



Kalmo Beach Master Plan

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Site Analysis

Kalmo Beach is a small municipal park located on the north shore of Whitson Lake in Blezard Township, near the town of Val Caron. Comprised of approximately # hectares (acres), the Kalmo Beach property sits within the Vermillion River Watershed. Whitson Lake feeds several tributaries. The main outlet for lake water is mitigated by a dam at the of the head of the Whitson River, at the north end of Whitson Lake. The water in the lake can fluctuate up to one metre. Much of the shoreline of this park is within the Nickle District Conservation Area's regulation area (see figure 1).



Figure 1: Much of the shoreline for Kalmo Beach falls in the regulation zone for the Nickel District Conservation Authority (NDCA) and any alterations in the regulation zone needs to be reviewed by the NDCA.

Cultural Resources

The Ontario Cultural Heritage Values Map indicates that the shoreline of the park has a high potential for archeological resources, which should be taken into consideration for any projects that will alter the grades or require excavation such as trails or new buildings. Since the Robinson Huron Treaty of 1850 the current property has undergone ownership from private to public.

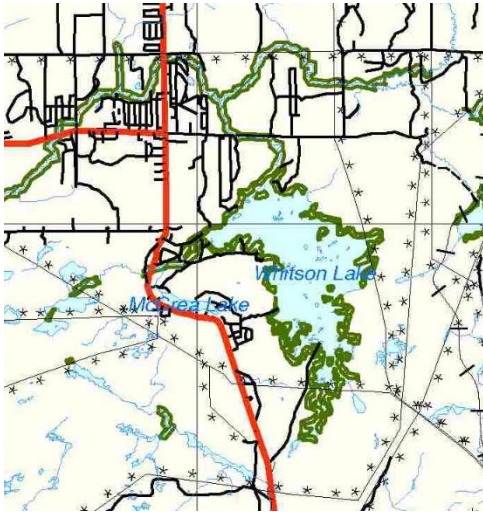


Figure 2: Magnified area of Whitson Lake from the Ontario Cultural Heritage Values Map, Sudbury Management Unit 2010-2020.

Green indicates an area with Archeological Potential. The entire shoreline of Kalmo Beach is highlighted with the exception of wetland areas to the east. These areas should be part of an archeological monitoring process to ensure that cultural artifacts are protected during construction processes.

Natural Environment

The topography of the area provides challenges due to the terrain which consists of steep rocky slopes. This condition makes most of the park inaccessible for those with mobility issues.

Vegetation in the area is regenerating forest with a mix of pioneer species as well as a few conifers that aid in retaining the soils on the slopes along the lake. This area had a long history of forestry and farming and the vegetation is in a state of regeneration.

Shoreline and riparian habitat are home to a variety of species and play an important role in biodiversity as well as water quality. The area has potential to be home to a number of Species at Risk.

Exiting Park Features

Access to the park is from Sandy Beach Road. No signage currently exists outside of the immediate park to indicate the location of the greenspace. The park currently features three beach areas and a boat launch (refer to map 1 not included in draft).

The beach furthest east is the main beach and is supervised by lifeguards for the summer months. There is an ambulance entrance in this area enclosed by a gate.

A small building exists nearby that provides gendered washroom and change facilities and includes a dedicated space for the lifeguards; however, the building is located at the top of a steep slope adjacent to the park driveway. A series of stairs provides a pathway for park users to get part way

down the slope to the beach. A small bike rack provides parking for cyclists, however there is not any potable water on site to replenish water bottles.

A small parking area located at the top of the slope on the north side of the driveway. It is currently unorganized and fits a minimum number of vehicles. Park visitors park along the driveway when other parking spaces are filled near the beaches.

The area where the building is located has some of the best views of Whitson Lake and features mature trees. Signage by this building indicates hours of operation. Regulatory signage indicates that dogs are permitted on leash. A park maintenance worker responsible for the lawn cutting, indicated that the steep slope is challenging to maintain the grass and it must be cut in the afternoon after the dew has dried.

Artwork by local artists enhances this area. There are existing concrete pads near the shoreline from previous structures that have been taken down due to vandalism.

A second beach is located west of the main beach. It is currently a favourite place for dog owners and is commonly referred to as the 'dog beach' although it is not officially recognized as such. This area is serviced by a second parking lot at the top of the steep slope. Many people use the parking at the main beach area to access the second beach because the slope is too steep from the designated parking area.

