

2 Beryl Gaffney Park

Located in the southern edge of the City of Nepean, along the shores of the Rideau River, Beryl Gaffney Park, formerly Rideau Bend Park, consists of 39 hectares (96 acres) of pasture and woodlands, stretching from the north bank of the Jock River to Barnsdale Road, between Prince of Wales Drive and the Rideau River.

The Park was re-named Beryl Gaffney Park in 1998 in honour of Nepean resident Beryl Gaffney who not only worked in the Parks and Recreation Department for more than a decade but served on Nepean Council for 9 years, on Regional Council for 6 and as a federal Member of Parliament for two terms. Beryl Gaffney took an avid interest and strongly supported community-based, family oriented initiatives, especially as they pertained to the healthy city concept, recreation services and historical amenities.

Land in this southern part of the City was acquired over several decades. The goal of establishing a southern destination point on the Rideau was recognized as early as 1974 with the City's acquisition of the Richardson property at the northwest corner of the Hwy 16 bridge.

References indicate that the Jock River was used as a transportation corridor for timber from Richmond and Merrickville to the Bytown lumber mills and that one of the early settlements was "Jockvale", at the mouth of the Jock River. Settled in the 1840's the area boasted a post office, general store, blacksmith shop and cheese factor. Part of the existing Heart's Desire Park was originally willed to Nepean Township by Reverend Father Dawson, who also had a log church built in the area.

2.1 Background Reports pertaining to Beryl Gaffney Park

In addition to the 1982 *Planning Guide*, Nepean initiated several relevant and important studies that have recommendations which pertain directly to Beryl Gaffney Park. The studies and key recommendations are highlighted in the following report summaries.

Jock River Landing Report - November, 1988, Torrance and Wright Landscape Architects

- ▶ Jock River Park - at the junction of the Jock and Rideau Rivers; on the north side (6 acres/ 2.4 hectares) proposed canoe launch, riverfront boardwalk and a landmark structure as Nepean's gateway to the River; pedestrian connection to Heart's Desire Forest under Highway Bridge
- ▶ emphasis on preservation of significant natural, cultural, and historic resources;
- ▶ specifically with respect to Heart's Desire Forest (32 acre/ 12.96hectare) - preserve in natural condition with woodland trails and picnic activity, minimal parking, linking along Jock River to Jock River Park and the Rideau River
- ▶ on the south side of the Jock, suggestion of provision for a unique facility like Nepean's Wild Bird Care Centre

Project Planning Canada Limited - January, 1990 - Opportunities and Constraints

- ▶ mapping of Rideau Bend Park (now Beryl Gaffney Park) boundary (estimated, not legal survey), good and poor views, natural grade access points, wetland areas, existing building, fencing and general terrain
- ▶ see the following, Rideau Bend Park, Existing Slope Conditions
- ▶ identification of opportunities and constraints such as waterfowl feeding area, historic bridge location (1863-1970)

Public Use of Naturalized Parkland - April, 1990- Corush, Laroque Sunderland

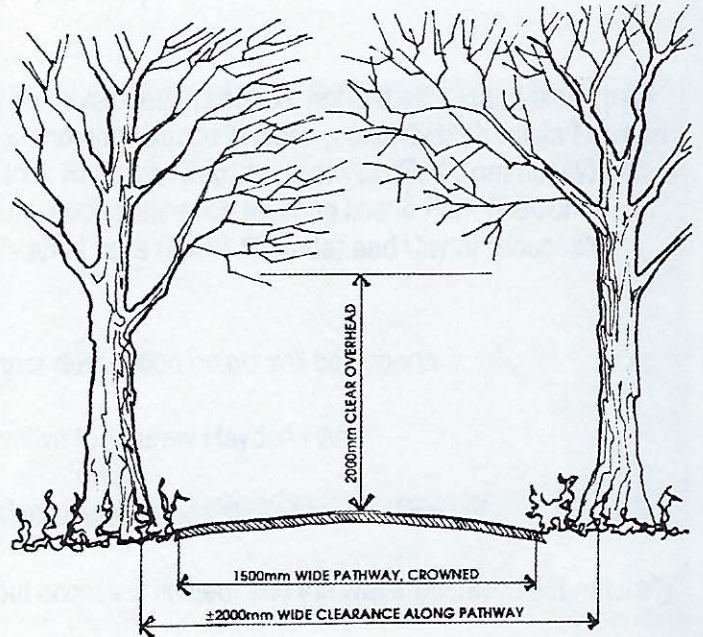
- ▶ an assessment of potential safety problems associated with recreation on naturalized parklands
- ▶ recommendations on the necessary precautions to be taken which address safety issues, legal concerns, insurance needs, design standards and maintenance procedures

