



Fort Willow Conservation Area Master Plan

Date-2020-2025



**Nottawasaga Valley
Conservation Authority**

September, 2020

For more information, or for a copy of this plan in an alternative format,
contact NVCA at 705-424-1479 or admin@nvca.on.ca.

Partner Missions/ Objectives

NVCA's Mission – 2020-2025 Strategic Plan

Working together to deliver innovative, integrated watershed management that is responsive to the environmental, economic and social sustainability of the Nottawasaga Valley watershed.

Fort Willow Conservation Area's Objective

Preserve, protect, education and enhance the Fort Willow Conservation Area while balancing the ecological and heritage features.

Friends of Historic Fort Willow's Mission

To help enhance natural and cultural history values and education of the Fort Willow Conservation Area.

Forward

The Fort Willow Conservation Area is a significant historical site within the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority watershed. This site was originally used by local Indigenous peoples, followed by fur traders, explorers, military and eventually European settlers.

This plan will highlight the significant contributions from local partners and will lay out recommendations on the development of the site for the next 5 years as well as a template for annual work plans to be developed in partnership between the Friends of Historic Fort Willow and NVCA.

This plan will complement and update upon the management recommendations of the Fort Willow Management Plan 2001-2008 and will provide a detailed first-year annual work plan.

Acknowledgements

Members of the Friends of Historic Fort Willow contributed to the development of this plan, including Joe Cianni, Trevor Carter (Archeologist), Dennis Johnson, Ruthan Johnson, Jane Martin, Neil Martin, Jim Scott and Jan Waechter (Barrie Garden Club).

NVCA staff that contributed to the plan include Naomi Saunders, Manager, Outdoor Education, Byron Wesson, Director, Conservation Services and written by Kyra Howes, Manager, Lands and Operations.

Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority

The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) is a public agency dedicated to creating a healthy environment and communities through innovative watershed management.

NVCA is committed to protecting watershed communities from natural hazards like flooding and erosion and works to preserve and enhance watershed land and water resources. NVCA connects the communities with the watershed through nature-based educational and recreational opportunities.

As one of the 36 conservation authorities legislated by Ontario's *Conservation Authorities Act*, NVCA is governed by a board of directors appointed by their 18 member municipalities. Critical to their success is their strong partnerships with

member municipalities, government agencies, community partners and local landowners.

Friends of Historic Fort Willow

The Friends of Fort Willow is a volunteer group formed in 2010, operating under the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA). The goal of the group is to assist with the preservation of the site and its reconstructed features and the promotion of historical, educational and recreational activities which make respectful use of the site.

Background Information and Context

Purpose of the Plan

This plan has been prepared to assess the current uses, potential infrastructure needs and educational and recreational opportunities of the Fort Willow Conservation Area. This document provides an updated history of the property, highlights significant natural heritage features of the site as well as current uses.

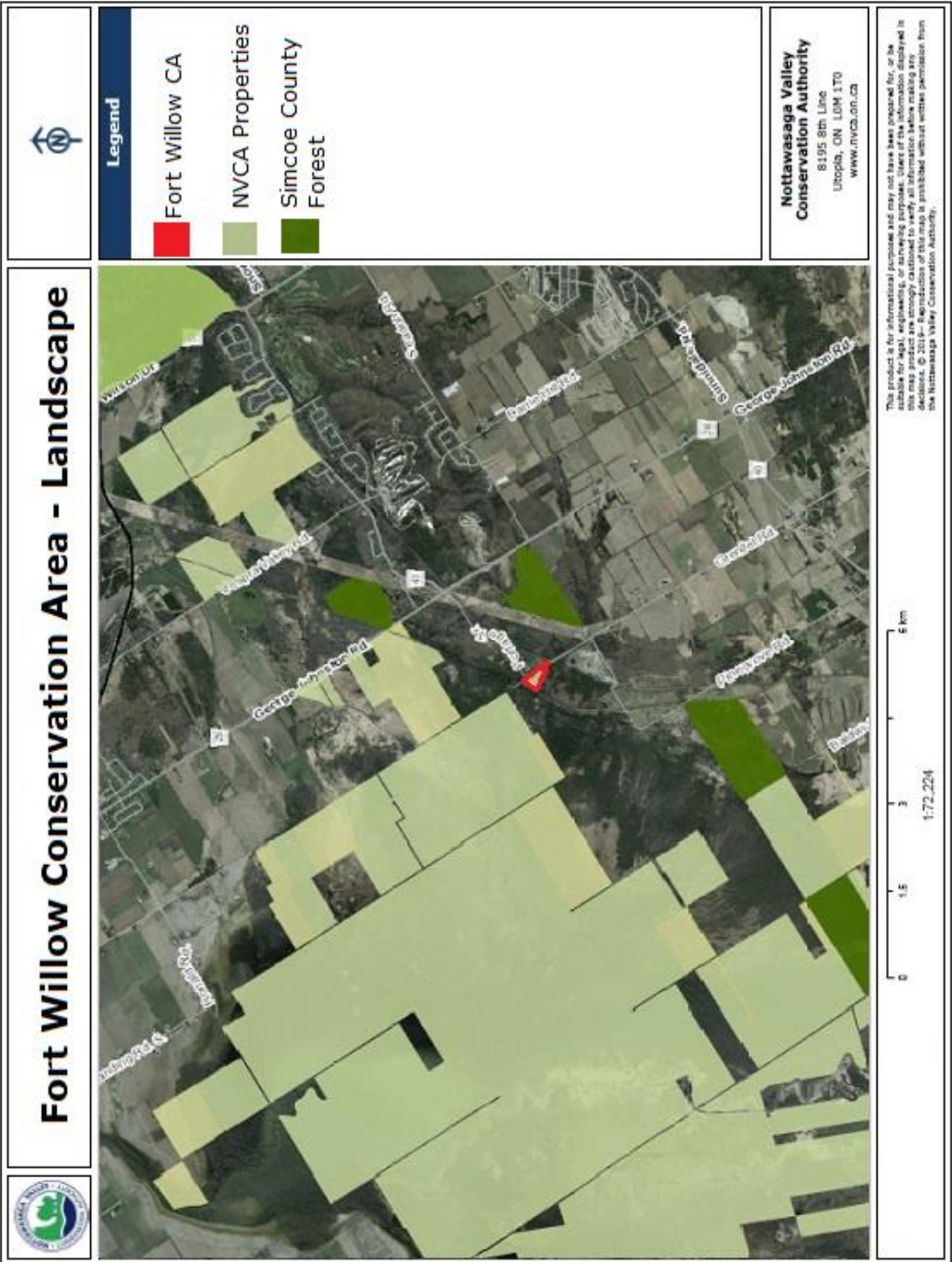
Location and Legal Description of Property

