

Universal Uses



There shall be soft management and/or low levels of manipulation / alteration of Nature Areas consistent with the objective of sustaining a high degree of habitat diversity and biodiversity at the systems-level. As a rule, natural ecological processes will regulate the character of Nature Areas.

The following are uses / activities generally permitted throughout the Nature Areas:

- Activities which protect or enhance natural heritage features and functions;
- Academic research, teaching and outdoor education (with some restrictions);
- Management of exotic and / or invasive plant species;
- Restoration and enhancement projects; and
- Indigenous traditional uses, teaching and knowledge sharing activities.

Although the above activities are generally permitted across all management categories, it is not the intention that all areas are appropriate for these activities or at the same level of intensity; site-specific conditions will inform recommendations and implementation. Further direction is provided.



Activities and Uses

To achieve the goals set out for the Nature Areas, general guidelines and accepted uses for the protection and management of the Nature Areas are described below:

- Use of ice melting and/or traction aids will be minimized and restricted to areas of key safety concern (e.g., parking areas). Materials used for this purpose will be ecologically sensitive products (i.e., no salt).
- Management, stewardship planning, and actions will comply with applicable policies, legislation, and regulations.
- Nature protection will be supported by research, monitoring, and public education.
- There shall be no removal of plants and animals, including wildflowers and edible plants, except as undertaken by Trent University Facilities Management with advice from the Nature Areas Stewardship Advisory Committee and in compliance with applicable policies, legislation and regulations for management, research or teaching purposes. Indigenous traditional uses are exempt.
- If a Nature Area is being degraded biologically or physically by overuse, management will be adaptive to respond to these concerns and could include alterations in allowable use.
- Any restoration or naturalization activities will be undertaken only with native species and environmental manipulation will be minimized.

- Exotic and/or invasive species (plant, animal) will be controlled where feasible / appropriate.
- Plant diseases and insect infestations (non-invasives) will not be controlled by pesticides or other means unless they threaten adjacent properties, infrastructure or human health and safety.
- Chemical spraying of pests and weeds will be minimized or prohibited except for limited specific needs around hazardous conditions (e.g., giant hogweed).
- There shall be no cutting of wood other than for sustainable forest management, educational or research purposes, vegetation management and trail maintenance purposes, unless undertaken by Facilities Management with advice from the Nature Areas Stewardship Advisory Committee.
- No commercial mineral exploration or extraction will be permitted.
- There shall be no lighting of fires in Nature Areas except as undertaken by Facilities Management or for Indigenous ceremonial uses and any fires are to be in accordance with any local fire bylaws or condition bans.



Teaching, Research and Outdoor Education

Academic research, teaching, and outdoor education are encouraged as part of Nature Area goals established under Section 12. Accordingly, the Nature Areas shall generally be available, with prior permission from Facilities Management and advised by the Nature Areas Stewardship Advisory Committee, for education purposes by Trent University, and where appropriate, schools, public organizations, and nature-based groups,

with some restrictions (e.g., location, equipment, class sizes, etc.) based on management categories, as described in proceeding section(s). Research must be consistent with the policies for Nature Areas and specific management prescriptions. Research which contributes to the understanding and appropriate management of Nature Areas is encouraged. Further, research results and publications must be shared with Facilities Management and the Nature Areas Stewardship Advisory Committee for consideration in ongoing management objectives.



Dogs

In preparing the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan, we heard from the community that they value the opportunity to walk their dogs in the Nature Areas. However, it is also well documented that running and barking dogs can significantly disturb and interfere with wildlife (e.g., as ground-nesting birds, create conflicts with other users, and reduce the opportunity for other users to view wildlife). Particularly, unleashed dogs may be intimidating to trail users, especially for individuals and families with small children. Another irritation to trail users is the frequent occurrence of dog feces on trails and around parking lots. In addition to being malodorous and interfering with walking and skiing, dog feces are a potential health hazard.

Given the tension between the benefits to individuals from walking with their dogs, and the impact to the natural environment, dog walking in the Nature Areas remains a challenge to be addressed through the next level of planning, informed by site-specific conditions and consideration for each nature area. Dogs may be permitted in some Nature Areas if a suitable location can be identified that addresses the environmental concerns. Some preliminary consideration has been given to dog use within each management category; however, final decisions regarding dogs and dog use will occur through site-specific planning activities.



Recreation

The Nature Areas are used for a variety of recreational purposes by the Trent University community and members of the Peterborough and area community. Opportunities for outdoor recreation must be consistent with the policies set for the Nature Areas and the management prescription of each area. Activities must be non-motorized and may include walking, hiking, jogging, orienteering, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, tobogganing, birdwatching, nature appreciation and photography.

Throughout the Nature Areas, there shall be no motorized vehicles, including snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles, except for emergency and for maintenance purposes as authorized by the University. Certain forms of non-motorized recreation may also be prohibited, depending on specific management considerations or where the activity could affect ongoing research. Hunting is prohibited in Nature Areas with the exception of traditional treaty rights. Fishing is permitted in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Camping, campfires or overnight use is prohibited except when authorized as part of an approved academic use. Permission for sporting or organized events (e.g., orienteering events) must be sought from Facilities Management, informed by advice from the Nature Areas Stewardship Advisory Committee.

Users of Nature Areas shall pack out their garbage, as garbage cans usually will be provided only at trailheads. The amount and impacts of recreational use shall be monitored to ensure protection of the environment, the provision of high-quality recreation experiences, and to guide management. Recreation in areas which are determined to suffer from ‘over-use’ may be restricted or prohibited for a period of time or permanently. Recreational trails and areas represent opportunities for education through signage and other materials. These can include panels or signs which speak to one or more of the following:

- Permitted and prohibited uses and supporting rationale to encourage appropriate use and stewardship.
- Ecological sensitivities, key features, species, etc.
- History of the land (natural, Indigenous, etc.).
- Directional signage to enhance safety and use.