

WELCOME

York Regional Forest 20 Year Management Plan INFORMATION SESSION

A new plan is required to guide forest management for the next 20-year period from 2019 to 2038.

As a leader in conservation, stewardship and management, York Region will use the new forest management plan to maintain a healthy and ecologically diverse York Regional Forest (the Forest) to sustain its communities and inspire people.

The process of updating the management plan began in 2016 and now decisions need to be made.

We want to hear your feedback.

This information session will update you on the management plan.

Ideas being considered for the new plan, include :

Public Use

- Possible changes to the way you currently use the Forest
- How use of the Forest will be managed in the future

Forest Management

- What actions are important to ensure the long term ecological integrity of the Forest

How Can I Provide Feedback?

You can provide feedback by emailing York Region at accessyork@york.ca

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You will have an opportunity to provide additional feedback when the draft Forest Management Plan is available for comment.

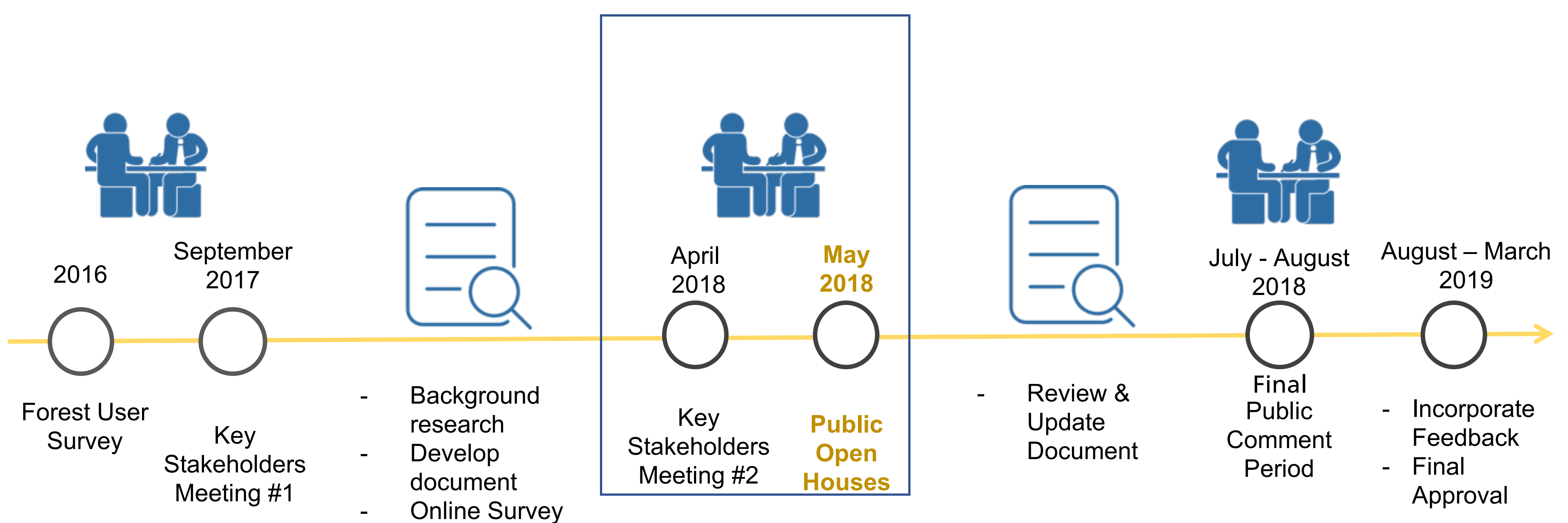
Everyone who submits feedback before May 31, 2018 will be provided an email link to the draft Forest Management Plan. All comments will be reviewed.

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PROJECT TIMELINE

York Regional Forest 20 Year Management Plan



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York Region

HISTORY

of the York Regional Forest



1800s

Before and After Settlers

Before settlers arrived, York Region was covered in forests.

Indigenous people hunted, foraged and harvested trees and plants for medicine and household goods. They used fire to keep part of the land open for crops, trails and gathering places.