The 3.6 ha (9 acre) Fort Willow Conservation Area is located in the Township of Springwater, Simcoe County (see Image 1). The irregular shaped property is surrounded by private property on all sides. Table 1 provides a summary of key property location and legal information.

Table 1: Location and Legal Information

Location/Information	Details
Address	2714 Grenfel Road, Springwater
Area (hectares/acre)	3.6 ha (9 ac)
Lot and Concession	Irregular shape- Part Lot 14, Concession 11
Municipality/Town/City	Township of Springwater
Nearest Major Centre	~13 km west of Barrie
Access Directions	From Barrie, Dunlop Street/County Road 90 west towards Angus, north on Grenfel Road (portions gravel) for 4 km
Watershed	Nottawasaga Watershed 2ED
Ecodistrict	Barrie 6E-6
Road Frontages	~400 m on Grenfel Road
Securement Type/Year	Fee simple purchase 1973
Ownership/Stewardship	NVCA/Friends of Historic Fort Willow
Key Local Partners	Friends of Historic Fort Willow, Barrie Garden Club, Rotary Club of Barrie
Roll Number	434101000621300

Image 1. Fort Willow Conservation Area – Landscape Context



Property History and Background

The content for this section was provided by Trevor Carter, Archeologist, and was condensed for this document. Additional historical content can be found in the Fort Willow Management Plan 2003-2008 and archeology reports provided to NVCA by Trevor Carter following all archeological surveys conducted at the property.

The Fort Willow Conservation Area has a rich history of local and regional significance which is linked to the Nine Mile Portage. The Nine Mile Portage connects Lake Simcoe to Willow Creek, into the Nottawasaga River and ultimately to Georgian Bay. The portage was used by the local Indigenous peoples prior to European contact. By the early 1600s, Samuel de Champlain became the first European to contact the local Huron or Wendat Indigenous peoples.

The first mention by the British of the Nine Mile Portage is in a map dated 1793. Knowledge of the portage was likely obtained from local Indigenous residents or fur traders. Upper Canada's Lt. Governor John Simcoe knew that the possibility of future conflict with the Americans was very real, so he planned alternate routes, like the Nine Mile Portage, for the provisioning of the western reaches of British North America.

The Nine Mile Portage, first charted in 1793, would be considered as an alternate communication and trade route to the west once the war of 1812 broke out and the British lost control over the lower Great Lakes.

The British immediately improved the portage route and built 29 batteaux (shallow draft boats), possibly at Fort Willow itself, that succeeded in transporting much needed supplies up Willow Creek and ultimately to Fort Michilimackinac. They also built a supply depot of small huts and storehouses at what is now called Fort Willow.

When the War of 1812 came to an end, the Treaty of Ghent did not initially quell fears of further American attacks and the depot at Fort Willow and a new naval base at Penetanguishene continued to be provisioned. Penetanguishene Road (today's Highway 93) was intended to handle all transportation to the Penetanguishene base, however, the road was often in such terrible condition that the Nine Mile Portage continued to be used as a preferred alternate route.

The Fort's decline began in 1818, with the signing of the Rush-Bagot agreement between Britain and the United States. Under this agreement, all armed vessels were put up into 'ordinary' or dry-dock. The British military's interest in the portage route waned as it became clear that hostilities were truly at an end.

The portage route would continue to be used by local fur trade companies P&W Robinson and Borland & Roe of Newmarket in 1824: fourteen year old Thomas Williams and an African-Canadian man named Ben, working for contractor Alexander Walker, would make many round trips each week along the portage route transporting goods.

