its:

- location and landscape
- natural heritage features and areas
- cultural heritage resources
- recreation opportunities
- values and pressures
- supporting infrastructure (existing and proposed), and
- community and stakeholder interests.

3.4.3 Key functions of Nodal Parks:

Orientation: Tell visitors where they are in relation to other parks, open spaces, trails, natural heritage features, cultural heritage resources and points of interest.

Education: Support an understanding of the Niagara Escarpment and its natural heritage features and cultural heritage resources.

Interpretation: Familiarize visitors with the features of the park or open space through programming or visual displays.

Recreation: Identify and provide information on how to participate in nearby Escarpment recreational activities. This may also include providing recreational opportunities appropriate to the park or open space lands.

3.4.4 Geographic Representation

Each geographic segment of the Escarpment, as defined by the NEP Maps (1 to 9), may include one or more Nodal Parks based on areas that are most representative.

The following list identifies the current Nodal Parks:

- Bruce Peninsula National Park
- Inglis Falls Conservation Area
- Mono Cliffs Provincial Park
- Terra Cotta Conservation Area
- Crawford Lake Conservation Area
- Cootes Paradise Sanctuary
- Dundas Valley Conservation Area
- Balls Falls Conservation Area
- Queenston Heights (Brock's Monument)

3.4.5 Modifications to the List of Nodal Parks

Nodal Parks may be added to or removed from the existing list of Nodal Parks through recommendation by:

- A NEPOSS agency
- The NEPOSS Council
- The Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry, or
- The Niagara Escarpment Commission.

A proposed addition or removal does not require an amendment to the NEP, provided that supporting rationale is directed to the MNDMNRF and the NEC. Supporting rationale may include:

- Consistent with the NEPOSS objectives
- Consistent with the Nodal Park concept
- Able to support the key functions, including orientation, education, interpretation and/or recreation opportunities.

Information gathered in the Background Document may be used as a resource to develop supporting rationale.

3.4.6 Engagement

The agency should engage Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders and the public in the proposed addition or removal of a Nodal Park. The engagement may be part of the management planning process when the management plan is developed, amended or revised.

3.4.7 Permitted Uses in Nodal Parks—Facilities and Functions

To support and enhance their educational and administrative role in NEPOSS, Part 3.1.6.2 of the NEP directs that Nodal Park facilities may include:

- Buildings or facilities (e.g., visitor centre, administrative office space) appropriately scaled for the site
- Special purpose buildings with meals and overnight accommodations
- Literature promoting the Niagara Escarpment UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve and where the Nodal Park is located within the NEPOSS.

3.5 Classification

Classification: Organizes parks and open spaces into broad categories, each of which has objectives and characteristics as well as distinctive planning, management and implementation policies.

Classification is a key element in determining the general policy basis for park and open space management, which in turn determines the type and extent of activities (protection, recreation, cultural heritage appreciation, scientific research) that may take place in a park or open space. Classification establishes a management framework for individual parks and open spaces within the NEPOSS.

Parks and open spaces in the NEPOSS are required to assign a classification to their property, based on the predominant characteristics of the land. The classification serves as a guide to agencies in the management and use of a park or open space. Parks and open spaces, including their classifications, are listed in Appendix 1 of the NEP.

In this stage, the planning team builds on the information collected in the Information Gathering and Analysis Stage (Stage 2) to ensure that the park or open space is correctly classified.

The classification and management guidance are based on the natural heritage features, recreational uses and cultural heritage resources of the park or open space. Exceptions to the classification policy include:

- Lands owned by a federal agency; and
- Lands acquired specifically for the Bruce Trail Corridor (not listed in Appendix 1 of the NEP).

Where these lands are part of the NEPOSS, these NEPOSS agencies are encouraged to apply Part 3 of the NEP and the guidelines of this manual as a best practice.

Each classification serves a specific purpose and provides planning and management direction to agencies. Table 11 provides information on the classification and planning guidelines. The classifications include:

- Nature Reserve
- Natural Environment
- Recreation
- Cultural Heritage
- Escarpment Access
- Resource Management Areas.

3.5.1 Confirming or Changing Classifications

The inventories undertaken in the Information Gathering and Analysis Stage (Stage 2) will help agencies identify, confirm or update the park or open space classification.

When several agencies own and/or manage a park or open space, the agencies will determine the proposed classification through consensus. Classifications are subject to confirmation each time a management plan is prepared, reviewed or amended.

Changing classification:

- After completing the information gathering and analysis on values and pressures, the planning team may wish to propose a new classification that accurately reflects the characteristics of the park or open space.
- Agencies should provide supporting documentation and rationale that was identified in the Information Gathering and Analysis Stage (Stage 2) when recommending a new classification.
- Classification updates as a result of the planning process will not require an amendment to the NEP but shall be done in consultation with the NEC and the MNDMNRF.
- The NEC may endorse the recommended classification changes, and the MNDMNRF approves or amends them, along with the new/ amended management plan.
- The NEC is responsible for revising Appendix 1 and map 10 of the NEP to reflect changes to classifications.

Table 11: Parks and Open Space Classification

NEP Description	Management Guidance	Examples of Permitted Uses (Subject to Management Planning)
Classification: Nature Reserve		

Represent and protect the most sensitive natural heritage features and landforms along the Niagara Escarpment, e.g., provincially significant wetlands and provincially significant Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest.	Management practices will ensure that the features and values for which the reserve was established are protected.	• Access to reserves will not be widely promoted and activities will be limited to:
		  • Scientific research
		  • Education and interpretation
		  • Trails.
		• The minimum amount of facilities necessary to support these activities are permitted.
		• The following zones are not permitted in Nature Reserve Parks:
		  • Natural Environment Zones
		  • Development Zones
		  • Resource Management Zones.

Classification: Natural Environment		

Lands that are characterized by, and serve to protect, outstanding natural heritage features, cultural heritage resources, and scenic resources.	Management practices will ensure that the recreational opportunities and supporting infrastructure are compatible with the protection of the natural heritage features, cultural heritage resources, and scientific resources.	• Compatible activities may include:
		  • Hiking
		  • Day-use activities, including car-camping, in developed or accessible areas.

Classification: Recreation		
Landforms that enable or have been developed to provide a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities.	Management and development of resources are appropriate in order to provide the recreational environment and facilities required to support a wide variety of activities, which may be for day use only. The protection of natural heritage features and cultural heritage resources must be prioritized when considering the placement of intensive/potentially high-impact recreational activities. Activities must occur in appropriate zones identified in an approved management plan and be conducted in an environmentally sustainable manner. Recreation facilities and supporting infrastructure must be designed, developed, and utilized to minimize environmental impact.	• Outdoor recreational activities (e.g., hiking, mountain biking, skiing, rock climbing, zip lining, athletic fields) • Supporting infrastructure for recreational activities where appropriate • Visitor facilities that are designed with the intent of meeting the NEPOSS objectives • Visitor facilities with a retail component • Overnight camping facilities (e.g., campgrounds, temporary yurts, tents, lean-tos, unserviced camper's cabins) • Special purpose buildings that may include overnight accommodation and meals for guests.

NEP Description	Management Guidance	Examples of Permitted Uses (Subject to Management Planning)
Classification: Cultural Heritage		
Cultural heritage parks or open spaces are characterized by the distinctive features that represent the Escarpment's cultural heritage resources.	Cultural Heritage parks or open spaces are intended to conserve, enhance, and interpret the cultural heritage resources, including: • Built heritage resources • Cultural heritage landscapes • Archaeological resources/ areas of archaeological potential.	• Development and activities will be focused primarily on the conservation and interpretation of cultural heritage resources. • Provincial lands may require a strategic conservation plan under the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Provincial Heritage Properties (Ontario Heritage Act).
Classification: Escarpment Access		
Include small areas that complement the larger, and in some cases, more developed parks or open spaces by providing opportunities for public access to the Niagara Escarpment.	Escarpment Access parks or open spaces are intended to provide opportunities for public access to the Niagara Escarpment.	• Modest facilities to support day use activities at points of interest; examples include: • Trailheads • Boardwalks • Interpretive spaces • Fishing areas • Picnic sites • Lookouts • Scenic areas • Beaches.
Classification: Resource Management Area		
Resource management lands include public lands that are managed primarily to provide resource related benefits, such as: • Forest products • Fish and wildlife • Flood control.	Resource Management Areas are intended to provide many benefits, including: • Recreation opportunities • Protection of natural heritage features • Conservation of cultural heritage resources • Resource products. These areas may undergo more intensive resource management than other classifications.	• Uses of these areas may include: • Sustainable forest and wildlife management • Recreational activities such as hiking, cross-country skiing and appreciation of natural heritage features and cultural heritage resources.

3.6 Zones

Zones are a spatial approach that divides a park or open space into compartments where common objectives, intentions and direction for management can be established.

This provides area-specific policy direction that is distinct from the remainder of the park or open space. While the classification and broad management direction may apply across a park or open space, site-specific management (e.g., permitted uses, visitor experiences, and management activities) can be established through zoning to address localized needs. Zoning provides an approach to protecting features and managing pressures over the long-term.

Each zone represents an area that has distinct management needs based on differences in:

- protection of natural and/or cultural heritage values
- permitted uses
- recreational activities/pressures
- allowance for sustainable development.

Natural, cultural heritage and recreational values, and actual or potential pressures on those values must be understood when considering zoning needs for a park or open space.

The information collected in the Information Gathering and Analysis stage (Stage 2) is used to assign zones. Consideration should also be given to the underlying land use designation(s) of the NEP.

NEP Land Use Designations

10 maps support and accompany the NEP. The planning team should review the relevant NEP maps (1 through 9) to identify the underlying land use designation.

The NEP maps may be found on the NEC website. Map 10 identifies the parks and open spaces within the system.

There are six zone types in the NEPOSS, each of which serves a specific purpose and provides planning and management direction to agencies. Table 12 contains guidelines for zoning and planning. The six types of zone are:

- Nature Reserve Zone
- Natural Environment Zone
- Access Zone
- Cultural Heritage Zone
- Development Zone
- Resource Management Zone.

3.6.1 Developing New Zones

New zones may be established and applied in specific circumstances to resolve special planning or management plan considerations that cannot be accommodated by the zones described above. Agencies should provide the supporting documentation and rationale that was identified in the Information Gathering and Analysis Stage (Stage 2) when recommending a new zone. Considerations for a new zone may include:

- recreation uses (existing and proposed)
- values and pressures
- customized supporting infrastructure (existing and proposed), and
- community and stakeholder interests.

Creation of a new zone as a result of the management planning process will not require an amendment to the NEP but shall be done in consultation with the NEC and the MNDMNRF.

3.6.2 The Purpose of Zoning

Zones are intended to fulfill a variety of functions in a park or open space, including:

- Identification and recognition of the features and attributes (values).
- Confirmation of the appropriate location for activities (i.e., directing activities with higher impacts to the least sensitive areas and low-impact activities to areas that are more sensitive, if appropriate).
- Delineation of areas based on their requirements for management (e.g., management plan objectives).
- Standardization to support management objectives and actions, based on values (e.g., Nature Reserve Zones support protection of sensitive natural heritage features and cultural heritage resources).
- Balancing of public use with the preservation of the natural environment.

3.6.3 Zone Policies, Descriptions and Mapping

The development of zone mapping and zone policies is required for orderly planning, compatible development, and effective management of a park or open space. All management plans will include zone policies, zone descriptions and a zone map.

In alignment with NEP direction, the land use designations (Part 1 of the NEP) and the Development Criteria (Part 2 of the NEP) should be used as a guide in the zone planning process. The zone policies developed through the management planning process take precedence over land use designations in the NEP once they are approved (per Parts 3.1.5.1.3 and 3.1.5.3 of the NEP). Zone policies, descriptions, and mapping should not conflict with Part 1 and Part 2 of the NEP.

- **Zone policies**—These provide the management direction and permitted uses for each zone. The permitted uses in Table 12 can be customized through the planning process to meet the appropriate needs of the specific property. Management plan objectives to achieve key outcomes should be permitted within zones.
- **Zone descriptions**—These provide a rationale for each zone based on information collected in the Information Gathering and Analysis Stage (Stage 2). The approximate area (in hectares) of each zone should also be included in the zone description.
- **Zone map**—This provides a clear depiction of the identified zones and must include the park boundary, topographic features and existing infrastructure, such as buildings and park roads.

Dundas Valley Conservation Area

Table 12: The NEPOSS Zones

NEP Description	Management Guidance	Examples of Permitted Uses (Subject to Management Planning)
Zone: Nature Reserve		
Nature Reserve Zones include the most sensitive natural heritage features and areas that require careful management to ensure long-term protection.	Management guidance should protect and where possible enhance the natural heritage and hydrological systems within the Nature Reserve Zone. Zone policies should protect the most natural Escarpment features, valleylands, wetlands, and related significant areas.	Sustainable recreational activities that are supported by a detailed environmental review and that are identified as compatible with the natural heritage features and areas of the park or open space. Examples include: • Trails • Necessary wayfinding signs • Temporary scientific research • Conservation practices (e.g., tree maintenance, erosion control) • Minimal interpretive facilities (where justified).
Zone: Natural Environment		
Natural Environment Zones include scenic landscapes in which minimum development is permitted to support recreational activities that have minimal impacts on the Escarpment environment.	Management guidance should maintain and enhance the scenic resources and open landscape character of the environment. Natural Environment Zones may function as a buffer between Nature Reserve Zones and Development Zones, Cultural Heritage Zones or Access Zones. Natural Environment Zones are not permitted in Nature Reserve classified parks.	Sustainable recreational activities that have minimal impact on the Escarpment environment may be permitted. Examples include: • Trails • Wayfinding signs • Scientific research and supporting facilities • Backcountry campsites • Conservation practices • Interpretive facilities. Activities with minimal supporting infrastructure and that will have minimal impact on the Escarpment environment. Infrastructure required for accessibility or safety may be permitted where there is no feasible alternative.

Table 12: The NEPOSS Zones, continued

NEP Description	Management Guidance	Examples of Permitted Uses (Subject to Management Planning)
Zone: Access		
Access Zones serve as staging areas (e.g., trailheads, parking lots) where minimal facilities support the use of Nature Reserve Zones and relatively undeveloped Natural Environment and Cultural Heritage Zones.	Management guidance should support the use of and access to adjacent zones.	Infrastructure may be permitted to support: • Nature Reserve Zone • Natural Environment Zone • Cultural Heritage Zone. Examples include: • Roads • Wayfinding signs • Interpretive signs • Interpretive facilities • Trailheads • Parking lots • Visitor amenities, toilets, waste receptacles.
Zone: Cultural Heritage		
Cultural Heritage Zones include cultural heritage resources that require management to ensure long-term conservation.	Management guidance will ensure long-term conservation, enhancement and potentially restoration of cultural heritage resources: • Built heritage resources • Cultural heritage landscapes • Archaeological resources and/or areas of archaeological potential.	Development will ensure long-term conservation of cultural heritage resources. Examples of permitted uses include: • Education and visitor buildings • Trails • Interpretive signs or supporting infrastructure • Historical restorations, reconstructions or re-enactments.
Zone: Development		
Development Zones provide access, orientation, and operational facilities (e.g., visitor centres, maintenance buildings, parking lots) to support nature appreciation and recreational activities. This zone may include areas designed to provide facilities and supporting infrastructure for recreational purposes.	Management guidance should note that recreational uses and development may be accessory or secondary to the protection of natural heritage features and to the conservation of cultural heritage resources, depending on classification. Retail and visitor facilities should be appropriately scaled for the site. Facility development must be undertaken in a way that will minimize the impact on the Escarpment environment.	Examples of permitted uses that provide access, orientation and operational facilities to support nature appreciation and recreational activities include: • Educational and visitor buildings • Recreational infrastructure • Commercial/retail service facilities • Special purpose buildings that provide over-night accommodation (Permitted in Nodal Parks or Recreation Parks) • Research buildings • Maintenance buildings • Parking lots • Road networks.