Planning and Land Use Appraisal Report - September, 1991, Totten, Sims, Hubicki

- ▶ description of Rideau Bend Park property in context of review of Planning documents
- ▶ description of soil types, vegetation
- ▶ recommendation to revive old Dawson Bridge, to connect the mainland and Nicolls Island; an Environmental Assessment may be required

Sachs Forest, Guidelines for Development of Parkland and Housing Adjacent to Parkland.
February, 1995. Wheeler/ Douglas Ltd., Landscape Architects

- ▶ Sachs Forest, stretching 1.5 km and averaging 150 metres in width, located between Prince of Wales Drive and Woodroffe Avenue, is an interesting remnant wood, characteristic of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence forest region, including the presence of eastern white pine, eastern hemlock, oak, basswood and an abundance of bird life.
- ▶ the understory includes trillium, blood root and jack in the pulpit with sufficient seed sources to re-generate
- ▶ the report made recommendations for homeowners in area to protect the forest
- ▶ recommended recreational pathway system including the routing, dimensions, materials, gradients, bridge design and community involvement that would protect Sachs Forest



Long Island Rideau Bend Parklands Concept Plan - June, 1996, Ecologistics

- ▶ focused on four value systems or themes for the park areas of Long Island Park, Long Island Lock Station, Rideau Bend Park, Jock River Landing, Walter Upton Collins Park, and Jeffrey Armstrong Park
- ▶ the concept plan values included historic/ cultural values, natural/ ecological values, scenic values, recreational values
- ▶ recommended that the Rideau Bend Park plateau become the Core centre with development including trailhead site to focus trail linkages within the region;
- ▶ include a kiosk with a strong thematic focus on naturalization and restoration processes
- ▶ any building should capture the historic and natural context of the site
- ▶ develop interagency partnership to develop these lands
- ▶ coordinate the "presentation story" for the parklands, signage, and trail system
- ▶ consider scenic drive connections

Several key findings or recommendations from these relevant reports are pertinent to the strategy for the development of Beryl Gaffney Park:

- Beryl Gaffney Park must be developed in context, not just as a stand-alone park but in relation to the parks and open space in close proximity both within Nepean (Heart's Desire Forest, Jock River Landing, the Jockvale Golf Community) and also the lands under other jurisdictions such as Long Island Park (Region of Ottawa-Carleton), Long Island Locks (Parks Canada) and City of Gloucester parks;
- Trail Connections with other destination points will be important;
- A complement and alternative to Andrew Haydon Park;
- Naturalization and Historic/Cultural values should be emphasized;
- Waterfront is important but access is limited, and the water course is not naturally amenable to swimming;
- Beryl Gaffney Park is the southern gateway to Nepean, but also, in many ways, to the Nation's Capital

2.2. Beryl Gaffney Park in Context

Beryl Gaffney Park is thirty-nine (39) hectares (96 acres) of land, stretching from the Jock River to Barnsdale Road, between Prince of Wales Drive and the Rideau River, excepting two small housing areas off Lockview and Maplehill Way and several private dwellings. See Figure D, Beryl Gaffney Park for the park boundaries.

Nepean's Official Plan provides comprehensive policies for all new development in the municipality and establishes long range goals and objectives. The principle growth area in the City will be in the south. When fully developed, this south urban area of the City of Nepean will be 100,000+ people. Nepean's 1998 population was about 120,000 people and projected annual growth is estimated at roughly 3,000 people per year, primarily in the South Urban Area.

Secondary Plans have been developed for many of the sections of the South Urban community. One of the areas, the Jockvale Golf Community, located just north of Beryl Gaffney Park, is of particular relevance and is shown in Figure E. As the Secondary Plan notes, "The recreationally-based community takes advantage of the many natural environmental amenities of the site and preserves public waterfront open space." The 700 acre land holding will initially include a 9-hole golf course and eventually an 18-hole course with low density and medium density housing. The first housing phase will be comprised of 700 units, with 950 units to follow and an anticipated subdivision population of 2,600.

The South Merivale Business Park will house the new JDS FITEL corporate campus - 260,000 square feet on 54 acres with a projected 7,000+ employees by 2000. Some are already working there now.