The portage and Fort also saw some other important visitors in the 1820s. In 1821, Lt. Henry Bayfield used the portage during his hydrographic survey of the Great Lakes; in 1823, members of the International Boundary Commission stayed at Fort Willow; and in 1825, Capt. John Franklin would pass along the portage route on his famous arctic expedition.

Apart from these infrequent visits and occasional use of the trail by settlers heading west, the portage route rapidly fell into disuse. By 1831, the portage was reported as difficult to navigate and overgrown and by 1835, it was reported that all the buildings at Fort Willow had burned down.

Archaeological Significance

The first archaeological surveys at Fort Willow were conducted by avocational archaeologist Wilfrid Jury. In 1954, in his search for the location of the Nine Mile Portage trail, he ventured into the Fort where he dug a few test holes. He returned to the Fort in 1958 and 1959, digging extensive trenches across the site and completing a survey map of the area that showed the locations of the War of 1812 structures he believed he had discovered. After completing his work in the Fort proper, Jury also dug into the brick kiln located outside of the Fort's reconstructed palisade. It is important to note that all of Jury's excavation work seems to have been done by hand; there is no mention of bulldozers or backhoes.

Jury's reports provide limited content on the field work and no maps or descriptions have been found showing exactly where or how deep his excavations were. Since it was not known how much of the site still lay unexcavated, and there was no evidence provided by Wilfrid Jury to back up his conclusions regarding the buildings at the site, and additional professional excavations were warranted.

The first professional archaeological investigations were undertaken by students from Barrie's St. Joseph's High School in 2005. These excavations were conducted under the direction of Trevor Carter, a high school teacher and professional archaeologist licensed with the Ontario Ministry of Culture. Subsequent excavations continued through 2019 with the objective of assessing the extent of Wilfrid Jury's excavations and confirming or refuting his identifications for the structures he discovered.

This task was made easier due to the fact that Jury did not screen his excavated soil; rather, he collected any large finds and returned the excavated soil into the trench along with smaller, yet significant, artifacts. The first exploratory excavation in 2005 determined that there were sufficient artifacts to be recovered and sufficient areas still unexcavated at the site to make valid site interpretations.

In 2006, excavations confirmed the identity of the structures identified by Jury as the 'Visiting Officer's Quarters' and the 'Cookhouse'. There was a high frequency of bones and kitchen ceramics near Jury's Cookhouse, while there were more pistol flints and printed ceramics near Jury's Visiting Officer's Quarters indicative of the higher class occupants who lived here. The excavations at Jury's 'Commandant's

House' in 2007 also confirmed his identification of the structure with high numbers of printed ceramics recovered. Cheaper hand-painted ceramics helped to identify the 'Soldiers' Barracks' in 2010 and 2011, but Jury's 'Soldiers' Cookhouse' contained ceramics from the late 19th and early 20th century; these late finds indicate that this structure should not be interpreted as one of Fort Willow's War of 1812 buildings. The 'Smithy' was investigated in 2013, with wrought nails, slag, and iron staining in the soil attesting to its location.

Throughout all of these excavations, minimal structural remains from the buildings were found. The few structural remains that were found indicate that the current site reconstruction would need only shift 2.6 metres to the south and 2 metres west to lie directly overtop the structures' original location. No evidence has been found to support the palisade nor the blockhouses that Wilfrid Jury claimed to have found.

Signs of Indigenous campsites were frequently encountered during most seasons of excavation. Post stains from temporary campsites, along with Iroquoian pottery and chert tool fragments, attest to the use of the site and the portage route by the local peoples before the arrival of Europeans.

In 2009, the excavations switched focus from the Fort itself, and moved south into the visitor's parking lot. A circular depression in the parking lot was investigated in the hopes of finding evidence for either "Playtor's Inn" (an inn mentioned in the documents associated with the Fort), or homes from the rumoured "Willow Hamlet" that built up around the Fort in the early 19th century. Regrettably, the excavations quickly determined that the structure beneath the depression was from the late 19th century, consisting of a log cabin homestead that housed a family of settlers on the property from 1888 to 1915.

The 2015 and 2017 excavations moved to the brick kiln, first investigated by Wilfrid Jury, just outside of the Fort site proper. The remains of a large rectangular brick kiln, largely undisturbed, were uncovered alongside a large pit for harvesting brick clay. The kiln would have measured 3.8m x 4.5m in size, with a probable brick yield of 14,000 to 17,000 bricks. Considering the low quality of the recovered bricks, it seems clear that the brick makers at the Fort were not highly experienced in their task. Artifacts from the kiln indicate it was one of the earliest structures at the Fort, perhaps being built contemporaneously alongside the Fort itself. Regrettably, the use to which the bricks were put remains unknown as bricks were not uncovered during the excavations of the buildings at the site.

With a total of over 30,000 artifacts found since 2005, and many more undisturbed finds to be made, there is clearly much more archaeological potential at the Fort Willow Conservation Area.

All excavation reports are on file with the Ontario Ministry of Culture under Trevor Carter, Professional Archaeological License #P063. Report copies were also submitted to the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority, the Friends of Fort Willow, the Barrie Rotary Club, and the Simcoe County Museum. The Barrie Rotary

Club has been integral in helping to fund the student transportation costs during the field school. All recovered artifacts and excavation photos are stored at the Simcoe County Museum.