When settlers arrived the forests were cut to build homes and communities. Sawmills were built and wood was sold as lumber.

When all the trees were removed, wind and water exposed the sandy soils of the Oak Ridges Moraine.

The land became bare and sand covered the landscape. Farming the land became impossible and animal populations dwindled.

1900s

Restoring the Forest

Foresters, farmers and politicians studied the landscape and concluded that trees were the solution to improve the landscape.

In 1921, the Ontario Agreement Forest system was introduced. This program allowed local governments to purchase degraded farmland and reforest it under long-term agreements.

This system led to the reforestation of the Hollidge Tract in 1924, making it the first York Regional Forest property.

Early on, the goal was to stabilize the soil and establish forests. Over time, the goal changed to focus on managing natural forests with a variety of native trees.

By 2038, most of the plantations established before 1950 will have evolved into natural forest communities.

HISTORY

of the York Regional Forest



1900s

Forest Management Plan

In 1998, the Ontario Agreement Forest partnership ended and York Region implemented the current Forest Management Plan.

Under the guidance of the existing plan, we were able to:

- Become the first public forest in Canada to be certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC®)
- Add 10 properties (315 hectares)
- Plant 195,000 trees
- Construct accessible trails
- Develop a Legacy Conservation Forest Strategy
- Manage invasive species

Today

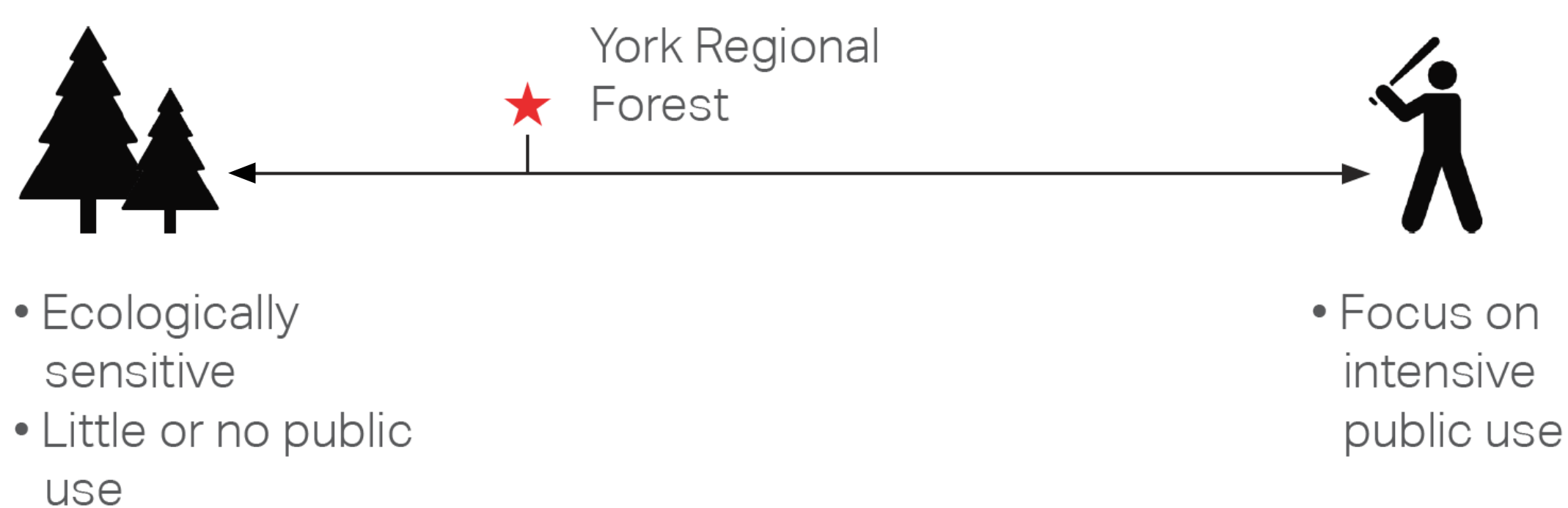
Protecting a Legacy

With careful management over the past 20 years, the Forest has grown and flourished into a diverse and resilient ecosystem of woodlands, wetlands and grasslands.

