
To: Mayor and Council

From: Rossalyn Workman, Manager of Planning; Sasha Helmkey-Playter, Clerk/Director of Legislative Services

Meeting Date: September 8, 2025

Subject: Report # PB-035-2025 – Devil’s Glen Provincial Park Proposed Management Plan Amendment – Request for Comments

Recommendation

Be It Resolved that Council of the Township of Clearview hereby receive report PB-035-2025 (Devil’s Glen Provincial Park Proposed Management Plan Amendment – Request for Comments) dated September 8, 2025; and,

- 1) That Council supports the comments provided by staff within this report regarding the Proposed Management Plan amendments for Devil’s Glen; and,
- 2) That Council directs staff to submit these comments on behalf of the Township of Clearview to the Environmental Registry of Ontario by September 19, 2025.

Background

On August 1, 2025, the Township received notice on the opportunity to comment on the proposed Devil’s Glen Provincial Park Management Plan amendment through the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO). The deadline to submit comments is September 19, 2025.

As outlined on the ERO website, Devil’s Glen Provincial Park is a 60.19-hectare (ha) park situated on the Niagara Escarpment, south of Nottawasaga Bay, in the Township of Clearview. The purpose of Devil’s Glen Provincial Park is to:

- permanently protect the park’s natural and cultural heritage values; and,
- provide a limited variety of compatible forms of outdoor recreation.

Specifically, the park protects:

- the Devil’s Glen Gorge Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI), which was designated an ANSI in the early 1990s.
- a regionally significant river valley that cuts through the escarpment by the Mad River.
- nine provincially significant vegetation community types associated with cliff and talus habitats, a number of old growth cedar trees as identified in the Niagara

Escarpment Ancient Tree Atlas Project (2004), significant breeding bird habitat, as well as roosting sites for a significant number of bats.

At a high level, the proposed amendments to the Plan reflect a future addition of adjacent acquired lands to the park, a classification change, zoning changes (park is divided into zones, but these 'zones' do not relate to the Township Zoning By-law 06-54), and changes to the permitted recreational activities within Natural Environment zones.

Comments and Analysis

With Devil's Glen Provincial Park being situated in the Township of Clearview and Council having a vested interest in the use of the lands, staff took the opportunity to review the proposed details of the amendments. This review was to understand if there were key areas worth submitting comments. A copy of the accepted track changes version of the Devil's Glen Proposed Management Plan is attached as Schedule C.

In summary, below are the key changes and the section of the Plan it relates to:

- **1.1 Boundary**
 - content added to reflect proposed park addition.
- **2 Classification**
 - proposed classification change from recreation to natural environment. A natural environment classification better reflects the current state of the park, the emphasis on protection of natural and cultural values, and the recreational changes since the 1994 amendment which resulted in the closure of the campground.
- **3.1 Purpose**
 - the purpose statement has been modified to emphasize protection of natural and cultural heritage values at the park.
- **3.2 Vision**
 - "vision" section added to plan.
- **3.3 Objectives**
 - Recreation
 - proposed addition of rock climbing as a permitted recreational use.
 - minor amendment to remove policy relating to the campgrounds that was not removed in the 1994 amendment.
 - Scientific research

- purpose and intended uses of scientific research are defined.
- **6.0 Zoning**
 - proposed addition of a third zone (Nature reserve zone).
 - **6.1: Development zone:**
 - increase in this zone area from 5.0 ha to 5.3 ha.
 - proposed policy change regarding minor parking lot expansion.
 - **6.2: Natural environment zone:**
 - reduction in this zone area from 56.0 ha to 29.3 ha.
 - reference to proposed addition.
 - **6.3: Nature reserve zone:**
 - proposed zoned to include 44.5 ha.
 - description and management intent added to describe new zone along the Mad River, forest community and seepage areas.
- **7.8 Land management**
 - policy added to describe actions to address pressures originating from adjacent lands.
- **8.2 Recreation management**
 - cycling and the use of motorized off-road vehicles will not be permitted
 - rock climbing: policy added to the plan to state that rock climbing may be permitted in areas designated by the park superintendent.
- **12 Implementation Priorities**
 - A table has been added to be consistent with the current management planning process for Ontario Parks. It describes short, medium and long-term priorities that align with the policies of this plan.
- **Appendix III: Management of Rock Climbing**
 - detailed policy describing the proposed establishment and management of rock-climbing activities at Devil's Glen Provincial Park.
- **Updated mapping to reflect proposed zoning and addition.**

In addition to the above, the province is proposing to add 18 hectares of acquired land to the park to protect representative features of the Niagara Escarpment and provide a limited variety of compatible forms and levels of outdoor recreation. It is also proposed to change the classification of the park from 'recreational' to 'natural environment' in recognition of the park's unique life science and earth science features and the recreational values of the park.