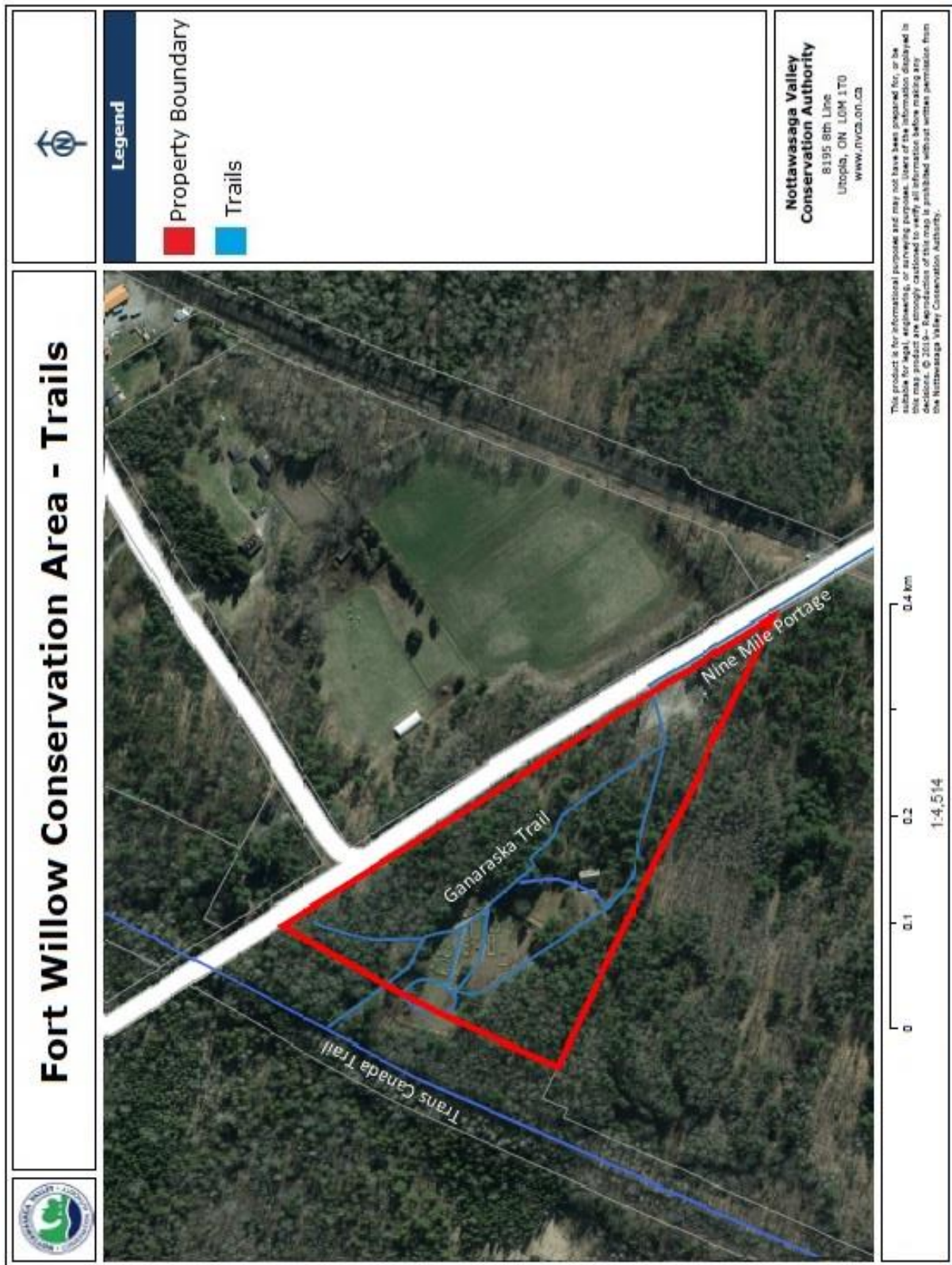
Planning Context

The Fort Willow site is protected under Part VI of the Ontario Heritage Act, which states that all work done at this site that results in any disturbance of the ground must be monitored by a licensed archaeologist in accordance with the Archaeological Standards and Guidelines of the Ontario Ministry of Culture.

The Ontario Archeological and Historical Sites Board recognizes the Fort Willow site as provincially significant and designated it as "Willow Creek Depot". In 1999, Fort Willow was acknowledged in the Official Plans of Springwater Township as a Heritage Site. In 2015, Fort Willow received Federal recognition as a National Historic Site.

The Fort Willow Conservation Area was part of "Treaty No. 18 Lake Simcoe – Nottawasaga (1818) which covered approximately 1.59 million acres of land west of Lake Simcoe. The agreement was negotiated with Chippewa representatives and was valued at 1,200 pounds annually to the nations (County of Simcoe Archeological Management Plan, 2019).

Image 2. Fort Willow Conservation Area Property Boundary



ECOLOGICAL FEATURES

The size Fort Willow Conservation Area is not particularly significant on its own, however, this property expands on the Minesing Wetlands Conservation Area to the north.