Table 12: The NEPOSS Zones, continued

NEP Description	Management Guidance	Examples of Permitted Uses (Subject to Management Planning)
Zone: Resource Management		
Resource Management Zones provide for sustainable resource management; examples include: • forest management • fisheries management • watershed management • wildlife management • flood control.	Management guidance should support: • experimenting with alternative resource management practices • developing an understanding of ecosystem structures and functions • activating effective conservation and stewardship practices. Previously disturbed sites (e.g., retired quarries, retired agriculture fields) where active measures are being taken to re-establish natural vegetation may also be considered for this type of zoning. This type of zone may include land that has traditionally been managed under long-term resource agreements; examples include: • Forest management agreements • Agricultural leases. This zone should not be established in Nature Reserve Parks, provincial parks or in life science ANSIs, except as noted in Part 3.1.5 of the NEP.	Resource Management Zones may be used to demonstrate ecologically sustainable resource management practices. Examples may include: • research monitoring plots (e.g., permanent sample plots for growth/yield studies) • forest management • fisheries management • wildlife management • watershed management • flood control. The recreation uses of this zone are subject to park management planning.

Zoning Permitted Use Notes

The planning team may encounter situations where the future condition for an area may need to be considered regarding zoning. For example, when considering rehabilitation of an area, the area should be zoned to allow for the work that may be needed to establish the future condition rather than the completed future condition of the site. Once the work has progressed sufficiently to reach the desired condition, the area can be rezoned. This ensures that the zoning allows for the rehabilitation work to be completed and does not restrict or complicate necessary management actions. Rezoning an area once a condition is met can be included as an objective in the management plan (see Table 9).

3.7 The Bruce Trail

The **Bruce Trail** is the oldest and longest continuous footpath in Canada. It runs along the Niagara Escarpment, spanning more than 900 km of main trail and 400 km of side trails, from Queenston to Tobermory.

The NEP recognizes the Bruce Trail as an essential component of the NEPOSS, as the corridor provides continuous public access to the Escarpment and connects to most of the parks and open spaces (Figure 3, Bruce Trail Map). In alignment with NEPOSS objectives, the long-term goal is to secure a permanent corridor for the Bruce Trail along the Escarpment's entire length.

The **Optimum Route** is defined as the most desirable route for the Bruce Trail.

The Bruce Trail and the Optimum Route are developed, implemented and managed by the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) and its volunteers. The BTC is a charitable organization, a trail association and a land trust dedicated to establishing a conservation corridor along the Niagara Escarpment containing a public footpath known as the Bruce Trail.

3.7.1 Bruce Trail Placement

- The Bruce Trail is permitted in most park classifications and zoning areas.
- The BTC should work with agencies to determine if the agency lands can accommodate the Bruce Trail and Optimum Route.
- The process of final Bruce Trail and Optimum Route selection and land acquisition should include consultations with adjacent agencies.
- The BTC should receive approval from agencies that own or manage NEPOSS lands prior to placing or altering the Bruce Trail on their lands.

3.7.2 Bruce Trail Development and Implementation

- The Bruce Trail should be planned, designed, developed, maintained and managed in accordance with the NEP (Part 2 and Part 3) policies.
- The Bruce Trail should be implemented in accordance with the management agreements with agencies.

3.7.3 Bruce Trail Management

- The existing Bruce Trail should be identified in management plans.
- The Optimum Route of the Bruce Trail will be determined by the BTC and the landowner (where applicable) in accordance with the NEP.
- The Bruce Trail should be implemented in accordance with the management agreements with agencies.
- The BTC is responsible for planning, designing, developing, maintaining and managing the Bruce Trail corridor in accordance with the provisions of the NEP.
- BTC-owned and/or -managed lands, including easements, are reserved for pedestrian use only. On these lands, no other uses are permitted unless approval is provided by the BTC or where emergency access authorization by the landowner is granted.
- On agency lands through which the Bruce Trail passes, agencies are encouraged to designate the Bruce Trail portion as footpath only.

3.7.4 Land Stewardship Plan

The BTC staff prepare a Land Stewardship Plan for every property that is acquired. The Land Stewardship Plan includes:

- Three-season biophysical inventory (spring, summer, fall)
- Breeding bird survey
- Vegetation survey
- Species at risk survey
- Ecological land classification.

Land Stewardship Plans act as a guide and contain active recommendations for Land Stewards that work towards the preservation and restoration of their adopted property.

3.7.5 Partner Management Agreements

The BTC has management agreements with the Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT) for properties to which the OHT holds title but which the BTC manages. The BTC also has license agreements with agencies (conservation authorities, Ontario Parks, Parks Canada, etc.) where the Bruce Trail passes through their lands. The management agreements and license agreements are developed collaboratively between the BTC and the agency.

3.7.6 Bruce Trail Maintenance

Bruce Trail maintenance is coordinated and implemented by BTC volunteers through the Trail Development and Maintenance program. This program includes:

- Submission of semi-annual Trail Status Reports concerning the state of their trail section and any issues that need to be addressed.
- Completion of a five-year audit completed by a third-party volunteer.
- Audit reports that summarize results and identify issues with priority listing.
- Responsibility by each of the nine Bruce Trail Clubs for the design of new trail or re-routes and maintenance of the Bruce Trail (as per the Guide for Trail Workers) within their Club section (see Figure 3, Bruce Trail Map).
- Quality review provided by BTC staff to ensure sustainable trail routing.
- Coordination of applications for required NEC Development Permits led by BTC staff.

Bruce Trail Policies and Resources

NEP Part 2: Recreation Policies (trail design and location)

NEP Part 2: The Bruce Trail (overnight rest areas and access points)

NEP Part 3: Management Planning

Bruce Trail Reference Guide (Bruce Trail Conservancy)

3.8 Communicate Proposed Management Plan Objectives, Park Classification and Park Zones

The planning team may wish to communicate the draft management plan objectives, park classification and park zones to a broader audience to receive feedback on key outcomes, management actions, priority indicators, permitted uses and draft policies.

Fishers Pond

Figure 3: Bruce Trail Map

Stage 4: Finalizing the Management Plan

This stage involves:

- Finalize the draft management plan
- Consider park or open space development concept
- Direct draft management plan to NEC and MNDMRNF for review

Documents Developed:

- Draft Management Plan

The purpose of this stage in the planning process is to collate and finalize the purpose and vision statement (Stage 1), background information (Stage 2), and preferred management actions, objectives, park classification and zoning (Stage 3) into a written document providing management plan direction.

The final document should provide enough direction to:

- Manage the parks and open space system over the identified time frame
- Achieve the vision and purpose
- Meet identified management objectives for the management plan, while being consistent with the purpose and intent of the NEPOSS objectives.

4.1 Finalize Purpose and Vision Statement for Management Plan

Consider the purpose and vision statements that were developed in Stage 1 along with:

- The results of the values and pressure analysis (Stage 2)
- The identified management plan objectives (Stage 3), and
- The park classification and zoning exercise (Stage 3).

Confirm that the purpose and vision statements reflect the results of each of these stages in the management planning process, as well as input received to date through the engagement process, if applicable.

Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Area

4.2 Finalize the Draft Management Plan

Once the classification, zoning, objectives, vision and purpose statements are completed, the planning team can work on finalizing the draft management plan for the park or open space.

An example of a simple, comprehensive method for finalizing a management plan is to format the management plan in a manner that outlines how the vision and purpose statements support the management planning framework.

Table 13 provides an example of how the management plan can be presented to demonstrate the hierarchy of the management planning framework. This type of framework allows planners to ensure there is a logical flow in the management plan and to avoid common mistakes (e.g., failure to include a management action to achieve a management plan objective as a permitted use within a zone). This example may be applied for each zone, if there are multiple zones. By outlining the management planning framework in this way, it allows the planning team to:

- Identify zones where management plan objectives may overlap, and plan zone policies (e.g., permitted uses) accordingly.
- Ensure that management plan objectives are achievable within each zone (e.g., avoid the problem of a permitted use prohibiting a management action).
- Ensure that management plan objectives align under zone classification, park classification and the purpose and vision of the management plan.

Please note that this is one format for agencies to finalize management plans, and a more detailed format of this same principle is provided in Table 13.

Table 13: Example of a Possible Outline Demonstrating Management Guidance

Vision	Include vision statement for management plan		
Purpose	Include purpose statement for management plan		
Park Classification	Rationale for the park classification		
Park Zone(s)	Natural Zone		
Zone Policies, Permitted Uses and Activities	Include zone policies developed to identify the objective of the zone (e.g., To support safe, sustainable recreational use opportunities while protecting the natural environment.) Ensure permitted uses and activities are consistent with what is appropriate for the zone and classification and allow for completion of actions that support objectives.		
Priority Value(s)	**Hiking trail**	**Public Safety**	**Conservation**
Priority Pressure(s)	Degradation of trail and surrounding habitat due to overuse.	Risk to public safety on trails due to dead or dying trees (e.g., ash).	Habitat degradation due to presence of invasive species (e.g., dog strangling vine).
Action(s)	Education of visitors (e.g., do not go off trail, impacts of trail use).	Selective tree removal.	Selective treatment of invasive species in identified areas.
Objective(s)	To address erosion and trail degradation, over the next 3 years, implementation of a trail education program and improved signage will inform park visitors about the potential impact of use to trail ecosystems. An education program will support the prevention of erosion, soil compaction and root exposure while allowing for continued trail use within the park and open space. **Effectiveness of the education program will be monitored over 3 years through visitor surveys and by monitoring habitat recovery.**	Over the next 10 years, selective trees will be removed annually in order to reduce the potential threat to public safety.	Over the next 10 years, invasive species (e.g., dog strangling vine) will be removed using appropriate best management protocols from identified areas within the natural zone.

The finalized draft management plan should be an accessible document that is informative and easy to follow. The Management Plan Template in Table 14 provides guidance on the key components that a management plan should include, regardless of the complexity.

4.3 Park and Open Space Development Concept

> The **park or open space development concept** is a description that summarizes the proposed intended future of the park or open space.

The development concept is identified, considered, developed and implemented in the following stages:

Stage 1—Scoping

Stage 2—Information Gathering and Analysis

Stage 3—Developing Management Direction

Stage 4—Implementation.

Management plan priorities, zone classification and management plan objectives should align to consider the future condition of the park or open space. The concept should also address the future development needs identified in the planning process (e.g., need for a visitor centre, an accessible washroom or increased visitor capacity through improved trails and parking opportunities).

The following is a list of topics that may be included in creating the park or open space development concept:

- A description of the development concept for the park or open space and the location of proposed facilities and improvements.
- A map outlining the development concept, supplemented with additional maps, if needed, and supporting text.

Kelso Conservation Area

- In the case of agencies undertaking a phased development strategy, include:
  - Phased development maps and text for planned future development
  - Demonstrate what the park or open space will look like at each stage of the phased implementation process.

Please note that the above topic list is not exhaustive; agencies should customize the list to their unique management plan and development concept.

The park and open space development concept can either be a stand-alone section within the final management plan (Table 14, Management Plan Template), or if the planning team prefers, can be separate sections within each of the zone sections of the management plan.

4.4 Management Plan Template

The following Management Plan Template provides a guide for suggested content within a final management plan. Regardless of the complexity of the management plan, planning teams should consider including all of the following planning components.

Table 14: Management Plan Template

Management Plan Sections	Considerations
1.0 Introduction	Include a description of where the park or open space is located and a brief description of its unique features: • Area history • Size • Natural heritage features and cultural heritage resources • Adjacent properties • How it builds on natural corridors. Include visual aids to describe the planning area, which may include: • Regional maps • Property site maps • Aerial photographs • NEP designations. Include NEPOSS Park Classification. Include Nodal Park Classification (if relevant). Include Grouping (if relevant). Include alignment with other planning processes (if relevant).
2.0 Outline the Planning Process	Summarize the planning process, including steps followed and information in the Terms of Reference that informed the planning team. Consider including the Terms of Reference in the appendix.
3.0 Purpose Statement	Include purpose statement developed during management planning.
4.0 Vision Statement	Include vision statement developed during management planning.
5.0 Engagement Strategy	Include Engagement Strategy summary, which may include: • Information made available to Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders and the public • Engagement medium (e.g., social media, virtual/in-person meetings, workshops). • Meeting date(s) • Participant summary (e.g., number and type of participants) • Summary of key issues • Brief issue description • Range of solutions considered • Issue outcome.
6.0 Background Report	Include Background Report summary. Mapping of natural heritage features and areas, cultural heritage resources, recreational uses and existing and proposed infrastructure. Consider including the entire Background Report in the appendix.

Management Plan Sections	Considerations
7.0 Park Classification	Include rationale for the following: • classification • grouping (if relevant) • Nodal Park classification (if relevant).
8.0 Management Plan Zones	The most detailed component of the management plan; include for each zone: • Zone classification and rationale • Zone map • Bruce Trail placements • Relevant zone policies and permitted uses • Summary of zone values and management priorities • The management plan objectives for each zone, including the objective statement for each management plan priority.
9.0 Development Concepts	Include a description of the park or open space development concept. A map outlining the park or open space development concept and location of proposed facilities and improvements. In the case of agencies undertaking a phased development strategy, include: • phased development maps and text for planned future development • what the park or open space will look like at each stage of the phased implementation process.
10.0 Effectiveness Monitoring Plan	Outline the performance indicators and how they will be used to monitor the outcomes of the management plan objectives over time. Describe the resources required for effectiveness monitoring, as well as duration and methodology.
11.0 Implementation Work Plan	Outline projected annual work planning—the level of detail will be dependent on what the planning team establishes as necessary • effectiveness monitoring • proposed development • proposed NEC Development Permit and exemptions • proposed uses/activities. Describe how objectives will be met over time. Annual work plans can be included as an appendix to the document.
12.0 Endorsement and Approval of the Management Plan	Include record of endorsement and approval.
Appendices	Appendices as needed • Engagement Strategy • Background Report • Implementation Work Plan.

4.5 Initial Review

The draft management plan, once finalized, should be shared with the MNDMNRF and the NEC for initial review. Discussion with MNDMNRF and the NEC and comments from this review should be incorporated into the management plan before it is shared further.

4.5.1 MNDMNRF and NEC Review Considerations

MNDMNRF and NEC considerations when reviewing the draft Management Plan generally include:

- Conformity with the NEP policies.
- Consideration and support of the NEPOSS objectives.
- Alignment with the guidance of this manual.
- Understanding of how the park or open space supports the UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve Designation.
- Appropriateness of management plan objectives for the unique park or open space.
- Rationale supporting management plan decisions.
- Background information supports proposed development and uses.
- Meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders and the public has taken place.
- Implementation plan has been developed to identify when the proposed development and uses will be executed.
- Monitoring plan and performance indicators have been developed to determine the effectiveness of management actions.

4.6 Communicate the Draft Management Plan

Once this stage has been completed, the draft management plan can also be circulated for internal agency review, and to Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders and the public. This will be critical if Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders and the public have been involved in previous stages of development. Comments can be considered and incorporated as the draft plan is finalized and prepared for Endorsement and Approval (Stage 5).

Finalizing the Management Plan Resources:

Section 6.3.1 Development Permits and Development Permit Exemptions

Appendix D—NEC Development Permit Process.

