

# A PLAN FOR OUR OPEN SPACES







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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## SCOPE & VISION

By 2023, MODC's open spaces will be a signature feature of our identity, providing exceptional outdoor recreation opportunities that inspire, challenge, and educate citizens and visitors while protecting and valuing the natural landscape and its inhabitants.

This document outlines a plan for our current open spaces and is specifically focused on 5 "gem" properties – Gold River, the Danny Haughn property, Moland Point, East River, and Castle Rock. All of these areas will be coined as "natural areas" where development is kept to a minimum to first protect the natural systems of the property and secondly, to support only low impact recreation. Simply put, we want to make outdoor places that people want to explore and love. It's important to note that this document is not a comprehensive open-space plan outlining strategic, future land acquisitions, but we have created space to consider the best mechanisms to expand our open space offerings in the future.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Following the vision as outlined above, our guiding principles are informed by 3 key foci: Protection and conservation, education and interpretation, and visitor experience. These foci have been expanded into seven guiding principles by which we will measure our work and we will adopt consistently and holistically. They are:

1. Respect the character of the place.
2. Respect natural and cultural resource protection goals.
3. Facilitate opportunities for meaningful and enjoyable visitor experiences.
4. Promote understanding and appreciation
5. Value and include voices of users and local communities.
6. Use appropriate design approach and construction techniques for all facilities within open spaces.
7. Ensure effective management.

## OUR CURRENT ASSETS (THE 5 GEMS)

Each of the five properties were assessed for their value and potential. This asset inventory consisted of the collection of historical and cultural information, as well as

respective physical inventorying of property characteristics like topography, flora and fauna, size, geography, and conservation and recreation value. Following this process, a SWOT analysis was completed for each property. Finally, as a form of community consultation, public guided hikes were held on each property to gain insight and to help form a vision for each.

## ACHIEVING THE VISION – A CAMPUS APPROACH

Early on, it was recognized that each of these properties have characteristics that make them unique. At the same time, the uniqueness of each supports the others in a "whole will be greater than the sum of the parts" kind of scenario. An overall vision that uses a strength-based approach was adopted and used to help shape respective visions for each property, meaning our goal is to magnify the unique strengths that each property has. In turn, our open spaces, when looked at as a "whole", will offer a diverse and attractive resource for residents and visitors. We call this the "campus concept".

### THE GOLD RIVER VISION & ITS PLACE IN THE CAMPUS

The Gold River property is the place to discover the natural history of our woodlands and explore the cultural histories of First Nations and early settlers to the area. It will highlight the natural and cultural history of our Municipality, interpret the ecology of an intact forest and the use of medicinal plants by first peoples, provide a unique, scenic riverfront destination, and offer our second longest hiking opportunity.

### THE HAUGHN PROPERTY VISION & ITS PLACE IN THE CAMPUS

The Haughn property will be a stopping place for travelers on the Rum Runners Trail (rail trail) and a gathering place for community to celebrate the arts and enjoy the tranquility of the property. The property will be a hub for summer youth programming, music and social events and educational programming. It will also be a stopping place for overnight trail users, a destination for naturalists and birders, a playground for hikers and mountain bikers, and a place to enjoy quiet, contemplation.

### THE MOLAND POINT VISION & ITS PLACE IN THE CAMPUS



Moland Point will be a place where all peoples will be able to freely access, enjoy, and appreciate the shoreline of Mahone Bay. Work on this property will focus on providing barrier-free access to the coast and will include leading edge design and construction allowing access for those with physical, mental, cognitive and mobility needs. The site will also provide interpretation of the surrounding ecosystems and the islands of Mahone Bay.

#### THE EAST RIVER VISION & ITS PLACE IN THE CAMPUS

The East River property has an abundance of natural history and cultural features that will tell the story of our past while immersing visitors in one of our most biodiverse and beautiful river environments. The site will be a value-add attraction from the Rum Runners Trail, providing a short, interpretive hike along and through river habitat including flood-plain, mixed forest, and a waterfall as a destination. Educational interpretation elements here will focus on the history of human development and the natural landscape and its inhabitants.

#### CASTLE ROCK VISION & ITS PLACE IN THE CAMPUS

Castle Rock is for the adventurer. It's granite peak and longer and more challenging hikes will continue to attract visitors from afar and will be an anchor trailside diversion for travelers on the Rum Runner Trail. The site provides our longest wilderness hike and provides a successful model of shared use trails in a wilderness environment. This trail system will act as a signature feature of our Municipality.

## OPINION OF COSTS

An itemized opinion of costs is provided for prescribed work elements for each property and is broken into "Must Do", "Should Do" and "Could Do" designations, denoting the importance of each element in meeting the overall vision for each respective property. The opinion of cost totals \$367,750 for all prescribed work suggested for the five gem properties.

## POLICY SUPPORTS

An inventory and comparison of municipal subdivision by-laws, specific to open-space provisions for developers, is carried out and presented. Examples from other NS Municipalities is provided. These examples offer differing approaches to balancing land or cash contributions by developers. It is deemed that MOCs subdivision by-law can do a better job at facilitating either the acquisition of quality

lands, or cash in lieu to help obtain lands.

The Municipality of Chester lacks a comprehensive means to inventory and evaluate our public lands and lacks a way to assess the value and useability of our lands to determine if they are non-essential or surplus. Correspondingly, we also lack a policy that guides the disposal of such lands. A summary of policies from NS Municipalities is presented to guide future policy development work.

Hunting and trapping will not be permitted on any of our Natural Areas.

## 1. BACKGROUND

In recent years, the Municipality of Chester has been fortunate to acquire, both through purchase and gift, several properties of exceptional beauty and recreation potential. Increasingly, citizens and visitors expect that open spaces and natural reserves will be available close to home for both quiet, contemplative enjoyment, and physical challenge. Demand for such spaces has also increased in recent months as more people seek the mental, physical, and spiritual benefits that these spaces provide.

Exceptional outdoor spaces are the cornerstone of much of our untapped tourism and economic development potential. These imperatives are further supported by provincial strategies such as Let's Get Moving, a Shared Strategy for Recreation, the NS Trails Strategy, and the pending Accessibility Legislation.

To this end, Council has directed staff to imagine a comprehensive development plan for our properties. Previously, citizens might have been unaware of some of our gems, or perhaps only a few people who had joined us for a guided hike might know of the opportunities. But it would be unfortunate if MOC did not capitalize on the opportunities we have created to satisfy the public demand.

This report attempts to lay out a roadmap for the responsible and sustainable development of these properties. We have aspired to create a plan that minimizes the impacts while maximizing the public's enjoyment, appreciation, and pride in these special places for generations.

## 2. SCOPE

The scope of this report is limited to our five 'gem' properties – those properties, wholly owned by the Municipality, and which possess exceptional natural and cultural features, and potential for outdoor recreation. We have considered these natural spaces only; thus, not our built parks, playgrounds, sports fields, or pools.

Some of the properties may include built infrastructure currently, or they might in the future, but the primary intention is to leave them in a natural state to the greatest degree possible while facilitating the responsible enjoyment of each.

The five properties include:

- Gold River on Beech Hill Road
- Danny Haughn Property, Middle River
- Moland Point on Buccaneer Road
- East River
- Castle Rock

Thus, we have intentionally entitled this report a "Plan for our Open Spaces" as opposed to an Open Space Plan which traditionally would take a more open-ended approach to land use planning. However, when appropriate, we will comment on complimentary opportunities and policies and approaches to help us identify gaps and mechanisms to expand our open space offerings.

### "Natural Areas." What's in a name?

You will note that throughout this plan we have chosen to designate each of our gem properties as 'Natural Areas'. The term Natural Area is customarily used to define land management units that represent distinct elements of an area's geological, ecological, or species diversity; and includes natural landscapes of value for heritage and cultural protection. Although human participation in natural areas may be actively encouraged, such participation is secondary to space protection. These lands preserve natural and environmentally significant areas which provide habitat for wildlife, maintain natural processes and support biodiversity. The human use of the land is limited to low impact recreational, educational, and interpretive opportunities that foster an understanding and appreciation of the space. (Adapted from the City of St. John's, NL, Open Space Master Plan, 2014)

Typically, development of these spaces is kept to a minimum standard to first protect the natural systems of the property, and secondly, to support only low impact recreation use.

We feel that this is the most appropriate designation of the Municipality of Chester's current open spaces, and an



appropriate vision for possible future spaces.

Additionally, the term 'Natural Area' most clearly describes to the public the expected use and purpose of each property. Thus, our natural areas are not parks, playgrounds, nature reserves, nor wilderness areas. They are spaces into which the public is welcome to experience the natural beauty of the place; without creating the unwarranted expectation of endless amenities and unfettered accessibility.

The principles of natural area development are expanded upon in section 4.

### 3. VISION AND MISSION

The goal of this plan for our open spaces will be to achieve the vision and mission for the five properties.

#### VISION:

By 2023, MODC's open spaces will be a signature feature of our identity because they will guarantee exceptional outdoor recreation opportunities that inspire, challenge, and educate citizens and visitors while protecting and valuing the natural landscape and its inhabitants.

#### MISSION:

MOC will use our open spaces to promote physical and mental health through access to landscapes and waterfronts; and through the development of trails and facilities that create exceptional visitor experiences and serve to activate individuals, families, and communities to pursue active outdoor lifestyles.

Our mission statement in brief:

**Make outdoor places that people want to explore and love.**

This is not only the vision and mission for our current properties, but will serve future acquisitions and planning as well.

## 4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our vision and mission statements can be distilled into three key elements: 1) Visitor experience, 2) protection and conservation, and 3) education and interpretation. These three elements happen to align with the mandate that Parks Canada has for the stewardship of public land. We have found that the model they employ for trail development to be a useful parallel for the goals and objectives of this plan. Therefore, we have adopted and adapted their approach to suit the context of our plan for open spaces.

**Visitor Experience:** Positive visitor experiences will not only help improve participants' physical and mental health, they will compel more people to seek their next opportunity to explore the natural environments that the Municipality has to offer.

**Protection:** consideration of the natural landscape, the opportunities it affords, and its inhabitants can help assure sustainable development and minimize negative interactions.

**Education:** We want our open spaces to be places of inspiration, where learning happens, and a sense of pride and stewardship develops within our citizens.

The principles outlined below, have been written with our current open spaces specifically in mind; however, they are universally applicable to any open space that we may add in the future.

### Principle 1: Respect the character of the place

We are fortunate to have a diverse set of landscapes to work with. Each is unique in its character. They possess different topography, beauty, accessibility, waterscapes, tranquility, and challenges. We must recognize, respect, honor, and value what each affords and the activities each facilitate.

#### Guidelines based on this Principle

1.1 Fit in the landscape – Trails and facilities must work with, not against, the surrounding landscape so that they don't look out of place and contradict the experience visitors expect to have. We should seek to minimize user conflicts, hazards, and maintenance costs.

1.2 Ensure appropriateness of trails, amenities, and facilities. We should achieve a balance between the needs and expectations of visitors, and the land type or

environment where activities will take place. For example, a paved trail to the top of Castle Rock may create easy access, but it would severely diminish the challenge, beauty and experience of the place.

1.3 Respect the Cultural landscape. Our open spaces have history. Some have traditional recreation uses, or past industrial uses. It is likely that they all have traditional uses by the Mi'kmaw. Some have neighbors today. We must be conscious and respectful of this when developing and promoting our open spaces.

## Principle 2: Respect natural and cultural resource protection goals

Natural and cultural resources determine where, how, and what type of facilities are built; and which activities are promoted.

### Guidelines based on this Principle

2.1 Ensure ecological integrity. We recognize that we will not always have a full ecological inventory of our spaces, nor the internal expertise to be fully aware of their intricacies and interdependencies. However, an overarching goal should always be to avoid sensitive areas and employ measures and techniques that will minimize the impact on the environment, habitats, and wildlife.

2.2 Protect and present cultural resources. The cultural heritage of our open spaces is rich. In some cases, we will need to ensure the protection (e.g. through trail routing, fencing, boardwalks, etc.) of these resources while in others it may be appropriate to bring these resources to light (e.g. the dam at East River property).

2.3 Re-direct visitors where appropriate. When naturally and culturally sensitive areas are identified and are to be protected, we will employ measures that prohibit or discourage the development of informal access.

2.4 Relocate, restore, and close inappropriate trails/facilities/features. Some of the traditional uses of our open spaces are no longer compatible with the current vision we have for these places (e.g. the bus on Gold River property, unsustainable trails). When identified, action should be taken to ensure the natural, cultural, and visitor experience goals are met.

2.5 Use previously disturbed areas. Allow intact areas to remain intact. When locating new trails and facilities on our land, whenever possible and without compromising our other protection, education, and experience goals; re-use

and re-purpose previously disturbed land. When new land is used the project should have clear management objectives.

## Principle 3: Facilitate opportunities for meaningful and enjoyable visitor experiences

We recognize that open spaces, the facilities provided within them, and the activities that are promoted, create a sense of connection to the place and satisfy the needs of users.

### Guidelines based on this Principle

3.1 Consider Visitor Safety. It is important to minimize hazards to users through thoughtful design and construction. To be clear, hazards are not the same thing as risks. Hazards are unpredictable, unknowable, or unseen (old barbed wire fence camouflaged in the underbrush). Risks, on the other hand, can be predictable, knowable, and seen (a challenging trail on a cold, rainy day) and are usually subjective based on the experience, abilities, and needs of the users. Often, risk is desirable for many users. We should always minimize the hazards (remove the barbed wire) and mitigate risks (use trail difficulty caution signs).

3.2 Minimize and mitigate human-wildlife conflicts. As we work to provide more access to more people to more wild and remote locations, the likelihood of human-wildlife interactions increases. These can be distressing for both parties of course. Trail routing, waste management, and the seasonality of our spaces should be considered.

3.3 Meet the needs of users. Each type of activity and each type of user has a unique set of preferred needs and desires. For example, a mountain biker will desire a different trail experience than an equestrian. We must be mindful of these distinctions if we are to successfully attract people to our spaces, have them return, and minimize the impact on the surrounding landscape.

3.4 Provide access to visitors with limited mobility when possible. Whenever technical constraints allow, and without compromising the natural setting, function, and challenges inherent in any given open space, we should seek to maximize accessibility as it is most broadly defined.

3.5 Achieve diversity. Visitors will bring with them a diverse set of desires and needs. Within, and between, our open spaces we should strive to achieve a variety of



experiences and a range of difficulty levels. For example, a stacked loop trails system is an effective way to offer a variety of experiences and challenges in a relatively small area.

3.6 Favor shared use modes, and reduce conflict through design. Shared use may be preferable for cost efficiency, to reduce the number of trails, and to fit more experiences in to a small space. But we will also segregate uses where needed, or prohibit where needed based on 1.3, 2.1, 3.3.

3.7 Create a sense of arrival and anticipation. Much of the experience of outdoor recreation is the planning and anticipation of taking part. Each of our open spaces need an arrival point where adequate parking exists, the necessary amenities are present, and wayfinding is in the ground to launch people into their experiences. Pre-visit technologies (i.e. websites, social media) should also be employed.

3.8 Offer destinations and connect them together. For many people our open spaces will act as destinations unto themselves. But we should also be mindful of 1) creating destinations within our spaces (anchors, viewpoints, summits, shelters, challenges), 2) using our spaces to connect to nearby destinations that may be outside of our boundaries but within public land, and 3) fostering connection between our spaces – the Chester Connection Trail provides a unique opportunity to extend the landscape, activities, and experiences. We should be mindful of the answer to the question “where do people want to go, and what role can our spaces play to get them there?” Reaching a destination creates a sense of accomplishment.

3.9 Facilitate navigation. Our open spaces should be easy to navigate with a simple and consistent wayfinding approach. Maps and signage schedules will include amenity listings, directions, difficulty ratings, trailhead information, etc.

3.10 Offer comfort, convenience, and respite. Ideally, our open spaces will become four season destinations. This means that the development should consider the comfort and safety of visitors. Natural and built elements should be used to provide shade in the summer, and relief from the wind, wet, and cold in the winter. Also, in accordance with the desired challenge of an open space experience, rest stops (i.e. benches) and opportunities for multi-modality (i.e. bike racks at trailheads) should be incorporated.

3.11 Trails can be a relatively simple, low cost opportunity to provide access and create experiences within our open spaces. Trails will also be the minimum level of development that many people expect. With this in mind, sound and sustainable trail building design and construction techniques must always be employed. This includes concepts such as trail flow, stacked loops, filtering, drainage, management,

and planning for expansion from the beginning. A sustainable trail is one that keeps the water off it, and the people on it.

## Principle 4: Promote understanding and appreciation

We want citizens to have a sense of pride and ownership of their open spaces. Our spaces will be developed in a way that promotes stewardship and facilitates learning.

### Guidelines based on this Principle

4.1 Offer learning opportunities by facilitating access to areas of exceptional beauty and natural history interest (flora, fauna, geography, geology, hydrology).

4.2 Offer learning opportunities by programming the spaces in ways which activate people to use them. Examples include guided hikes and bikes, interpretive walks, skill building workshops, etc.

## Principle 5: Value and include the voices of users and local communities

Our open spaces and the opportunities they afford will evolve over time. This document represents our first attempt to put in place a development and management plan. In the future, we should continue to be receptive to the thoughts and desires of users and stakeholders.

### Guidelines based on this Principle

5.1 Users and stakeholders should be involved in the development of open spaces to build support, address needs and constraints, and to increase the likelihood that we build spaces that will be used into the future.

5.2 Engage the First Nations. The cultural significance to the Mi'kmaw is currently not known for any of our open spaces. Nevertheless, we should invite their knowledge of the traditional uses of the lands. This is an opportunity for cross-cultural learning and to gain greater insights into the interconnectedness of the lands. For example, include the Mi'kmaw language in signage and place names when appropriate.