The third area furthest west where the boat launch is located, is used for motorized boats and paddle crafts. It is also used by swimmers and dog owners. Currently boaters park along the side of this gravel parking area after launching their boats. This gravel area is subject to erosion. A previous dock was removed, however timbers are still visible in the water with hardware jutting out. In the August 2019 survey, residents commented on the shallow nature of the boat launch.

Challenges

- Steep slopes impede or prevents access for many people including but not limited to young children in strollers, the elderly and those with mobility issues.
- The steep slope also prevents the addition of site furniture and poses a hazard to maintenance staff charged with grass cutting.
- The current changeroom and washroom buildings do not meet accessibility standards and the location is considered inconvenient for the lifeguards who ideally would be closer to the water to aid in the event of an emergency.
- The existing driveway in the park is not marked with a speed limit or signage to indicate the visitor is approaching the park.

- A sharp turn in the driveway of the park is directly adjacent to both the changeroom building and parking area where visitors cross the driveway to access the main beach, creating a vehicular and pedestrian conflict.

Opportunities

- There aren't currently any trails in the park, Vale owns the property to the north and west it is suggested to pursue partnership opportunities to access these lands and create a trail system to connect to the town of Val Caron off road and to green spaces north of the site, creating an active transportation network.
- Use the slope to create elevated decks for picnic areas and site furniture
- Naturalize the shoreline while maintaining views to the lake
- Make the entire park more accessible by creating a boardwalk and upper trail system but maintain ecological integrity by limiting impact from construction processes and development

Kalmo Park Master Plan Concept

The goal for the Master Plan for Kalmo Park is to responsibly guide the development process to create a park that responds to the natural environment as well as creating memorable opportunities for visitors to experience the beauty of the Whitson Lake environs.

The edge of a lake draws visitors, but this area is also a vitally important resource for lake health. The shoreline and accompanying riparian zone are home to many plants, animals, amphibian species. A healthy riparian zone acts as a filter for the water that runs off land into a lake and the adjacent shoreline acts as a nursery for 90% of the inhabitants of a lake. The standard 30 metre buffer to prevent development around a water body protects water quality but may not be enough to preserve important habitat for a species. *It is important that as Kalmo Beach enters a new phase of redevelopment, it ensures that the shoreline becomes a place for people but does not disconnect this vital habitat.*

“Connect the park without disconnecting the landscape from the water”

The concept for the park proposes new features and maximizes use of existing features. It proposes naturalizing the shoreline to add to the beauty of the park but adds infrastructure so that it will be easier for visitors to access the park and enjoy what it can offer.

Circulation, Parking and Wayfinding

To improve circulation and parking, a new route to the beach furthest west is proposed. It will reduce vehicle and pedestrian conflict by eliminating most of the traffic that needs to navigate the existing sharp corner. The existing driveway will become a one-way circulation system used for dropping off visitors to the park. The new alternate route to the west beach will be created that will be a two-way system. By using small pockets of parking a park-like experience can be maintained.

Increasing signage to indicate the park area along with posting speed limits will increase safety and also give the area a higher profile. A monument sign on the park border will alert visitors that they are entering a park area. Changes in paving and additional signage will highlight the pedestrian nature of the park. An existing opportunity for a bike lane will be marked and formalized.

Existing parking lots could be expanded to support more vehicles and organized to maximize capacity. New parking areas will be located within walking distance to amenities.

Existing parking adjacent to the current building is very awkward. It is proposed that this area could be used for another purpose- a play structure or pavilion to support larger group functions for example. It will become a central area in the park experience.

Tiered Decking

The views from the current building (that houses the washrooms and change rooms), are some of the best in the park and this area could be turned into a platform that could support activities such as picnicking and other passive activities. Mature trees should be protected because they provide valuable shade and make the area very pleasant on hot summer days. Images 3-6 show creative ways to use decking as a bridge between challenging areas. Image 5 represents novel ways to navigate a steep slope in various ways including ramps and benches. While this application is urban, the idea can be applied in a more traditional way to Kalmo and can incorporate picnic areas as well as seating. The bedrock of Kalmo Beach can be highlighted in areas where appropriate and become an attractive part of the landscape design (refer to image 6).

Existing concrete platforms near the beach could be resurfaced to provide picnic opportunities near the water.