City View Park

Stage 5: Endorsement and Approval

This stage involves

- Seek endorsement and approval of draft management plan

Documents Developed:

- Approval Statement

5.1 Management Plan Approval Process

Prior to submitting the draft management plan, the agencies are encouraged to consider and respond to the NEC and MNDMNRF comments on the draft management plan. This process will help identify and resolve any outstanding comments and/or resolve potential conflict with NEP policy conformity and/or issues with the management plan.

Prior to submitting the draft management plan for endorsement and approval, the NEC and MNDMNRF should have participated in the management planning process, and there should be agreement that the plan is ready to proceed to final approval.

What to Submit for Management Plan Endorsement and Approval?

The agency may submit the draft management plan digitally or provide physical/hard copies to the NEC and MNDMNRF. Physical/hard copies to include:

- Three (3) copies of the final management plan
- Three (3) copies of the approval statement.

Digital copies to include:

- Accessibility for digital signature.

Smokey Hollow

Approval Statements:

Prior to submission to the NEC and MNDMNRF, the approval statement should be either signed by the agency representative with approval authority or accompanied by a Resolution from the Conservation Board of Directors or Municipal Council. Approval statements should be brief and contain the following elements:

- A brief description of the park or open space
- Signatures of approval, and dates, or a dated Resolution supported by the Conservation Authority Board of Director or Municipal Council.

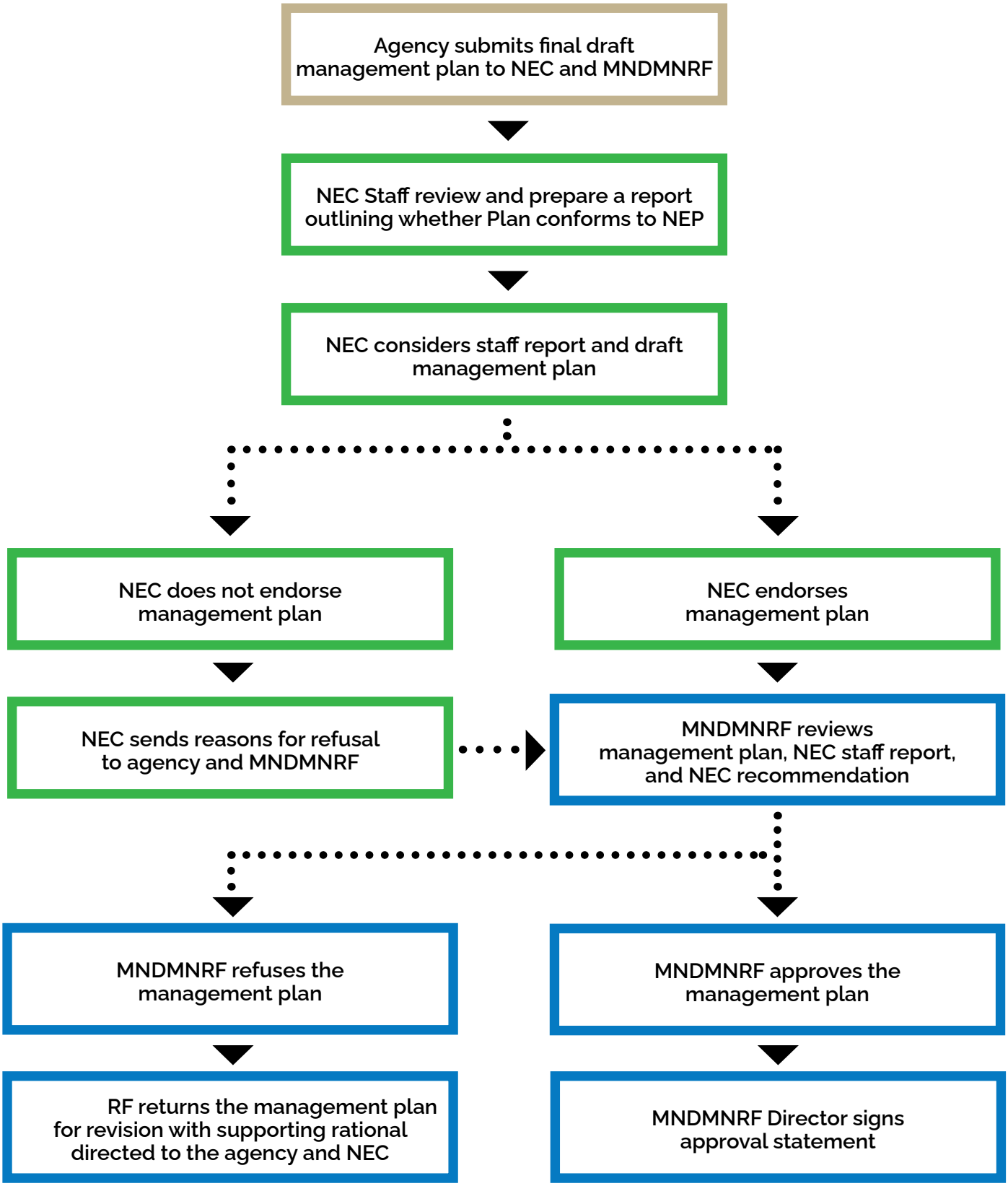
The approval statement should appear in all approved NEPOSS management plans (see Appendix F for the Approval Statement Template).

If NEC and/or MNDMNRF do Not Support Submitted Management Plan

- If both MNDMNRF and NEC do not support the submitted draft management plan, the management plan is returned to the agency with supporting rational and comments.
- If the NEC staff does not support the submitted draft management plan, the management plan and the NEC staff report will be presented to the NEC for consideration. If the draft management plan is endorsed by the NEC, it will be forwarded to the MNDMNRF for consideration of approval.
- Upon receipt of the NEC endorsed management plan, MNDMNRF will either approve the management plan or refuse the management plan, with comments directed to the agency and the NEC.

The NEP (Part 3.1.5.3) provides direction on the management plan approval process. The Niagara Escarpment Commission will endorse a Master/Management Plan, when it is not in conflict with the Niagara Escarpment Plan, before forwarding it to the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry for approval (see Figure 4. Management Plan Approval Process).

Figure 4: Management Plan Approval Process



5.2 Management Plan Approval Process for Other Government Bodies that Manage NEPOSS Parks

Ontario Provincial Parks

If Ontario Parks has developed provincial park management plans, they do not require approval under the NEP; however, management of these areas should be consistent with the objectives of the NEP. After the NEC and MNDMNRF review, the MNDMNRF may issue a letter stating that the management plan conforms to the NEP.

National Parks and Federal Lands

Lands held by a federal agency (e.g., Parks Canada) are not subject to provincial legislation. However, per Part 3.1.5.3.2 of the NEP, management of these areas should be consistent with the NEPOSS objectives. Federal agencies should provide the MNDMNRF and the NEC with copies of the draft park management plans for review and comment, as well as copies of the approved management plans.

Balls Falls Conservation Area

Stage 6: Implementation

This stage involves:

- Implement the management plan
- Communicate the management plan
- Consider proposed development permits and exemptions
- Consider new land additions

Documents Developed

- Work Plan

6.1 Implementing the Management Plan

Once the management plan is approved, the important task of implementing the management plan begins. This stage involves building awareness of the approved management plan and implementing the identified management plan objectives. In Stage 4 (Finalizing the Management Plan), it was recommended that the planning team incorporate their approach for implementation as a section within the management plan (Table 14).

At this phase, the planning team may dissolve or continue to be active in the implementation of the management plan. This is entirely dependent on the structure of the planning team/agency. From this point forward, reference for implementation will include both the planning team and/or the agency responsible for the management plan.

6.2 Releasing the Management Plan

After the management plan has been approved, it may be appropriate for the planning team and/or the agency to communicate that the plan is complete and readily available to Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders and the public. This communication may include:

- Posting the final document on the agency website
- Issuing a press release, and
- Posting the release on social media.

The planning team and/or agency should look for opportunities to inform Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders and the public about the importance of the approved management plan direction, how to interpret it and its implementation strategy.

Cave Springs Conservation Area

For parks and open spaces where public access is discouraged or where there is the presence of known endangered or threatened species, management plans should not be publicized. In this case, the management plan may be better suited to remain an internal working document. This does not preclude the agency from preparing an executive summary or other communication materials that exclude sensitive data.

6.2.1 Work Planning

For management plans to be implemented, the planning team and/or agency should create and use annual operational work plans. Work plans may include:

- implementation priorities for the year or over multiple years if the priorities are phased (priorities should be directly linked to management actions and objectives)
- defined roles and outline responsibilities for each action
- timelines for completion
- the projected budget for implementation.

It is an asset to include work plans in the management plan as they identify:

- proposed development and recreational uses
- phased development concept strategy
- proposed NEC Development Permit Exemptions and/or NEC Development Permits.

6.2.2 Implementing Management Actions to Achieve Objectives

Prior to implementing management actions to achieve management plan objectives, the planning team and/or agency should confirm that they are consistent with the management plan and that all appropriate approvals are in place (e.g., NEC Development Permit, Planning Act approvals, building permits).

6.3 Development in the NEPOSS

"Development" includes a change in the use of any land, building or structure (NEPDA, s.1).

The approved management plan may include actions to achieve objectives that address proposed development within the park and open space. Development requirements must be followed to ensure conformity with the NEP policies and NEPDA regulations. The planning team and/or agency must also ensure that proposed development activities conform with other relevant legislation and guidelines.

6.3.1 NEC Development Permits and NEC Development Permit Exemptions

Implementation Resource:

Appendix D—NEC Development Permit Process

6.3.1.1 NEC Consultation

Agencies considering development activities should first contact the NEC to determine if they require a NEC Development Permit. Some forms of development are exempt from a NEC Development Permit requirement insofar as they meet Ontario Regulation 828 criteria.

Development identified in an approved management plan does not automatically mean that a NEC Development Permit, if required, will be issued. The management plan should contain clear direction on what development does and does not require a permit. If the scale, intensity, location or purpose of the proposed development changes from what was proposed in the management plan, it will need to be reassessed by the NEC and MNDMNRF. Each proposed development will be assessed individually to determine if it is consistent with the NEP and the management plan.

Development Timeline (time length for permit/exemption)

NEC Development Permits:	3 years
NEC Development Permit Exemptions:	5 years

In circumstances where a NEC Development Permit is not required (e.g., it has previously been determined to be exempt under Ontario Regulation 828/90—see Section 6.3.1.2), development plans should still be forwarded to the NEC to confirm the exemption and avoid confusion that could cause delays later in the process.

6.3.1.2 Development Permit Exemptions

To determine if development proposed within your management plan may be exempt from requiring a NEC Development Permit, agencies should work with the NEC and MNDMNRF during management planning to identify development proposed for exemptions.

Undertakings within an approved management plan may be exempt from the need for an NEC Development Permit, in accordance with Ontario Regulation 828/90 made under the NEPDA.

Development may be exempt if it is identified and supported in the management plan and sufficient detail is provided. Sufficient detail might include:

- Information in the background report (Stage 2) that provides baseline data on values associated with the proposed development (e.g., natural heritage features, habitat present at the site) that contribute to the following:
  - Demonstration that there will be minimal impact on the Escarpment environment
  - Demonstration that the proposed development is compatible with the Escarpment's scenic resources.
- Identification of the proposed development as a management priority based on information collected/rationale/risk analysis (Stage 2).
- Identification of the proposed development as a management plan objective, with clear actions to address the management priority

and performance indicators (e.g., monitoring impacts associated with development over time, monitoring visitor use, etc.) (Stage 3).
- Clear consideration in proposed park classification and zoning classification for proposed development (Stage 4).
- The exact location and size of a new building or structure (a component of the park and open space development concept).
- Proposed change in an existing building or structure (a component of the park and open space development concept).
- The servicing requirements (water and wastewater) associated with a new building or change in use (a component of the park and open space development concept).

The required information will depend on the complexity of the proposed development. For a more complex development (e.g., construction of a visitor centre), it may be difficult to provide sufficient detail in a management plan if the exact location or design considerations have not been decided upon.

6.3.1.3 Ontario Regulation 828/90

Ontario Regulation 828/90, made under the NEPDA, lists the classes of development that are exempt from the requirement of obtaining a NEC Development Permit.

The following classes of development for a management plan, where applicable, are exempt from the requirement of obtaining a NEC Development Permit:

- Section 5.17 of Ontario Regulation 828/90: The maintenance of lands, buildings and structures under the jurisdiction of a conservation authority, the establishment of hiking or cross-country ski trails and the erection of signs for the purpose of property identification or interpretative or recreational information on lands owned by a conservation authority.
- Section 5.30 of Ontario Regulation 828/90: The maintenance of lands, buildings and structures for the Bruce Trail by the Bruce Trail Conservancy and the establishment of the Bruce Trail by the Bruce Trail Conservancy on land owned or managed by agreement with the Bruce Trail Conservancy.
- Section 5.41 of Ontario Regulation 828/90: The construction and installation of buildings, structures, facilities and related undertakings identified in a park and open space plan as identified in the NEP for a park or open space area listed in Appendix 1 of the NEP, if:

  I. The plan has been approved by the NEC and MNDMNRF under Part 3 of the NEP after the coming into force of Ontario Regulation 423/12 (January 5, 2013).

  II. The plan has specifically identified and detailed the buildings, structures, facilities and related undertakings that are to be exempted under this section.

  III. The construction and installation of the buildings, structures, facilities and related undertakings occurs within five years of the approval of the management plan.

When submitting the management plan for endorsement and approval, the planning team should include a table identifying:

- Proposed development that will require a NEC Development Permit
- Proposed development that will be considered for exemption.

The agency may also be permitted to amend the approved management plan to reflect the current status of the exempt development and to provide an update for renewed exemption requirements. New development that is not identified in the management plan will require engagement with relevant Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders and the public.

6.3.1.4 Fulfilling Exemption Requirements (of *Ontario Regulation 828/90*)

To fulfill the requirements of Section 5.41 ii of Ontario Regulation 828/90, the proposed development articulated in the management plan needs to provide detail similar to that of a NEC Development Permit; that is, development that may be proposed independent of a management plan, in order to determine if the development is in accordance with the NEP.

The Regulation does not exempt development that is identified as a 'concept' or 'potential' development identified in a management plan. However, if a development was identified for exemption in the appendix of a management plan and the agency proposed minor modifications to the development (e.g., minor relocations, reconfiguration of a structure, minor size changes), the implementing authority (NEC) would be able to exercise some discretion to consider minor modifications to the proposed development as continuing to be exempt under this Regulation.

Section 5.41.iii states that construction must occur within five years of the management plan's approval. If the construction is not completed within the five-year time frame, the agency would need to obtain a NEC Development Permit for any development, whether proposed in the management plan or not.

6.3.1.5 Proposed Development not Identified in a Management Plan

Development that has not been identified or proposed in a management plan and not otherwise exempt under Ontario Regulation 828/90 may still take place on a NEPOSS property where it is in accordance with a NEC Development Permit.

6.3.1.6 Identifying Proposed Exempted Development in the Management Plan

To provide clarity, the management plan should list the proposed development to be exempt under Reg. 828 in a separate appendix (See Table 15). Approval of the management plan by the NEC and MNDMNRF will render the development proposed in the appendix as exempt from requiring a NEC Development Permit.

6.3.1.7 NEC Approval Required Prior to Other Approvals

During implementation, if a NEC Development Permit is required, it must be obtained before any other approvals. Examples include:

- Conservation Authority permits
- Endangered Species Act permits from the Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks
- Permits under the Ontario Building Code
- Planning Act approvals
- Cultural heritage requirements, Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries.