Vegetation Communities

Once the Fort Willow Conservation Area was abandoned as a depot in the early 1800s, the site was used for livestock grazing until it was re-forested in the mid-1900s with Red Pine (*Pinus resinosa*), White Pine (*Pinus Strobus*) and Scot's Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*). The plantations were likely an attempt to stabilize the sandy, eroding soil throughout the site.

The plantations are now mature and have become interspersed with naturally occurring successional species including Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*), Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*), and Poplar species (*Populus spp.*).

The remaining 0.50 ha (1.5 ac) is a maintained, mown cultural meadow, with patches of native tall-grass prairie species that historically would have been common throughout the sandy uplands in the region. The mown area supports large, open grown Red Oaks and Large-tooth Aspen (*Populus grandidentata*) giving the impression of a maintained oak savannah.

Vascular Plants and Floristics

Detailed vascular plant surveys have not been conducted for the Fort Willow Conservation Area. The cultural influences on all parts of the property has resulted in the prevalence of non-native species throughout the property.

The maintenance of the open mown area, the introduction of native shrubs for ornamental purposes and maintenance of a non-native cultivated garden has created a managed landscape throughout the main portion of the property.

Native tallgrass prairie remnants can be observed in patches throughout the property. Species of interest include Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), Prairie Dropseed (*Sporobolus Heterolepis*) and Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) and are an indication of historic site conditions.

Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat

Detailed wildlife studies have not been conducted for the property and only incidental observations have been recorded.

The property has been identified as 'Stratum 2 Deer Wintering Area' by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. This identifies adjacent mixed forest browse habitat for White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) that is adjacent to core habitat that is critical for survival (Minesing Wetlands). The presence of White-tailed Deer is noticeable from the challenges encountered by the Barrie Garden Club.

The property has been used as a staging area for various citizen science projects resulting in observations from a variety of guilds, particularly dragonflies through surveys that were focusing on the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly (*Somatochlora hineana*) within Minesing Wetlands. This nationally endangered dragonfly has very specific habitat requirements provided within the wetlands, including groundwater-fed meadow marshes and fens with crayfish burrows. The dragonfly uses the open, vegetated areas around the Fort Willow Conservation Area for foraging as well as shaded forests for perching and roosting.

The sandy soils and proximity to the large wetland complex provides excellent turtle nesting habitat and Blanding's Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*- Threatened) have been observed nesting within the open area of the property. This species of turtle is known for its wide overland ranges and may travel several kilometers on land to reach suitable nesting sites.

Eastern Wood Pewee (*Contopus virens* – Special Concern) have been observed in the upper parking area.

The site appears to have suitable habitat for Whip-poor-will (*Antrostomus vociferous* – Threatened) which require deciduous or mixed forests next to open clearings, though not records have been noted.

The coniferous forests likely supports avian species such as Pine Warblers (*Setophaga pinus*), Magnolia Warblers (*Setophaga magnolia*), Red and White-Breasted Nuthatches (*Sitta Canadensis* and *S. carolinensis*), Golden-crowned Kinglets (*Regulus satrapa*), and Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*).

The study of the cultural history of the site has inadvertently led to significant natural history discoveries on the property. In a 2005-2006 study conducted by Trevor Carter, remnants from 'pigeons' were identified by the 'cookhouse'. These were likely Passenger Pigeons (*Ectopistes migratorius*), a now extinct species that was known to frequent large, mixed hardwood forest sites, such as the Fort Willow Conservation Area and surrounding region. The last known Canadian record was in 1902 in Penetanguishene.

Aquatic Biology

Unlike most properties owned by the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority, there are no aquatic features within the Fort Willow Conservation Area.

Social Context

Existing Site Features

The main entrance of the Fort Willow Conservation Area from Grenfel Road opens to a large gravel parking lot and the trailhead to access the property. The Fort Willow Conservation Area is not particularly large with less than 2 km of accessible trails throughout the property, however the property is a local hub that connects regionally and nationally significant trail corridors that include the Nine-Mile Portage Trail, the TransCanada Trail, the North Simcoe Rail Trail, and the Ganaraska Hiking Trail.

Associated infrastructure on the property includes seasonal accessible washrooms, trail signage and information kiosks and a storage cabin.

In 2010, the Friends of Fort Willow undertook the construction of a large, timberframe open pavilion. This pavilion is available for rental through NVCA.

The Fort Willow Conservation Area also supports infrastructure to highlight the historical features of the property. The Fort Willow Improvement Group undertook the construction of the palisade which surrounds the historic outlines of the structures that were in place at the site during the early 1800s. These outlines were originally constructed in 2001 and were reconstructed in 2017 to ensure their future preservation.

In 2003, the Fort Willow Improvement Group brought in a replica of a batteau that would have been used on the Nottawasaga River in the early 1800s.

As a result of the previous Fort Willow Management Plan (2003-2008), highlighting the importance of the use of Monarch butterflies of the property, a butterfly information kiosk was erected in 2006. In 2018, the kiosk was converted to a replica of a trading cabin.

