

From: [Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority](http://www.saugeenvalleyconservation.ca)
To: clerk@arran-elderslie.ca
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – July 7th, 2022

Effective Immediately

Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority Provincial Offences Officers will begin ticketing under Regulation 133, Conservation Authorities Act

FORMOSA, ONTARIO – All 21,000 acres of Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority property, including but not limited to Conservation Areas: Allan Park, Bell's Lake, Brucedale, Denny's Dam, Durham, Hardwood Hill, Kinghurst, McBeath, Mildmay-Carrick, Saugeen Bluffs, Schmidt Lake, Stoney Island, Sulphur Spring, Varney, as well as Managed Forests, Wetland Complexes.

The Province of Ontario regulates all 36 Conservation Authorities, and staff members from each Authority are appointed as officers to enforce this regulation. Under this authority and with occasional help from local law enforcement, SVCA will begin ticketing those in violation of the permitted uses of Authority lands.

SPECIFIC AREAS OF FOCUS:

1. Unauthorized vehicles, which include both motor vehicles and off-road vehicles i.e. ATVs. No Authority property permits the use of ATVs, side by sides, dirt bikes, or motor vehicles outside of designated parking areas.

The negative impact of unauthorized vehicles on SVCA property is significant. Unauthorized vehicles create unsafe trails for other users, restrict emergency access and destroy habitats. Significant damage has been caused. Costs associated with extensive trail repair are not within SVCA's standard operating budget. Tickets will be given to deter this property destruction, in an attempt to prevent loss of access for all.

2. Off leash animals. All animals visiting Saugeen Conservation properties are to be secured by a leash no more than 2m in length.

Loose pets upset local wildlife and damage the ecosystem maintained to support conservation, and wildlife can in turn endanger the safety of loose pets. Saugeen Conservation lands are shared spaces, keep all visitors and pets safe by keeping pets leashed at all times.

3. Illegal camping, also known as wild camping or boondocking. All campers must either have a valid permit to camp on their specific site, or camp on permitted property. Camping is only permitted at the following Conservation Areas: Brucedale, Durham, McBeath, and Saugeen Bluffs.

Illegal camping creates additional workload and potentially unsafe conditions for local park and emergency staff. The presence of illegal campers can encourage other illegal activity and is expressly prohibited on all Authority property.

4. After hours presence. No person shall remain on day-use Conservation Authority lands after posted times.

Unless permitted, Authority lands are to be considered closed from dusk until dawn. This allows wildlife and park staff to get rest and be prepared for visitors during open hours.

Other prohibited activities (including but not limited to):

- Defacing, removing or damaging property
- Injuring or destroying a plant, tree, shrub, flower, or growing thing
- Removal of any soil or rock
- Abusive language or excessive noise
- Possessing or igniting fireworks
- Fires started outside of fireplace or designated area

“There is a fundamental misunderstanding over ownership, access and purpose of Conservation Authority land that has contributed to the widespread and significant property destruction we are experiencing. Conservation land is not Crown land. All Saugeen Conservation properties are owned and managed by the SVCA for the explicit purpose of conserving, managing and restoring significant wetlands, forests, and river systems, recognizing these are highly valuable natural resources providing essential habitat to wildlife.

There are specific permitted recreational uses of our properties for the public to enjoy at a nominal fee. It is with great pleasure that we share these spaces, for people to experience and appreciate the outdoors.

I believe it is important to highlight the degree to which off-road vehicles have changed over the last number of years. Puttering around on off-road vehicles with the equivalent of a turf tire has been replaced by snorkel and winch equipped machines with significant power, boasting ‘dirt digging’ mudder tires. The impact is exponential. Unauthorized vehicles of any kind are not allowed on any Authority lands as they create unsafe trails for other users, restrict emergency access and destroy habitats and wetlands.

We implore the public to respect our Conservation lands, and unfortunately must move forward with the authority granted to us by the Province of Ontario with enforcement to protect them.”

- Donna Lacey, Manager of Forestry and Lands, Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority

Attached photographs:

Credited to SVCA. Photographs illustrate the deep ruts and property destruction caused by unauthorized vehicle use on Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority lands.

For more details please visit:

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/900133>

For more information please contact:

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Photo 1

Photo 2

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