

Parkhill Conservation Area

A. Introduction

Parkhill Conservation Area is the largest conservation area with 1,880 acres acquired with the development of the Parkhill dam and reservoir. The property is used for flood control, environmental protection, agriculture, recreation and nature appreciation.

Its current use is a fraction of the grand vision of several campgrounds and an outdoor education centre proposed following the construction of the reservoir. However, as society expectations and needs change, so has the role of Parkhill CA. In a county with intensive agricultural use and increased pressures for rural development, Parkhill CA is important in protecting a significant natural ecosystem. Although renting agricultural land may appear to be in conflict with the land management goals, the revenue is used to benefit the environment.

Current management techniques help achieve the goals of regulating water quantity in the Parkhill Creek and reservoir, enhancing the Parkhill Creek, protecting the forest resources and providing an area for recreation. The following action plans will further these goals.

B. Goals

1. To regulate water quantity and improve water quality in the Parkhill Creek and Reservoir
2. To enhance the Parkhill Creek watershed while protecting forest resources and providing an area for recreation

C. Objectives

1. To reduce downstream flooding
2. To maintain a supply of water in the reservoir to augment flow in Parkhill Creek
3. To provide habitat for aquatic species
4. To protect and enhance the Parkhill Creek watershed
5. To protect and enhance water quality in the Parkhill Creek

6. To provide habitat for terrestrial and aquatic species
7. To provide an area for recreation, nature appreciation and education
8. To provide an area for research and scientific study
9. To provide an area for the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation Commemorative Woods

D. Action Plans

Current management techniques help achieve the goals of regulating water quantity in the Parkhill Creek and reservoir, enhancing the Parkhill Creek, protecting the forest resources and providing an area for recreation. The following action plans will further these goals.

Land Management

1. Continue to lease the campground to the private sector.
2. Manage terrestrial resources to provide habitat for species, including Species At Risk.
3. Update the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems inventory and develop a fisheries management plan for the reservoir.
4. Do an improvement cut on upland forests.
5. Thin the conifer plantations to facilitate the succession of hardwood forests.
6. Maintain the relationship with the Canadian Forest Service and create partnerships with other research, educational and scientific organizations institutions.
7. Do the Environmental Farm Plan and Nutrient Management Plans for agricultural land.
8. Establish buffer strips along watercourses on agricultural fields.
9. Minimize the number of trails on steep slopes.
10. Create a “Friends of Parkhill CA” group.
11. Protect the meta woodlot from development.
12. Restrict equestrian, ATV and dirt bike use in environmentally-sensitive areas.
13. Continue to restore hiking trails.
14. Decommission the White Pine Woods area if community support is not found.

Water Management

1. Encourage better land management upstream to reduce sedimentation and pollution.

2. Establish vegetation on the reservoir banks to reduce sedimentation.