In addition, while not geographically in proximity to this site, the City of Nepean will have a future Waterpark, located 1 km west of Carling and Moodie, in the north west corner of the City. Watts Creek Waterpark is scheduled to open May 18, 2000 and will include restaurants, picnic areas, a sand beach, several pools, body slides, speed slides, paddle tennis, volleyball, basketball courts and diving towers. The private sector project will provide for 1,000 parking spots, be serviced by bus and "be an integral part of the tourism and family entertainment industry in the City of Nepean for many years to come."⁴

Finally, just north of Beryl Gaffney Park, the private sector is exploring other passive recreation and environmental programs and projects that would be quite complementary to the City-owned property, building on the aesthetics of the water and the interest in ecological initiatives.

Beryl Gaffney Park is therefore the centre or hub of a prominent, large and varied Open Space aggregation in the southern part of the Ottawa-Carleton area. This network of Open Spaces in the vicinity of the Rideau River is perhaps the most significant feature of the area and is visually demonstrated and more readily captured in the following map..

⁴ Nepean Chamber of Commerce Magazine. *The Link*. Volume 1. Number 4. Nepean

Long Island Park [14 hectares or 34.6 acres]

- ▶ owned by the Region of Ottawa-Carleton, maintained by the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority and located in the Township of Rideau
- ▶ accessible by land via Barnsdale Bridge and Road and by water through the Main Channel of the Rideau River and also the back channel.
- ▶ currently has a basic washroom facility, parking, picnic tables, barbecue stands, garbage containers, some reforestation areas and a RVCA bank stabilization demonstration project
- ▶ recommended future development - passive recreation such as trail activities, picnicking, swimming, fishing; principle themes including natural, ecological interpretive, and educational.

Long Island Locks [18.4 hectares or 45.5 acres]

- ▶ a National Historic site, owned by the federal government and managed by the Rideau Canal Office of Parks Canada
- ▶ includes part of Nicholls Island
- ▶ accessible by land from River Road and Nicholls Road and by water from the Main and Back Channel of the Rideau River
- ▶ includes public washrooms, parking, the Lock Master's House, Northern Area Office and Maintenance Depot for the Rideau Canal
- ▶ the canal infrastructure includes 3 flight locks and dam 31 feet high and 700 feet long
- ▶ the canal recorded a total of 84,505 vessel passages in 1998
- ▶ Long Island Locks is also used by tourists and locals for picnicking, cycling stop, fishing and lock visitors

Walter Upton Collins Park [3 hectares or 7.4 acres]

- ▶ owned and maintained by the City of Gloucester
- ▶ includes parking, washrooms, picnic tables, a children's play structure, small dock and softball diamond
- ▶ accessible by land from River Rd. and has access to the main channel of the Rideau River
- ▶ no future plans for development

Jeffrey Armstrong Park [0.275 hectares or .68 acres]

- ▶ owned by the City of Gloucester and used principally by the Rideau-Osgoode Soccer Club
- ▶ accessible by Nicholls Road, and bordered on the east by private homes, to the north and west by a farm and to the south by Parks Canada lands
- ▶ the adjacent farm is significant and a desirable acquisition

The South Urban Community, located in the City of Gloucester, on the east side of the Rideau River, was projected to have a population of 4,000 by 2001 and 22,749 residents by 2011 according to the 1993 Gloucester Growth Area Recreation Master Plan. Approximately 1,265 hectares of land will eventually be developed as a comprehensive community known as River Ridge. Several hundred houses are already in this River Road community.

This report recommended five cornerstone points for Gloucester's future park and open space system and these factors should be understood with respect to the development of Beryl Gaffney Park:

- ▶ protection and enhancement of all significant natural areas; improved quality of park sites;
- ▶ include much more riverfront;
- ▶ parkland that is well linked - more linear connectors, recreational trails and wildlife corridors;
- ▶ contains three levels of adequately distributed parks (city-wide, district and local) - increased diversity in the type of parks including provision for family-oriented activities, spontaneous, unstructured and unprogrammed spaces;
- ▶ contains sufficient tableland within all three levels to support all required outdoor and indoor leisure facilities and activities.

More specifically, this Report called for the following in the South Urban Community:

- ▶ 1 boat launch facility in a park on the Rideau River
- ▶ 1 beach on the Rideau River (if feasible)
- ▶ in the order of 70 km of recreational trails throughout the community

In addition, there were a series of local district and community amenities including playgrounds, wading pools, outdoor rinks, soccer and ball fields, tennis courts and indoor facilities recommended for the River Ridge community.⁵ An update of this report, done in January, 1998, recommended that Gloucester acquire any possible waterfront in the approved urban area.