Often these planning and permitting processes can run concurrently with the NEC Development Permit process.

If a NEC Development Permit is required, agencies will follow the process laid out by the NEPDA. The NEC has the delegated authority to make decisions on NEC Development Permits and will ensure that the policies and objectives of the NEP and the NEPOSS are adhered to.

In circumstances where municipalities and ministries that have properties within the NEPOSS do not require a NEC Development Permit, it is recommended that development plans be forwarded to the NEC for review and assessment of compliance before their implementation.

Table 15: Example of Agency Review and Requirements for Proposed Development (Cheltenham Badlands Master Plan: 2018)

No.	Proposed Development	NEC Development Permit Exemption	NEC Development Permit	Town of Caledon Permit	Conservation Authority Review
PHASE ONE					
1	Entrance Sign	X			
2	Staff shelter at main parking lot; max. 15 sq m.	X		X	
3	Vault toilets at main parking lot (Olde Base Line Rd.)	X		X	
4	Wayfinding signage	X			
5	Accessible trail (Type 1: compacted limestone screenings)	X			
6	Elevated boardwalk on accessible trail	X		X	
7	Water crossings: on-grade boardwalks	X			X
PHASE TWO					
8	Viewing deck at Main Badlands	X		X	
9	Boardwalk connection Main Badlands viewing area to Plateau Trail	X			
10	Plateau trail (Type 2: compacted limestone screenings)	X			
11	Lookout viewing platforms on Plateau Trail	X			
12	Wetland to Plateau Trail (Type 4: combination trail/boardwalk with staircase structures)	X		X	
13	Wetland boardwalk	X			X
14	Improvements to Main Bruce Trail, Side Trail and connecting trails (Type 3, natural surface)	X			
15	Water crossings: on-grade boardwalks	X			X
16	Improvements to Maintenance Trail: widening, signage, gate	X			
17	Additional wayfinding and interpretive signage	X			
18	Pavilion/shelter added to main viewing area; max. 45 sq m	X		X	X
PHASE THREE*					
19	Southwest parking lot at Creditview Rd.		X	X	X
20	Vault toilets at southwest parking lot		X	X	
21	Entrance, wayfinding and interpretative signage at southwest parking lot		X		
22	Staff shelter at southwest parking lot; 15 sq m		X	X	

* Phase Three development proposals will be assessed through a Master Plan amendment and NEC Development Permitting process

6.4 Demolition

If a management plan proposes the removal or demolition of structures or buildings, this should also be considered under the requirement for NEC Development Permits. The NEC can advise if it can be exempted under Ontario Regulation 828/90.

6.5 Consideration of Provincial Heritage Properties

Provincial ministries and prescribed public bodies must also comply with the Standards & Guidelines for Conservation of Provincial Heritage Properties (S&Gs). If a ministry or prescribed public body has not evaluated a property in its care or control, and if that property contains a building or structure that is 40 or more years old, then the ministry or prescribed public body shall:

- prevent the building or structure from undergoing demolition by neglect; and
- obtain the consent of the Minister of Tourism and Culture before removing or demolishing the building or structure, or before transferring the property from provincial control.

> The S&Gs define development as follows:
>
> Development means the construction or placing of buildings or structures on land; the addition to or alteration of existing buildings or structures; site alteration, including but not limited to alteration of the grade of land, and placing or dumping fill; or the removal of vegetation.

6.6 Land Acquisition and Land Disposal

Land acquisition to grow the NEPOSS relies on the continuous efforts of agencies.

6.6.1 Acquisition of a New Park or Open Space

New parks or open space areas may be added to the NEP and the NEP Maps without requiring a NEP amendment (NEP, Section 3.5). The managing agency should engage with the MNDMNRF and the NEC to confirm that the addition would satisfy the NEPOSS objectives. The agency should be prepared to plan the land in accordance with the NEP and submit an Acquisition Document.

An Acquisition Document should include:

- Support that the addition is consistent with the NEPOSS objectives
- Support that the agency is prepared to manage the land in accordance with Part 3 of the NEP
- A brief description of where the park or open space is located and a brief description of its unique features, such as:
  - Area history
  - Size
  - Natural heritage features and cultural heritage resources
  - Adjacent properties
  - How it adds to natural corridors
- Visual aids to describe the planning area, which may include:
  - Regional maps
  - Property site maps illustrating the boundaries so that NEP maps may be updated to reflect the addition
  - Aerial photographs
  - NEP designations
- Proposed NEPOSS Park Classification, and
- Agency confirmation that the proposed park or open space is for conservation purposes and appropriate recreation.

6.6.2 Administrative Process

- Agency submits the Acquisition Document to the NEC and the MNDMNRF.
- MNDMNRF staff and NEC staff each develop staff reports confirming that the addition is consistent with the NEPOSS objectives.
- NEC staff present the proposed NEPOSS addition at a Niagara Escarpment Commission meeting and invite the applicant to attend.
- The Niagara Escarpment Commission considers the NEC Staff Report recommendation of the proposed park or open space.
- Upon endorsement, the NEC staff report is forwarded to the MNDMNRF for consideration and approval.
- The MNDMNRF's decision is then circulated to the agency and the NEC.
- The NEC will initiate the addition to Appendix 1 of the NEP and Map 10.

Fathom Five National Marine Park

6.6.3 Existing Management Plan

Should an agency have an existing management plan for the proposed park or open space addition, the MNDMNRF and NEC will review the management plan to ensure that it conforms with the NEP and this manual. If required, the MNDMNRF and NEC will provide direction so that the management plan may be amended to enable its alignment with the NEP.

6.6.4 Addition to Existing Park or Open Space

Where lands are acquired and are to be managed as part of an existing park or open space in the system, the lands can be included on NEP maps without an amendment to the NEP (per s. 3.5.1, NEP). Agencies should provide to the NEC and the MNDMNRF a map illustrating the revised park boundaries so that the NEP maps remain current and accurate.

6.6.5 Land Disposal

The disposal of public lands from the NEPOSS requires a NEP amendment (per s. 3.5.2, NEP) unless the following criteria can be met:

1. The disposal is considered minor in nature and would not result in the removal of a park or open space from the NEPOSS or change its boundary in a significant manner. In this regard, minor generally means lots of 2.0 hectares or less in size.
2. The disposal must conform to land use provisions, Lot Creation Policies and the Development Criteria of Parts 1 and 2 of the NEP.
3. The disposal can be justified as being beneficial to the NEPOSS (e.g., exchanging surplus lands for lands with a higher environmental or recreational priority); and
4. The disposal will not detrimentally affect the public land base, its future use or adjacent properties.

Agencies seeking to remove lands from the NEPOSS should contact the NEC and the MNDMNRF as a first step.

Stage 7: Monitoring and Evaluating Management Plans and Initiating Management Plan Amendments

This stage involves:

- Implement effectiveness monitoring
- Evaluate management actions
- Consider management plan amendments
- Communicate management plan amendment

Documents Developed:

- Monitoring report (as needed)
- Management plan amendment (as needed)

7.1 Implementing Effectiveness Monitoring and Evaluating Management Actions

Monitoring and evaluating the success of a management plan allows agencies to ensure that commitments to management plan objectives are being accomplished. It also allows for management actions to be measured over time to ensure they are addressing pressures on priority values.

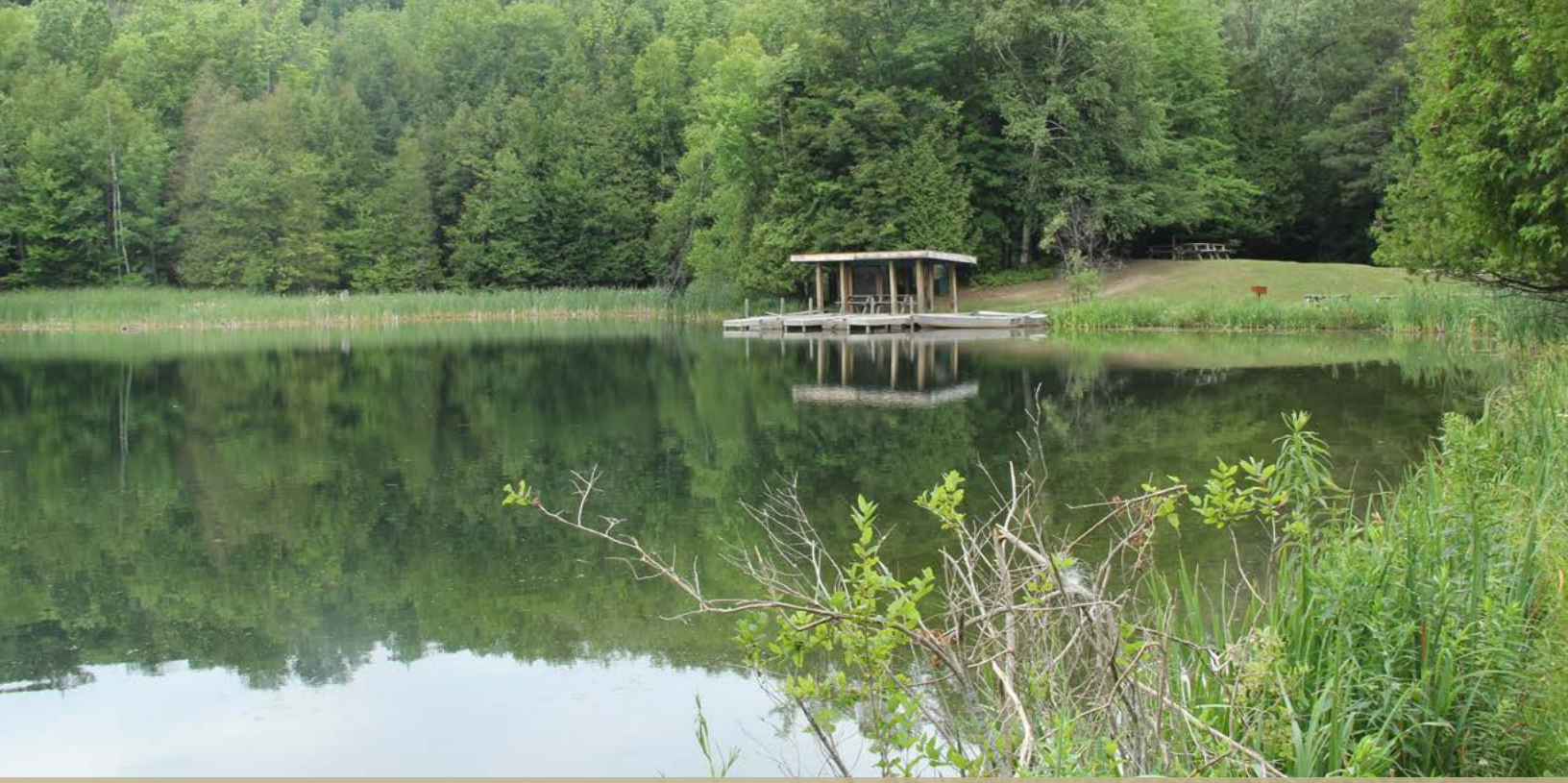
Effectiveness monitoring is important to:

- address identified data gaps;
- evaluate the implementation of the management plan direction;
- determine the effectiveness of management actions; and
- inform adaptive management planning.

In Stage 3 (Developing Management Direction), effectiveness monitoring needs were discussed as a component of the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound) guide in developing management plan objectives. Early development of performance indicators that can be used in an effectiveness monitoring program contributes to a more effective use of resources and will ensure that monitoring and evaluation programs are tied directly to the objectives of the management plan (see Table 9).

Information collected during the lifespan of a monitoring program is valuable to the management planning process. It is important that information gathered is managed in a way that will ensure its value is maintained over time.

If executed properly, an effectiveness monitoring program will provide the planning team and/or agency with critical information on how effective the management action was at achieving the stated management plan objective. This information should be used to inform and rationalize amendments and revisions to the management plan (e.g., Table 16).



Glen Haffy Conservation Area

Table 16: Example of Using Data to Determine if the Management Objective Has Been Met

Objective	Address erosion and trail degradation, over a 3-year time period.
Management Actions	Inform visitors of use impact on trails and adjacent ecosystems by: • Implementing a trail education program. • Improving trail and park signs.
Measurable Performance Indicator	Survey visitors (for understanding). Monitor habitat recovery over time (3 years).
Outcomes	Sustainable trail use. Ongoing trail assessment/monitoring. Active education program.
Management Recommendation	Objective has been met within 3 years of implementing the management actions. Noticeable improvement in visitor understanding and reduction in trail erosion has led the planning team to deduce the education program is an effective tool for mitigating trail erosion. Planning team will continue to support the trail education program with annual trail erosion monitoring to ensure trend continues over time. Trail use will continue within the park and open space.

7.2 Management Plan Amendment Process

Management plan direction and site-specific policies timelines are developed by the agency. The agency may wish to consider a review process that aligns with either the three-year NEC Development Permit timeframe or the five-year timeframe cited in the NEC Development Permit exemption.

The agency should continually monitor the implementation of management direction. Requests for a management plan review or specific changes may also arise from Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders and/or the public at any time throughout the term of the management plan.

Amendments or changes may be necessary during the term of the management plan when unforeseen circumstances arise, or new information becomes available.

7.2.1 Reasons for Management Plan Amendments

Amendments are proposed changes to the management plan and its policies. Proposed changes may have a significant effect on the environment of the park or open space, and on adjacent landowners or users, or may result in a significant public reaction on a local, regional or provincial scale.

The following are examples of circumstances that might require an amendment:

- New development
- New trails or recreational uses
- Removal of a recreational use
- New park zone
- Adjustments to zone boundaries
- A significant change in resource management or prescriptions for a zone.