Township Proposed Comments

Given the above proposed amendments, Township Staff provide the following comments for Council's approval to submit to the ERO.

1.1 Boundary

Proposing to add 18 hectares of acquired land to the park to protect representative features of the Niagara Escarpment and provide a limited variety of compatible forms and levels of outdoor recreation.

Comment: Township Staff support adding additional lands to the Park but encourages the Province to support and adhere to the Township's property standards requirements under its Property Standards By-law especially if the intent is to provide levels of outdoor recreation encouraging the public to use these lands.

Township Staff have identified that a typo has occurred in the second line of this paragraph. It should state 'north of Nottawasaga Sideroad 17/18', not 'north of Nottawasaga Sideroad 17'.

3.2 Objectives

Under the 'Recreation' heading there is a proposed change to formally include rock climbing as a use.

Comment: Township Staff support the addition of this use, since it is already occurring. Township Staff requests that additional study be undertaken to assess how adding this use will impact the increased usage of the park, and whether the park can support the addition of another type of user. The park is a popular destination and sufficient parking facilities to accommodate all users should be provided on park lands.

6.1 Development zone

Proposed policy change regarding minor parking lot expansion.

Comment: Township Staff supports an expansion to the current parking lot but requests that the development of a new parking lot in the proposed development zone be made a short-term priority, rather than a long-term priority as identified under Section 12 of the Plan. With the addition of rock climbing as a permitted use, and the increase interest in hiking in this area of the Bruce Trail, Staff have concerns regarding the public

using Concession 10 South Nottawasaga on both the east and west sides of the road as parking for their recreational activities while using the Devil's Glen Park. Concession 10 South Nottawasaga is a busy road for travelers and the additional parking on the shoulders of the road pose safety risks. Rock climbers already use the Park for their recreational activity, and the Township has received complaints regarding parking. Some measures have been taken to alleviate parking issues such as installing 'no parking' signs in specific areas of Concession 10, but unfortunately this has been unsuccessful. This is a real safety concern, and one that could be solved by providing sufficient parking on park lands to accommodate larger amounts of Park users. A needs assessment study should be undertaken to determine where users are coming from, duration of stay, purpose of visit and user requirements, including a justification for parking demand.

8.2 Recreation management

Rock climbing: policy added to the plan to state that rock climbing may be permitted in areas designated by the park superintendent.

Comment: Township Staff support the addition of rock climbing as a permitted use in this park. Township Staff have concerns for safety as it relates to the parking of users on nearby road shoulders. Road shoulders are not designed or designated for extended parking of vehicles and poses safety risks.

In relation to recreation activities and emergency services, Clearview Fire and Emergency Services is equipped to attend calls that require high angle rescues, if required. Rock climbing has been occurring at the Park for many years with Clearview Fire adapting and completing training to address these emergency situations.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

Clearview's Strategic Plan

The above initiative supports the following strategic pillars:

- Communication

Report Appendices

Appendix A – Ortho Map

Appendix B – Policy Map

Appendix C – Proposed Amendments to Devils Glen Provincial Park Management Plan

Approvals

Submitted by: Rossalyn Workman, MURP, Dipl.MM, MCIP, RPP, Manager of Planning; Sasha Helmky-Playter, B.A., Dipl. M.A., AOMC, Clerk/Director of Legislative Services

Reviewed by: Krista Pascoe, Dipl. M.A., Deputy Clerk
Derek Abbotts, MCIP, RPP, PLE, Director of Planning & Building

Financial Implications Reviewed by: Kelly McDonald, Treasurer

Approved by: John Ferguson, CAO