Fast Forest Facts:

- 23 forest tracts
- 147 kilometres of trails
- 2,300 total hectares
- Estimated 600,000 visitors per year

Protected and Public Use Spectrum



FOREST TRACTS

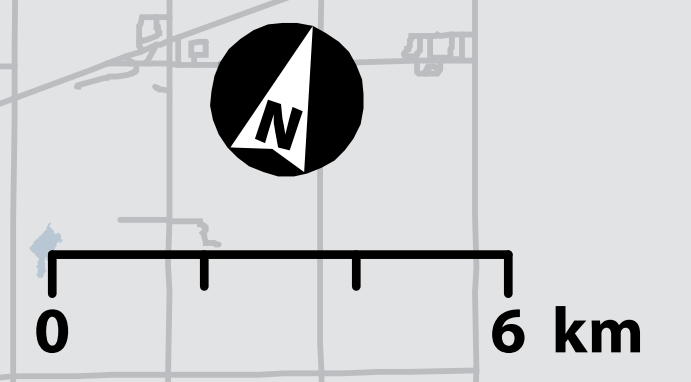
York Regional Forest

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Bendor and Graves Tract | 10 Eldred King Tract |
| 2 Brown Hill Tract | 11 Hall Tract |
| 3 Zephyr Tract | 12 Hollidge Tract |
| 4 Cronsberry Tract | 13 Mitchell Tract |
| 5 Metro Road Tract | 14 North Tract |
| 6 Pefferlaw Tract | 15 Patterson Tract |
| 7 Happy Valley Tract | 16 Porritt Tract |
| 8 Clarke Tract | 17 Robinson Tract |
| 9 Dainty Tract | 18 Scout Tract |

Lake Simcoe

Legend

- Highways
- Regional Road
- Road
- Municipal Boundary
- York Regional Forest
- 10 Forest Tracts



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FOREST VISITS

2016/17 USER SURVEY RESULTS

A public online survey was completed over the past few months. This survey was used to collect feedback on how the public currently uses the York Regional Forest. Feedback was used to help shape the draft 20 Year Forest Management Plan.

Through the survey we also collected opinions on a variety of aspects of the Forest and most opinions were positive.

More than 90 per cent of respondents agree:

The York Regional Forest provides an enjoyable experience for a variety of users.