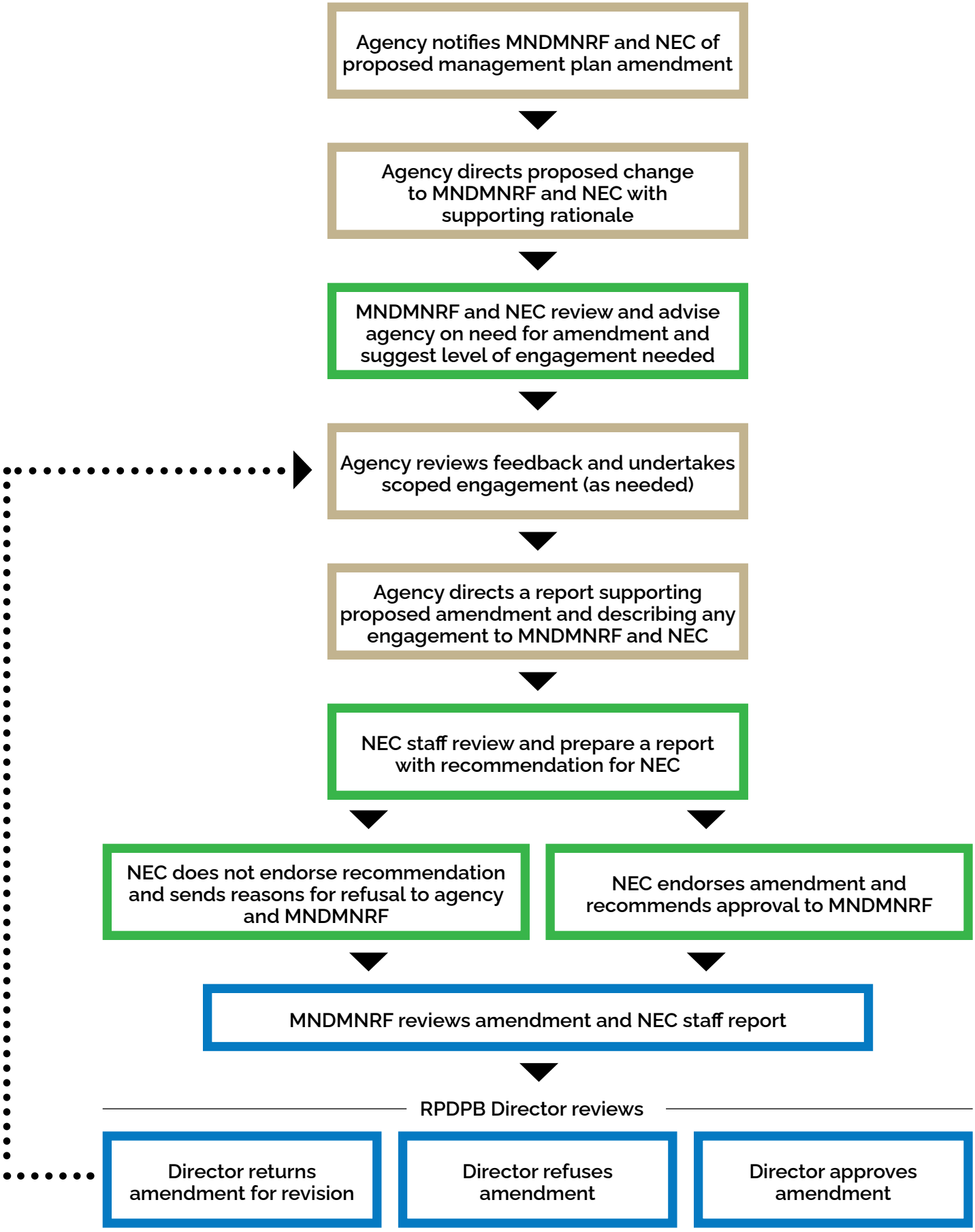
If a permitted activity is causing harm to humans or having a significant impact on the environment, the agency is to take immediate action to prohibit and prevent the permitted activity and is to notify the MNDMNRF, the NEC and any affected parties.

The amendment approach will vary depending on the types of changes being proposed (see Figure 5: Process for Management Plan Amendments). Changes that are generally in keeping with the spirit and intent of the existing management plan usually only involve notifying the NEC and the MNDMNRF; a formal planning process or management plan amendment is not needed. Major changes to a park or open space will require a formal planning process and an amendment to the management plan (e.g., re-classification of a park or open space not part of a planning process or development not proposed in the management plan).

In cases where a management plan amendment is being considered for new development not contemplated in the approved management plan, the NEC's Development Permit process may be pursued instead of the amendment process. However, the amendment process may be the preferable route from a community engagement and land use approvals perspective. The pros and cons of each process should be discussed with an NEC advisor as part of pre-consultation.

After the agency notifies the NEC and MNDMNRF of the proposed amendment, the NEC and MNDMNRF will assess the proposed amendment and indicate to the agency an approximate timeline for the amendment review process, based on their initial assessment.

Figure 5: Process for Management Plan Amendments



7.2.2 Scoped Engagement Requirements

If a proposed amendment affects only a portion of the park or only a segment of park users, the amendment engagement may be scoped to include only the affected stakeholders (e.g., owners of adjacent lands, park or natural space volunteers, trail users, local municipalities). The NEC and MNDMNRF will provide engagement advice as part of pre-consultation on the proposed amendment.

7.2.3 Administrative Amendments

An administrative amendment could be a clarification, addition or update to an approved management direction. Such an amendment is considered a minimal or modest change to an existing management direction. The proposed change may fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Is required to keep management direction current and relevant;
- Corrects or clarifies content;
- Updates implementation or work plan activities;
- Addresses some error or omission;
- Is expected to have minimal impact or interest to Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders or the public;
- Does not change or impact management plan policy; and/or;
- Does not involve an impact to natural heritage features or cultural heritage resources.

7.2.4 NEC and MNDMNRF Consideration of Administrative Amendments

- The agency pre-consults with the NEC and MNDMNRF on the proposed administrative amendment with supporting rationale to the NEC and MNDMNRF for review and consideration.
- The NEC and MNDMNRF will consider:
  - If the proposed use warrants an administrative amendment or a formal amendment
  - If the proposed use/amendment conforms to the NEP
  - If additional approval agencies/ministries should participate in the initial review of the amendment
  - The level of scope for Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders and public engagement.
- The NEC and MNDMNRF will prepare and direct comments to the agency, identifying if the proposed use warrants an administrative or formal amendment.
- Dependent on the NEC and MNDMNRF's recommendation, the agency will either:
  - Initiate an administrative amendment and provide an update to the NEC, MNDMNRF and any interested parties, or
  - Initiate a formal amendment.

The agency may defer administrative amendments until a future revision of the management plan is undertaken.

Administrative amendments should also be inserted into the printed and digital management plans and placed on the agency website. The version update should be identified and explained.

7.2.5 Notice of Approved Amendments

The changes made to the management plan should be clearly identified within the management plan document, along with rationale for why the changes were made.

Approved amendments should be circulated and inserted into the printed and digital version of the management plan by the:

- Agency
- NEC, and
- MNDMNRF.

Notification and a copy of the approved amendment should be sent by mail or email to all parties involved in the planning process. The approved amendment should also be placed on the agency's website.

7.2.6 Proposing Development or Change in Use without an Approved Management Plan

If the agency does not have an approved management plan, any proposed development or change in use of the park and open space must consider and comply with the following:

- the NEPOSS policy directives in Part 3 of the NEP;
- the land use designations and permitted uses in Part 1 of the NEP; and
- the requirements for a NEC Development Permit under the NEPDA (e.g., for construction, demolition or removal of facilities, new infrastructure or recreational uses).

7.3 Revisions to the NEPOSS Planning Manual

The manual may be reviewed by the MNDMNRF at the request of the NEC or the NEPOSS Council. The Ministry may also initiate a review to align with the NEP revisions or other relevant policies. The review will be based on the best information available at the time and consultation with the NEC and the NEPOSS Council.

This manual is one of several templates and supplementary tools prepared to provide support for developing and implementing management plans. Supplementary tools and guidelines to the manual may be developed to modernize or recommend efficiencies in park and open space planning. The MNDMNRF will manage these materials independently of the manual, and they may be changed, created or deleted at the MNDMNRF's discretion, with NEC and agency engagement.

Fathom Five National Marine Park

Indigenous communities and organizations and key stakeholders should receive direct notification of proposed changes to the manual.

A Word of Thanks

Thanks go to the NEC staff, members of the NEPOSS Council, the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, and the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks for their help in developing this manual.

References, Resources and Appendices

Crook's Hollow

References

Rattlesnake Point Conservation Area

The following are references used to develop this manual.

- Consultation and Accommodation: Indigenous Relations Training (2019)
- Niagara Escarpment Plan (2017)
- Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act (1973)
- Ontario's Protected Areas Planning Manual (2014)

Resources

Aerial Photographs

Bruce Trail Reference Guide (Bruce Trail Conservancy)

Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association

Canadian Commission for UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Network

eBird

iNaturalist

Land Information Ontario

Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries (registered archaeological sites)

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Indigenous Relations Training, Module 2: Law and Resources (2017)

Municipal Heritage Registers

Natural Heritage Information Centre

Natural Heritage Make a Map

Natural Heritage Reference Manual (2019)

Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System Council Terms of Reference (2021).

Niagara Escarpment Commission

Niagara Escarpment Plan (2017)

Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act (1973)

Ontario Heritage Tool Kit

Ontario Regulation 828/90

Ontario Wetland Evaluation System Manual (2014)

Significant Wildlife Habitat Technical Guide (2019)

Southern Ontario Land Resource Information System

Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Provincial Heritage Properties (2010)

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Biosphere Reserve

Appendix A—Definitions

The definitions provided in this glossary are specific to the Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Spaces System Planning Manual and are for guidance purposes only. Note that definitions cite specific legislation; "Aboriginal" is therefore used here instead of the more current "Indigenous."

Archaeological resources: Includes artifacts, archaeological sites and marine archaeological sites, as defined under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The identification and evaluation of such resources are based upon archaeological fieldwork undertaken in accordance with the *Ontario Heritage Act* (Provincial Policy Statement, 2020).

Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI): Means areas of land and water containing natural landscapes or features that have been identified as having life science or earth science values related to protection, scientific study, or education (Provincial Policy Statement, 2020).

Best available information: Information that is the most defensible, reliable, verifiable and representative information available at a point in time.

Biosphere Reserve: An international designation of recognition from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) under the Man and Biosphere Program that recognizes the unique natural features and ecological importance of the area regulated by the Niagara Escarpment Plan (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Brow (edge): The uppermost point of the Escarpment slope or face. It may be the top of a rock cliff or where the bedrock is buried. The most obvious break in slope associated with the underlying bedrock (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Bruce Trail: The oldest and longest continuous footpath in Canada. It runs along the Niagara Escarpment, spanning more than 900 km of main trail and 400 km of side trails, from Queenston to Tobermory.

Bruce Trail access point: Property managed and/or acquired in whole or in part for the purpose of providing public access to the Bruce Trail (e.g., parking areas) (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Bruce Trail corridor: Property managed and/or acquired in whole or in part under Part 3 of the Niagara Escarpment Plan or by other means for the purpose of securing the Bruce Trail and facilitating the establishment of overnight rest areas and Bruce Trail access points (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Built heritage resource: Means a building, structure, monument, installation or any manufactured or constructed part or remnant that contributes to a property's cultural heritage value or interest as identified by a community, including an Indigenous community. Built heritage resources are located on property that may be designated under Parts IV or V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, or that may be included on local, provincial, federal and/or international registers (Provincial Policy Statement, 2020).

Campground: An area used for a range of overnight camping experiences, from tenting to trailer sites, including accessory facilities such as administration offices, laundry facilities and washrooms to support the use, but not including the use of mobile homes or trailers on a permanent year-round basis (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Classification: Organizes parks and open spaces into broad categories, each of which has objectives and characteristics as well as distinctive planning, management and implementation policies.

Compatible: Where the building, structure, activity or use blends, conforms or is harmonious with the Escarpment environment (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Conserve or conservation:

a In an ecological context, means the wise management of the environment in a way that will maintain, restore, enhance and protect its quality and quantity for sustained benefit to humans and the environment.

b In a cultural heritage context, means the identification, protection, management and use of built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources in a manner that ensures their cultural heritage value or interest is retained under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. This may be achieved by the implementation of recommendations set out in a conservation plan, archaeological assessment, and/or heritage impact assessment. Mitigative measures and/or alternative development approaches can be included in these plans and assessments (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Conservation organization: A non-government conservation body that includes a land trust, conservancy or similar not-for-profit agency governed by a charter, articles of incorporation or letters patent, and with by-laws and objectives that support the protection of the natural environment of the Niagara Escarpment. Such an organization must have registered charitable status.

A conservation organization shall be considered to have an "approved" status under this Plan once the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry and the Niagara Escarpment Commission have been satisfied that the conservation organization has an environmental purpose consistent with the purpose, objectives and policies of the Niagara Escarpment Plan. This includes commitment, public support, organizational ability, sustained activity in the interests of conservation over several years and a legally binding arrangement to ensure that all lands acquired or held as nature preserves remain protected should the organization cease to exist (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Cultural heritage value or interest: A property may be determined to have cultural heritage value or interest if it meets one or more of the criteria found in Ontario Regulation 9/06 under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. A property may be determined to have cultural heritage value or interest of provincial significance if it meets one or more of the criteria found in Ontario Regulation 10/06 under the *Ontario Heritage Act* (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Cultural heritage landscape: Means a defined geographical area that may have been modified by human activity and is identified as having cultural heritage value or interest by a community, including an Indigenous community. The area may include features such as buildings, structures, spaces, views, archaeological sites or natural elements that are valued together for their interrelationship, meaning or association. Cultural heritage landscapes may be properties that have been determined to have cultural heritage value or interest under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, or have been included on federal and/or international registers, and/or protected through official plan, zoning by-law, or other land use planning mechanisms (Provincial Policy Statement, 2020).

Cultural heritage resource: Property that includes built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes, archaeological resources and/or areas of archaeological potential (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Development: Includes a change in the use of any land, building, or structure (NEPDA: 1973).

Effectiveness Monitoring: Monitoring programs developed and implemented to assess the effectiveness of a management action over time/space.

Endangered species: Means a species that is classified as "Endangered Species" on the Species at Risk in Ontario List, as updated and amended from time to time (Provincial Policy Statement 2020).

Escarpment environment: The physical and natural heritage features, cultural heritage resources, and scenic resources associated with the Escarpment landscape (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Escarpment slope (face): The area between the brow and toe of the Escarpment and usually characterized by a steep gradient. Where the rise occurs in the form of a series of steps, the slope also includes the terraces between the steps (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Existing use: The legal use of any land, building or structure for a purpose that is not otherwise listed as a permitted use under the applicable designation in the Niagara Escarpment Plan, and that was:

a existing on the day of approval of the Niagara Escarpment Plan, June 12, 1985; or

b approved in accordance with the provisions of the Niagara Escarpment Plan since June 12, 1985 but prior to the date of any amendment to the NEP under which the use ceased to be a permitted use; or

c existing, in an area added to the Niagara Escarpment Plan at the date of the approval of the amendment to the NEP that added the lands to the NEP;

provided that the existing use has continued without interruption after the effective date as set out under a), b), or c) (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Fish habitat: The spawning grounds and nursery, rearing, food supply, and migration areas on which fish depend, directly or indirectly, in order to carry out their life processes (*Fisheries Act,* R.S.C., 1985, c. F-14).

Christie Lake Conservation Area

Forest management: The sustainable management of forests to produce wood and wood products, provide outdoor recreation, protect, restore or enhance environmental conditions for wildlife, and protect water supplies (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Grouping: The concept allows for the development of a management plan for one or more park(s).

Habitat of endangered species and threatened species: Means habitat within the meaning of Section 2 of the Endangered Species Act, 2007 (Provincial Policy Statement, 2020)

Heritage attributes: Means the principal features or elements that contribute to a protected heritage property's cultural heritage value or interest, and may include the property's built, constructed, or manufactured elements, as well as natural landforms, vegetation, water features, and its visual setting (e.g., significant views or vistas to or from a protected heritage property) (Provincial Policy Statement, 2020).

Heritage conservation easement agreement: A covenant or agreement that may be entered into by the owner of real property and either a municipality or the Ontario Heritage Trust, is registered on title and executed with the primary purpose of preserving, conserving and maintaining a cultural heritage feature or resource, or preventing its destruction, demolition or loss. A heritage conservation easement may be entered into under either Parts II (Section 10) or IV (Section 37) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Hydrologic function: Means the functions of the hydrologic cycle that includes the occurrence, circulation, distribution and chemical and physical properties of water on the surface of the land, in the soil and underlying rocks, and in the atmosphere, and water's interaction with the environment including its relation to living things (Provincial Policy Statement, 2020).

Implementing authority: The body responsible for the administration of the Niagara Escarpment Plan (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Indigenous: Indigenous Peoples are the descendants of the original inhabitants of a particular region or country who have historical continuity with pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories and who consider themselves distinct from other sectors of societies. In Canada, Indigenous Peoples have often been referred to as "Aboriginal;" however, the term commonly refers to a collective of both rights bearing and non-rights bearing First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. Indigenous is also an inclusive term often used in international contexts (Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Indigenous Relations Training, Module 2: Law and Resources, 2017).