5.3 Promote stewardship. Volunteers should be developed and supported. Opportunities for volunteer building, maintenance, and monitoring can engender respect and ownership of our spaces.

## Principle 6: Use appropriate design approaches and construction techniques for all facilities within our open spaces.

Doing so will minimize our impact on the land, enhance visitor experiences, and decrease the cost of construction and long-term maintenance.

### Guidelines based on this Principle

6.1 Work with landscape. The simple solution is usually the better solution from a cost, landscape intrusion, ecological, and maintenance point of view. For example, whenever available, construction materials endemic to the site should be used for trail construction to fit into the context of the land, minimize disturbance, and minimize the cost of importing materials. More complex solutions such as bridges and boardwalks should be reserved for when the goal is to maximize accessibility or minimize ecological impact in sensitive areas if they cannot be avoided.

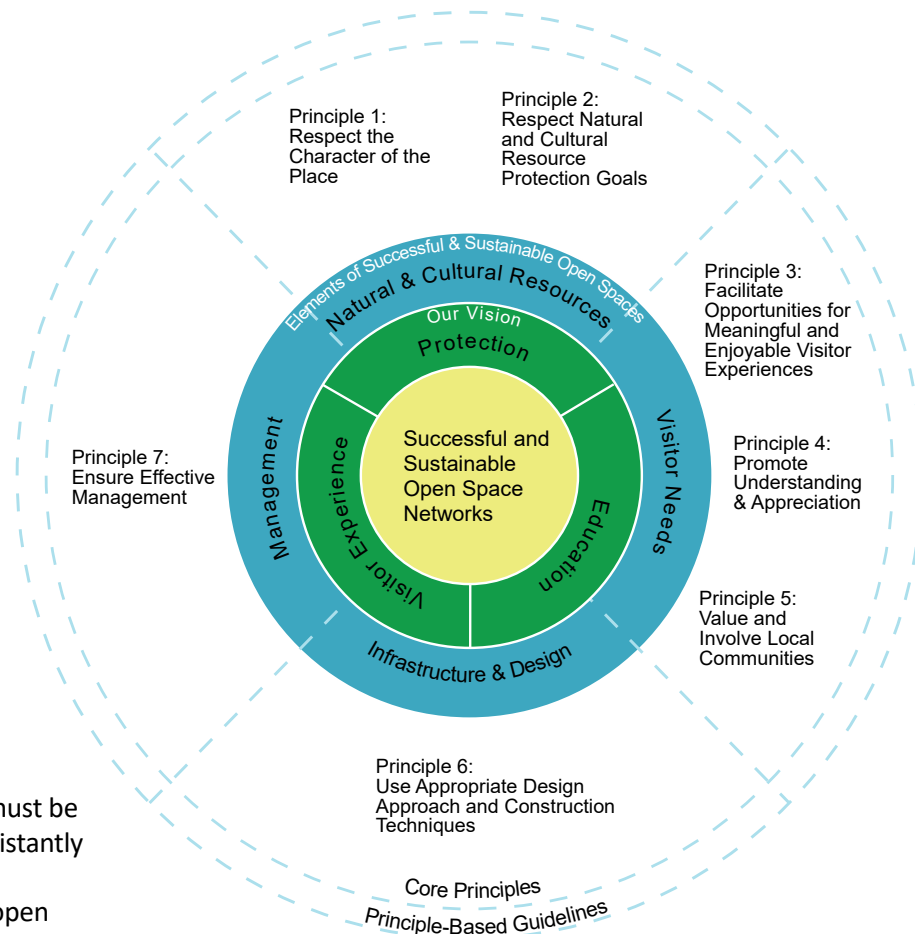
6.2 Plan for climate change. More severe and frequent extreme weather events can have a great impact on our

open spaces. Particularly in riparian and coastal zones. Locating facilities and infrastructure within these areas should be avoided whenever possible. Alternately, if using these zones is unavoidable, investments should be minimal, and they should be managed as seasonally accessible and closed when required.

6.3 Eliminate short-term solutions. Short-term solutions typically cost more, require more maintenance and detract from the visitor experience. They should be avoided whenever longer-term solutions are feasible.

6.4 There are well established standards and guidelines for building facilities within open spaces and these should be adopted by MOC. Of note are the IMBA (International Mountain Bike Association) trail building guidelines that have been adopted by Parks Canada. IMBA's guidelines prescribe techniques for building a variety of trail types, on different soil types, grades, contours, and drainages and are based on achieving a variety of visitor experiences (i.e. difficulty, activities).

Barrier free accessibility guidelines are also an invaluable resource to draw from.



The seven core principles must be viewed holistically and consistently to achieve our vision of a successful and sustainable open space network.

Adapted from: Parks Canada Agency, *Trail Principles*, February 2017



## Principle 7: Ensure effective management

Open space management, maintenance and monitoring is essential to lessen the impact on our resources, minimize deterioration of facilities and to increase visitor safety and quality experiences.

### Guidelines based on this Principle

7.1 Ensure cross-departmental collaboration. Recreation, Infrastructure and Operations, Planning, Tourism, Economic Development, and Communications will all have a level of interest and investment in our open spaces. Council too needs to be confident that our spaces are achieving our goals. A commitment to these goals and to work collaboratively will help ensure that users will have memorable, safe, and high quality experiences. This will also require frequent and clear communication between all parties.

7.2 Provide a level of service based on facility type. For example, fully accessible ‘front country’ facilities will require monitoring and a high level of service (i.e. frequent deadfall removal, surface repairs). More remote ‘back country’ facilities will require less monitoring and maintenance (i.e. stepping over a downed tree will be an expected part of the experience).

7.3 Ensure consistent inspection and maintenance. The golden rule of risk management is to “say what you are going to do, and do what you say.” We must establish inspection and maintenance standards, communicate them to the public (signs, maps), and adhere to them. They must also be based on the human resource capacity among our departments. We must also be willing to close facilities when conditions warrant.

7.4 Consider capital and long-term costs. Responsible facility planning should work within the financial and human resource capacities of MOC. Ongoing and future operating and maintenance costs should be tracked and forecast to ensure the sustainability of our current spaces and to inform future investments in others.

## 5. OUR CURRENT ASSETS

This section provides a brief overview of the current state of each of the five gem properties. We describe the physical characteristics, acquisition history, and any known natural history, industrial history, or recreation uses of the land.

Each property description also includes a brief SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). This was done as a beginning exercise to help us consider the challenges and opportunities inherent in each gem. They are included here to compliment the accompanying narrative, and to bridge to the development discussion in section 6.

Our imagination for each property was also sparked by conversations we had with participants of guided hikes that we hosted last year. Recreation staff felt that it was important to solicit the opinion of people who had experienced the land. Groups of people joined us for guided hikes after which they were invited to share their thoughts via Voices and Choices. There was a great appreciation for the properties and the recreation opportunities they might afford in the future. There was a clear preference for low impact recreation with basic amenities and limited development – just enough to provide safe access and the ability to self-navigate. Where unique opportunities existed (e.g. the shoreline of Moland Point, the house at the Haughn property) people were keen to seize upon those special features to build exceptional outdoor recreation spaces.

# Gold River (Amapapskegek - the Rocky River\*)

Our property on the gold River was gifted in 2015 by Rudy Haase and the Chester Educational Foundation. Rudy's desire was to see the land retained in its natural state, while allowing for low impact recreation opportunities. Two contiguous properties total 75 acres and extend 1100m from Beech Hill road to the Gold River. Over this span, the slope drops from 110m at the road to 40m at the river which gives an average slope of 6.3% on a northeastern aspect. However, it is not uniform and is rather comprised of several undulations and ridges. This results in intermittent high ground with good drainage; and low, poorly drained areas. The river is 15-55m wide across the span of our property and is generally a faster-flowing riffle between sections of still water. The forest is a stand of mixed age and species. Red Maple, Yellow and White Birch, Red Spruce, Eastern Hemlock, and White Pine dominate the canopy.

The property contains evidence of past recreational uses. A hunting blind sits near a small clearing on the north edge of the land. A school bus was, presumably, driven to its final resting place on a small point of land by the river to serve as a camper. There is also a double track (ATV) path that follows the shoreline and enters/exits the property on

the north and south ends. We assume that this may be the legacy of traditional use and a migration route of the Mi'kmaw. More inquiry is required.

Since acquisition we have hosted several public guided hikes on the land. To support our future vision, we also hosted a team of NSCC resource students who conducted an ecological survey of the flora that have traditional medicinal uses and importance for the Mi'kmaw.

The extraction of forest products is another traditional use. The property to the north has an active woodlot. There is one haul road (route B on map in section 6), now deeply rutted, that bisects the property. Trees have been cut on, or just off, the property for boat knees.

Both property lines have been recently surveyed and re-blazed. There is a small driveway off Beech Hill road, and a path from this that leads to the haul road.

Two small residential properties are inset into the road front side of our land. One of these has been the subject of a land exchange – this transaction should be completed.

The Gold River flows 22km from New Ross, past this property, and then 10km to the outlet into Mahone Bay. Across the river are crown lands that connect to Henry Lake and Forest Heights School, 6.5km away by woods road.

We have been told that a nearby neighbour brought the bus on to this property and claims ownership of the adjacent marsh area. Although this does not appear in the deed, this issue will need to be clarified.

\* While we appreciate the idea of illuminating the cultural history of the property, the name Amapapskegek, should not be used unless a cooperative relationship is first built with Acadia First Nation.

## GOLD RIVER

### HELPFUL to achieving the objective

### HARMFUL to achieving the objective

INTERNAL ORIGIN  
(attributes of the property)

- The property's STRENGTHS are that:
- Large tract of fairly pristine, forested land
  - Attractive frontage on Gold River
  - Variety of forest type and age
  - Beautiful areas of mature forest with open understory
  - Access from Beech Hill Road with good sight-lines
  - Existing trail along river
  - Existing cart-tracks throughout property
  - Much of the property is well drained
  - Given the size and diversity - variety of flora and fauna
  - Covenants limiting use to low-impact, education/ recreation
  - Proximity to Acadia First Nation reserve
  - Possibility of areas of traditional Mi'Kmwaw use.
  - Need to explore land more to complete this section well
  - Variety of medicinal plants located on-site (initial inventory completed)
  - Area used for harvesting of "Ships Knees"

- Its WEAKNESSES include:
- Derelict bus at most attractive location
  - Limited access/ no supportive infrastructure in place (parking, awesome trails existing...)
  - Traditional uses encroaching (forest harvesting). Land being used by adjacent landowners to access forest harvest
  - Covenants limiting use to low-impact education/ recreation
  - Optimal trail alignment not (yet) obvious. May take some substantial work to create sustainable routing and tread.
  - Isolated location
  - Some existing trails/tracks are poorly routed

EXTERNAL ORIGIN  
(attributes of the environment)

- This a great OPPORTUNITY to:
- Partnership with Acadia First Nation
  - Proximity to Crown Lands on East side of Gold River through to FHCS
  - Potential for outdoor programming
  - Potential for external partnerships for land-use (schools, NSMNH, MTRI, BCAP, NSCC, universities)
  - Possibility of unique partnerships opens doors for funding opportunities
  - Opportunity to strengthen relationship with local First Nation Community

- THREATS may include:
- Relations with adjacent land-owners/ users
  - Encroachment
  - No funding secured for development
  - Lack of working relationship between Council (Municipality) and Acadia First Nation
  - Hemlock Woolly Adelgid





1. The hunting blind that currently sits in the forest



2. The Gold River - looking upstream from the bus location



3. The Gold River - looking downstream from the bus location



4. The 'elbow tree' - a familiar waypoint on our guided hikes



5. Hikers taking a break by the Gold River



6. Jody exhibiting one of the ship's knees cut on, or very near the property line



7. Portions of the forest floor are a lush carpet of ferns





8. The infamous old school bus that sits riverside



9. Pileated woodpeckers have had a buffet with this old standing dead tree



10. The upper haul road that bisects the property (road B on map in section 6)



# Danny Haughn Property

The property was gifted to us in 2017 by the estate of Danny Haughn. Four properties total of 28.6 acres (11.6ha) and they are bounded by highway 3, a short section of Middle River Road, private property (including a new subdivision at the end of Cove Ridge Road), and the Chester Connection Trail. It also contains a very pretty crescent of Cooks Brook which is a tributary of the Middle River. Approximately 30% (9 acres) of the property has been harvested in the past decade. Older stands of pine and spruce do remain intact. The former home (circa 1839), including the possessions, of Danny Haughn occupies the southern portion along with a small duck pond and outbuildings. The driveway drops in from highway 3 to the house, then an old haul road rises toward the back of the property. This drops again into a shallow valley (swale), then a gradual upslope again to the northern edge of the property where it abuts the rail-trail. We are told this swale was previously a quarry.

The property is approximately 180m at its widest, and 750 m from highway 3 to the rail-trail.

Footpaths, deer paths, and skidder paths can be found to traverse the entire length. The entire property is generally moderately sloped and well drained.

With the gift of the property, a trust was established was

to help preserve and maintain the dwelling. The Municipality is able to apply to the trust.

There is also a small parcel of land on the south side of highway 3, immediately downstream and river-left, of the Middle River bridge. Access is only via the steep road embankment.

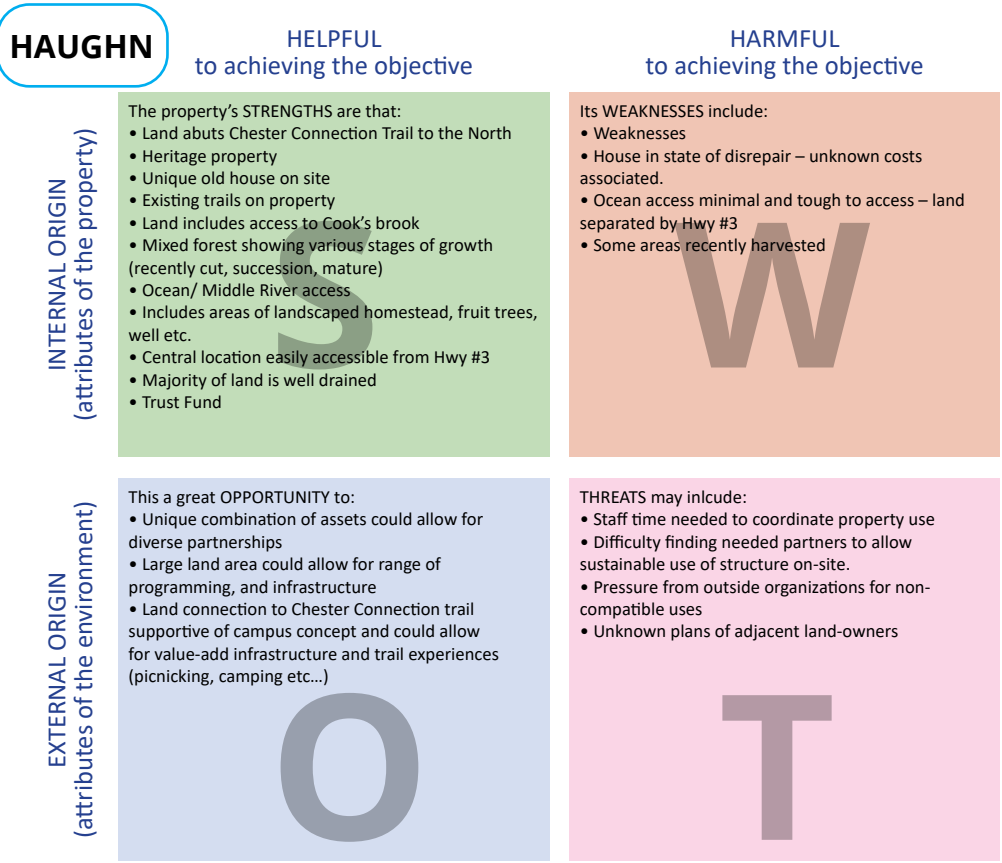
The house is perhaps the most unique asset on the property. It was designated as a heritage property by Municipal Council in 1990 because it was built in 1839, is a Victorian Duplex, and was home of two prominent Chester Basin families. This designation prohibits significant alteration or demolition without approval by Council. Its condition was fully assessed in the Spring of 2020. We are fortunate to be provided with an opportunity to imagine its future uses and public benefits.

The fact that this relatively large tract of land also connects highway 3 to the Chester Connection Trail, uninterrupted, is a valuable characteristic.



11. Petey the partridge who greets visitors to the Haughn home

Remains of a low, stone wall snake toward the northern property boundary near the house, and some debris has been left in the woods.







12. The home from the front showing the kitchen (left) and den (right)



13. The porch on the east side of the building



14. Hikers assembling before exploring the property



15. Gord explaining the lay of the land once having reached the rail-trail



16. Descending down from the ridge to Cook's Brook





17. The group about to return to the house via the cut-over portion of the property



18. One of the existing footpaths that leads up to a pine covered drumlin



19. Enthusiastic naturalists inspecting the young buds of a tamarack



# Moland Point

Moland Point is the smallest of our gems (4 acres). It is bounded by Buccaneer Road, private properties on both sides, and Mahone Bay to the South. The traditional, and easiest, access into the property is unfortunately from the adjacent property to the west. There is a well compacted and clear road to the beach. The heart of our property is a tangle of thick conifers, deadfall, poorly drained soil, and rocks. At the beach visitors do enjoy a panoramic view over Mahone Bay. Snake and Saddle Islands are the closest offshore Islands (5-6km) to the South, and Graves Island lays 2km to the southwest. The beach is comprised of granitic rock and gravels with larger boulders interspersed. The total water frontage is 145m. There are some erosion faces on the back side of the beach, but otherwise the shoreline is stabilized by a dense border of rose bushes.

As with the Gold River property, this one was gifted to the Municipality by Rudy Haase. As part of the land transfer, MOC entered into a partnership agreement with the Mahone Island Conservation Association (MICA). The land development implications of this agreement will be discussed in greater detail in section 6.