A New Vision for the West Beach Boat Launch

The concept for Kalmo Beach has a major change in that the beach furthest west becomes the main area of arrival. The slopes in this area are more manageable for a canteen building that can meet accessibility requirements and makes this area a natural choice for the start of a boardwalk that can follow the shoreline and connect all of the beaches on one level. The new building will offer space

for accessible washrooms and changerooms, a canteen and for rentals of canoes, kayaks and paddleboats.

By using a boardwalk design that could include floating boardwalks or boardwalk supported on helical pier, a new and interesting experience could be provided to visitors. Smaller in scale than the boardwalk at Bell Park (see image 7) but similar in feel, this could be a big draw for visitors. The boardwalk would have to be designed to meet a number of factors including changing water levels and also meet legislative parameters for navigable waters.

It was indicated in the survey that the current boat launch is not deep enough. It is proposed that this boat launch remain to be used for small craft and paddle craft. Another boat launch on Whitson Lake provides better opportunities and access for larger boats.

Naturalization

Opportunities exist to naturalize some of the park where grass cutting is difficult. In turn the beauty of the area would be enhanced with native plant material and habitat would be increased. Views to the water would be maintained. Furniture built into the tiered decking will provide opportunities for relaxing (refer to image 3).

Off-grid Washrooms and Changerooms

With a new building at the west end of the property, that provides refreshments, washrooms and rental opportunities, changes can be made to provide restrooms and changerooms for the east beach. Because it is difficult to reach this area for infrastructure and the slope is considerable, composting toilets are proposed as well as off-grid change facilities that would be located further down the hill towards the beach. By using off-grid facilities the location of services for beach goers can be made more accessible while still providing the convenience required.

Proposed trails to the north will connect the park to the community, creating a new way to experience the landscape.

Additional trails are proposed to connect the area. A trail to connect all of the beaches is proposed on the upper area of the park, adjacent to driveways but separating pedestrians from vehicles. Any new development is to be low impact environmentally and to not significantly increase edge habitat.

An important opportunity to connect Kalmo Beach to Val Caron via a trail system is possible through Vale lands to the north of the city property. A carefully designed trail system could increase visitation by offering a multi-seasonal experience for hiking. Safety and surveillance of the park would increase with user frequency, year-round. The City should consider purchasing additional lands or pursue agreements with adjacent landowners to increase the opportunities for access to green space.

Phases

Year 1

Initial stages should include the investigation of any potential Species at Risk habitat

A topographical survey which includes tree lines, contour lines and depth to bedrock is also important for future design work

Partnerships or purchasing/ acquiring land to the north of the exiting park to expand protected areas and connect with green spaces further north

Year 2

Preliminary design work and trail layout concept

Archeological assessment for proposed elements

Year 3

Public consultation on Preliminary work

Final Design

Years 4-10

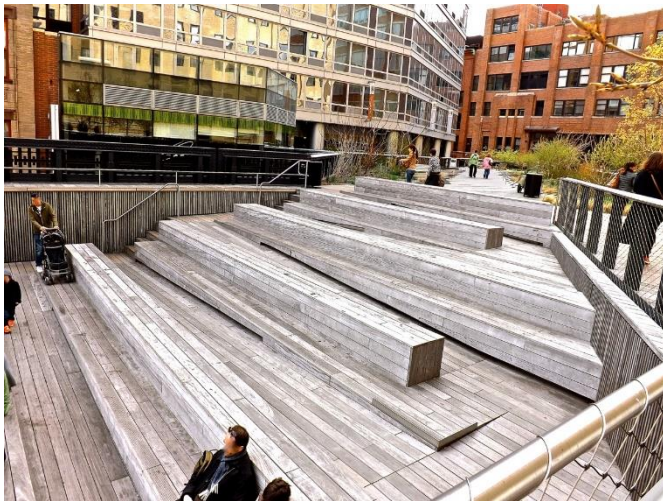
Implementation



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6



7

Figure 3: Furniture built into decking provides opportunities to enjoy the views.

Figure 4: Wooden seating can mimic the rocky landscape and add an element of surprise.

Figure 5: Multi-layer decking can help create level places for picnic areas and seating helping visitors of all abilities to move up and down the steep slopes while maintaining the natural rock.

Figure 6: Opportunities exist to highlight elements of the natural landscape in decking.

Figure 7: Bell Park Boardwalk at Science North

List of Works Consulted

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