Intermittent stream: A stream-related watercourse that contains water or is dry at times of the year that are more or less predictable, generally flowing during wet seasons of the year but not the entire year, and where the water table is above the stream bottom during parts of the year (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Key Outcome: The preferred outcome of a management plan priority when a pressure on a priority value has been addressed. A key outcome can be achieved through the implementation of an effective management action.

Lake: Any inland body of standing water, usually fresh water, larger than a pool or pond, or a body of water filling a depression in the earth's surface (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Land Information Ontario (LIO): LIO helps public and private organizations and individuals find, access and share geographic data. LIO also coordinates the collection of aerial photography for Ontario.

Management Action: An action identified to address the pressure on a priority value.

Management Objective: A statement of intent describing how an action will be implemented over time/space to address the pressure on a priority value and the intended outcome of that action.

Management Plan Options: Options for management action and associated management objectives for those actions that are presented for decision-making purposes.

Management Planning Cycle: Includes the development and implementation of management direction, monitoring, and examination and potential adjustments to management plan direction.

Management Planning Process: A term to describe the portion of the management planning cycle that includes scoping, information gathering and analysis, developing management options and finalizing management direction stages.

Management Plan: A strategic and long-term operational document that provides direction for the protection of natural heritage features and cultural heritage resources, supporting infrastructure, and sustainable recreation.

Management Priority: Those values and associated pressures that have been identified as having the greatest need for management action.

Natural environment: The air, land and water or any combination or part thereof (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC): As part of Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry, NHIC's mission is to acquire, maintain, update, and make available data on the province's rare species, vegetation communities, and natural areas. NHIC maintains a permanent and dynamic atlas and data bank on the character, distribution and conservation status of natural areas, critical flora and fauna, communities and special features in Ontario.

Negative impact:

a in regard to water, degradation of the quality or quantity of surface water or groundwater, key hydrologic features and their related hydrologic functions, due to single, multiple or successive development;

b in regard to key and other natural heritage features, degradation that threatens the health and integrity of the natural features or ecological functions for which an area is identified due to single, multiple or successive development;

c in regard to fish habitat, any permanent alteration to or destruction of fish habitat, except where, in conjunction with the appropriate authorities, it has been authorized under the *Fisheries Act;*

d in regard to scenic resources, a degradation of the natural scenery and scenic quality due to single, multiple or successive development; and

e in regard to cultural heritage resources, degradation or destruction of built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes, archaeological resources, including a visual impact, when heritage attributes include the visual setting of a cultural heritage resource and other features of significant cultural heritage value or interest, including heritage and archaeological sites of critical importance to Aboriginal Peoples (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Battlefield Park National Historic Site

NEPOSS agency (agency): Public body and approved conservation organizations that own/manage land within NEPOSS (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC): The NEC is a statutory body that operates at arm's length from the provincial government in accordance with the *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act* and the Agency Establishment and Accountability Directive under the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry. The NEC is mandated to develop, interpret and apply policies that maintain and enhance the vitality of the Escarpment's unique environmental and landscape features.

Nodal Parks: Parks that are focal destination areas that promote the Escarpment's unique landscape diversity by providing orientation, education, interpretation and/or recreation opportunities.

Non-government organization (NGO): An NGO is a legally constituted organization created by private persons or organizations with no participation or representation of any government.

Optimum route: The most desirable route for the Bruce Trail.

Overnight rest area: Property managed and/or acquired by the Bruce Trail Conservancy or through agreements with landowners or public bodies for the purpose of allowing small, basic, unserviced camping sites for Bruce Trail users (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Park or open space development concept: The park or open space development concept is a description that summarizes the proposed intended future condition of the park or open space.

Performance Indicator: A metric used to measure the effectiveness of a management action in achieving a key outcome.

Permanent stream: A stream that continually flows in an average year (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Planning team: A group representing the NEPOSS agency that works collaboratively to develop a management plan (statement or master plan) for the park and open space.

Pressure: A planning term used to identify any natural disturbance or anthropogenic activity or facility that impacts a value.

Protected heritage property: Means property designated under Parts IV, V or VI of the *Ontario Heritage Act*; property subject to a heritage conservation easement agreement under Parts II or IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*; property identified by the Province and prescribed public bodies as provincial heritage property under the Standards and Guidelines for Conservation of Provincial Heritage Properties; property protected under federal legislation, and UNESCO World Heritage Sites (Provincial Policy Statement, 2020).

Public body: A federal or provincial government, a municipality, or a municipal agency, including any commission, board, authority or department, established by a government or agency exercising any power or authority under a statute of Canada or of Ontario. The Bruce Trail Conservancy shall be treated as if it were a public body with respect to the role of the Conservancy in securing and managing the Bruce Trail corridor under Part 3 of the Niagara Escarpment Plan (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Purpose Statement: A statement that describes why the park or open space system was established and how it contributes to the NEPOSS.

Recreational development: Those activities and associated tourism facilities designed to provide recreational and tourism opportunities for the use of local residents and the travelling public (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Risk: The impact (extent/severity/magnitude) of a pressure on a value and the likelihood of the pressure occurring.

Rock climbing: The sport or activity of climbing a vertical rock face (e.g., cliff face), especially by means of specialized techniques and equipment (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Ropes course: An outdoor activity consisting of challenging elements placed on or above the ground (e.g., swings, suspension bridges, ropes, ladders, climbing nets and zip lines), usually constructed using trees and/or artificial poles (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Scenic quality: A reference to the scenic rankings derived from the Niagara Escarpment Plan: A Landscape Evaluation Study and updates to the study. There are six rankings: Outstanding, Very Attractive, Attractive, Average, Low and Very Low (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Scenic resource: The general appearance of a place or landscape, or the features of a landscape, taking into consideration the visual condition and scenic quality, which vary by location and are dependent on features such as geology, vegetation, landforms, and human developments. The heritage attributes of protected heritage properties may also include or be, in themselves, scenic resources (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Scoping: The term identifies the main opportunities and issues to be addressed and the proposed time frame to complete the management plan.

Significant:

a in regard to wetlands, coastal wetlands and areas of natural and scientific interest, an area identified as provincially significant by the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry using evaluation procedures established by the Province, as amended from time to time;

b in regard to woodlands, an area which is ecologically important in terms of features such as species composition, age of trees and stand history; functionally important due to its contribution to the broader landscape because of its location, size or due to the amount of forest cover in the planning area; or economically important due to site quality, species composition, or past management history. These are to be identified using criteria established by the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry;

c in regard to other features and areas, ecologically important in terms of features, functions, representation or amount, and contributing to the quality and diversity of an identifiable geographic area or natural heritage system.

d in regard to mineral potential, an area identified as provincially significant through evaluation procedures developed by the Province, as amended from time to time, such as the Provincially Significant Mineral Potential Index; and

e in regard to cultural heritage and archaeology, resources that have been determined to have cultural heritage value or interest. Processes and criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest are established by the Province under the authority of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Criteria for determining significance for the resources identified in sections (c)-(d) are recommended by the Province, but municipal approaches that achieve or exceed the same objective may also be used.

While some significant resources may already be identified and inventoried by official sources, the significance of others can only be determined after evaluation (Provincial Policy Statement, 2020).

Southern Ontario Land Resource Information System (SOLRIS): SOLRIS is a primary data layer that provides a comprehensive, standardized, landscape level inventory for southern Ontario. SOLRIS is based on MNDMNRF's Ecological Land Classification for southern Ontario.

Stakeholder: Any persons whose right to use, acquire or enjoy property is or may be affected by any action taken under a management plan, or whose right to use or enjoy a park or open space under a management plan may be infringed upon by an action or a failure to act under the management plan.

Threatened species: Means a species that is classified as "Threatened Species" on the Species at Risk in Ontario List, as updated and amended from time to time (Provincial Policy Statement 2020).

Toe (base): The lowest point on the Escarpment slope or face determined by the most obvious break in slope associated with the bedrock or landforms overlying the bedrock (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Valleylands: Means a natural area that occurs in a valley or other landform depression that has water flowing through or standing for some period of the year (Provincial Policy Statement, 2020).

Value: A planning term used to identify those features and activities that are important from an ecological, cultural, economic or social perspective.

Vision Statement: A statement built on the purpose statement that provides additional perspective on the park or open space and its desired future state. The vision statement should reflect the unique components specific to the park or open space.

Visual impact: A change to the existing cultural and natural landscape from viewing points, usually associated with proposed development (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Visual impact assessment: A study in accordance with the NEC Visual Assessment Guidelines (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Watershed management: The analysis, protection, development, operation and maintenance of the land, vegetation and water resources of a drainage basin (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Wetlands: Means lands that are seasonally or permanently covered by shallow water, as well as lands where the water table is close to or at the surface. In either case, the presence of abundant water has caused the formation of hydric soils and has favoured the dominance of either hydrophytic plants or water-tolerant plants. The four major types of wetlands are swamps, marshes, bogs and fens. Periodically soaked or wet lands being used for agricultural purposes which no longer exhibit wetland characteristics are not considered to be wetlands for the purposes of this definition (Provincial Policy Statement, 2020).

Wildlife habitat: Areas where plants, animals and other organisms live and find adequate amounts of food, water, shelter and space needed to sustain their populations. Specific wildlife habitats of concern may include areas where species concentrate at a vulnerable point in their annual or life cycle; and areas which are important to migratory or non-migratory species (Provincial Policy Statement, 2020).

Wildlife management: The management of wildlife habitats for the purposes of sustaining the quantity and quality of wildlife (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Woodland: A treed area that provides environmental and economic benefits to both the private landowner and the general public, such as erosion prevention, hydrological and nutrient cycling, provision of clean air and the long-term storage of carbon, provision of wildlife habitat, outdoor recreational opportunities, and the sustainable harvest of a wide range of woodland products. Woodlands include treed areas, woodlots or forested areas that vary in their level of significance at the local, regional and provincial levels. Woodlands may be delineated according to the *Forestry Act* definition or the Province's Ecological Land Classification system definition of "forest" (Provincial Policy Statement, 2020).

Zip line: A pulley suspended by cables mounted on an incline or tilt. It is designed to be driven by gravity to slide from the top to the bottom of a cable by holding onto, or attaching to, a freely moving pulley (Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017).

Zone: A spatial approach that divides a park or open space into compartments where common objectives, intentions and direction for management can be established.

Dundas Valley Conservation Area

Appendix B—Terms of Reference Template

The purpose of this template is to provide guidance to planning teams on the format and general content for the Terms of Reference document developed during management planning. This template applies to NEPOSS parks and open spaces.

Guidance on the development of the Terms of Reference is provided in the Scoping Stage (Stage 1) of this manual.

Using This Template

The Terms of Reference serve as a record of the outcome of the Scoping Stage and will guide the planning team throughout the remainder of the planning process. This template can be used to support the development of a new management plan, amendments and revisions to existing management plans.

This template provides suggested content (headings and sub-headings) for the Terms of Reference and is flexible to be customized to each park or open space. Additional sub-headings may be included, where appropriate. However, information in the Terms of Reference should not be repeated in multiple planning documents. For example, the bulk of background information should be included in the background document and not in the Terms of Reference. The template is to be used as a general guide for the development of the management plan.

General advice and direction for authors to consider is contained within square brackets, such as: [……]. The text in square brackets should be deleted from the final document.

Sample text is provided in select sections in one of two ways:

- Black type is recommended wording that may be used by authors. If it is not applicable, this wording can be removed or adjusted by the author.
- Text shaded in grey, as here, is wording that should be customized to the park or open space. Shading is to be removed from the final document.

When writing the Terms of Reference, consider the following:

- The Terms of Reference are developed to provide guidance to the planning team throughout the planning process.
- If changes are made to the planning project after the Terms of Reference have been developed and approved, it should be revised to reflect such changes and approved accordingly.
- Although the Terms of Reference document is not normally consulted on, the agency may make it publicly available if requested. Consider this when developing the content.

Cootes Paradise Sanctuary

Cover Page Placeholder

Park or Open Space Name

Terms of Reference

Date

[List all names of parks or open spaces when dealing with a grouped planning project]

Agency Name

Table of Contents

The Table of Contents below is suggested for Terms of Reference. Adjustments to this Table of Contents (i.e., more headings and sub-headings) may be required to meet the needs of the local situation.

The recommended Table of Contents for the Terms of Reference is as follows:

1. **Introduction**
2. **Planning Team**
3. **Planning Context**
    - 3.1 Planning Area
    - 3.2 Level of Planning Complexity
    - 3.3 Purpose of the Park or Open Space
    - 3.4 Planning Topics
    - 3.5 Alignment with other planning processes

Appendix I: Engagement Strategy

Appendix II: Project Schedule

Appendix III: Project Budget

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this section, provide a general description of the park or open space. This section may include the following information:

- name of the park or open space
- Niagara Escarpment Plan land use designation(s)
  - The land use designations are shown on Maps 1 to 9 of the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP).
- park or open space classification
- predominant characteristics of the park or open space
- general location
- size (hectares)

Include information (including dates or time periods) on any of the following topics that may be relevant:

- relevant legislation and/or regulations
- previous management direction
- known Indigenous community and organization use of a park or open space.

2.0 PLANNING TEAM

This section should document the membership of the planning team, including:

- the respective roles of team members
- additional team representation where applicable.

Step 1.1.2 of the manual provides information on what skills and expertise should be considered and what team members are typically involved in the management planning process. Keep in mind that planning is an integrated effort and planning team representation should reflect this.

Do not include specific names of individual team members but rather identify position titles. Examples of recommended wording to include in this section, for some team members, are provided below.

- **Land Management Planner** is identified as the team lead and will be the primary contact and coordinator for the planning project. The Planner will provide advice and expertise on the management planning process, coordinate the completion of management direction documentation and guide the completion of engagement according to the engagement strategy. The Planner will also ensure that all applicable legislation and policy requirements are met.
- **Geographic Information System (GIS) Database Technician** will provide technical skills and expertise related to GIS. The GIS Technician will assist in completing technical analysis and producing mapping products.

3.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

This section should provide a brief overview of the planning initiative and should address the following:

3.1 Planning area

This section is a more detailed, site-specific description of the park or open space(s) than what is provided in the introduction. In this section, consider describing the following:

- the extent of the planning area, including location and boundary;
- the property in a landscape context (e.g., names of townships, counties, municipalities); and
- existing or proposed uses adjacent to the park or open space.

When the planning process involves grouped parks and open spaces, identify which parks or open spaces are involved and provide the rationale for grouping (see section 1.2.2 of this manual).

Mapping

In this section, include a map illustrating the regional landscape in which the park or open space exists, including location and boundary of the park or open space and any other administrative boundaries relevant to the planning project (e.g., Bruce Trail Conservancy or Ontario Heritage Trust holdings). Where appropriate, a detailed map of the park or open space may also be provided.

3.2 Planning complexity

In this sub-section, the planning team should determine the complexity of the project.

Based on the factors listed in the manual and the information in Section 1.2.3., provide a clear rationale for the decision. The implications of this decision on the number of engagement opportunities (i.e., Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders and public) will be addressed in the engagement strategy.

Consider Development Concept

The planning team may also want to consider the park and open space development concept for their management plan. This concept is a summary of the future condition of the park and open space that describes the long-term development outcomes. These outcomes can include development efforts such as infrastructure development that are identified either prior to or as an outcome of the planning process (e.g., Stage 2—Information Gathering and Analysis).

Planning teams are encouraged to consider the complexity of the planning project in Stage 1—Scoping. This will inform the Terms of Reference and ensure that the resources and engagement opportunities required for a planning project are understood. It also reduces the likelihood that the level of complexity may need to change.