⁵ Delcan/ ReThink. 1993. Gloucester Growth Area Recreation Master Plans. Gloucester

2.3. Beryl Gaffney Park - A Detailed Description

A formal bid has been submitted to the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board to have the Rideau River designated as a heritage river, the 33rd Canadian river to be given that honour. This designation reflects the long history of the waterway in developing the area, the hand-operated locks, farming establishments and more. While the Canadian designation has no regulatory implications, the status can affect tourism interests. A recent study by Heritage Canada indicated that the annual economic benefits for those rivers in the Heritage River Program totaled more than \$32 million in 1997. To date almost every community in the Ottawa-Carleton Region has supported the Heritage River Designation and most agencies anticipate that the Rideau will be given Canadian Heritage River status soon.

Zoning

The zoning for the park and area is outlined in Nepean's Southern Area Zoning By-Law, Office Consolidation of By-law 73-76, as amended September 1, 1990.

Residential Special Density-RIA

Permitted uses include one dwelling detached, one-family per lot; a home occupation; a public park; a conservation use and uses accessing to the foregoing. [Section 6.1.]

Conservation- CON

Public open space, conservation and recreation are the foremost uses intended by the conservation zone. The alteration of the natural character, including the natural physical or topographical condition of the land shall not be allowed. [Section 8.2]

Rural Agricultural

Permitted uses include cultivation and agricultural operation. Permitted buildings include detached one-family rural, residence and auxiliary buildings. [Section 10.1]

Restrictive-RE

Reflects the environmental hazards found due to steep slopes, flooding etc. Restricted use protects the natural, physical or topographical condition of the lands. Any action which alters the character of the restrictive land will not be allowed unless approved by the City of Nepean, the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority and any other government agency as required. [Section 9.1]⁶

6

City of Nepean, Southern Area Zoning By-Law. Office Consolidation of By-law 73-76. As amended to September 1, 1990.

Rideau River 1998 Water Quality Results

| Variable | Meaning | Results |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dissolved Oxygen | determines whether fish and aquatic life have enough oxygen to survive. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ temporary degradation in summer months ▶ reduction in oxygen levels in deeper water and in the summer months due to slow river flows and increased decomposition |
| E.coli Bacteria | indicator for safe swimming and recreational water use. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ majority of samples indicate safe and good quality for recreational use ▶ usually below the provincial water quality guideline of 100 counts/100ml ▶ increased E.coli in July, suspected stormwater runoff events |
| Total Phosphorus | the greater the phosphorus levels, the more aquatic plant growth and productivity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Rideau very susceptible to phosphorus inputs ▶ sources of phosphorus - shoreline erosion, stormwater discharges, agricultural runoff, sediment from construction sites and over-use of lawn fertilizers. |

See details in Appendix D, Rideau River Water Quality in the Manotick Area, Region of Ottawa-Carleton.

Fish and Wildlife

The Museum of Nature is currently working on a three year, multidisciplinary, community-based study of the environmental health of the Rideau River. This Biodiversity Project is intended to assess the biodiversity of the Rideau River from Smith Falls to Ottawa. The areas of research include phytoplankton and water chemistry, amphibians, aquatic plants, molluscs, birds, reptiles, fishes, invertebrates and mammals.

From July to September, 1998, 14 urban, agricultural and forested sites were sampled for fish. 6587 fish were caught representing 51 different species in the River. Five species had never been documented in the Rideau River before and four of the five new species were caught in the urban area. The freshwater drum was caught near the Bank Street bridge. The drum is the only freshwater species of a primarily saltwater family of fish. They bottomfeed on clams, snails and zebra mussels.

Amendment No. 9, the Jockvale Golf Community Plan, notes:

"A viable sport fishery for muskellunge, northern pike, walleye, black crappie and smallmouth bass presently exists within both the adjacent Jock and Rideau Rivers. Two areas of important fish habitat have been identified within the Jock River in the vicinity of the proposed secondary plan."⁷

Local anecdotes related during the Slide Presentations and Open House indicated the presence of skunk, groundhogs, numerous birds, deer and even a moose!

A detailed and extensive inventory of flora and fauna in Beryl Gaffney Park has not been undertaken and should be done initially to determine the base conditions of the site. Having this base inventory and data will allow degradation of the site to be measured over time. While this may not be an immediate concern, it will certainly be an issue in time and with more extensive use.

Prince of Wales Drive

Known to many as Highway 16, Prince of Wales Drive is currently identified as "The Scenic Route" to the Capital. A recreational pathway is planned and will extend along this route. In addition, Region officials anticipate that the intersection of Jockvale and Prince of Wales will need to be realigned. This "Scenic Route" may bring slower traffic and have design implications that will enhance Beryl Gaffney Park. The re-alignment may also affect the park although the full impact is not known at this time.

⁷City of Nepean. December, 1997. *Amendment No. 9*. Nepean p.8.