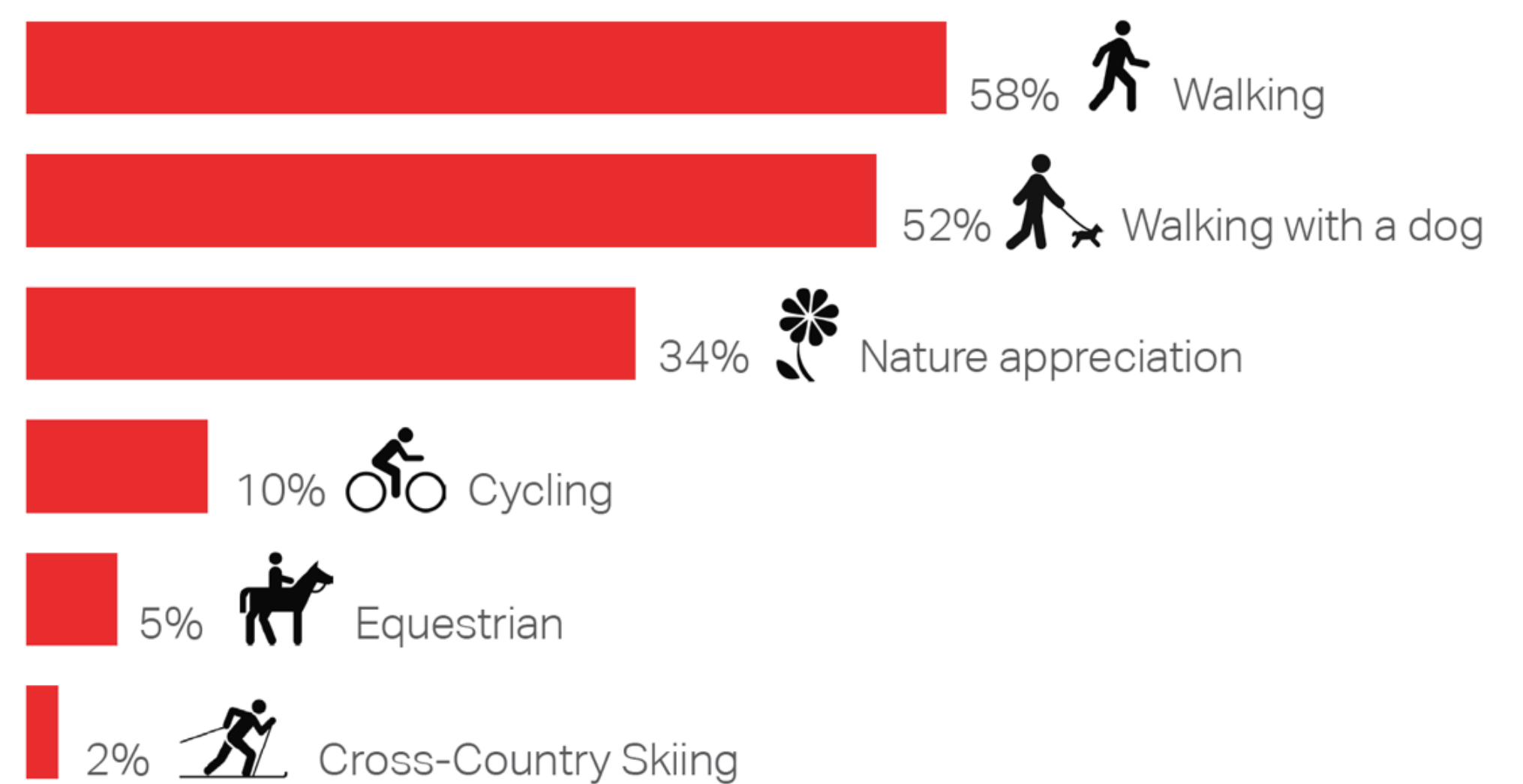
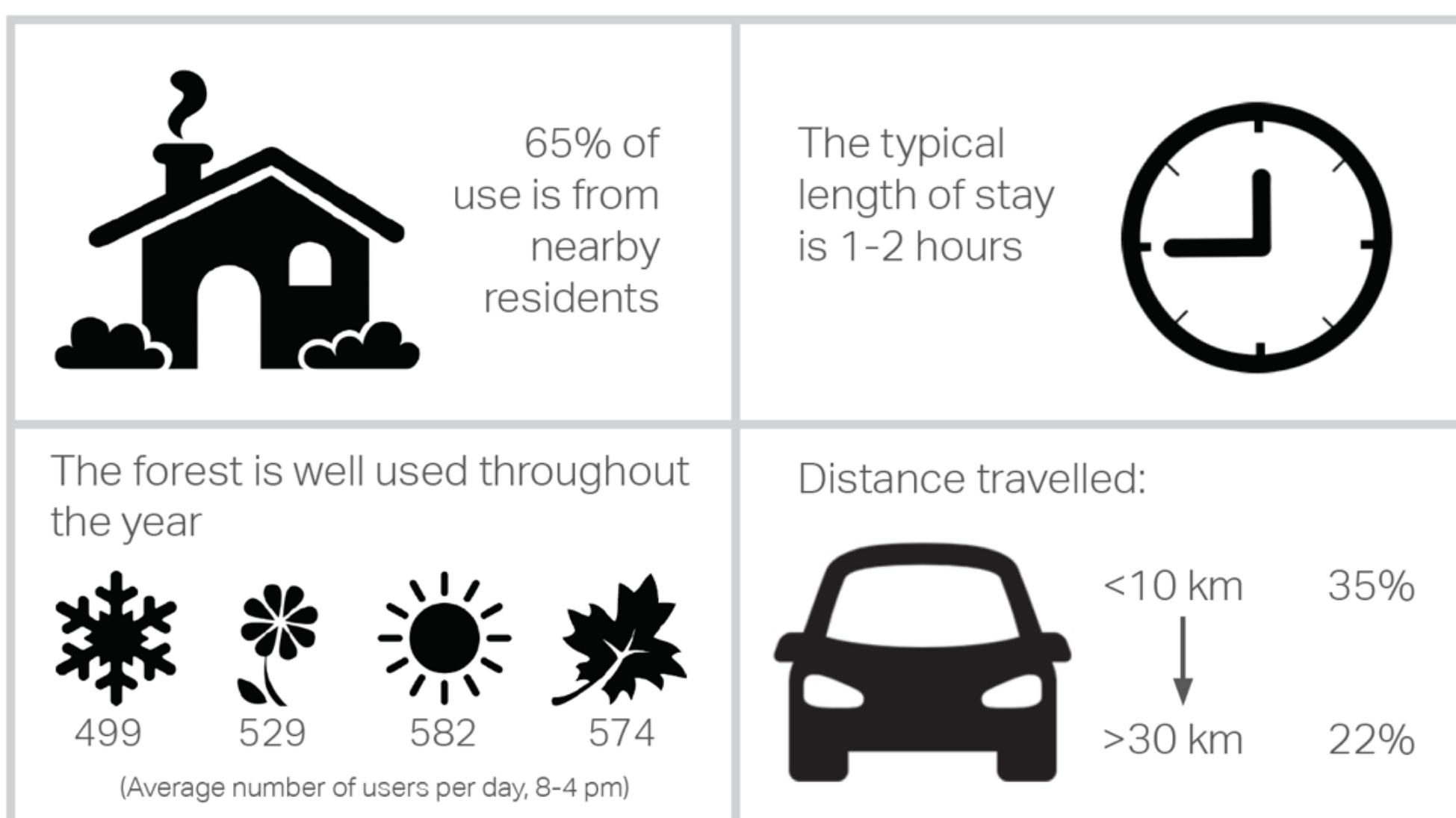
My experience in the York Regional Forest met my expectation.