The only apparent current use is as a short walk or picnic spot for nearby residents that know the route to the beach. Ocean waste does wash ashore here, and some dumping has occurred at the end of the existing path toward the beach.



20. The existing path from Buccaneer Rd. to the beach



21. The interior of the property is a dense understory of conifers, snags, and swampy areas

**MOLAND**

HELPFUL  
to achieving the objective

HARMFUL  
to achieving the objective

INTERNAL ORIGIN  
(attributes of the property)

The property's **STRENGTHS** are that:

- Ocean Access.
- Gravel Beach.
- Existing trail from Buccaneer Road to water.
- Stewardship Agreement with MICA (Property Protected in Perpetuity).
- Diversity of property: swamp area, shoreline, wild rose bushes.

S

Its **WEAKNESSES** include:

- Need to reroute top of existing trail (currently on private land).
- Change current hike habits / keep people within property boundaries.
- Challenges to trail rerouting: thick brush, slope, wet area.
- No parking (currently pull to the side of Buccaneer Road only).

W

EXTERNAL ORIGIN  
(attributes of the environment)

This a great **OPPORTUNITY** to:

- Potential site for future programs.
- Promotion of property to increase public awareness.
- Addition of minor amenities (i.e. bench at high point overlooking the water).
- Provide onsite recognition to Rudy Haase for the land donation (i.e. signage / plaque).

O

**THREATS** may include:

- Potential activity / development of neighboring properties that could affect the current experience when on the public property i.e. buildings, fence, wharf).
- Visitor disrespect: some evidence of garbage.
- Climate change: rising water levels / storm damage to shore.

T





22. The beach at Moland Point looking west from approximately the boundary of the private property to the east. The other property line is close to where the downed tree has fallen over the beach in the distance

## East River

The property at East River was purchased in 2012 after Council assessed the land to have exceptional recreation qualities and beauty. The land totals 13.6 acres, but approximately 5.3 acres of that is on floodplain and the remaining 7.3 is upland forest. It is bounded to the west by private property, to the south by highway 3, and to the east by the flowage of the East River. At the northern end, it is separated from the Chester Connection Trail by a narrow (6m) stream, Barry's Brook which flows from Labrador Lake. A small parcel of land is included on the northern side of the rail-trail. More recently, MOC acquired another small property just upstream that connects to the waterfall on the East River (below the site of the former power generating station).

Shortly after the purchase,

### EAST RIVER

HELPFUL  
to achieving the objective

HARMFUL  
to achieving the objective

INTERNAL ORIGIN  
(attributes of the property)

- The property's STRENGTHS are that:
- Beautiful landscape and waterscape
  - Diversity of flora and fauna
  - Topography is adequate for path building
  - Access not necessarily dependent on southern access from highway 3
  - Adequate sized land for lollipop trail
  - Very popular and appreciated guided hikes
  - Industrial heritage evidence on/nearby
  - Proximity to rail-trail, parking, East River Park,
  - Gateway to Castle Rock

- Its WEAKNESSES include:
- Large % seasonally flooded
  - "landlocked" by Barry's Brook (seasonal step across stones)
  - Current driveway access not suitable for improvements (sightlines have been measured by TIR)
  - Health of forest?
  - Alder path through the floodplain requires frequent maintenance
  - Current footpath build is adequate, but not complete
  - Cinder block dump

EXTERNAL ORIGIN  
(attributes of the environment)

- This a great OPPORTUNITY to:
- South access could be improved at the GN property (sightlines adequate there)
  - Demand for guided hikes and natural history interpretation
  - Hike and exploration opportunities nearby (falls, power station site)
  - BCAF partnership for eel interpretation
  - Chester Heritage Society partnership for industrial heritage interpretation

- THREATS may include:
- Neighbour not willing to grant access to an expanded southern access (donate, easement)
  - Land F not approve bridge connection at Barry's Brook
  - Engineering of bridge becomes prohibitively expensive
  - Development of adjacent properties diminish beauty
  - We cannot promote private land opportunities adjacent

Recreation Department staff began construction of a primitive standard footpath. The trail begins at the driveway off highway 3 and skirts the western edge of the floodplain to the pond. At this junction hikers can proceed upstream to Barry's Brook, or return through the floodplain which is comprised of alders and some mature pines and maples. Although wet underfoot much of the year, the floodplain is traversable with proper footwear and we have carved out a route through the alders.

Owing to its proximity to water, and its large variety of habitats in a small area, this property is home to an exceptional abundance of fauna. We have observed evidence of fox, hare, beaver, coyote, otter, and ducks. 1.7 million American eels migrate past the property annually and thus serve as an important basal species.

Water front abounds here, but it is not suitable for swimming due to steep shorelines and mucky bottoms. However, it is a popular fishing spot.

Access is currently limited to the driveway at highway 3. Due to the road sightlines, it is not suitable for public motor vehicle access (determined by DoTIR, 2013). If public access were to be established on highway 3, it would need to be to the west at a point across from Sunny Point Ln., and the current driveway would need to be decommissioned. This would require an agreement with, or purchase of, the narrow private property that lays between ours and highway 3. The little provincial picnic park at East River is also a short distance away and could serve as a launching point for people accessing the property from highway 3.

Pedestrian infrastructure was added to the East River Bridge when reconstructed in 2019. This facilitates access from the rail-trail crossing into the driveway.

It is possible to use stepping stones across Barry's Brook at times of low water, but this is not advisable from a public safety standpoint.

Because of its beauty and accessible terrain, East River has become a popular location for us to host guided hikes and snowshoe treks. The variety of fauna has also provided an opportunity to focus these hikes around the natural history of the land. Our hikes here have received media attention.

It is 12.5km to Chester along the rail-trail from this property. This is a comfortable distance to travel by bike so we have hosted youth bike rides and explorations in the summer.

The lower reaches of the East River have an interesting industrial history, which is evident on and near our property. Just over the trail bridge is the remains of a sawmill. The old sawdust pile is now disguised as a grassy island in the pond. Upstream from this, just above the lovely waterfall, is the former site of a power station. Another mill sat on the point of land just below the highway 3 bridge. On our property, this is the remains of a damn that used to be part of the water supply system for the mills.

This property is also unique in that it is in the gateway of the corridor that leads to Castle Rock and the South Panuke Wilderness Area beyond.



23. Fishing where Barry's Brook meets the East River





24. An inquisitive otter family caught on a trail camera



25. A beaver who lives in the pond



26. During a 'Play Hike' kids and their parents build a fort...



27. ...Using loose parts they happened upon in a mystery box



28. The pond has served as a picnic spot for summer program bike adventures from Chester



29. This old rotten tree stump is perfectly sized for one kid





30. Hikers on the current footpath



31. One of many examples of shelf fungus found on the decaying trees



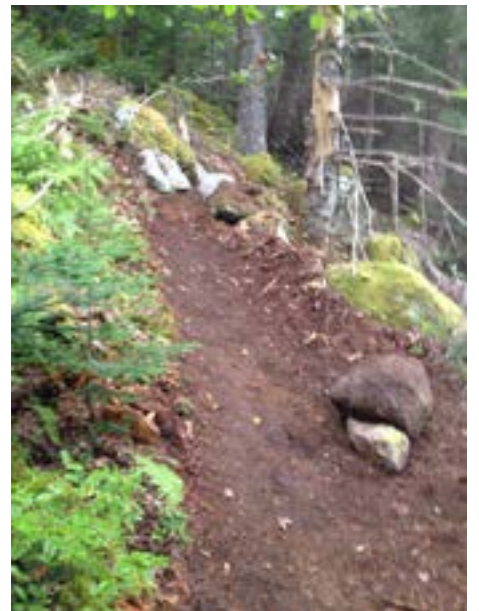
32. The waterfall upstream from the trail bridge



33. The floodplain seasonally floods but is passable most of the year



34. Ice discs form where the East River flows into the pond



35. The simple footpath already constructed through much of the property



36. The view of the property from the rail-trail, and across the pond



# Castle Rock

The Castle Rock property was purchased early in 2018. It is bound by the Chester Connection Trail, the powerline, private property, and the South Panuke Wilderness Area. From the rail-trail (27m) it rises to an elevation of 106m at its highest. The average slope on the west side (typical approach direction) is 11.0%, but it does plateau at the midpoint of the routes up. It is accessible primarily from the trailhead just off the rail-trail at the northern end of Labrador Lake (3.2 km from East River parking lot, 10.2km to Chester) but access can also be gained from the powerline (primarily used by OHVs).

11% of the total 206 acres of the property was dedicated to a Christmas Tree farm previously. Since harvesting ceased, that portion is rapidly regenerating a monoculture forest of balsam fir. The remainder of the land is an upland forest that drains toward east river and Labrador Lake. There is a portion of the property that is interrupted by the power line. The section at the northern most tip has been partially harvested.

The marquee feature of Castle Rock is the peak itself. Atop this rock dome, there is a 360-degree view of all of Mahone Bay, the Aspotogan, Second peninsula, and the woodlands to the north. Three trails provide access to the top. They vary in difficulty and suitability for different activities (hike, mountain bike, OHV). For the most part, the trails are well defined and clear (see map in section 6 for more detail).

The easiest route is actually the old woodlot haul road, and the other trails have been carved out by OHVs and hikers over the years. However, they were not originally routed with drainage and sustainability in mind, so some rutted and wet areas are present

Since the purchase we have implemented a signage program (wayfinding, blazing) and mapping to help people navigate to Castle Rock. Also, a picnic table and bike rack have been installed at the trailhead to enable people to cycle in, lock their bikes, then hike to the peak.

The terrain and topography of the trails vary, but all of them are traversable for most people on foot. Regardless of the chosen approach, each of them ends with a more challenging scramble up and onto the peak.



37. From the peak, looking back toward Mahone Bay

Although it is a large platform, care must be taken when on top as the western edge of the peak does have a steep drop to the rocks below. We have alerted people to these considerations in our maps, signage, and promotional material. Although accessible to most, Castle Rock does demand an extra level of preparedness.

Castle Rock has always been a popular hiking destination. The private landowners recognized the uniqueness of the spot and were generous with public access. Management wasn't without challenges however. Some users have treated the property and access to it disrespectfully. This

## CASTLE ROCK

### HELPFUL to achieving the objective

### HARMFUL to achieving the objective

INTERNAL ORIGIN (attributes of the property)

- The property's **STRENGTHS** are that:
- Unique physical characteristics of the land – the rock and its panoramic views.
  - Historical use of the property (Christmas tree farm).
  - Connection to the Rum Runners Trail.
  - Adjacent Crown land and protected land.
  - Existing tradition of "Annual Hike to Castle Rock" by many people.
  - Accommodate multiple unique trail users (trail choices).
  - OHV's no longer making new trails off the rail trail through wet areas.
  - Trail head sign and wayfinding signage helps visitors navigate.
  - #castlerockclub for promotion of site (tourism draw).

EXTERNAL ORIGIN (attributes of the environment)

- This a great **OPPORTUNITY** to:
- The land beyond the rock needs to be explored further.
  - Opportunity for additional trails that access other parts of the property.
  - Potential to improve the visitor experience.
  - Potential for youth involvement (Castle Guard idea - monitoring).
  - Research memorial flag and consider permanent solution.
  - Addition of minor amenities (i.e. bench, picnic table, interpretive signage).
  - Build on Castle Rock experience for tourism purposes.

- Its **WEAKNESSES** include:
- Main power transmission line intersects the property.
  - High volume of visitors may decrease the experience that some visitors were looking for.
  - Multiple access points (trail & power lines).
  - Need for improved wayfinding on yellow trail.
  - OHV related issues – accessing blue trail, increase damage to wet areas.
  - Limited access to property - use of rail trail for maintenance, emergencies, getting equipment on site for events.
  - Trailhead parking (limited and requires crossing of HWY 329 & HWY 3).
  - Unattractive areas left over from previous use (gravel pit, network of roads, gate posts).

- THREATS** may include:
- Activity / development / cutting on neighboring property (Bond property).
  - High volume of visitors undermines the nature experience.
  - Impact of severe weather events on trail / roads (i.e. washouts).
  - Evidence of camping near base of rock (people leaving tarps, garbage, burnt logs, etc...) – possible this could increase

seems to have abated since it has been opened officially to the public, but we will need to be mindful of this in the future.

To date, our awareness of the characteristics of the land is limited primarily to the well-travelled paths. We have done some bushwhacking through the back portion of the property. This revealed that there are two smaller cliff faces just to the south of the main feature. Much of the unopened portions of the property could be described as low brush barrens.

The transfer of Castle Rock into the public domain has been extremely well received. Our open hike day on May 5, 2018 attracted 130 people in four hours. We have since hosted several other guided hikes, and judging by its online presence (Facebook, AllTrails.com) and personal conversations, people are very appreciative of this outdoor recreation opportunity.

Castle Rock is also known as a destination for bouldering, albeit not a renowned one. The waypoint for climbers is at the base of the cliff at a spot where a lobster has been painted on the rocks. Next to this same location, there is a small clearing where a fire pit and campsite can be found.

For several years, a Canadian Flag has been flying atop Castle Rock. We believe the flagpole was installed in memoriam to someone who appreciated Castle Rock as a special place.

There is potential for Castle Rock to become a gateway into the South Panuke Wilderness Area. Recreation in wilderness areas is limited to non-motorized uses (unless by special agreement) yet any development for low impact recreation does still require a planning process to be undertaken with and by the provincial Department of the Environment – Protected Places Branch. We have had casual conversations with the branch and they are amenable to exploring the possibility.

The private land adjacent to the southern edge of the municipal property is zoned Mixed Use. Subject to specified approval processes and standards, residential, commercial



39. Following the narrow footpath that is the yellow trail



40. Directional signage installed at multiple trail junctions



41. Hikers pausing on the blue trail to watch a grouse in the trees



38. The final push to the peak from the yellow trail

and light industrial uses are permitted. Although there is not a direct view plane from the peak into this property, any of these activities may impact the experience of travelling into Castle Rock.

It should be noted that the trip in to the trailhead from the East River parking lot, is one of the prettiest sections of our trail. The rail trail passes our property (4.0) on the lower end of East River, then passes over three bridges and alongside Barry's Brook and Labrador Lake on the way. The water and soundscape is a pleasurable part of the total Castle Rock trip.





42. No matter from which direction you approach, the final push to the peak can be a challenge



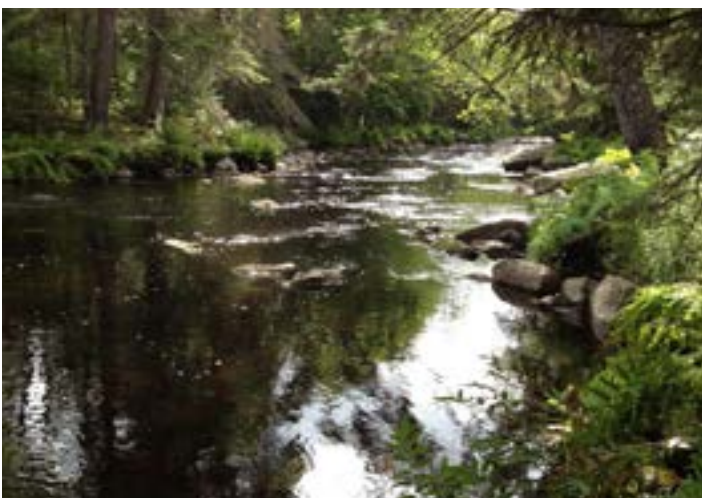
43. Ascending the lower portion of the yellow trail



44. Descending the red trail



45. More interesting cliff features hidden in the woods and not on a primary route



46 and 47. The waters of the East River in the adjacent South Panuke Wilderness Area would make a stunning longer distance hike



## 6. WHAT WE MUST DO TO ACHIEVE THIS VISION

This section takes from our guiding principles, public consultation, and SWOT analysis to suggest a vision for each property. In each case we offer development activities and management considerations that will help us achieve the visions. We have tried to imagine all the activities that we could pursue to create exceptionally rewarding visitor experiences while balancing land protection goals, and our desire to provide education and inspiration.

Accompanying each property’s narrative is an Opinion of Cost. These are estimates only - based on our experience, consultation with other departments, or requests for quotes from vendors.

We have been as thorough as possible to capture realistic costs associated with each development activity and realize that any development will require some level of investment.

This section does not constitute a workplan. Once direction on these visions is received from Council, a more comprehensive workplan can be developed which will

include more firm costing for final budget approval.

To assist in decision making we have partitioned the development activities into three categories of prioritization.