Grey Sauble Conservation Area

3.3 Purpose of the park or open space

In this sub-section, record the components that will form the basis of the purpose statement. The purpose statement is revisited in Stage 3 (Developing Management Direction) of the planning process to confirm the final direction of the management plan. Developing the preliminary purpose and vision at this stage helps to focus the information collection, analysis, and discussion during subsequent stages on the most important values and pressures in the park or open space.

The purpose statement describes why the park or open space was established and how it contributes to NEPOSS. Section 1.3 of the manual describes how to develop the basis of the purpose statement.

3.4 Planning topics

In this sub-section, describe the scope (limits of what the project will and will not deliver) of the planning project, by describing what topics will be addressed during the management planning process and deliverables. It is not necessary to provide an exhaustive list of what is in scope or out of scope, but this section should provide a general idea of the main topics, issues or proposals (see example below).

Example of Scoping Exercise	
IN Scope	**OUT of Scope**
Describe specific items that WILL be included as part of the work performed this project.	Describe specific items that WILL NOT be included as part of the work performed project.
Define hiking trail system and supporting infrastructure. • Evaluate trail markers • Evaluate trail condition • Construct boardwalk • Construct comfort stations • Develop sustainable parking options for park or open space Develop education programming. • Visual panels	Visitor/Interpretive Centre New recreational uses

Additional topics may be added throughout the planning process; therefore, this list is considered preliminary at this time. It may also be appropriate to identify specific topics, issues or proposals that will not be addressed during the management planning process. Potential topics to include in this section are:

- Ecological integrity
  - Significant/sensitive site values (e.g., earth and life science, cultural)
  - Values of conservation interest
  - Condition of site values
  - Existing/anticipated pressures
  - Strategies to avoid, mitigate and/or remedy pressures (maintenance and restoration of ecological integrity)
  - Invasive species
- Cultural heritage
- Cultural heritage resources
  - Condition of values
  - Pressures
  - Assessment and protection
  - Monitoring
- Resource management
  - Fire management
  - Fish and wildlife management
  - Vegetation management
  - Water management
- Recreation and heritage appreciation
- Operations and development
  - Buildings and structures
  - Campgrounds/campsites
  - Trail system
  - Roads, bridges and parking
  - Day use areas
  - Beaches
  - Boat launches
  - Docks
  - Utilities
- Research and monitoring
  - Prescribed burning for ecological objectives
  - Wetland evaluation
  - Scientific research/education

Mono Cliffs Provincial Park

3.5 Alignment with other planning processes

In this section, record any opportunities for alignment with other planning processes (e.g., NEC Development Permits, Municipal or Conservation Authority Permits). Distinguish between processes that will run concurrently (meet engagement requirements through different mechanisms at the same time) and processes that will be coordinated (meet the requirements of multiple processes in a single process). Review Section 1.4 of the manual when considering alignment with other planning processes.

APPENDIX I: ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

In this section, include the engagement strategy that was developed with consideration of Section 1.5 of the manual and the Engagement Strategy Template (Appendix C). The engagement strategy documents the approach to engaging with Indigenous communities and organizations, stakeholders and the public throughout the planning process. The engagement strategy is also the basis for project planning and informs the project schedule associated with the planning process.

APPENDIX II: PROJECT SCHEDULE

Completion of this section is discretionary. If not included in the Terms of Reference, project schedule information may be included in an accompanying project charter or plan. If included in the Terms of Reference, provide details on the project's anticipated timelines. Ensure that the timelines detailed here are general enough to allow for flexibility but also provide enough structure to guide the planning project. These timelines should reflect what is included in the engagement strategy in Appendix I. In this section, it may also be appropriate to provide information on the tasks assigned to planning team members associated with the anticipated timelines.

APPENDIX III: PROJECT BUDGET

Completion of this section is discretionary. If not included in the Terms of Reference, budget information may be included in an accompanying project charter or plan. If included in the Terms of Reference, provide details on the estimated costs of the project and how resourcing will be provided.

Appendix C—Engagement Resources

1. Engagement Strategy Template

This template provides guidance to planning teams on the format and general content requirements for documenting a comprehensive engagement strategy during planning for parks and open spaces.

Guidance on engagement is provided in Stage 1 (Scoping). The guidance should be used in conjunction with this template.

This template is one of a number of tools which provide support for implementing this manual.

Planning Stage	**Timeline** (outline anticipated timeline associated with each planning stage and/or each engagement approach)	**Engagement Approaches** (list engagement approaches determined in Appendix C) **Indigenous Communities and Organizations**	**Stakeholders and the Public**	**Products and Communication Requirements** (identify communication requirements associated with each document)	**MNDMNRF/ NEC Engagement**
Scoping (including early engagement)				Terms of Reference (no engagement required)	
Information Gathering and Analysis				Background Document	
Developing Management Direction				Management Options	
Finalizing Management Direction				Draft Management Plan	
Endorsement and Approval				Final Management Plan Approval Statement	
Monitoring, Review, Evaluation, and Plan Amendments				Monitoring Report Amendments	

Crawford Lake Conservation Area

2. Best Practices for Indigenous Engagement

Best Practices have been developed as guidance for NEPOSS agencies on engagement and accommodation. They are intended to provide practical advice and suggestions to planning staff who have responsibility for engaging with Indigenous communities and organizations about proposed management planning actions or decisions, and where appropriate, accommodating their rights and interests.

"Indigenous Peoples" is a term used to describe the original peoples of North America. Indigenous is a collective term used to describe three distinct groups in Canada:

- First Nations
- Métis
- Inuit.

The manual and best practices use the term "Indigenous communities and organizations" as a catchall for the many organizations and communities servicing and/or representing these three distinct groups.

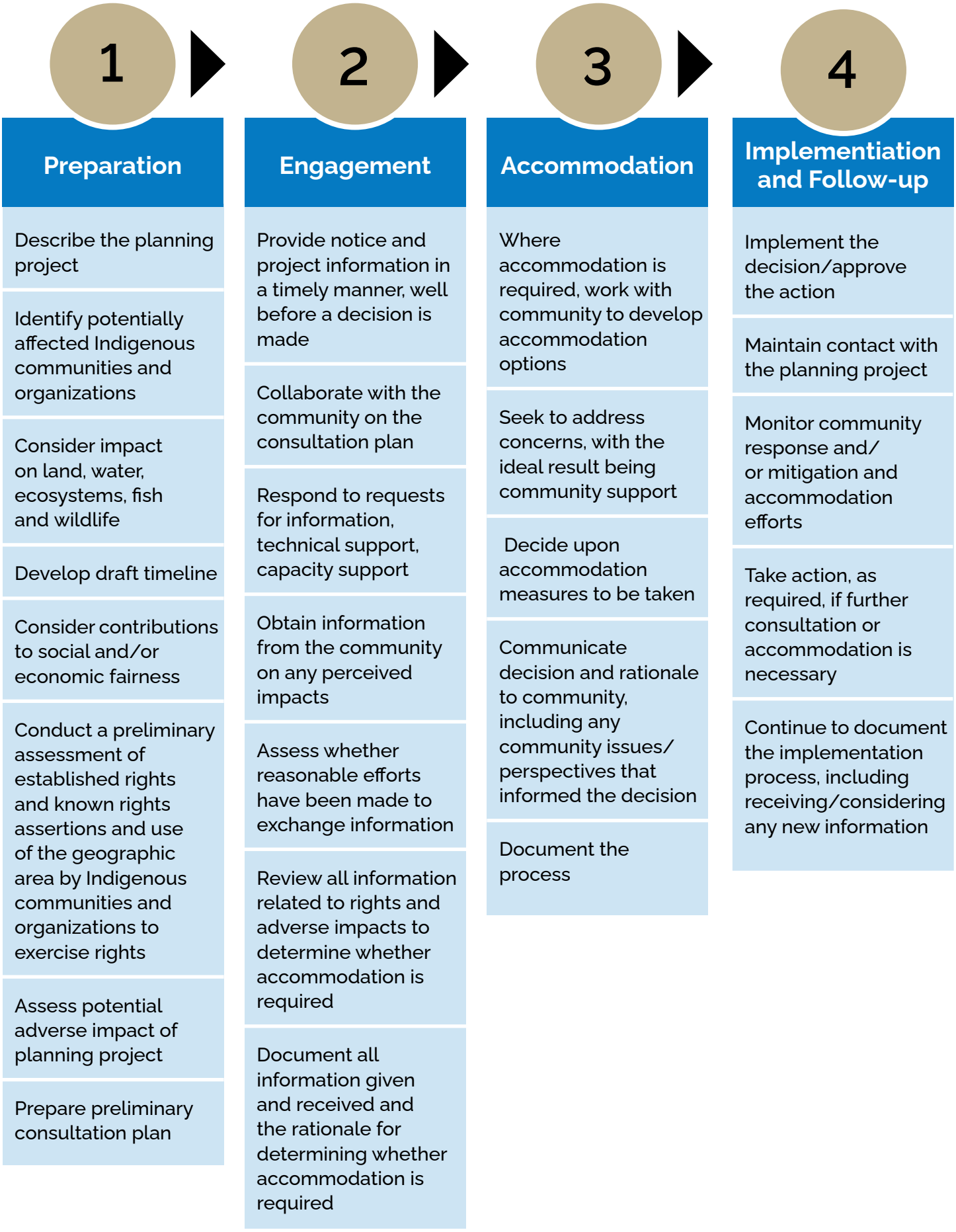
The term "engagement" should be understood broadly as the entire process that encompasses several phases.

There is a four-stage approach to engagement:

1. Preparation
2. Engagement
3. Accommodation
4. Implementation and monitoring.

Within each of the four stages (Figure 6) is a series of steps that will be applicable in a wide range of circumstances, although not necessarily all. These steps and considerations have come from experienced staff and are not intended to be prescriptive, but to help the planning team assess, develop and carry out effective engagement with Indigenous communities and organizations. Engagement with Indigenous communities and organizations should be assessed on a case-by-case basis, considering the unique circumstances of each situation. The steps in the engagement process itself may also reflect the unique requirements of the affected communities and organizations and the planning team.

Figure 6: The Four-stage Engagement Approach



PREPARATION

Thorough preparation has been shown to contribute to effective processes and improved relationships between planning teams and Indigenous communities and organizations. Begin early enough to ensure that Indigenous interests can be appropriately considered and balanced in the decision-making process.

Describe the Planning Project

Describing the planning project is an important first step for several reasons. It is important to communicate the objective of the proposed action to all parties, including:

- degree of change it represents
- geography and whether it is local, regional or provincial in scope
- impact on land, water, ecosystems, fish and wildlife, etc.
- timing
- contribution to social and/or economic fairness.

Identify Potentially Affected Communities

When identifying potentially affected communities, consider:

- First Nations, Métis and other Indigenous communities and organizations within or near the area of the proposed activity, and
- First Nations, Métis and other Indigenous communities and organizations located outside of the area of the proposed activity, but whose asserted traditional use areas are within it.

Some sources to help identify potentially affected communities include:

- Ministry of Indigenous Affairs (IAO)
- Public information, such as claims made in court, information on publicly available websites
- Discussions with colleagues, etc.—What about using information from previous projects in the same geographic area or for similar purposes?

> Communities and organizations may not be directly affected until some point in the future, but nevertheless are owed engagement early in the planning or policy development process.

Consider how decisions made now and over the next several years could potentially have long-term implications for the Indigenous communities and organizations. Uncertainty about the potential impact may indicate a need for more information about the proposed planning project.

Common Components of an Engagement Plan

- Brief summary of the proposed planning project
- Potentially affected communities
- Preliminary assessment of the potential impacts to the Indigenous communities and organizations
- Indigenous communities and organizations that may have an identified interest in the project but are not necessarily affected.
- If known, names of key contacts from Indigenous community and organization, as applicable
- Roles and responsibilities of the key contacts involved in the planning, assessments, and practical aspects of the engagement for the project
- Steps in the engagement process and how they will be carried out
- Timing of each of the steps
- Supporting materials.

Ensure flexibility of process and timelines to accommodate community needs.

ENGAGEMENT

Engagement must begin early enough that the time and information need of the Indigenous community and organization community can be reasonably addressed. Where there are ongoing working relationships between the agency and the community, it may be helpful to indicate early that the agency will be contacting the community about future engagement. At some point, however, a formal written notice and information should be conveyed to the community.

Provide Project Information And Notice

Written communication should clearly indicate that the agency wishes to engage with the community about a planning project that may have an adverse effect on the community. This

initial communication would typically include:

- The nature and scope of the planning project
- The communities with whom the agency is engaging
- The feedback that the agency is seeking
- The agency's assessment of the degree of required engagement and proposed steps
- A willingness to discuss process and provide further information
- A request for a response from the community, with a response date (understanding that more time may be necessary)
- The agency contacts and how to reach them.

Respond To Requests From The Indigenous Community and Organization

In order for the community or organization to provide its assessment of the impact of the proposed planning project, community or organization representatives may require further information and explanation of the proposed project, activity, policy or decision than what was originally provided. Community or organization representatives/decision-makers may wish the whole community or organization to have a chance to learn about the project and request processes that engage their members. These could include:

- Briefings of council
- Community presentations and discussions
- Field visits to examine a site.

They may request different kinds of support for their participation in the engagement process, and for timelines to accommodate their needs. The agency should try to act reasonably in the face of these requests.

Technical Support

Some planning actions may be related to projects that require significant technical knowledge and experience, both in order to understand the nature of the project, and to assess its potential impact. There are several ways to address the community's needs in this regard:

- The agency may provide background reports and analysis to augment the community's understanding
- The agency may offer its staff as a technical resource.

Capacity Support

The community or organization may request financial support to participate in an engagement process. The agency may wish to address the request on a case-by-case basis, and take into consideration:

- The intended use of the support
- The potential impact of the planning project and actions
- The capacity of the community (economic, technical, human and financial resources, including access to other sources of funding)
- The engagement burden on the community, which can be driven by engagement requests, existing protocol agreements and the engagement policies of a community.

When communities or organizations don't engage

Communities or organizations may not respond to preliminary notifications about engagement. In these cases, it is important to note the follow-up notification, using alternate means (e.g., phone, fax, email), and attempt(s) to notify in the engagement record. If communities or organizations don't engage, do not respond to multiple notifications, or decline to participate in the engagement, planning staff will have to assess whether they have made all reasonable efforts to inform the communities of the proposed planning project. Ensure that all correspondence is documented.

Other Requests:

- Coordinating meetings during the evening or on weekends
- Sponsoring meals or feasts as part of community information or engagement sessions
- More time for the engagement process.

Obtain Information From The Community or Organization on Any Perceived Adverse Impacts

The purpose of providing information and support to the community or organization is to enable them to give feedback to the agency about the adverse impact(s) they think the proposed planning project or action will have on their

community or rights. This feedback may be in writing, but it does not have to be. Feedback at briefings and community meetings should be properly recorded and considered by the agency. If the feedback is entirely oral, it may be sensible for agency staff to capture the information in writing and provide it to the community for confirmation that the agency has understood the issues/ interests/concerns they identified.

Document Engagement Process

It is critical to keep a record of all correspondence and communications that relate to the engagement, including:

- Any modifications made to the engagement plan, particularly in response to feedback from the community or organization
- Each contact made with the community or organization—phone calls, meetings, emails
- All information about the proposed planning project/activity that was shared with the community or organization
- Response to any information requests made by the Indigenous community or organization
- Feedback from the community—usually organized according to at which meeting it was received as well as consideration for how their feedback was used and where the changes were made
- Resources provided to the community or organization to support their participation
- The determination of whether accommodation is required and the rationale for this decision
- All correspondence between the agency and the community related to the engagement.