21,000 annual visitors in 1975



600,000 annual visitors in 2017

Current Forest Uses



CHALLENGES

Impact on the York Regional Forest



A variety of challenges could impact the York Regional for over the next 20 years.

Climate Change

As the world's climate changes, the length, frequency and severity of droughts will likely increase. This is expected to have a wide range of effects on plants, trees and wildlife.

Climate change is also expected to affect insect-tree interactions.

Invasive Species and Disease

Non-native, invasive species threaten the health of the Forest by competing with native plants and animals for food and habitat. They can unknowingly be carried into the Forest by mud on shoes, bikes, vehicles, clothing and pets.

Some invasive species include:

- Emerald Ash Borer
- Dog-strangling Vine
- Garlic Mustard
- Buckthorn

Future influences on forest health



There are a number of diseases negatively affecting the health of the Forest, including Red Pine Decline.

Population Growth

With increasing population, more people will want to access the Forest. Increased use will need to be managed to continue to protect ecological integrity and provide an excellent user experience.

VISION

York Regional Forest 20 Year Management Plan



The 20 Year Forest Management Plan will guide Regional decisions around the management of the York Regional Forest to the year 2038. The plan identifies short and long-term actions for achieving management objectives.

Vision

As the heart of the Region's natural landscape, a healthy and ecologically diverse York Regional Forest sustains its communities and inspires its people.

Mission

In achieving this vision, York Region is a leader in working with nature, communities and people.

Goals

Our main priority is to protect and manage the ecological integrity of the Forest to maximize the benefits to the environment, community and residents.

1. Strengthen Ecological Integrity
2. Build Understanding of the Broader Benefits
3. Inspire People

The Forest Management Plan will be implemented through successive five-year operating plans, annual work plans and other Regional programs.

These five year plans will lay out the schedule of activities to support the goals, objectives and actions of the 20 year plan.

The 20 Year Forest Management Plan will be updated every 10 years to continue responding to the changing needs of the Forest.