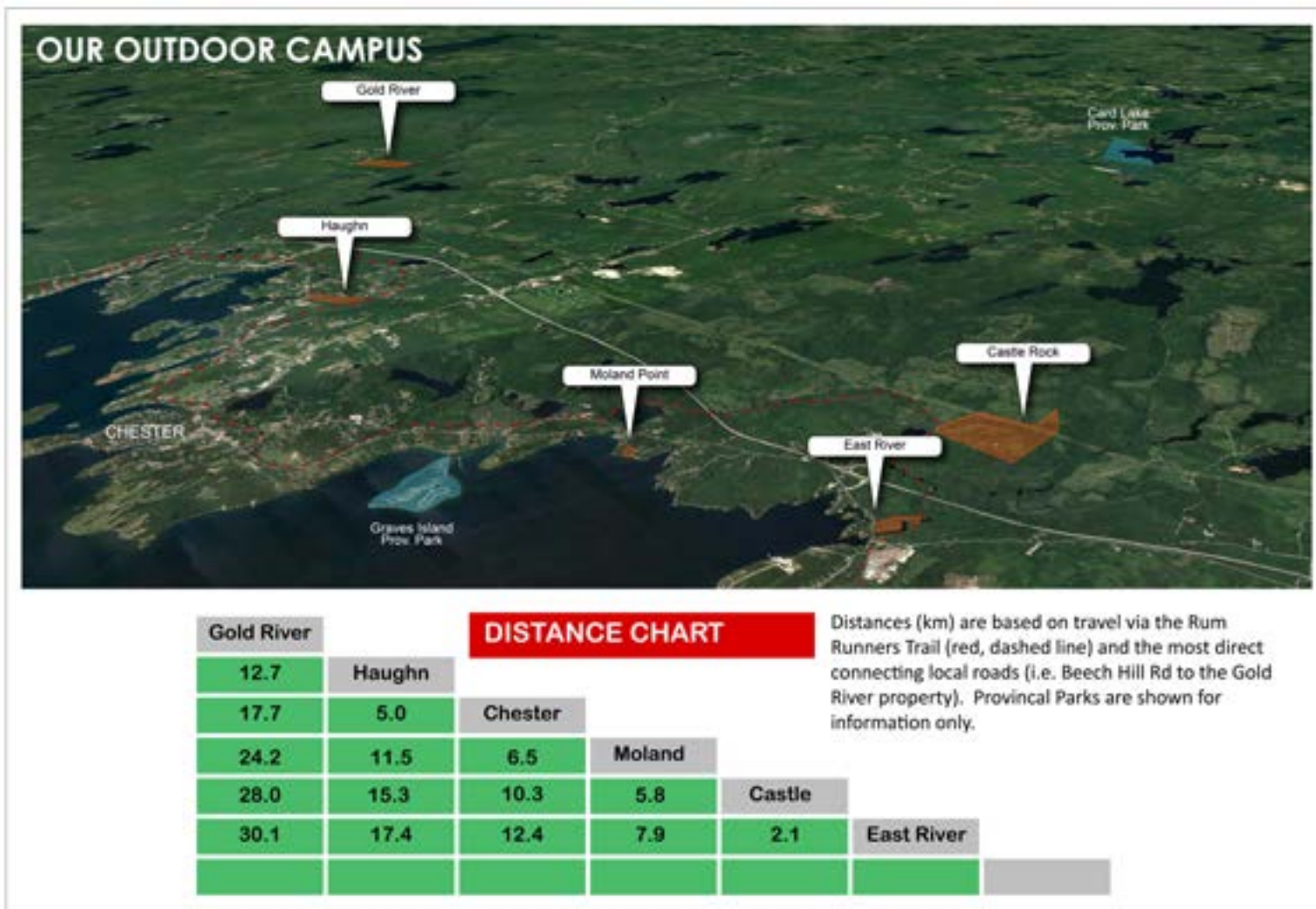
“Must Do” suggests that the activity is critical to establishing the character of the property, or that some urgency exists to make the property useable and safe at a minimum. In some cases, they may be sector best practices.

“Should Do” denotes activities that would be strongly preferred to be included in the development, but are not urgent or critical, nor determine safety.

Finally, “Could Do” activities capture those that complement the execution of the full vision for the properties, but are of lowest importance.

### We can build it, but then what?

Any capital investment, even a simple footpath through the woods, requires frequent monitoring and maintenance. Each of the spreadsheets below includes a column to capture the anticipated maintenance frequency of the budgeted items. The lifespan of an item cannot truly be known, but we have attempted to give some indication of



the attention each will demand. In some cases, these refer to years of trouble free service a unit might give us. For example, the enviro-toilets are noted at 10 years. Certainly they will require frequent monitoring and cleaning, and annual upkeep, but '10 years' refers to the anticipated life cycle of the unit where we would expect at least this amount of trouble free use (with proper maintenance), but should realistically begin to budget for replacement.

In other contexts, the number given refers to when we might expect to replace a unit due to wear and tear, vandalism, etc. For example, wooden benches will deteriorate over time, and wayfinding signs will 'go missing' so they are denoted with '5 years' but for very different reasons.

Again, these are only estimates which attempt to capture the anticipated lifecycle of items, and to convey that we understand that we are making an investment both now and into the future.

## The Campus Concept

When developing these visions, we have consistently thought about the unique aspects of the properties and how they compliment each other to add up to one unified Municipality of Chester outdoor experience. We call this the "campus concept." Buildings on a university campus all serve different functions and satisfy different visitor needs, yet together they create one shared experience.

Similarly, our varied properties can satisfy many different needs and user preferences and the "whole will be greater than the sum of the parts".

Each property's narrative concludes with its role in the campus.

## Our Trail Building Rationale

As outlined above, much of the development investment in each of these properties is in trail building to provide safe and enjoyable access to the properties. As our guiding principles have directed us, we have tried to conceptualize a trail plan that "does what the land allows us to do". In most cases we have described 'footpaths' – trails that requires little to no machinery to construct, and result in a path through the woods that establishes an open corridor but retains a tread underfoot that may often be rooty and rocky. Only in the cases on Moland Point (for maintenance purposes only) and the spine through the Haughn Property (for recreational OHVs) have we suggested building trails to higher construction specification that would enable motorized access (i.e. 2m wide crusher dust/gravel pathway).

To the most primitive standards, trail building can be labor intensive, but relatively low cost. Higher standard trails demand more machine time and imported materials and thus higher costs typically. Both standards of trail benefit from well thought out routing, and well developed workplans to increase the sustainability of each and to mitigate trail deterioration caused by drainage issues or motorized use.

For these reasons we have prescribed a balance between machine work, hand work, and professional consulting to provide the detailed workplans. Our original concept was that a professional trail building consultant would be hired to provide routing advice, and a small dedicated crew of summer staff would do the construction over a couple of seasons.

However, based on Council's feedback for an accelerated timeline we have increased our reliance on professional trail building services. This is reflected in the Opinion of Costs for each property.

Professional consultants would also be commissioned to lead trail building workshops for interested volunteers. Heavy equipment contractors would be employed for the construction of the gravel pathways.



For file sharing and printing purposes, accompanying maps for each property can be found with the appendices or at the end of the document.



This icon denotes decision points for which staff require specific direction from Council before we can proceed with the execution of this plan.





## GOLD RIVER

### The Gold River Vision

**The Gold River property is the place to discover the natural history of our woodlands, and explore the cultural histories of the First Nations and early settlers to the area.**

### Development Activities and Considerations

1.1 Construct a parking lot and trailhead on Beech Hill Road. This should accommodate 6-8 cars, and include an enviro-toilet located a sufficient distance away from the parking area as to not be visible from the neighboring properties. The parking area will also include trailhead signage that highlights the trails, riverfront picnic area, protective measures (i.e. safety, pack it out), and special features of the property. A plaque honoring Rudy Haase's donation of the land should also be located here. There is currently a small patch of garbage that has been dumped here that should immediately be cleaned up. We recommend against locating waste receptacles on the property; rather, promoting Leave No Trace principles and pack-it-in-pack-it-out guidelines. This policy will need to be monitored over time to ensure that visitors are being respectful and keeping it clean.

1.2 Develop a trail corridor through the property. We have walked the entirety of the property and have analyzed the topography. Given the drainage patterns, we recommended a double stacked lollipop trail configuration. From the parking area, the trail would follow the existing pathway into the property, but from the junction with the first north-south haul road (which would be decommissioned for hikers) the new trail would

be developed only to a footpath standard and follow the higher ground of the property to minimize standing water and erosional forces on the tread. A footpath could be constructed relatively simply and inexpensively by a trail crew. It would be sufficient to serve as a four-season pathway, and would only require wayfinding signage and benches on the route. A footpath would be built to the standard that facilitates the use of accessibility equipment such as a Trail Rider (see example below).

1.3 Remove the bus and establish a riverside picnic site. The old bus must be removed immediately. It is inconsistent with the esthetic of the location. Although some visitors appreciate its charm and imagined history, it poses a safety hazard for anyone (adults, children, pets) who may venture into or onto it.

In its place, we should locate a picnic table and streamside seating. We do not recommend promoting overnight stays in this location. The proximity of the neighbor's woodlots, and the potential for too much live fuel to be taken from the woods precludes large fire building. Rather, for the purposes of picnicking, we would install a small steel fire box (therefore limited fuel required) and promote the use of only dead endemic wood fuel, fuel stoves or twig stoves, and would use the same for our own guided hikes. The proximity of water from the gold River would help mitigate fire risk.

This is an example of taking a 'management' over 'prohibition' approach. We know that we cannot constantly police the activities on the properties, but rather we can take a proactive approach to providing positive guidance to users (i.e. start one small fire versus several large fires), and mitigate risks and impacts rather than adopting an unrealistic expectation of compliance to the rules.

1.4 Remove the existing hunting blind (see 'Hunting and Trapping', section 7).

1.5 Two roads already exist across the property. The westernmost haul road (road A) has been used in the past to transport logs across our property between the adjacent properties and logging roads. This road has not been sustainably built and suffers from poor drainage, steep sections down the fall line, and heavily eroded sections. The current use is unclear, and this necessitates a conversation with the adjacent landowners. If this is still an important link for them, we recommend that its use is retained, but that no future expansion of the route be permitted, and that they must pay for any significant damage that may occur. This route would be decommissioned for hikers, and bypassed by the future footpath.

The lower cart-path along the river (road A) does not



appear to host more than ATV traffic. Again, we recommend that the current use be retained (also see section 1.6), but there is one perpetually wet area near the northern edge of the wetland that should be re-routed.

1.6 Locate municipal property signage on the boundaries of the property. There is evidence that the existing riverfront path is used by OHVs. We do not recommend closing this path to ATVs, but we will want to ensure they cannot access the footpaths. We do recommend that trail users of all types know where the boundary of the property is and discourage them from entering private property. For example, at both ends of road A, bi-directional signs on one side would say “Entering Municipal property, please enjoy safely” and on the other side “Private property beyond this point”

1.7 Along the footpath, at multiple locations, we suggest installing two to three interpretive panels that highlight the natural (ecology, medicinal plants) and cultural (First Nations migration, forestry, commerce, mining) histories of the Gold River corridor.



Before any development occurs, we seek the permission of Council to take this plan for the Gold River Property to the adjacent landowners

so that they may understand our vision, the extent of our plans, and provide feedback.

## An Opportunity for Cross-Cultural Partnerships

Acadia and Sipekne’katik (formerly Shubenacadie) First Nations have a long history with the Gold River. Likewise, the Ross Farm Museum has an interest in telling the story of the experience and impacts of the early settlers to the area. The Gold River property represents an exceptional opportunity to form cross-cultural partnerships to tell these stories. We will seek the permission of Council to share this plan so that we may officially explore means to share our collective histories.

## Part of a Whole: Gold River’s role in the Campus

This is the property that can:

- Highlight the natural and cultural history of the Municipality
- Describes the ecology of an intact forest and use of medicinal plants by first peoples.
- Provide a unique, scenic riverfront destination
- Be our second longest hike opportunity

## Opinion of Cost

### 1.0 Gold River



Development Activity	Task	Maint. (yrs)	Must Do	Should Do	Could Do
1.1 Beech Hill Road Interface	1.1.1 Parking Lot at Beech Hill Road	5	\$8,000		
	1.1.2 Enviro-toilet	10			\$10,000
	1.1.3 Trailhead and Interpretive Signage/maps	10	\$1,500		
	1.1.4 Rudy Haase plaque (includes install)	-	\$500		
	1.1.5 Garbage clean-up (staff time to haul)	-	staff time		
1.2 New Trail Corridor	1.2.1 Professional trail consultants to route	-	\$5,000		
	1.2.2 Trail Construction	1	\$30,000		
	1.2.3 Wayfinding signage	5	\$1,500		
	1.2.4 Benches (O2 students supplied)	5		\$1,000	
1.3 River side picnic area	1.3.1 Remove bus	-	\$3,000		
	1.3.2 picnic table	5		\$500	
	1.3.3. Small Fire box + gravel pad install	10		\$500	
1.4 Remove hunting blind	1.4.1 Dismantle and leave on site	-	staff time		
1.5 Existing Roadways	1.5.1 Re-route small section near wetland	-	as above with trail crew		
1.6 Municipal Property signage	1.6.1 Boundary Signage + no hunting	5	\$600		
1.7 Interpretive Panels	1.7.1 Interpretive Panels	10		\$1,000	\$0
			<b>\$50,100</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>
<b>Total Cost of ALL Development Activities</b>				<b>\$</b>	<b>63,100</b>





### The Haughn Property Vision

**The Haughn property will be a stopping place for travelers on the rail trail, and a gathering place for community to celebrate the arts and enjoy the tranquility of the property.**

### Development Activities and Considerations

2.1 The first priority for this property is to determine the fate of the house. The Infrastructure and Operations Department completed an engineering assessment of the building in May/June. The result of this will determine the possible uses of the house. Until a final determination is made, this discussion assumes that Council is willing to utilize the endowment that accompanies the property to make a significant portion of the home open to the public.

Public washrooms should be included in the facility. For example, we can imagine repurposing the existing kitchen area from the building and rebuilding this as the public entryway and utilizing the existing plumbing to install wheelchair accessible public washrooms. This new, small extension, one that is architecturally congruent, could be secured from the main portion of the home so that washroom facilities could be available for the public at times when the rest of the home could be closed. On the exterior of the building a waste sorting station, and a water spigot (ideally with potable water) should be installed to service visitors, hikers, ATVers, and campers at Cooks Brook (see 3.6). Lastly, a larger communal firepit located at a safe distance from the house would be a lovely social gathering place to enhance events that might be occurring there.

Again, assuming the other necessary upgrades can be made, we imagine the building could become a host for a myriad of programs. For example:

- It could become a headquarters for Recreation and Parks summer staff and the child and youth programs that they offer. The corresponding property is ideal for programs focused on outdoor play and nature-based activities.
- In honor of Danny Haughn, it could host live music and 'coffee houses' where local talent could play. Depending on the insulation and heating situation, it could be especially suited to events in shoulder season after Picnic in the Park has wrapped up.
- It could host group meetings like a *Men's Shed* that

blend supportive environments and physical/mental well-being.

- It could serve as a location for other organizations that want to host workshops, retreats, residencies, drama and art, and heritage learning opportunities. Additionally, events like natural building workshops could be hosted as a means to help repair the building.

- It could host an outside organization (with a complimentary mandate) with office or field work space (ie: Coastal Action, MTRI, NSCC NRET Program)

Some of these programming options will fall upon the Recreation and Parks Department to initiate, but we know that there are other interested community organizations too that would like to offer programming in the building and on the grounds.

We recognize that the house has Municipal Heritage Status. Any demolition or alterations would need to be done with the approval of Council.

2.2 Develop a trail network on the property. This entails two standards of trail. First, we propose a mainline trail from the rail-trail to the house. This would be a 3-meter-wide crusher dust path built to a standard to accommodate ATVs, cyclist, and hikers. This would also provide a barrier-free route for people in wheelchairs, although the topography of the land may make it difficult to achieve a fully accessible standard. At the rail-trail terminus, a trail head would be established that includes signage (noting the entire property's features and amenities), bicycle parking, and ATV parking. At the house terminus, there again would be an ATV parking area (with vehicle and trailer loop) and gates to prevent ATVs from entering directly onto the grounds around the house. The trail would be routed and constructed to encourage slow travel and prevent cyclists and ATVers from speeding, in an effort to minimize user conflict on the trail.

Flowing from the mainline trail would be a network of footpaths. These trails would primarily use existing pathways, but some improvements in routing and drainage would be made. The focus of these routes will be to access the more mature stands of forest on the property and to access the lovely stream-side environment at Cook's Brook. They would be built to a standard for hikers and mountain bikers. Signage, routing, and sightlines would be appropriately done to mitigate conflict between these two user types.

Benches should be installed along these paths to support the needs of seniors and people with limited mobility.

2.3 There is debris in the woods around the house that must be cleaned up immediately.

2.4 We deem the pond near the house to be too small to

promote activities like skating. The esthetics and ecology of the pond have a higher value than possible recreation uses. If it were to be used for skating, fishing, etc. it would need to be expanded considerably. We do not recommend this at this time.

2.5 A large sign should be placed by the driveway at highway 3 to announce the property and its amenities.

2.6 The stream side setting at Cooks Brook provides a unique and lovely setting in which to experience the tranquility and soundscape of the stream. This location possesses a flat area next to the stream which appears to be dry in all but the highest flood conditions. It is backed by a high, curved hill which creates an amphitheater effect. At this location we propose a collection of small wooden platforms; perhaps a dozen, ten of which could measure approximately 8' x 4' and two at a size large enough to accommodate a family sized tent (10' x 10'). They would be oriented in a theatre style to facilitate them being used for yoga, tai chi, or some other passive, contemplative activities. They would all be connected by narrow footpaths through the vegetation. We're thinking of this as a small woodland 'village'. Indeed, during our public hikes we have heard that the location would be ideal for this use.

The two larger tent pads would be permanently available for campers. They would be situated near the other platforms but be placed on top of the ridge. This would be a welcome and valuable amenity for hikers and bikers travelling along the Rum Runners Trail as Chester Basin is ideally situated somewhat midway along the entire distance between Halifax and Lunenburg. Should they choose, ATVs could also use this spot but would need to leave their vehicles at the parking area near the rail-trail and walk in. Establishing tent pads serves the dual purpose of providing a comfortable base and minimizing impact on the land by concentrating the impacts. Sites would need to be booked and this can be managed through the Recreation Department.

Each of the tent pads would be equipped with a small fire box. The proximity of the stream would help mitigate the fire risk. As with Gold River, visitors would be directed to only use dead material from the nearby woods, and the size of the firebox would limit the size of fires. There would be no waste receptacles installed here; rather, people would be directed to take all waste to the house where they could also access potable water if not equipped on their own to filter it from the stream. The presence of an electronics charging station at the house would also encourage transporting waste there (2.8).



This vision for the area around Cook's Brook should be shared with the neighbouring properties prior to development.