ACCOMMODATION

If through engagement it has been determined that accommodation is appropriate, the next step is to develop strategies that will mitigate, minimize or compensate for adverse impacts of a planning project action or decision upon the community. Whenever possible, work with the community or organization to develop options that will address the adverse impacts. This will demonstrate good faith attempts to accommodate in a way that takes the Indigenous community's or organization's concerns and suggestions into account and will improve the chance that the solutions will be acceptable to all affected parties. It is important to be creative and flexible about accommodation options, including:

- Changing project scope, design or approach to lessen the impacts
- Facilitating Indigenous community or organization participation in the initiative, such as sharing the economic benefits, where feasible and available
- Other opportunities for mitigation.

IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP

After making a decision that required engagement and, where appropriate, accommodation, the agency should ensure that its decision is implemented as approved, that the consequences are as predicted, and that any necessary adjustments as required are made.

Monitor Community or Organization Response

In addition to tracking the agency actions (and/or related project) implementation and impacts, the agency should also learn about the observations and experiences of the community or organization in terms of the action/project's effects on their rights and interests. It may make sense to plan for this kind of follow-up with the community or organization to ensure that it takes place at appropriate times in the life of the project, when impacts may be felt or observed. The community or organization should also be made aware of whom to contact to discuss impacts.

Take Action If Required

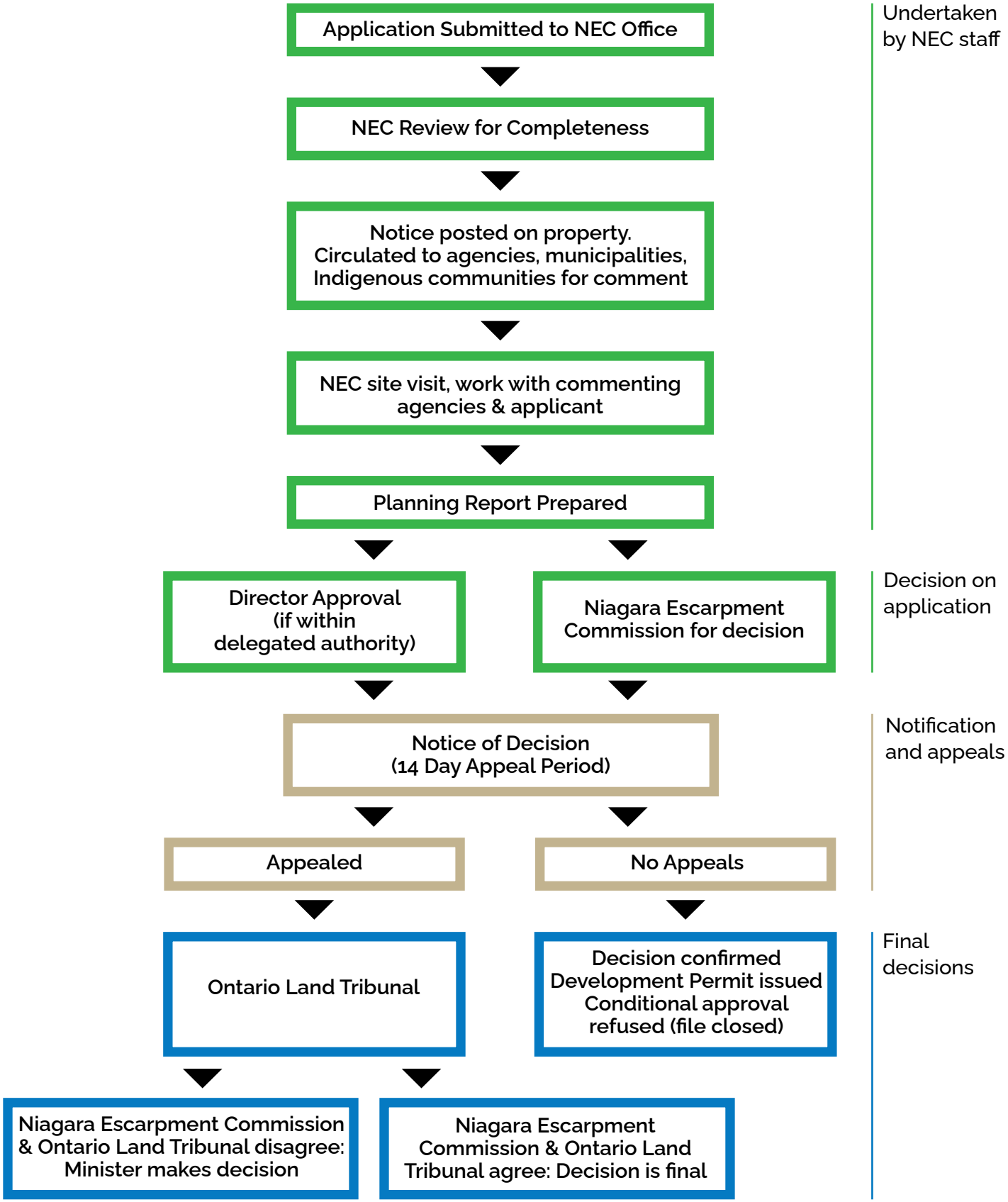
Where there are unintended or unexpected actions or consequences, the agency has a responsibility to ensure that the intent of the engagement prevails, despite changing circumstances or new information. If implementation has not proceeded as approved, or if for some other reason there has been an unanticipated adverse impact on Indigenous or treaty rights, the agency should initiate further discussions with the community or organization and take revised or new accommodation measures, as required.

3. Engagement Techniques

Engagement techniques may vary according to the level of engagement based on the complexity of the plan and the intended audience. The list below provides an example of engagement techniques typically employed in the planning process. Each planning team will establish techniques that work best for the management plan being developed.

Technique	Description
Mail/email notices	Sending direct mail to interested parties can be used to provide a project description and information on how to become involved and receive information.
Social media	Using social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, podcasts etc.) may enable interactive dialogue and significantly increase community participation.
Moderated online discussion forums	Initiating and moderating forums allows interested parties to share information and discuss interests that are important to them.
Website postings	Posting information on agency websites will provide accessibility to current planning documents.
Local newspaper ads	Placing ads in local newspapers can inform diverse participants.
Park notices	Posting information notices at park or open space bulletin boards/trail heads informs visitors who use the area.
Surveys	Conducting in-person, online or paper surveys may provide an alternate medium to receive comments and understand the visitor profile.
One-on-one discussions	Coordinating discussions with interested parties can be used to gain an understanding of their interests and knowledge.
Group discussions (e.g., workshops)	Supporting group discussions provides opportunities to share and understand diverse perspectives.
Site visits	Visiting the park with interested parties can provide an opportunity to gain site-specific knowledge and receive input.
Open houses (virtual town hall/in-person)	Hosting open houses provides the public with an opportunity to hear presentations, receive information and meet with planning teams.
Attendance at local meetings	Attending a local group meeting may provide insight to the group's goals and interest in the park or open space.

Appendix D—NEC Development Permit Process



Appendix E—Cultural Heritage Resources

Many properties are icons in the Escarpment landscape because they have cultural heritage value or interest. Properties of cultural heritage value or interest are important to the social, economic and cultural well-being of Ontario communities. On those properties can be found, either singly or together, three types of cultural heritage resources: built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes, archaeological resources and/or areas of archaeological potential. The conservation of cultural heritage resources, including features of interest to Indigenous communities and organizations, is an objective of the NEP.

The *Ontario Heritage Act* provides the framework for provincial and municipal responsibilities and powers in the conservation of cultural heritage resources.

Identifying, conserving and protecting our cultural heritage resources is mandatory for ministries and prescribed public bodies under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

The Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries (MHSTCI) has developed Standards and Guidelines for Conservation of Provincial Heritage Properties (2010), which have been approved by Cabinet. The purpose of these standards and guidelines is the appropriate conservation and management of provincial heritage properties.

The Ontario Heritage Tool Kit is a series of written guides developed by the MHSTCI to help land use planners understand the heritage conservation process in Ontario and to explain the *Ontario Heritage Act,* the *Planning Act*, and related programs.

The Ontario Heritage Tool Kit includes:

- *Your Community, Your Heritage, Your Committee* (2006), a guide to establishing and sustaining an effective Municipal Heritage Committee
- *Heritage Property Evaluation* (2006), a guide to listing, researching and evaluating cultural heritage property in Ontario communities
- *Designating Heritage Properties* (2006), a guide to municipal designation of individual properties under the *Ontario Heritage Act*
- *Heritage Conservation Districts* (2006), a guide to district designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*
- *Heritage Resources in the Land Use Planning Process* (2006), a guide that explains cultural heritage and archaeology policies of the Ontario Provincial Policy Statement (2020)
- *Heritage Places of Worship* (2011), a guide to assist in the conservation and protection of all heritage places of worship in Ontario.

The NEP (2017), Section 2.10, provides direction to inventory, interpret, evaluate, maintain and conserve cultural heritage features of the NEP area.

Appendix F—Approval Statement Template

Approval Statements

Prior to submission to the NEC and MNDMNRF, the approval statement should be either signed by the agency representative with approval authority or have a Resolution provided by the Conservation Board of Directors or Municipal Council.

If the park is a co-management project (e.g., NEPOSS lands jointly managed by a conservation authority, the MNDMNRF and/or a county), the signatures of representatives from all implementing agencies should appear in the approval statement.

Approval statements should be brief and contain the following elements:

- A brief description of the park or open space.
- Signatures of approval and dates, or a dated Resolution supported by the Conservation Authority Board of Directors or Municipal Council.
- A signed statement to indicate that the signing authority commits to the management plan, as shown in the sample here.
- A statement that the management plan conforms to the NEP and other relevant legislative requirements, signed by NEC and MNDMNRF Directors, as shown in the sample.

Sample Approval Statement

This should be identified as one document. The first part of the approval statement is signed by the agency and the second part is signed by MNDMNRF and the NEC.

I am pleased to approve the **[name of park or open space area]** Management Plan as the policy for the management and development of this park. The management plan reflects the **[managing agency]'s** intent to protect the natural environment of the Niagara Escarpment and the natural **[and cultural, if applicable]** features of the **[park name]** and to **[maintain and/or develop]** high-quality opportunities for natural [and cultural, if applicable] interpretation, recreation and enjoyment of the Niagara Escarpment by Ontario residents and visitors.

_____ Date: _____

Director **[or Manager]**
[Name of Agency]

Note: For provincial parks, the approval statement appearing in the Protected Areas Planning Manual will be substituted for the above.

I am pleased to confirm that this management plan is in conformity with the general intent and purpose of the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

_____ Date: _____

Director,
Niagara Escarpment Commission

_____ Date: _____

Director,
Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry

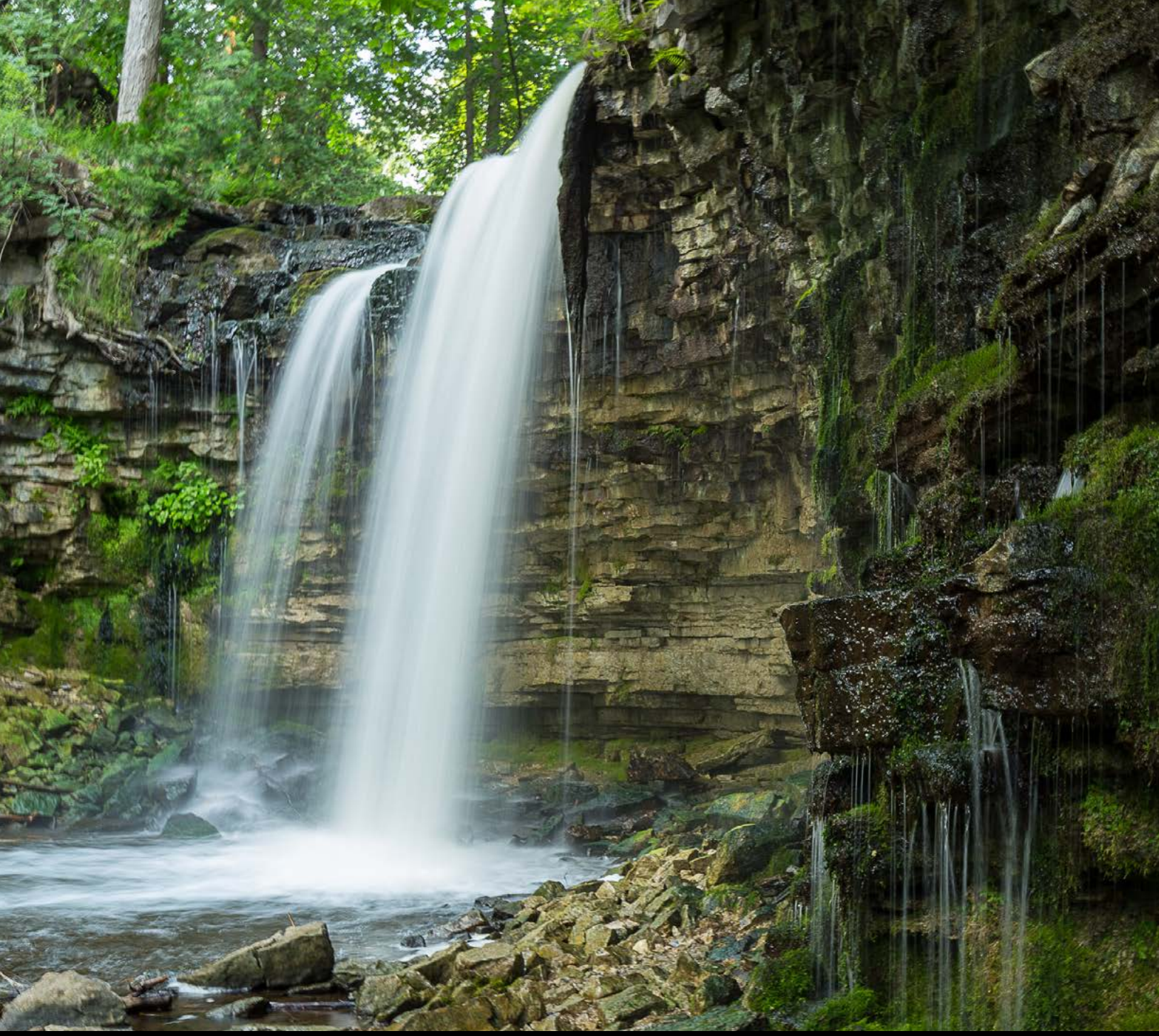
City View Park and (back cover photo) Hilton Falls Conservation Area

Acknowledgments

Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry would like to acknowledge the following agencies, NEC staff, members of the NEPOSS Council, and the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries for their help in developing this manual.

Photo Credits:

Bruce Trail Conservancy
City of Burlington
City of Hamilton
Credit Valley Conservation Authority
David Lamb
Gary Hall
Grey Sauble Conservation Authority
Halton Region Conservation Authority
Hamilton Conservation Authority
iStock Getty Images
Lawrence Homestead
Mark Zelinski
Niagara Escarpment Commission
Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority
Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation
Parks Canada
Royal Botanical Gardens
Toronto and Region Conservation Authority



Ministry of Northern Development,
Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry

Ontario

Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System Planning Manual (2021)

© Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2021
ISBN 978-1-4868-5473-8 PRINT
ISBN 978-1-4868-5474-5 HTML
ISBN 978-1-4868-5475-2 PDF