Adjacent Land Uses

The Fort Willow Conservation Area is surrounded by large residential lots and agricultural lots. There is limited risk of encroachment from adjacent properties.

Legal Arrangements

There are no legal arrangements associated with the Fort Willow Conservation Area. An informal agreement is in place with the Friends of Fort Willow to assist with the management of the property.

Management Recommendations

In consultation with the Friends of Historic Fort Willow, a list of management recommendations was developed for the Fort Willow Conservation Area. The recommendations included infrastructure projects as well as actions to move the vision of the conservation area forward for the next five years.

The recommendations for this plan have been broken down into two sections, overarching targets and concepts (ex. increase educational opportunities and move towards a self-sustaining festival) and infrastructure recommendations which were compiled into an annual infrastructure plan.

Fort Willow Conservation Area Priorities

The main priorities for the conservation area are as follows:

1. Conserve, protect and learn about the natural and cultural features of the property (conserve, protect, learn);
2. Increase awareness of the natural and cultural history of the site (education);
3. Provide safe, historically accurate environment for visitors (infrastructure); and
4. General administration (liability).

1. Conserve, protect and learn about the natural and cultural features of the property

The Fort Willow Conservation Area is primarily recognized for its cultural history features, however, the compilation of information for this plan highlighted the significant natural heritage features of the property. Additional surveys may find the property is being used by additional species at risk and alter the recommendations for the site based on the potential impact to these species.

The historical significance of the property has been locally recognized since Jury's studies in the 1950s. Support from the Rotary Club of Barrie and licensed archeologist, Trevor Carter and St. Joseph's High School have provided valuable contributions to the knowledge of the historical uses of the site.

Action items:

- Completion of biological inventory of the property to better identify the use of the property by species at risk and species of interest and the impact of infrastructure development on the natural heritage features of the site (may include historic species review).
- Continue to engage local community and interest in expanding the size of the Fort Willow Conservation Area through land donation.
- Continued partnership for archeological research surveys to develop a better understanding of the features and history of the property.

- Identify priority conservation zones (historical/ecological) to guide future infrastructure projects.

2. Increase awareness of the natural and cultural history of the site

The Fort Willow Conservation Area is locally known for the annual Festival at Fort Willow in the fall. The property sees infrequent use throughout the rest of the year for passive recreation. Increasing the profile and use of the property is a short and long-term goal of both NVCA and the Friends.

Improving visitor experience at the site is an integral component to raising the profile of the property. Self-directed learning experiences for visitors may be a strategy to improve experiences for year-round visitors.

A strategic, long-term vision for the infrastructure development of the property will identify priorities, ensure the infrastructure and recreational needs of the property are met and will assist with the securement of funds for these projects.

Infrastructure development at the property has been opportunistic and a detailed annual plan is required that covers the duration of this strategic plan as well as for the longer-term vision of the property. A number of infrastructure projects have been suggested as part of the development of this report, these suggestions have compiled into the Fort Willow Conservation Area Infrastructure Plan, below. This plan will prioritize the recommendations, identify the lead(s), estimated project costs and timeline to help guide fundraising and budgeting activities.

Increased visitor engagement may come in the form of additional year-round school group visits, regular, reoccurring historic or educational events, and recreational events making use of the trail 'hub' asset of the property.

The Friends of Fort Willow currently has members with the knowledge to form the starting point of a committee with the main goal of focusing on the development of educational opportunities highlighting the Fort Willow Conservation Area. NVCA supports a thriving outdoor education program at the Tiffin Conservation Area, some of this knowledge and programs may be used to guide the development of an expanded educational experience at the property.

Action Items:

- Develop and review an annual infrastructure plan which includes estimated costs and leads for recommended infrastructure development.
- Identify funding partners and opportunities for project development based on the approved annual work plans.
- Develop a committee to investigate the expansion of the educational opportunities the property may provide, including increased visitation of

schools to the property or through outreach, increased membership, fundraising opportunities and volunteer recruitment.

- Identify opportunities for recurring annual events to raise awareness of the property and build community engagement.
- Review opportunities to ensure the Festival at Fort Willow and other recurring activities are self-sustaining.

3. Provide a safe, historically accurate environment for visitors

The safety of visitors and volunteers is a priority for NVCA and the Friends of Historic Fort Willow, followed by the preservation of the historical features of the property.

In the past, historic archeological surveys followed less stringent requirements resulting in lost information that could have assisted with the interpretation of the history of the site. As required by the *Ontario Heritage Act* under the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, all site disturbances must be completed under the supervision and guidance of a licensed archeologist.

A review of the signage throughout the property was last conducted in 2017, and significant improvements to the signage at the site were undertaken. An annual review of the efficacy and needs of the onsite signage should continue to be done on a bi-annual basis.

Action Items:

- Annual safety review to be conducted to ensure the health and safety of the site for visitors and all infrastructure is safely maintained.
- Continued partnership with professional archeologist Trevor Carter, the Rotary Club of Barrie and St. Joseph's secondary school to continue professional archeological studies at the Fort Willow Conservation Area.
- Bi-annual signage review.
- Ensure the property is well-maintained to reduce vandalism at the site and to provide a positive image of the site for visitors.
- Regularly monitor the property for trespassers, vandals and damage to the property.