2.7 We recognize that all of this development, and the increased traffic on the property it is intended to generate, will necessitate increased management and maintenance responsibilities. The trail and 'village' development are relatively low-cost and low maintenance by design. The management controls (i.e. ATV access, limited number of tent pads, signage, etc.) we put in place can also help mitigate maintenance issues and costs. However, we will need to increase our attention to this property and regularly inspect it and include upkeep costs in our operating budgets. This may be another opportunity to enlist the Castle Watch students (see 5.10). The house will of course require an enhanced maintenance schedule, but we hope that the endowment will be sufficient to support this over time.

2.8 The deck on the back of the home should be renovated, and perhaps extended, to serve as a permanent covered picnic spot. This assumes that the building condition assessment has determined that it is useable and not in need of major repairs. It could function independently, whether the main house is open to the public or not. Wifi and an exterior electrical plug should be installed so that people can charge their devices- particularly valuable amenities for people travelling past on the rail-trail and one that would be indicated at the junction and would serve to pull people in off the trail. The deck could also serve as a stage for outdoor concerts as it faces the open lawn where people could gather.

2.9 We do not recommend any enhancements to the small lot across highway 3. Although it does provide a small frontage on the Middle River, the lot is too small and inaccessible to imagine public uses.

2.10 We know that portions of the property were previously a quarry site. It appears in more recent years that some wood harvesting has occurred. As a result, much of the immature forest is a monoculture of spruce. One benefit of this is that there is much fringe habitat that can be attractive to a variety of bird species. However, to promote a more diverse forest and improved wildlife habitat, it would be advisable to attempt to restore Acadian Forest species. This could be done over a number of years by strategic forest rehabilitation practices – thinning the spruce and planting seedlings of native Nova Scotia species. This may be an excellent longitudinal project for students at Forest Heights or another interested community group, and a way to move toward net-zero paper use within our offices.

2.11 Whereas our other gem properties have already



been designated as Conservation Zones, consideration should also be given to the Haughn Property for at least the wooded portion of the property. However, large scale trail development and the use of motorized vehicles is generally inconsistent with the definition of ‘passive recreation’ as used in the language of the policy (Municipal Planning Strategy, Policy E-38). Nevertheless, there should be a discussion of the best way to protect the natural characteristics of this property. It should also be noted that Castle Rock has already been designated Conservation Zone. ATVs and larger scale trail building is permitted there. The level of development we are proposing on the Haughn property is consistent with The Castle Rock precedent.

2.12 Our hope is that the house can be renovated to at least provide washroom facilities. With or without the house being available, indoor facilities on the property

would be an incredible asset for programming. We imagine a separate, fixed roof structure akin to a small ‘bunkhouse’ or cabin being constructed to host summer programs and small workshops.

## Part of a Whole: the Haughn Property’s role in the Campus

This is the property that can be:

- A hub for MOC summer, youth programming, music and social events, and heritage/learning programming
- A wayside stopping place and overnigher for rail-trail users, and a destination for nature enthusiasts and birders
- A playground for hikers, mountain bikers, and those who appreciate quiet, contemplative pursuits.

## Opinion of Cost

### 2.0 Haughn Property



Development Activity	Task	Maint. (yrs)	Must Do	Should Do	Could Do
2.1 Building upgrades	2.1.1 Washroom renovations/secure entry	-	\$50,000		
	2.1.2 Waste sorting station (from existing stock)	5		from inventory	
	2.1.3 potable water + exterior spigot	10	with renos		
	2.1.4 Rock firepit & circle space	-		\$500	
2.2 New Trail Corridors & trail interface	2.2.1 Mainline trail - motorized (contractor)	3	\$28,000		
	2.2.2 Trailhead signage/maps at rail-trail	10	\$2,000		
	2.2.3 Bicycle parking/rack	10		\$500	
	2.2.4 ATV parking lots and trailer turn	5		\$8,000	
	2.2.5 Professional trail consultants to route	-	\$5,000		
	2.2.6 Trail Construction	1	\$24,000		
	2.2.7 Picnic table	5		\$500	
	2.2.8 Wayfinding signage + no hunting	5	\$1,800		
	2.2.9 Benches (O2 students supplied)	5		\$1,000	
2.3 Property Clean-up	2.3.1 Debris remaining in woods near house	-	staff time		
2.4 Pond	2.4.1 No action	-			
2.5 Road side signage	2.5.1 Signage	10		\$1,000	
2.6 Stream side 'village'	2.6.1 10 solo (4x8) yoga wooden Platforms streamside	10		\$2,500	
	2.6.2 2 (10x10) tent platforms on ridge	10			\$1,200
	2.6.3 2 Small Fire boxes	10			\$1,000
2.7 Monitoring	2.7.1 on-going	-	staff time		
2.8 Exterior Renovations at house	2.8.1 Renovations to porch and roof (with renos)	-		with renos	
	2.8.2 Wi-Fi	annual			\$1,200
	2.8.3 Exterior charging station (as part of renos)	-		with renos	
2.9 Small lot south of highway 3	2.9.1 No action	-			
2.10 Acadian Forest restoration	2.10.1 Plantings (multi year)	annual			\$400
2.11 Conservation Zone designation	2.11.1 Staff time/public consultation	-		staff time	
2.12 Bunkhouse and Office	2.12.1 Construction	10			\$20,000
			<b>\$110,800</b>	<b>\$14,000</b>	<b>\$23,800</b>
<b>Total Cost of ALL Development Activities</b>				<b>\$</b>	<b>148,600</b>



## MOLAND POINT

### The Moland Point Vision

**Moland point will be a place where all peoples will be able to freely access, enjoy, and appreciate the shoreline of Mahone Bay.**

### More about this vision

Thirty-three percent of Lunenburg County residents live with a disability that limits their day-to-day activities. The definition of 'disability' includes limitations on sight, hearing, mobility, flexibility, dexterity, pain, learning, developmental, mental health, and memory. Yet no outdoor facility in the Municipality of Chester has been constructed with intention to serve the need of both these persons with disabilities, and the ever-increasing demographic of seniors who also might need special accommodations.

Given the relatively small size of the Moland Point property, which will limit the scale of investment needed (i.e. length of trails, quantity of signs, etc.), we see it as an ideal candidate to make the special investments required to really carve out an outdoor experience for those with disabilities to enjoy. The fact that it offers a coastal experience is another reason to facilitate access for those who are typically excluded from these sites.

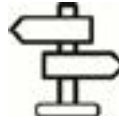
We recognize that a lovely provincial park at Graves Island is within view of Moland Point. And while it does provide an excellent network of accessible trails, it lacks the ability for persons with mobility challenges or those in wheelchairs to access the water.

Moland Point could be a showpiece for how municipalities plan outdoor spaces and accommodate accessibility needs. It will attract and serve not just our own residents with special needs, but those from across the region too.

The narrative below assumes Council's willingness to develop Moland Point as a barrier free natural area. Should Council not choose this path, our alternate recommendation concludes this section.

### Moland Point and the role of the Mahone Islands Conservation Association (MICA)

As you will read, Moland Point represents our most ambitious development plan. The level of development also pushes the boundaries of what some might consider 'conservation first'. The partnership agreement signed by MICA and MOC states that MOC's responsibility is to steward the property so that its natural values are protected and/or enhanced, and to ensure that it is available for public use. The full text of the agreement can be found in Appendix A.



With this in mind, we have consulted, informally, leadership of MICA to gauge the level of support they might have for this vision of an accessible Mahone Bay shoreline. Again, informally, and without the ability to speak for the entire Board, that person suggested that MICA would be very supportive of the vision. With Council's direction, we will next need to present the plan to the entire MICA Board for their feedback and endorsement.

### Development Activities and Considerations

3.1 Access to this property from Buccaneer Road will require suitable parking. We recommend space for 4 vehicles--each sized, spaced, and delineated to accommodate wheelchair accessibility. The pad should be constructed of compacted gravels similar to the trail to allow the most feasible tread possible (short of paving). The site plan should prevent the possibility of vehicles blocking the trail entrance. The entrance should also include a swing gate, spaced to accommodate wheelchairs or double wide strollers (850-1000mm), but narrow enough to prevent motorized vehicles.

This location will serve as the trailhead. Signage will be designed and installed with the unique needs of disabled persons in mind. This will include a description of the natural area and what to expect of the path and amenities (i.e. washroom, handrails, beach pad, interpretive panels, trail length, tread and slopes). A Universal Trail Assessment Process (UTAP) could be conducted to inform this design. Braille could be included for some elements of the signage. An acknowledgement of Rudy Hasse's donation, and the role of MICA, should also be included here.

3.2 Dense vegetation and the wet and rocky nature of this property make the prospect of carving a simple footpath to the beach a challenge. To achieve a new route, machine work will be required. Our rational then becomes if access requires machine time, let's use that to construct as barrier-free a route as possible. Following guidelines published by the Alberta Safety Codes Council and other parks planners, a barrier free route would require:

- A clear path of at least 1800mm wide.



- As minimum a running slope as possible, and where less than 5% cannot be achieved, we should provide a level rest area every 30m. A maximum cross slope of 2%.
- A compacted tread of crusher dust material.
- Some board-walked sections with a non-slip tread.
- Rope handrails to assist those with low vision or blindness.
- Occasional passing area for wheelchairs.
- Edge protection on the boardwalks and anywhere where there is a significant drop from the trail.
- Regular maintenance to ensure a clear canopy of at least 2300mm.
- Occasional plantings, preferably of native species, to provide trail edge contrast.

An interesting opportunity to serve persons with low vision would be to design and fabricate some small, tactile interpretive signs that include raised 'relief maps' of some of the floral species that live in the natural area. This project could be done in partnership with the Aspotogan Heritage Trust or students at FHCS who have 3D printing capabilities.

The final trail alignment, and the required construction

techniques, will be determined in consultation with our contractor.

3.3 If this natural area is to be constructed with persons with disabilities foremost in mind, we need to think of their unique needs and how limited mobility necessitates locating some amenities closer to where they are. Put more bluntly, it is not easy for a person in a wheelchair to run off to a nearby gas station when nature calls. Therefore, we recommend the installation of an enviro-toilet system close to the beach front. It should be located far enough from the beach to provide some privacy and to not impact the view of the shore from the water, but at the same time be close enough to be practical for users (also see 3.6).

The trail from the parking area therefore should be 2.0m wide, and hence the use of a swing gate barrier, to accommodate maintenance of the washroom via our OHV if required. Installation of the washroom should be sequenced with the trail construction and other near-beach amenities to minimize disturbance to the area.

Systems like enviro-toilets are designed to be low maintenance, but they do require frequent sanitizing like any other public washroom. The washroom will be ~150m from the parking lot which should still be practical for cleaning crews. If, as expected, winter user traffic is lower

## Opinion of Cost

### 3.0 Moland Point



Development Activity	Task	Maint. (yrs)	Must Do	Should Do	Could Do
3.1 Buccaneer Road interface	3.1.1 Parking lot	5	\$8,000		
	3.1.2 Swing gate	10	\$1,200		
	3.1.3 Rudy Haase plaque (inc install)	-	\$500		
	3.1.4 Signage/maps	10	\$1,500		
3.2 Barrier free trail	3.2.1 Mainline trail - non motorized (contractor)	7	\$14,000		
	3.2.2 Boardwalking	5	\$4,000		
	3.2.3 Rope handrail	5	\$1,500		
	3.2.4 Plantings	-	\$3,000		
	3.2.5 Tactile interpretive signs	5	\$3,000		
	3.2.6 Midway bench	5	\$250		
	3.2.7 Professional trail consultants to route	-	\$5,000		
3.3 Washroom	3.3.1 Enviro-toilet	10		\$10,000	
3.4 Beach accessibility	3.4.1 Mobi-mat or cabled boardwalk	10		\$11,000	
	3.4.2 Mobi-chair	5		\$3,800	
3.5 Boundary marking	3.5.1 Signage	5	\$300		
	3.5.2 Blocking and naturalization	-	\$500		
3.6 Interpretive Signage at beach	3.6.1 Signage	10	\$500		
	3.6.2 Bench	5	\$500		
			<b>\$43,750</b>	<b>\$24,800</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Total Cost of ALL Development Activities</b>				<b>\$</b>	<b>68,550</b>

here than at East River, this washroom could be closed for the season to reduce maintenance.

The design and construction of the washroom (entrance, pad size, handrails, etc.) should all be done with barrier free guidelines in mind. Although we will not promote swimming in this area, a right sized washroom enclosure could also serve as a change room for those who do take advantage of the beach pad (3.4).

These recommendations assume that a system can be selected at a reasonable cost and with no deleterious environmental effects on the land or beach environments. For this reason, systems like Eco-loo and Envirolet would be preferred.

3.4 Moland Point is an excellent location for persons with disabilities to immerse themselves in the water of Mahone Bay, or to simply touch it with their toes. Several waterfronts in HRM and around the province have Mobi mats, but Lunenburg County's only accessible site is at Risser's Beach Provincial Park. Mobi mats are portable, non-slip beach access mats for people with disabilities. They provide beach access for wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers. Mobi chairs are beach accessible wheelchairs that can float and are a one-size-fits-all. Typically, Mobi mats are installed at the beginning and end of the warmer water season (Mid-June to end of September). Municipalities manage Mobi Chair bookings via the Recreation and Parks Departments. We recommend the purchase of both items to make the beach at Moland Point as accessible as possible. Ideally, a small storage shed would be constructed on the site to house both of these when not in use. These are the types of items that can often be supported through grant programs.

3.5 Our neighbors here desire their privacy, and protection and cleanliness of their property. We shall erect boundary signs on the beach to clearly delineate where the municipal property ends. Additionally, the existing trail from Buccaneer Road should be blocked at the road (with agreement from the private owner) and be naturalized at our property boundary to dissuade usage and encourage usage of the facilities wholly on our property.

3.6 Where the existing trail approaches the beach there is a hillock. This is an ideal location to install a bench to enjoy the view, and interpretive signage. The signage here could feature a panoramic map of the offshore islands and describe the nature of the island ecosystems and the role that the Municipality and MICA play in protecting them. Just behind this hill, or upland toward the trailhead, is a likely best location for installing the

washroom facilities and an accessible picnic table.

3.7 We recommend that users be directed to pack out their own waste from this property.

## An Alternate Purpose

Staff recognize that this plan is perhaps our most intensive investment and will likely need to be a multi-year project from a Municipal budget perspective. If Council does not support these recommendations, then we suggest that the minimum development possible be done to the property. Its uniqueness lies in the opportunity to development an accessible coastal location. If that is not the chosen vision, then it should only seek achieve the conservation goals as laid out in the agreements with MICA. As stated above, providing access to the beach, wholly within the property, is challenging due to its dense vegetation, topography, and wet nature. We should block the existing entrance into the property, which lays on the neighbor's property, to prohibit motorized vehicles; and naturalize the trail at our boundary. Occasional monitoring should occur for waste management and abuse of the property; otherwise, the property can be left to protect a small portion of our coastal environment.

## Part of a Whole: Moland Point's role in the Campus

This is the property that can be:

- A barrier free access to the shoreline of Mahone Bay.
- A model for enhanced Natural Area design that is inclusive of for all people with physical, mental, cognitive, and mobility needs.
- A place to introduce people to the ecosystems of the islands of Mahone Bay.





## EAST RIVER

### The East River Vision

**The East River property has an abundance of natural history and cultural features that will tell the story of our past; while immersing visitors in one of our most biodiverse and beautiful river environments.**

### Development Activities and Considerations

4.1 The gravel pad near the East River bridge on highway 3 is not suitable to promote it as parking lot to access the property. This is based on previous sightline measurements done by TIR. Therefore, we do not suggest that the lower end of the property be developed as a hiking destination. We should discourage use of the gravel pad; however, some of our programming and research partners (i.e. Coastal Action, NSCC-NRET ) do rely on this site to unload and deploy equipment (i.e. for elver studies). We recommend “Authorized Parking Only” signs be installed here, and special permission be given only to those research partners.

Upon completion of the highway 3 bridge project, TIR’s contractor smoothed out this new pad and buried some old cinder blocks that had been left on site when we acquired it. Their attempt was incomplete, so another load or two of gravel should be placed to fully hide the blocks.

4.2 TIR has previously installed “trail crossing” signs independently or when requested by MOC. We intend to request that they do so where the rail trail crosses highway 3. We also have a part to play to encourage safe practices when crossing the road here. In addition to the existing ‘stop’ signs, we intend to install “use caution when crossing the road” signs to alert ATVs, cyclists, and hikers. We will include this location in future discussions on alternate road crossing treatments such as Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs).

4.3 As discussed below in section 5.0, this corridor between the highway 329 East River Parking lot, along the rail trail past this property, then onto Castle Rock will begin to act as one destination for many users. We have already seen days when the parking lot is overflowing and does not serve the demand placed on it. To this end, the Director of Recreation and Parks had begun a dialogue

with Louisiana Pacific who owned the property adjacent to our parking area. They were amenable to the idea of expanding this lot with certain restrictions to control access onto highway 329 and to maintain the treed aesthetic of the property. Given that the plant recently changed ownership, these discussions may need to start again. As discussed in 5.8, expansion plans at this location should include an accessible washroom facility to serve users of the entire corridor.

4.4 With MOC’s recent acquisition of one more property to the north of the rail trail bridge, we now can extend a footpath to the waterfall that exists below the former NSP generating station site. We will not promote swimming at this location, but it is a dramatic stream side location ideal for picnicking. One small NSP property intersects the two MOC lots, so we will need to seek an agreement with NSP to be able to connect our properties with a footpath over theirs. This route will also be popular with fisher people.

4.5 Where the existing footpath running along the west side of East River crosses Barry’s Brook and joins the rail trail, and where now a new footpath can be constructed to access the waterfall, we will need to establish a proper trailhead to serve both routes. First, a small parking area should be established to serve ATV and bicycle parking. Trail users will want to leave their vehicles in a secure location to then hike into the trail system or visit the falls, and we do not want them leaving them on the rail-trail as this will create congestion and a safety hazard. We imagine a gravel pad located on the siding space, just large enough to accommodate 4 ATVs and a bike rack too. Appropriately graded gravel ramps will need to be constructed to be able to descend from the rail trail. We will install trailhead maps and the first of the interpretive panels at this location (see 4.6). All of this work, plus the bridge (4.8), will need to be done with the approval of Lands and Forestry as it falls within their right of way.