GOAL 1

Strengthen Ecological Integrity

Continue to build the health, diversity, resiliency and sustainability of the York Regional Forest.

Objectives

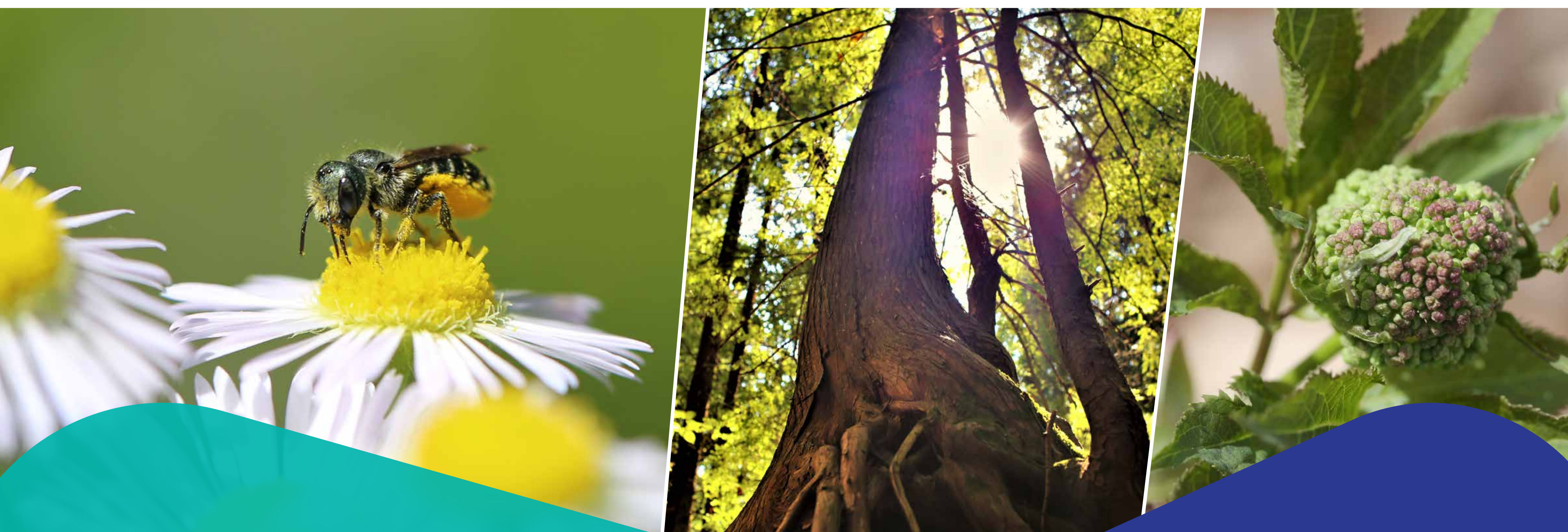
1. Implement best management practices for the protection, establishment and restoration of the York Regional Forest.
2. Manage the York Regional Forest to protect ecological features, improve ecosystem health and increase biodiversity.
3. Implement best practices to prevent and mitigate impacts of invasive species in the York Regional Forest.
4. Manage the York Regional Forest to increase ecological resilience and minimize the impacts of climate change.

What are silvicultural practices?

To maintain the health of the forest, new trees may be planted and older trees may be removed to promote the growth of young trees. This ensures that the forests will continue to grow and evolve into a diverse woodland.

Actions

1. Undertake a climate change vulnerability assessment of the York Regional Forest including a mitigation strategy.
2. Develop a Forest Information System to consolidate existing information including ecological features, species at risk and invasive species.
3. Review criteria and update atlas of Legacy Conservation Forests every five years.
4. Review science based [silvicultural practices](#) and Traditional Ecological Knowledge to sustainably manage the York Regional Forest and inform standard operating procedures.
5. Update invasive species inventory, review mitigation practices and develop invasive species action plan.



GOAL 2

Build Understanding of the Broader Benefits

Show that the Forest has environmental and social benefits, making it key to the Region's vision of healthy, thriving communities.