4. General administration

The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority undersees all administration and oversight of the Fort Willow Conservation Area. The Friends of Historic Fort Willow provide support with demonstration projects (ex. wood working, blacksmithing, etc.), site maintenance, coordination with the reenactor community and participation on committees.

The support that is provided by the Friends is integral to achieve the goals that have been set out in this plan. The roles and responsibilities of the volunteers

should be clearly identified to facilitate volunteer longevity and future volunteer recruitment.

Action Items:

- Development of volunteer 'job descriptions' to facilitate volunteer recruitment and identification of roles and responsibilities of current volunteers. This job description would identify options for different levels of volunteers, for example, volunteers who wish to assist with maintenance or events, and if volunteers wish to vote, participate in meetings and long-term planning of the property.
- Development of 'terms of references' for the Friends of Historic Fort Willow. The terms of reference will identify the overall goals and responsibilities of each the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority and the Friends of Fort Willow and will include details on the purpose of the group, responsibility for liability, finance management and administration, identification of responsibilities and authority for decision making, development and approval of policies, size, composition and terms of membership, etc.
- Annual report completed by the Friends executive and presented to NVCA. This report will include an annual work plan proposal and budget that will be approved by NVCA.
- Friends and NVCA will develop a communications plan that will help guide the 'public face' of the organization.

Fort Willow Conservation Area Targets

Four priorities for the Fort Willow Conservation Area

1. Conserve, protect and learn about the natural and cultural features of the property (protect);
2. Increase awareness of the natural and cultural history of the site (education);
3. Provide safe, historically accurate environment for visitors (infrastructure); and
4. General administration (liability).

Table 2: Fort Willow Conservation Area Master Plan Targets

1. Conserve, protect and learn about the natural and cultural features of the property		
Conserve, Protect, Learn	Timeline	Delivery
Completion of biological inventory of the property to better identify the use of the property by species at risk and species of interest and the impact of infrastructure development on the natural heritage features of the site (may include historic species review).	Year 1	NVCA/ Volunteers
Continue to engage local community and interest in expanding the size of the Fort Willow Conservation Area through land donation.	Ongoing	NVCA
Identify priority conservation zones (historical/ecological) to guide future infrastructure projects	Year 1	NVCA
Continued partnership for archeological research surveys to develop a better understanding of the features and history of the property.	Ongoing	NVCA

2. Increase awareness of the natural and cultural history of the site

Education	Timeline	Delivery
Develop and review an annual infrastructure plan which includes estimated costs and leads for recommended infrastructure development.	Year 1	NVCA/ Friends
Identify funding partners and opportunities for project development based on the approved annual work plans.	Year 1	NVCA/Friends
Develop a committee to investigate the expansion of the educational opportunities the property may provide, including increased visitation of schools to the property or through outreach, increased membership, fundraising opportunities and volunteer recruitment.	Year 1	NVCA/Friends
Identify opportunities for recurring annual events to raise awareness of the property and build community engagement.	Year 1	NVCA/Friends
Review opportunities to ensure the Festival at Fort Willow and other recurring activities are self-sustaining.	Year 1	NVCA/Friends

3. Provide a safe, historically accurate environment for visitors

Infrastructure	Timeline	Delivery
Annual safety review to be conducted to ensure the health and safety of the site for visitors and all infrastructure is safely maintained.	Ongoing	NVCA

3. Provide a safe, historically accurate environment for visitors

Infrastructure	Timeline	Delivery
Continued partnership with professional archeologist Trevor Carter, the Rotary Club of Barrie and St. Joseph's secondary school to continue professional archeological studies at the Fort Willow Conservation Area.	Ongoing	NVCA
Bi-annual signage review.	Ongoing	NVCA
Ensure the property is well-maintained to reduce vandalism at the site and to provide a positive image of the site for visitors.	Ongoing	NVCA/Friends
Regularly monitor the property for trespassers, vandals and damage to the property.	Ongoing	NVCA/Friends

4. General administration

Liability	Timeline	Delivery
Development of volunteer 'job descriptions' to facilitate volunteer recruitment and identification of roles and responsibilities of current volunteers. This job description would identify options for different levels of volunteers, for example, volunteers who wish to assist with maintenance or events, and if volunteers wish to vote, participate in meetings and long-term planning of the property.	Year 2	NVCA/ Friends

4. General administration

Liability	Timeline	Delivery
Development of 'terms of references' for the Friends of Historic Fort Willow. The terms of reference will identify the overall goals and responsibilities of each the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority and the Friends of Fort Willow and will include details on the purpose of the group, responsibility for liability, finance management and administration, identification of responsibilities and authority for decision making, development and approval of policies, size, composition and terms of membership, etc.	Year 2	NVCA/Friends
Annual report completed by the Friends executive and presented to NVCA. This report will include an annual work plan proposal and budget that will be approved by NVCA.	Year 1	NVCA/Friends
Friends and NVCA will develop a communications plan that will help guide the 'public face' of the organization.	Year 1	NVCA/Friends

Fort Willow Conservation Area Infrastructure Plan

The following suggestions were provided during the spring 2020 working group meetings and are intended to guide the infrastructure developments to take place at the Fort Willow Conservation Area within the next five years. Any construction that requires the disturbance of soil will require communication and coordination with a professional archeologist as part of the planning process.