4.6 The East River property possesses incredibly diverse natural and cultural history. This is its signature quality and we will use the opportunity to create a living laboratory and education opportunity. The first of the interpretive panels at the Trail head (4.5) will highlight the variety of species and landscape features. Within the properties themselves, we will then place a series of small interpretive panels that further describe the flora, fauna, and cultural artifacts in the site (see list on following page)

4.7 One of the loveliest spots on the property is at the junction of the “lollipop and the stick” (see map). This

Flora (2 signs)	Fauna (2 signs)	Natural (1 sign)	Cultural (2 signs)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shelf fungus</li> <li>• Maple saplings</li> <li>• Mountain cranberry</li> <li>• Golden thread</li> <li>• Snake berry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eels</li> <li>• Otters</li> <li>• Beavers</li> <li>• Fox</li> <li>• Ducks</li> <li>• Coyotes</li> <li>• Snowshoe hares</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Floodplain</li> <li>• Ice discs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old dam site</li> <li>• Sawdust island</li> <li>• Railroad history</li> <li>• Power generation</li> </ul>

tranquil site next to the stillwater pond is ideal for a small picnic area. Some clearing (hand tools only) will be required to establish a picnic table pad and create a 'tick buffer'.

4.8 We intend to install a small footbridge over Barry's Brook to provide access from the rail-trail into the southern property. The Infrastructure and Operations

Department is assisting with the selection of the appropriate span and abutments design. The Annapolis Valley Trails Coalition has also been onsite and have provided construction details from comparable projects. Construction is dependent on approval from Lands and Forestry. Funds have previously been received from TD Friends of the Environment to support this construction.

4.9 The footpath that was constructed in a couple of days when we first acquired the property is holding up well over time. We have periodically gone in to take out downed trees or to limb up those growing into the trail. It will require annual maintenance and inspection, especially after we open the property to more visitors. Fortunately, this maintenance is minor and typically requires only hand work. Some enhancements will be done to install wayfinding signage/blazes, small re-routes, and side-hill benching. People will be discouraged from exiting the property to highway 3, and instead will be expected to retrace their steps, or return to Barry's Brook via the route through the floodplain. This route can be traversed year-

## Opinion of Cost

### 4.0 East River



Development Activity	Task	Maint. (yrs)	Must Do	Should Do	Could Do
4.1 Parking restrictions at hwy 3	4.1.1 "Authorized parking Only" signs	5	\$300		
	4.1.2 Load of gravel to cover cinder blocks	-		\$300	
4.2 Trail crossing	4.2.1 TIR Trail Crossing signs	10	\$500		
	4.2.2 Caution signs	10	\$300		
4.3 Expand parking at hwy 329	4.3.1 To serve two properties. See section 5.8	5			
4.4 Footpath to waterfall	4.4.1 Trail Construction	1	\$5,000		
4.5 Trailhead	4.5.1 Signage/maps	10	\$1,000		
	4.5.2 ATV parking pad and ramps	5		\$6,000	
	4.5.3 Bicycle parking/rack	10		\$500	
4.6 Interpretive Signage	4.6.1 Signage	5		\$2,100	
4.7 Picnic area	4.7.1 picnic table	5		\$500	
4.8 Footbridge at Barry's Brook	4.8.1 Bridge (\$15,000 already available via grants)	12	\$0		
4.9 Footpath enhancements	4.9.1 minor trail upgrades	-	included in 4.4		
	4.9.2 Wayfinding signage	5	\$500		
4.10 Hunting restrictions	4.10.1 Signage	5	\$300		
4.11 Partnerships	4.11.1 No cost	-			
			<b>\$7,900</b>	<b>\$9,400</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Total Cost of ALL Development Activities</b>				<b>\$</b>	<b>17,300</b>



round, but seasonally it is wet, and signage will indicate that to visitors.

4.10 Hunting and trapping is contextual on each of our properties (see Section 7). These activities are incompatible with the East River property for two reasons. First, under Section 113, Subsection 11(2) of the Wildlife Act, *No person shall at any time hunt, take or kill or attempt to hunt, take or kill wildlife with a firearm loaded with a rifle cartridge, single ball or slug or discharge a firearm loaded with a rifle cartridge, single ball or slug within 402 metres of a dwelling, playground, golf course, athletic field, woods operation, place of business, agricultural building or public building other than a school (804m).* As several dwellings exist within 400m of all corners of this property, discharging a firearm is a safety hazard here. Secondly, we know that there are many fur-bearing animals on this property but given the narrow confines of the acreage and the high likelihood of traps being set where people and pets might walk, this activity too should be prohibited.

Fishing from our shores should continue with special messaging about Leave No Trace principles as the only waste we've seen in the property over the years is worm containers.

4.11 Given the natural and cultural history diversity of this site, it is an excellent site to foster partnerships with other organizations to assist us in delivering programming and education opportunities. Coastal Action has been researching and collecting data on the lifecycle of the American Eel at this site for many years. Students from the Natural Resources and Environmental Technology program at NSCC have used this property for species identification studies. And the Chester Historical Society has documented some of the industrial past of this watershed. These are relationships that can help us tell the story of the property.

## Part of a Whole: East River's role in the Campus

This is the property that can:

- Provide natural history, industrial history, and a high density of interpretive points.
- Provide a short hike experience that is easy to get to.
- Offer diverse habitats and a waterfall.
- Be a nature education laboratory.
- Be a marketable anchor experience off the Rum Runners Trail.



## CASTLE ROCK

### The Castle Rock Vision

**Castle Rock is for the adventurer. Its granite peak, and longer and more challenging hikes, will continue to attract visitors from afar and will be an anchor trailside diversion for travelers on the Rum Runners Trail.**

### Development Activities and Considerations

5.1 Since acquisition, Castle Rock has quickly become a very popular hiking destination. The trails on the property were never routed nor constructed to be sustainable and to host heavy traffic. Although they are holding up admirably, some wear and tear is beginning to show. Each of the existing three trails will require some minor improvements and maintenance.

**Red Trail** – The red trail does have a few steep sections that are routed directly down the fall line. This is not ideal, but the severity does not necessitate re-routing. From time to time grading and re-surfacing should occur to inhibit the formation of a loose, unstable surface for hikers, and to prevent ATVers from migrating off the trail and causing trail widening. Near the top of the Red route there is a small boggy area that ATVers typically traverse to get closer to the peak. We should either fill (preferably with borrowed material onsite) or re-route here.

Additionally, an ATV parking site should be established just short of the flat area at the base of the last slope. This area is experiencing erosion and compaction from ATV tires. A parking area would only add a 30-50m walk for people leaving their machines to hike up the last slope (which cannot be traversed by machine anyway). A rock bollard should also be installed here to prohibit going beyond the parking, and to remove the ability to drive a machine down the blue route.

**Blue Trail** – Our current signage and maps do not show prohibitions, they only provide positive guidance. The blue route has been designated for hikers and snowshoers. Nevertheless, ATVs tracks have been observed on the blue route which is incompatible due to its steep slopes and occasional wet sections. A rock bollard should be installed at the narrow entrance where the trail enters the trees. Some minor re-routing should be done to avoid wet spots. Annual maintenance is required to keep the corridor open and the canopy high enough. This is minor work that can be

accomplished typically with hand tools.

**Yellow Trail** – Some ATVs are entering the trail and are quickly realizing that they cannot navigate this route. They then turn around and compromise the trail tread as they descend. In some cases, they have been cutting trees to aid their passage through narrow spots. Like the Blue Route, a rock bollard should be installed to prohibit this misuse. And again, some minor re-routing should be done to avoid wet spots, and annual maintenance is required to keep the corridor open and the canopy high enough.

5.2 Additional signage – when we first installed the wayfinding signage on each of the routes, we were alerted to feedback offered from trail users. Some told us that more signage was needed, others said there was a little bit too much. We've tried to balance the aesthetics of the trail with the desire to help keep people on the proper paths. It seems that the signage on the red and blue trails is sufficient. As the yellow trail traverses some rock outcrops, we have decided to add a couple of free-standing rock cairns that will support wooden posts with our blaze mark on it.

5.3 There is a well-established camping spot with a small, stone fire ring at the base of the cliffs near the top of the yellow route. Although we have not prohibited camping, we do not want to promote it either, especially in this location which is directly on a main travel route and could therefore impact the experience of hikers passing by (i.e. interrupting people eating, or sleeping in tents). Therefore, we recommend maintaining the policy of not explicitly prohibiting camping, but we will remove the log bench and blue tarp that has been stuffed under it and move the fire ring to a location a few meters away from the trail. By its rocky nature, the site is not ideal for camping, so we do not think it is being overused, but we will manage its use by this small modification.

5.4 For many years a Canadian flag has been flying from a log pole at the peak. As stated earlier, we believe it was erected in memoriam to someone. We recommend that our policy be to not prohibit it, but we should not replace the flag ourselves, and we should be willing to remove it when it becomes tattered from the strong winds on top of Castle Rock.

5.5 We have explored almost the entire property on foot. We have left the main trails and investigated the characteristics of the land beyond the power line and toward the eastern boundary of the property. There are not many features of the property here that suggest additional trails should be built. However, we believe that a fourth hiking route could be established that would provide both



a lovely woodland walk, and a gentler approach to the southern edge of the peak's approach. This route also features some currently unseen rock and cliff features that would serve as interesting "anchors" for trail routing. It is also sufficiently dry so that a more sustainable, low maintenance footpath could be established. It is sketched in as the dashed pink trail on the included map.

5.6 Our insurance agent visited Castle Rock last year. He was complimentary of the signage that we had installed and the safety and risk management messages it contains. His only suggestion was to erect a sign on the peak warning people of the steep cliffs. Our existing map and signs do warn people of the site's exposure, but he felt the message should also be delivered at the peak. While we do not disagree that visitors should be reminded of the inherent risks, were we to follow that guidance it is our recommendation that signage be installed at the final approaches to the peak and not on the peak itself. Our rationale is twofold: first, the base of the peak is the final decision point – a warning sign located here will allow people to make informed decisions before they choose to go up or not. For example, parents may choose to stay back with young children while the rest of their party make the last ascent. Second, aesthetically, signage on the peak is misplaced. It would detract from and pollute the otherwise unencumbered views.

5.7 ATVs do enter the property from the powerline. Currently there is no signage to guide them once they join the red route. We will add arrows to the existing post to direct them to either Castle Rock (left) or the Chester Connection trail (right).

5.8 We have received feedback that a washroom facility would be appreciated at Castle Rock. We have previously imagined installing an enviro-toilet near the trail head and close to the junction of the red and yellow trails. It could be set back from the main trail to provide a little privacy and segregated from machines by a path and rock bollards.

However, we have also considered how this entire corridor between the parking area on highway 329, past the East River property (4.0) function as a single experience. If an enviro-toilet were to be located at the Parking area on the 329 it could serve people before they depart to visit either Castle Rock or East River. Of course, that does not help someone once they arrive at Castle Rock or are ready to hike out again.

Enviro-toilets are designed to be low-maintenance. In theory their systems are self-sustaining and clean; however, like any public washroom facility they do require frequent sanitizing. Given that we have not observed a waste management issue at Castle Rock, we recommended that

one enviro-toilet be installed at the highway 329 parking lot would be sufficient for now to accommodate users. Accessing this location for regular cleaning would also be much more efficient for staff.

5.9 Castle Rock attracts a wide demographic of user-particularly active seniors. We have described the Red route as the easiest path to Castle Rock in terms of grades and stability of the tread underfoot. Yet to be mindful of those who may be highly motivated but still challenged by the red route, we recommend the installation of benches at the mid-point of the slopes (3-4 locations).

5.10 Since acquisition, and our first foray into promotion and development, we have been monitoring the exposure of Castle Rock in the online trail community. Visitors have been very complementary of the site and the enhancements. During our recent experience in COVID we saw an anecdotal spike in the number of people visiting. With increased exposure, and demand for healthy lifestyles and accessible outdoor experiences, we expect the amount of traffic to increase. As the adage goes: "Attractive places attract people until they are no longer attractive". We will continue to monitor the impact this usage has on the site. The improvements suggested here are intended to protect the site and the experience by creating more sustainable pathways and dispersing the traffic across more paths (i.e. fourth trail suggestion). Another management opportunity we have available to us is through the Castle Watch program. The Community School Coordinator has enlisted and trained (first aid, inspection forms, etc.) a small group of students who are keen outdoors people. Their task will be to periodically visit Castle Rock and to report any maintenance or management needs. This program could also help serve our other properties.

5.11 The Castle Rock property is immediately adjacent to the Panuke Lake Wilderness Area. This provides a unique opportunity to think about the area as one contiguous parcel of public space. Nova Scotia's Wilderness Areas protect the natural environment while providing opportunities for education, research, wilderness recreation, camping, sport fishing, hunting, and community stewardship. Trail development is generally prohibited except under special approval from Nova Scotia Environment. Through personal contacts it has been signaled to us that trail expansion into the Wilderness Area might be acceptable. For example, the boundary of the Wilderness Area hugs the highway 103 corridor. Where our rail-trail bridge crosses at Barry's Brook, one can quickly turn right and enter the Wilderness Area. Although there is no trail at this point, in time, we believe an alignment could be routed to hug the East River flowage north, and

then provide an easterly entrance into our property and a route up the ‘backside’ of Castle Rock. In past explorations of the area we have found some lovely river frontage, forest environments and geological features that would serve as perfect trail anchor points. To be clear, we imagine this to be built to a wilderness footpath standard, and any development would need to go through a rigorous planning process with Environment. Nevertheless, this would be an excellent means to provide an even more extensive wilderness hiking experience and to leverage the presence of the nearby public lands. Future trail development north toward Connaught and Timber lakes could be considered as part of a long-term vision.

5.12 When we acquired the property, we inherited at least three known instances of graffiti on the rocks. Although they are not extensive nor obscene, they do

detract from the experience and the composition of photos taken at Castle Rock. Fortunately, these are fading with time as they wear off or are reclaimed by lichen. We are hoping that this problem will be self-policed by the increased presence of trail users and will monitor as time passes.

5.13 To date, we have been fortunate that waste management (garbage, human waste) has not become a major concern. We decided to not install waste receptacles at the trailhead as the municipality does have a history of them being misused. They also require frequent management which is not feasible for our Infrastructure and Operations crews. Therefore, from the beginning we have promoted the guiding principles of Leave No Trace Canada. Leave No Trace certainly encourages people to bring their waste out with them,

## Opinion of Cost

### 5.0 Castle Rock



Development Activity	Task	Maint. (yrs)	Must Do	Should Do	Could Do
5.1 Trail upgrade and maintenance	5.1.1 Red trail - Grading	2		\$2,500	
	5.1.2 Red trail - fill or re-route boggy area near top	10	\$1,500		
	5.1.3 Red trail - ATV landing + rock bollards	-	\$1,500		
	5.1.4 Blue Trail - rock bollards	-	\$250		
	5.1.5 Blue Trail - minor re-routing (see 5.5 below)	-			
	5.1.6 Yellow Trail - rock bollard at bottom	-	\$250		
5.2 Additional signage	5.2.1 Yellow trail wayfinding	5	from inventory		
5.3 Modify existing camp site	5.3.1 Move fire ring	-		staff time	
5.4 Canadian Flag	5.4.1 no action	-			
5.5 Fourth trail to peak	5.5.1 Trail Construction	1		\$10,000	
5.6 Signage at approach to peak	5.6.1 1 sign red/blue approach, one yellow + no hunting	5		\$600	
5.7 Signage from powerline	5.7.1 directional arrows	5	from inventory		
5.8 Expanded parking at hwy 329	5.8.1 Enviro-toilet	10	\$10,000		
	5.8.2 Parking Lot Construction (in 20/21 budget)	5	\$0		
	5.8.3 Trailhead and Interpretive Signage/maps	10	\$1,000		
5.9 Red trail benches	5.9.1 benches	5		\$1,000	
5.10 Monitoring	5.10.1 Castle Watch (no funds needed)	-			
5.11 Proximity to South Panuke WA	5.11.1 Expanded trail plan, professional fees	-			\$10,000
5.12 On-going clean up	5.12.1 Graffiti watch (no action at this time)	-			
5.13 Waste management messaging	5.13.1 Membership - Leave No Trace Canada	-		\$400	
5.14 Trail building Tools	5.14.1 Pulsakis, Mcleods, rocks bars, wheelbarrows, etc.**	5	\$1,200		
			<b>\$15,700</b>	<b>\$14,500</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>
<b>Total Cost of ALL Development Activities</b>				<b>\$</b>	<b>40,200</b>



but it goes beyond this too and educates people on the responsible way to manage human waste, build campfires, traverse trails, protect flora and fauna, etc. These are ideas that can be easily understood and shared; however, Leave No Trace Canada, a national non-profit dedicated to promoting a responsible wilderness ethic, is the leader in providing the educational material that mitigates the impacts of recreation. Membership in this organization costs \$400 annually. Although an ongoing membership may not be necessary for us, a one-year membership would be the responsible choice to allow us to ethically adopt and use their materials and messages in our own literature and signage.

## Part of a Whole: Castle Rock’s role in the Campus

This is the property that can:

- Offer our longest wilderness hike, with potential to expand into the adjacent wilderness area.
- Be a destination hike- a marquee addition to the Rum Runners Trail and a marketable extension to the trail experience for visitors.
- Be a model of shared use and creating an experience for all users.