Objectives

1. Review and assess ecological goods and services of the York Regional Forest.
2. Promote environmental and social benefits of the Forest through engaging residents and community networks.
3. Ensure the York Regional Forest continues to demonstrate leadership through science, innovation and sharing best practices.

Actions

1. Refine and deliver forest outreach and education programs that convey the benefits of the York Regional Forest and align with key Regional initiatives.
2. Support research initiatives that align with the evaluation of ecological services and best practices for protecting ecological integrity.



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GOAL 3

Inspire People

Encourage public use that inspires respect for the Forest and a connection with nature.

Objectives

1. Provide an exceptional visitor experience which connects people and communities with nature.
2. Ensure that public use and facilities are managed to protect the Forest and provide a safe and enjoyable visitor experience.

Actions

1. Trail Strategy (wayfinding, signage)
2. Visitor Experience Plan (communications, connection with nature, education and stewardship)
3. Review of opportunities to balance forest protection, visitor experience and dog walking.
4. Implement Green Infrastructure Asset Management Plan



FUTURE PUBLIC USE

Things to Consider

Public use in the Forest needs to recognize a balance between the ecological integrity and public use benefits associated with open spaces and connecting the public with nature.

To help make decisions on acceptable public use the Region has developed a number of criteria that activities can be considered against.

- Must have minimal or manageable **environmental impact**
- Must not have significant **impact on other forest users**
- In determining the suitability **consider any benefits to the community**
- Must **not pose significant liability** for the Region
- Must be **manageable and affordable** for the Region
- Must be **aligned with applicable legislation and regulations**



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FOREST ACTIVITIES

Proposed Updates

- ✓ Walking, running, hiking
- ✓ Dog walking (including service dogs)
- ✓ Cycling and mountain biking
- ✓ Cross-Country Skiing
- ✓ Snowshoeing
- ✓ Nature appreciation and wildlife viewing
- ✓ Organized recreational and educational events
- ✓ Scientific Research
- ✓ Equestrian / Horseback riding

- ✓ Snowmobiling
 - Only on OFSC Trails
- ✓ Hunting
 - Subject to federal and provincial legislation and local municipal discharge of firearms bylaws
 - Only permitted in Pefferlaw, Cronsberry, and Metro Road Tracts
- ✓ Fishing
 - Subject to federal and provincial legislation

- ✗ Lighting Fires
- ✗ Smoking
- ✗ Camping
- ✗ Property and trail alteration/creation
- ✗ Damaging or removing trees, plants and fungi
- ✗ Alcohol consumption
- ✗ Littering
- ✗ Paintballing or pellet gun use
- ✗ Fireworks
- ✗ Use of unauthorized vehicles including ATVs and dirt bikes



- ✓ Geocaching
- ✓ Peddle-Power Assisted Bikes



- ✗ Drones



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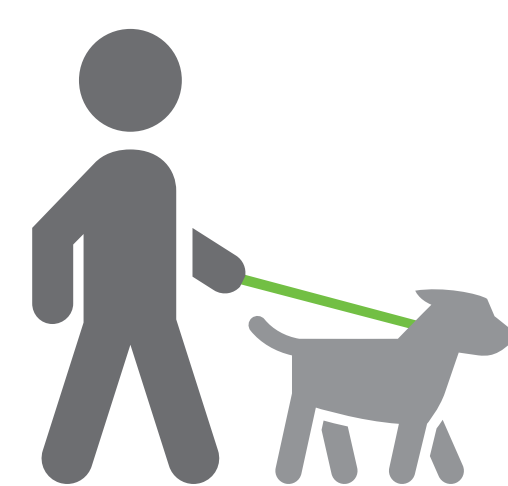
DOGS IN THE FOREST

Proposed Updates

Dog walking is one of the most popular activities in the Forest.

Currently, dogs must be on-leash or under control. York Region is currently considering alternative options for dogs in the Forest to ensure a positive visitor experience.

We are seeking further feedback about dog walking in the Forest.



52%
of respondents walk with a dog.



55%
of respondents agree that **dogs should be on leash** except in specific areas.



100
specific comments received about dogs in the forest.

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