NVCA staff will undertake all large construction projects and will be taking on site maintenance (ex. grass cutting) for the foreseeable future. Volunteers may take on demonstration projects (ex. wood working, blacksmithing) and small carpentry projects.

The priority of the annual workplan projects will be determined based on ensuring the health and safety of the site and visitors, pending funding availability, completion of prior projects followed by ensuring the historical accuracy of the site (particularly within the palisade).

Table 3: Five Year Infrastructure Plan

Infrastructure Action	Estimated Cost (Lead)	Priority	Timeline
Directional signage	Varies (NVCA)	High priority	As required, at least bi-annually
Period correct compost	Est >\$300	Low priority	Year 3
Northwest building- complete construction	Materials available onside (Friends)	High priority	Year 1
Period eaves trough to fill rain barrels	No estimate available (NVCA)	Low priority	Year 5
Tree identification signage	Varies (NVCA)	Low	Year 5

Infrastructure Action	Estimated Cost (Lead)	Priority	Timeline
Railway ties by artillery to be replaced with tree stump fence	~\$8,000 (NVCA)	Low	Review in Year 3
Timberframe cauldron frame	Materials available (Friends + installation by NVCA)	Medium	Year 2
'Fort Willow/ Willow Creek Depot' sign	Varies (NVCA)	Medium	Year 1
Completion of the tack shop/black smith lein-to	Materials available (Friends + final construction by NVCA)	High	Year 1
New horse corral	~\$500 (Friends)	Low	Year 1
Roof for batteau	~\$1,800 (NVCA)	Medium	Year 3
Firewood shed	\$1,200 (NVCA)	Medium	Year 1
Parking lot security, including lighting and cameras	Est. \$15,000 (NVCA)	Cost prohibitive at this time	Not assigned
Re-shingling of northwest cabin	(NVCA)	Low	Year 3
Re-shingling of work shed	(NVCA)	Low	Year 2
Relocation of native shrubs	No cost (Barrie Garden Club)	Medium	Year 1

Table 4: Annual Work Plan Year 1

Action Item	Delivery	Cost
Completion of biological inventory of the property to better identify the use of the property by species at risk and species of interest and the impact of infrastructure development on the natural heritage features of the site (may include historic species review).	NVCA/ Volunteers	1 staff day @ \$500/day + volunteers
Continue to engage local community and interest in expanding the size of the Fort Willow Conservation Area through land donation.	NVCA	Varies
Identify priority conservation zones (historical/ecological) to guide future infrastructure projects	NVCA	> 1 staff day @ \$500/day
Continued partnership for archeological research surveys to develop a better understanding of the features and history of the property.	NVCA	> 1 staff day @ \$500/day
Develop and review an annual infrastructure plan which includes estimated costs and leads for recommended infrastructure development.	NVCA/ Friends	2 staff days @ \$500/day + volunteers
Identify funding partners and opportunities for project development based on the approved annual work plans.	NVCA/Friends	2 staff days @ \$500/day + volunteer
Develop a committee to investigate the expansion of the educational opportunities the property may provide, including increased visitation of schools to the property or through outreach, increased membership, fundraising opportunities and volunteer recruitment.	NVCA/Friends	Varies

Action Item	Delivery	Cost
Identify opportunities for recurring annual events to raise awareness of the property and build community engagement.	NVCA/Friends	Varies
Review opportunities to ensure the Festival at Fort Willow and other recurring activities are self-sustaining.	NVCA/Friends	Varies
Annual safety review to be conducted to ensure the health and safety of the site for visitors and all infrastructure is safely maintained.	NVCA	1 staff day @ \$500/day
Continued partnership with professional archeologist Trevor Carter, the Rotary Club of Barrie and St. Joseph's secondary school to continue professional archeological studies at the Fort Willow Conservation Area.	NVCA	1 staff day @ \$500/day
Bi-annual signage review.	NVCA	To be completed with safety review above
Ensure the property is well-maintained to reduce vandalism at the site and to provide a positive image of the site for visitors.	NVCA/Friends	52 staff days @ \$500/day
Regularly monitor the property for trespassers, vandals and damage to the property.	NVCA/Friends	To be completed with the above
Annual report completed by the Friends executive and presented to NVCA. This report will include an annual work plan proposal and budget that will be approved by NVCA.	NVCA/Friends	2 staff days @ \$500/day + volunteer
Friends and NVCA will develop a communications plan that will help guide the 'public face' of the organization.	NVCA/Friends	~5 staff days @ \$500/day + volunteer
Directional signage	NVCA	Varies

Action Item	Delivery	Cost
Northwest building- complete construction	Friends	Material available
'Fort Willow/ Willow Creek Depot' sign	NVCA	Pending
Completion of the tack shop/black smith lein-to	Friends	Materials available
New horse corral	Friends/volunteers	~\$500
Firewood shed	NVCA	~\$500
Relocation of native shrubs	Friends/Barrie Garden Club	Volunteer