## Summary Opinion of Cost for ALL Properties



	Property	Must Do	Should Do	Could Do	Total
1.0	Gold River	\$50,100.00	\$3,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$63,100.00
2.0	Haughn	\$110,800.00	\$14,000.00	\$23,800.00	\$148,600.00
3.0	Moland Point	\$43,750.00	\$24,800.00	\$0.00	\$68,550.00
4.0	East River	\$7,900.00	\$9,400.00	\$0.00	\$17,300.00
5.0	Castle Rock	\$15,700.00	\$14,500.00	\$10,000.00	\$40,200.00
		<b>\$228,250.00</b>	<b>\$65,700.00</b>	<b>\$43,800.00</b>	<b>\$337,750.00</b>

## 7. POLICY SUPPORTS

### Hunting and Trapping

Our Natural Areas exist somewhere between a wilderness area (where hunting and trapping is permitted) and a provincial park (where they are not). While smaller and less remote than most wilderness areas, they will not possess the infrastructure development and level of service people associate with provincial parks, nor the legislated protection. Nevertheless, the public will be invited into the spaces to enjoy them independently throughout the year and all users should always have an expectation of safety.

As discussed in section 4.10, under the Wildlife Act hunting with a rifle is prohibited within 402m of a dwelling. By this criterion alone, hunting would be excluded in all of Moland Point, all of the Haughn Property, and all of East River. This would leave Castle Rock, and approximately the easterly half of the Gold River property, where hunting might be permitted. Note, it is possible for dwelling owners to give a hunter permission to discharge within that radius on neighboring properties (MOC land in this case).

However, Council clearly stated their preference for no hunting or trapping within our natural areas. It would be incongruous to invite people onto public lands then potentially put them in harms way during hunting season.

Under the Wildlife Act, the occupier (owner) of property may post notice in writing prohibiting hunting and trapping. However, because the Protection of Property Act allows hunting on “forest land”, which portions of the Haughn property, and all of East River, Gold River, and Castle Rock would qualify as, we may not be able to prosecute someone for hunting/trapping on those properties. Lands and Forestry would not be able to enforce no hunting restrictions on these lands. We may be able to establish trespass restrictions via a municipal by-law which could then be enforced by the RCMP.

Regardless, we recommend the following policies and practices to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all users:

- Hunting should be prohibited within all areas of all of our natural areas. Signage should be erected at the boundaries of each property and incorporated into the trailheads.
- Visitors to all properties should be reminded to wear hunter’s orange and take other safety precautions during the season. Signage should be erected at the trailhead, property entrances, and at the parking areas to remind users.
- The regulated distance-to-dwelling criterion for

trapping is 182m for most gear. However, because we know that dog owners will allow them to run off leash regardless of our guidance or regulations, trapping should also be prohibited on all our properties to avoid unnecessarily ensnaring pets.

- Hunting and trapping should be actively discouraged. Hence, any permanent structures (i.e. hunting blinds) should be removed if they currently exist on the property or if they appear in the future. The signage noted above should convey that structures will be removed.



- Conservation officers with Lands and Forestry should be made aware of our approach. Their support and advice could also help avoid or mitigate enforcement issues in the future.

### Amendments to Sub-division By-Laws

MOC’s Subdivision bylaw relies on a very narrow definition of useable land. This is typically an area of 5% of the area to be subdivided, or cash in lieu in an amount equivalent to 5%, with certain minimum requirements that describe the physical quality of the land, but not the recreation potential.

When land is subdivided, if the contribution of the developer meets the minimum requirements, then the Municipality typically accepts the chosen parcel of land. However, historically this has resulted in parcels being conveyed to the Municipality that, although they might meet the minimum requirements, do not create spaces that are well suited to development and enjoyment by the public.

The Municipal Government Act empowers Municipalities to develop their own by-law within bounds. It allows for at least 5%, but no more than 10% of land to be transferred to the municipality as Public Open Space “if the requirement and the reasons for it are provided for in a municipal planning strategy” (or cash equivalent, or combination).

The MGA also allows proceeds of cash in lieu to be transferred to villages or non-profits for acquisition or capital improvements of parks, playgrounds, and recreation facilities. Interest on funds may be used for operation or maintenance.

We have reviewed the MGA, and comparable by-laws in other Nova Scotia Municipalities (see Appendix A) to



determine amendments to our own bylaw that could result in higher quality open spaces, either within subdivisions, or more generally, as part of a comprehensive strategy to create a suite of open spaces to compliment the gem properties described in this report.

MOC may **consider** the following amendenments to our Open Space provisions of the Sub-division bylaw:

1. Requiring that transfer of land, if it be in parcels, be contiguous. This allows for crucial connectivity.
2. Providing land classification and quality tables, and working collaboratively with developers early in the application process to assist them in selecting appropriate parcels. (e.g. HRM's Parkland Classification and Quality Criteria tables)
3. Increasing the minimum requirements from current amount to double. This means requiring the transfer of 10% of the area subdivided based on the final plan (excluding streets and roads), and doubling the minimum lot requirement-or at the very least providing reason for the current requirement.
4. Add clarity to the provision for opportunity to refuse land, if deemed unsuitable, in favour of:
  - a. cash (equal, less, or more e.g. MODL approach).
  - b. combination of more suitable land (define) of insufficient quantity, and cash.
  - c. 'Services' to also include improvement of recreational area(s) offsite, undertaken by the developer, at equivalent value.
5. Safeguarding transferred lands from nearby development. This is to prevent drainage problems, or other such issues, from impacting Municipal Public Open Space caused offsite.
6. Develop a policy to use Open Space funds to support village or non-profits' provision of recreation facilities.
7. Dispose of surplus subdivision properties.

#### **Recommendation:**

Council should clearly define the goal of the Open Space Provision. If it is to help acquire the highest possible quality land with the goal of environmental protection or to create recreation opportunities (or other strategic priorities), then

staff should be directed to propose amendments to the by-law to help achieve these goals.

## Disposal of Surplus Land Policy

MOC lacks a comprehensive means to inventory and evaluate our public lands. We lack a way to assess their utility and if they should be deemed non-essential or surplus. By extension, we also lack a policy to guide the disposal of lands that might be deemed surplus.

Consequently, this absence, in conjunction with our sub-division bylaw that often nets sub-optimum lots, means that we have collected several properties that have little utility and have languished. A proactive approach to land acquisition, inventory, and disposal could lead to an inventory of higher quality lands that serve a greater public good.

Several other municipalities in Nova Scotia do possess a suite of policies that address this issue. Specifically, the table presented in Appendix C captures the highlights of several policy approaches to land disposal.

Each policy example varies in its scope and complexity, but there are a few common themes that emerge from them all.

- The Municipal Government Act (MGA) authorizes municipalities to sell surplus land.
- CAOs (or their designates) have the authority to sell surplus land in accordance with policies adopted by Council.
- Staff evaluation and recommendations usually inform Council decisions to deem land surplus, and the method by which the sale might take place.
- The MGA directs that land be sold at market value (with some exceptions).
- Land may be sold below market value if doing so is deemed for public benefit (i.e. to nonprofits **and** for the public at large).
- Depending on the circumstances of the marketability and usability of the land, it may be sold unsolicited, by public tender, by request for proposals, direct sale on the open market, through land exchanges, or sale to abutting owners.
- Employing an evaluation tool (see MODL's) is a useful approach to help Council determine if land is non-essential.
- The purchaser is usually responsible for the cost of the sale incurred by the municipality.
- The policy may be waived under certain pre-determined conditions.
- None of the policies reviewed state how the

proceeds of land sales should be assigned to municipal reserves.

**Recommendation:**

A disposal of surplus property policy should be developed by MOC. Based on the approaches of comparable municipalities, Council should provide direction to municipal staff as to what elements of a policy are most critical to them, and most relevant in the context of MOC lands.

The policy should include a mechanism for inventorying, evaluating, and categorizing land, with criteria for designating land as surplus.

The policy should provide guidance on acceptable mechanisms for the sale of the land, and guidance on how the proceeds of the sale should be treated based on the category of land (i.e. land acquired through sub-division by laws, when sold, could be placed in the Parkland reserve).

It is hoped that this policy, when employed in conjunction with an enhanced Sub-division bylaw, will result in a public land base that has greater environmental and economic benefits, higher quality, and greater utility as recreation lands.

## APPENDIX A: Partnership Agreement between MICA and MOC

### **THIS AGREEMENT IS MADE BETWEEN:**

**MAHONE ISLANDS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION**, a Society registered pursuant to the laws of Nova Scotia,

(hereinafter called "MICA")

**-and-**

**THE MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF CHESTER**, a municipal body corporate,

(hereinafter called "MODC")

### **WHEREAS:**

- A) MICA is a not-for-profit society registered under the laws of Nova Scotia, the stated mission of which is to protect and conserve the natural environment of the islands and shoreline of Mahone Bay, and the traditional, social and recreational opportunities valued by its various communities ("Mission Statement");
- B) The MODC supports MICA's conservation goals as expressed in the Mission Statement;
- C) MICA and MODC have agreed to a partnership to support a strategic approach of conservation with respect to the management of 2 parcels of land at Buccaneer Road, East Chester, Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia owned by MODC and further identified as PID 60417003 and 60417011 (hereinafter referred to as the "Land").

**AND WITNESSETH THAT** in consideration of the mutual promises herein and other good and valuable consideration, receipt of which is acknowledged, MICA and MODC hereby agree as follows:

1. This Partnership Agreement (the "Agreement") is solely with respect to the Land.
2. This Agreement shall be effective on the date it is signed by the parties.
3. In addition to this Agreement, the parties further acknowledge that they shall enter into a Stewardship Agreement to set out the responsibilities of the parties with respect to the ongoing management and stewarding of the land. The guiding principle of the Stewardship Agreement will allow MICA to supplement and compliment MODC's management of the Land.
4. The parties acknowledge that this Agreement is subject to MICA being satisfied with the title to the Land.
5. MODC agrees that it shall administer, use and maintain the Land in a manner consistent with the conservation goals shared by MODC and MICA, as defined by MICA's mission statement and further in a manner consistent with paragraph 8 herein and the Stewardship Agreement to be executed by the parties pursuant to paragraph 3 above.



6. MICA and MODC both agree to apply reasonable efforts to the partnership and further agree, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, and unless specifically agreed otherwise, that:
  - a) MICA shall be responsible for its legal fees in relation to any and all matters relating to its partnership with MODC and the Stewardship Agreement which the parties shall enter into with respect to the Land.
  - b) MODC shall be responsible for its legal fees in relation to any and all matters relating to its partnership with MICA and the Stewardship Agreement which the parties shall enter into with respect to the Land.
7. MODC agrees that it shall not at anytime sell, transfer, hypothecate, dispose of, mortgage, encumber, lease or grant any interest in or enter into any Agreement respecting all or any part of the Land without the prior written consent of MICA or their assigns, which obligation shall be confirmed in writing in a recordable form in the Land Registration system.
8. MODC agrees that the Land shall be preserved in its natural state in a manner consistent with the mission statement of MICA and the parties shared strategic approach for conservation.
9. MODC shall further register this Agreement and the Stewardship Agreement and any other documents as in the opinion of MODC's solicitor shall be required to place a burden on the Parcel Registrar for the lands which shall covenant that the Land shall remain in their natural state and further that the consent of MICA or their assign shall be required in writing prior to MODC taking any action with respect to the Land as set out in paragraph 7 herein.
10. MODC shall, upon receiving a request in writing from MICA, grant a Conservation Easement to MICA pursuant to the *Conservation Easements Act*, S.N.S 2001, c.28, as amended. It is understood between the parties that MICA presently is not designated as an eligible body pursuant to the *Conservation Easements Act*. The terms of the Conservation Easement shall include those provisions set out in paragraph 3, paragraph 9 and paragraph 10 of the Partnership Agreement and those provisions of the Stewardship Agreement to be entered into between the parties, as may be agreed upon by the parties at the time the Conservation Easement is granted to MICA.
11. MODC subject to receiving Municipal council authorization, agrees to enter into further Agreements with MICA to initiate and complete additional components of the parties' shared strategic approach for conservation.
12. This Agreement shall enure to the benefit of and be binding upon MICA and MODC, and their respective successors and assigns according to law.

**APPENDIX B: Overview of Open Space Provisions of Subdivision by-laws\***

	MGA	MOC	Region of Queens	Digby	MODL	East Hants	HRM**
<b>Percent of area of new lots created</b>	5% , OR 10% if reasons for this amount are provided in the MPS.	5%	5%	5% (20 or more new lots)	Cash is default (see below), but developer may propose 5% land	10%, OR 5% where sewer services not available	=>10%  Notwithstanding 10%, first three lots require 5% dedication
<b>Minimum lot size</b>		929m2 (10,000ft2)	929m2 (10,000ft2)	none	Minimum contiguous area of 1000m2, none less than 6m in any dimension	929m2 (10,000ft2)	
<b>Useable land defined as</b>	Municipalities may define based on: Minimum area Minimum dimensions Location Access and frontages Methods to establish quality	Slopes: 50% @ 0-8% 25% @ 8-12% 25% @ 12% Wetland: 75% or less of the land is not swamp, bog, flood plain, wetland, or subject to storm damage Proximity: Proximal to neighborhood, rec lands, or waterfront	Slopes: 50% @ 0-8% 25% @ 8-12% 25% @ 12% Wetland: 75% or less of the land is not swamp, bog, flood plain, wetland, or subject to storm damage Proximity: Proximal to neighborhood, rec lands, or waterfront	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average slope &lt;15% (no more than ¼ &gt;15%)</li> <li>Not swamp or flooded</li> <li>Not electrical transmission corridor</li> <li>Not clearing/grubbing area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Max slope of 5%</li> <li>Free of wet or swampy areas</li> <li>Not part of stormwater pond</li> <li>Not an electrical or gas corridor</li> </ul>	Can support recreation facilities (fields, trails, etc.,) or conservation goals  Max average slope 10% Not subject to flooding Is accessible to all resident	Based on minimum area Minimum dimensions Location Topography Hydrology Vegetation  And is prescribed for urban vs rural, and parkland types
<b>Road frontage required</b>		Yes (minimum 6m)	Yes (minimum 6m)	Yes	If land dedicated, Yes (minimum 6m)	Yes (minimum 30.5 m)	Yes
<b>Cannot be subject to easement or other encumbrances</b>		yes	Yes	Not stated		Yes	
<b>Cannot have environmental hazards</b>		yes	Yes	Not stated	Yes	Not stated	
<b>Must meet or exceed score based on defined criteria</b>		Yes	Yes	No		No	
<b>OR unique features</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steep slopes suitable for skiing;</li> <li>Marshland for waterfowl</li> <li>Nature reserve (1ha)</li> <li>Beaches for swimming</li> <li>Vehicle access to navigable water</li> <li>Buildings of historical value and useable for public purposes</li> <li>Land suitable for recreation trails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steep slopes suitable for skiing;</li> <li>Marshland for waterfowl</li> <li>Nature reserve (1ha)</li> <li>Beaches for swimming</li> <li>Vehicle access to navigable water</li> <li>Buildings of historical value and useable for public purposes</li> <li>Land suitable for recreation trails</li> </ul>	Not stated		Yes  Unique physical, cultural, historical characteristics	Yes

	MGA	MOC	Region of Queens	Digby	MODL	East Hants	HRM**
<b>Cash in lieu (market value of new lots)</b>	Yes, funds must be used for the development of Public Open Space by the Municipality OR any Village or Community Group. Interest may be applied to operations and maintenance	5%	5%	Not stated	2%	Yes  Cash, facilities, work in kind or any combination only when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient open space already exists nearby</li> <li>• The character and amount of green space would be negatively affected</li> <li>• The value could be used to greater positive effect to enhance recreation opportunities nearby</li> </ul>	10%
<b>Waterfront access provision if land abuts water</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes (when more than four lots created)	Not stated	If land dedicated on water, Yes (minimum 6m)	Yes, and must be protected through a ROW easement	Yes
<b>Combination of land and cash</b>	Yes  Local by-lay may stipulate under which conditions a municipality might accept land, cash, or a combination	Yes	Yes	Not stated	Not stated	Yes	Yes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land accepted where it is scarce</li> <li>• Cash accepted where sufficient land and recreation services exist</li> <li>• Site development accepted where land sufficient, but rec services deficient</li> </ul>
<b>Can accept external spaces of equal value</b>	Permitted	Yes	Yes	Not stated	Not stated	Yes	
<b>Other notes</b>	Bonds or other securities may be conveyed for future phases of the subdivision  Councils are permitted to sell the land (with public notification) and funds to be used for public open spaces  MGA provisions apply unless a Municipality adopts more stringent requirements, and these assure implementation of the MPS	Can be referred to Recreation and Parks Dept for Recreation Suitability Assessment	Can be referred to Recreation and Parks Dept		Reserve funds may be used for park repair, maintenance, upgrades	Bonds or other securities may be conveyed for future phases of the subdivision  Flexibility through use of language like “as determined by the Municipality, and “in the opinion of the Municipality”	Small subdivisions (<11,148m2) require cash only  Bylaw also provides “Parkland Classification & Service Delivery Criteria” and Parkland Quality of Land Criteria”

\* This is not an exhaustive list of all components of any subdivision bylaw, and is only applicable to MOC’s Part 11 – Public Open Space.

\*subject to Halifax Charter, not MGA



**APPENDIX C: Overview of municipal and provincial land divesture policies in Nova Scotia†**

	MGA (1998)	MOC	CBRM (2000)	Nova Scotia (1995)	Guysborough (2008)	HRM* (2013)	MODL (2015)
<b>Policy goal or trigger</b>	<p>Authority: Sections 31, 50, 51, 51A, 218,</p> <p>50 (1-3) Municipalities may own, absolutely or in trust, property for public or charitable purpose. Property is under the exclusive management and control of Council</p> <p>51 (5) (B) Municipality may sell at market value when the property is no longer required for the purposes of the municipality</p>	None enacted	<p>Contained within Property Management Policy</p> <p>Maintain inventory of lands that may be surplus and marketable</p> <p>Identify land for acquisition that should be priorities to support municipal priorities</p> <p>List surplus properties to be disposed by various methods as outlined below</p> <p>Staff review to ensure lots are indeed nonessential</p>	Authority: Section 16(1)(a) of the Crown Lands Act	<p>When requests received to purchase property, OR</p> <p>when property is no longer required for municipal purpose</p> <p>The policy is subject to provisions of MGA</p>	<p>Where business units of HRM determine properties that no longer serve an operational requirement, and as verified by Corporate Real Estate, the policy shall be followed in all cases (few exemptions)</p>	To provide guidance when proposing to divest surplus land and to ensure an open and transparent process
<b>Decision making</b>	31 (1) (2) (d) (ii) Subject to policies adopted by Council, CAO's may sell property that is deemed surplus or non-essential		<p>CAO is authorized to approve sale if: 1) property is deemed surplus, 2) the property is not sold for less than market value; 3) the value of the property is less than \$100,000</p>		Rest with Council for all properties	<p>Council to determine surplus based on staff reports and recommendations</p> <p>Six categories of surplus land exist, each with specific criteria for disposal. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Ordinary Properties</li> <li>b) Economic Development Properties</li> <li>c) Community interest Properties (also see Schedule 1)</li> <li>d) Remnant Properties</li> <li>e) Extraordinary Properties</li> <li>f) Intergovernmental Transfer</li> </ul> <p>Local Councilors and Community Councils to be informed of surplus land inventory to assess community use potential</p>	<p>Council, by resolution, shall declare a property surplus</p> <p>Reports to committees and council and/or negotiations shall be dealt with in camera.</p> <p>To avoid conflict of interest, Council, employees, and family members, or companies of those are precluded from purchasing surplus property</p>
<b>Disposal Method 1: Request to purchase/ unsolicited proposals</b>			<p>Offer to purchase via letter of request (first-come-first-served)</p> <p>If not already deemed surplus, it must be reviewed.</p> <p>Once deemed surplus, it can be sold at assessed value</p> <p>Cost of appraisal, survey, etc. born by purchaser.</p> <p>If offer is less than market value, a public tender process will be initiated</p>		<p>Submit Expression of Interest</p> <p>Refundable deposit</p> <p>Staff report</p> <p>Council may accept or reject</p>	Permitted under surplus land categories c, f above	<p>Consideration only given to written proposals</p> <p>Council may deem properties as surplus</p> <p>A report and recommendation from staff will be submitted to council (refer to Appendix A of policy)</p>
<b>Disposal Method 2: Direct Sale on Open market</b>			<p>For properties of high market potential. Sold through listing at predetermined price. Offers received in writing on first-come-first-serve basis</p>	<p>By direct sale, at market value to a municipality, agency, or non-profit or community group when a public benefit can be demonstrated.</p> <p>Less than market value or negotiated price to alleviate undue hardship and when it is demonstrated as being in the best interest of the province.</p>		Permitted under surplus land categories a, c above	

	MGA (1998)	MOC	CBRM (2000)	Nova Scotia (1995)	Guysborough (2008)	HRM* (2013)	MODL (2015)
<b>Disposal Method 3: Request for Proposal</b>			Typically for properties with industrial or commercial potential Proposal shall consider economic viability and benefits of development Staff recommendations will inform approval		Council may divest property through RFP process. Proposal must outline intended future use of property, offered amount, economic, municipal and community benefit Land may transfer aback if conditions not met. MGA states municipality must receive market value	Permitted under surplus land categories a, c above	
<b>Disposal Method 4: Sale by listing agent</b>			For properties that do not achieve satisfactory sale, or those with buildings shall be submitted to a real estate agent	permitted		Permitted under surplus land categories a, above	
<b>Disposal Method 5: sale by public tender</b>			For properties that may not have high market potential but are marketable nonetheless. Once sold, purchaser has 18months to construct. CBRM may purchase back at original price	Yes, if no other department requests it not be sold			Tendering is the general practice used, but exemptions may be granted for land exchanges or sale by real estate firm or broker
<b>Disposal Method 6: Sale by land exchange</b>			Surplus properties may be used in exchange to acquire land for capital project, watershed protection, street widening, etc.				permitted
<b>Disposal Method 7: Sale to abutting owners</b>	51A If land is insufficient for reasonable use, council may sell to an abutting owner at less than market value		Where there is no apparent value except to abutting owners, and where the lot does not meet minimum development standards. If more than one abutting owner is interested, the sale will be to the highest bidder			Permitted under surplus land categories d, above	permitted
<b>Disposal Method 7: Sale to Non-profit organizations</b>	51(1) May sell to non-profit at less than market value if council deems their activity is beneficial to the municipality. Requires 2/3 vote of council Subject to public hearing (2 public advertisements)		The MGA permits sale/lease to non-profits at less than market value if there is public benefit A public hearing will occur if greater than \$10,00 and less than market, with approval by 2/3 Council			Permitted under surplus land categories c, above	Permitted, at less than market value, if council considers the non-profit to be carrying out activity beneficial to the public at large
<b>Disposal Method 8: Community based Surplus property</b>			Applies to decommissioned schools, community halls, etc. that might come into possession of CBRM. If deemed surplus, the property is may be sold through the Community-Based Property Procedure			Permitted under surplus land categories c, above ###verify####	
<b>Eligibility of property of sale</b>					Municipal ownership must be verified prior to offer for sale Property valuation shall be requested	See six categories noted above	Appendix A of the policy includes a land profile evaluation tool. A series of 22 questions by which to evaluate the current of future potential of the property. Lots without potential may be deemed surplus by Council.

	MGA (1998)	MOC	CBRM (2000)	Nova Scotia (1995)	Guysborough (2008)	HRM* (2013)	MODL (2015)
<b>Terms of Sale/requirements of purchaser</b>	218(2) Municipality may sell land subject to building restrictions and easements to ensure the development is consistent with the municipal planning strategy		Certificate of title, survey, and subdivision plans, processing charges, schedule of building restrictions, appraisal, advertising costs  Submit building/development permit with 365 days, complete construction before expiration of permit		Municipal expenses for sale (e.g. title search, surveys, etc.) shall be paid by purchaser  Purchaser subject to all by-laws	Market value as supported by appraisal	
<b>Tendering procedures</b>					Tender bid accompanied by deposit at 10% of tender price  Municipality may reject any or all tenders received		
<b>Waiver of Policy</b>					This policy may be waived by Council with a majority vote under certain conditions	For extraordinary properties which have a legal distinction and include extraordinary processes for their disposal (i.e. Halifax Commons, streets, properties and parks held in trust, parkland acquired through subdivision)	In certain situations, the municipality may divest land and be exempt from this policy: sale of land for tax arrears; sale of land under Expropriation Act, divesting land for economic development purposes
<b>Limits of responsibility</b>					Sale without warranty Property sold "as is, where is"		

† Highlights of the policies are presented in this table. Refer to the complete text of each for details.

\* Subject to Halifax Charter, not the MGA





# GOLD RIVER

VISION: The Gold River property is the place to discover the natural history of our woodlands, and explore the cultural histories of the First Nations and early settlers to the area.

### Development activities and considerations might include:

- 1.1. Parking + trailhead
- 1.2. Footpath + wayfinding
- 1.3. Remove bus and establish picnic area
- 1.4. Remove hunting blind
- 1.5. Enhancements of existing river path (A) + decommission haul road (B)
- 1.6. Boundary signage
- 1.7. Interpretive panels

**Please Note:** The images included here are for illustration purposes only and do not necessarily represent the actual construction/development details

### Legend:

- New footpaths
- Existing roads



1.1



1.5



1.4



1.1



1.3



1.3



1.3



1.3



1.5



1.6



1.2



1.7

**GOLD RIVER/  
AMAPAPSKEGEK\*  
NATURAL  
AREA**

\* Please Note: The traditional name for the river would only be used if a relationship and partnership with Acadia First Nation is developed.





# HAUGHN PROPERTY

VISION: The Haughn property will be a stopping place for travelers on the rail trail, and a gathering place for community to celebrate the arts and enjoy the tranquility of the property.

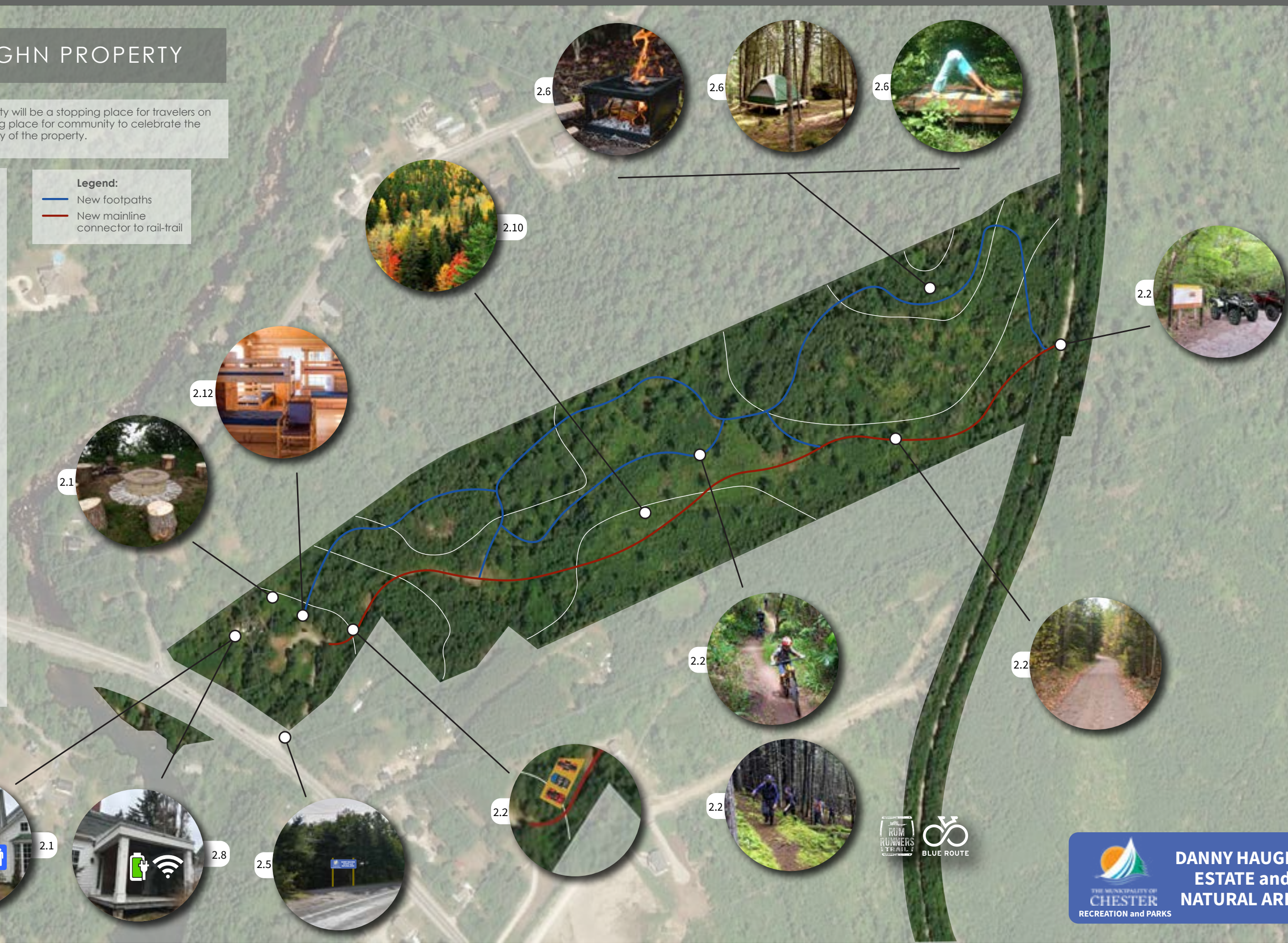
### Development activities and considerations might include:

- 2.1. Public washrooms + external water spigot + program firepit
- 2.2. Trailhead + ATV parking + mainline trail (red)+ footpath/ mountain bike trails (blue)
- 2.3. Property cleanup
- 2.4. Pond to remain in current state and use
- 2.5. Entrance signage
- 2.6. The village at Cooks Brook (yoga and camping)
- 2.7. Increased monitoring and maintenance
- 2.8. Deck renovations to include wifi and exterior charging station
- 2.9. Small riverfront lot remains undeveloped
- 2.10. Restore the Acadian forest
- 2.11. Conservation designation
- 2.12. Bunkhouse/seasonal office/program space

**Legend:**

- New footpaths
- New mainline connector to rail-trail

**Please Note:** The images included here are for illustration purposes only and do not necessarily represent the actual construction/development details



**DANNY HAUGHN ESTATE and NATURAL AREA**





# MOLAND POINT

VISION: Moland point will be a place where all peoples will be able to freely access, enjoy, and appreciate the shoreline of Mahone Bay.

## Development activities and considerations might include:

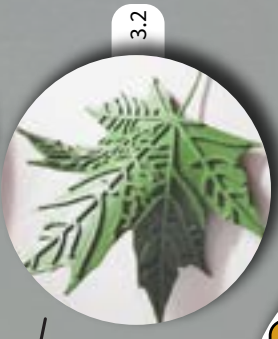
- 3.1 Parking + trailhead signage (including accessibility information)
- 3.2. Barrier free trail design + rope handrails + tactile interpretive signs
- 3.3. Enviro-toilet
- 3.4. Mobi-mats + Mobi-chairs
- 3.5. Boundary signs
- 3.6. Accessible picnic table + island interpretation

**Please Note:** The images included here are for illustration purposes only and do not necessarily represent the actual construction/development details

**3.1**

**MOLAND POINT**

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>CROSS SLOPE</b>	<b>TREAD WIDTH</b>	<b>Surface</b>
Typical 2%	Typical 3%	Typical 200mm	Gravel/Stone/Wooden, non-slip boardwalk







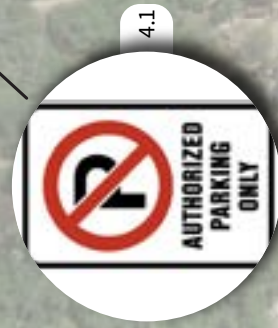
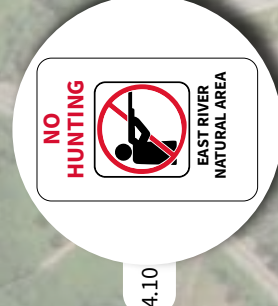
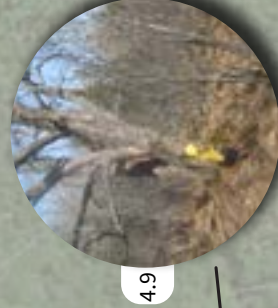
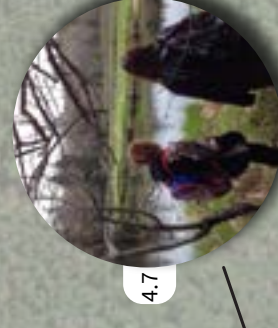
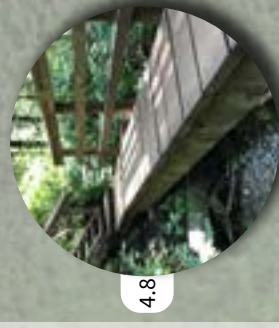
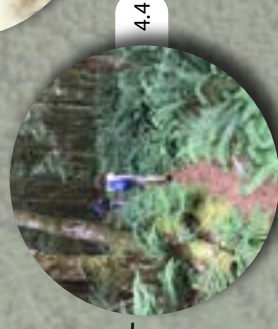
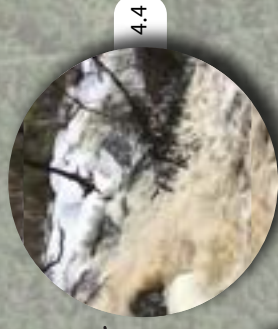
# EAST RIVER

VISION: The East River property has an abundance of natural history and cultural features that will tell the story of the our past; while immersing visitors in one of our most beautiful river environments.

## Development activities and considerations might include:

- 4.1. Authorized parking only
- 4.2. Trail crossing
- 4.3. Expanded parking + enviro-toilet
- 4.4. Access negotiation + footpath to waterfall
- 4.5. Trailhead + ATV and bicycle parking
- 4.6. Interpretive panels
- 4.7. Picnic area
- 4.8. Footbridge
- 4.9. Trail enhancements and wayfinding
- 4.10. No hunting
- 4.11. Partnerships

Please Note: The images included here are for illustration purposes only and do not necessarily represent the actual construction/development details



Legend:  
- - - Existing footpath  
- - - New footpath to falls



# EAST RIVER NATURAL AREA

RECREATION and PARKS





# CASTLE ROCK

VISION: Castle Rock is for the adventurer. Its granite peak, and longer and more challenging hikes, will continue to attract visitors from afar and will be an anchor trailside diversion for travelers on the Rum Runners trail.

### Development activities and considerations might include:

- 5.1. Trail enhancements, protection, and ATV parking
- 5.2. Additional signage
- 5.3. Campsite re-location
- 5.4. Canada flag policy
- 5.5. Fourth hiking route
- 5.6. Warning signage
- 5.7. Additional ATV wayfinding
- 5.8. Enviro-toilet at East River
- 5.9. Rest benches
- 5.10. Castle Watch
- 5.11. Opportunities to connect to South Panuke Wilderness Area
- 5.12. Graffiti monitoring
- 5.13. Membership and promotion of Leave No Trace ethics



Please Note: The images included here are for illustration purposes only and do not necessarily represent the actual construction/development details

### Legend:

- Easiest
- Moderate
- Most difficult
- - - Potential 4th route
- - - Possible future routing in the South Panuke Wilderness Area



5.13



5.10



5.7



5.9



5.1



5.11



5.4



5.12



5.6



5.8



5.2



5.3



5.5



5.5



CASTLE ROCK NATURAL AREA

THE MUNICIPALITY OF CHESTER RECREATION and PARKS