

Tuesday, November 9, 2021

Catherine Redden
Chairperson
Board of Directors
Crowe Valley Conservation Authority

Dear Chairperson:

I am pleased to announce that Phase I & II at Callaghan's are now complete. Phase I was executed entirely by volunteers. We used local material from Callaghan's windfall and some hardware donated by volunteers, thus costing nil and is 100% successful. High water levels this summer and fall reduced ATV traffic along the riverbed, but until Phase III is implemented, this unwanted activity will persist.

Phase II was completed within the projected budget and on schedule. The workmanship (Don Barrons) is very good and they did some extra trail housekeeping along the south trail at no additional charge. The objective of this Phase was to double the capacity of the parking lot, improve drainage, improve pedestrian safety, provide space for future facilities, a two-point turn alcove for authorized school buses and municipal vehicles, and secure the parking lot periphery with a barricade to thwart unauthorized vehicular entry to the interior of the park. The effectiveness of the barricade will be tested next season.

It is important to understand that a few ATV enthusiasts will attempt to penetrate or circumvent the new barricades because they have become proficient and accustomed to this activity. For example, an ATV can be retrofitted with "lift kits" that are specifically designed to elevate the suspension of the vehicle to climb over obstacles when required. I am confident that future repairs, improvements or modifications can be implemented from time to time with volunteer labour, in-kind materials and equipment or donations. This is my challenge and responsibility for 2022, but look forward to a more permanent and formal volunteer organization that works with and compliments the CVCA mandate.

Phase III, the proposed ATV parking area and control barriers at the EOTA trail ramp will require a thorough needs analysis to design the parking lot/barriers, get a good cost estimate and schedule the work, hopefully for early May 2022 in time for the new season. Don Barrons and I walked it through last spring and came up with a "guesstimate" of \$10,000. I respectfully request your support and solicit suggestions from the CVCA, EOTA and ATV/Snowmobile enthusiasts in the near future as part of my needs analysis.

From this needs analysis a specification can be drawn up including a very good cost and schedule estimate. This document will be presented to both Boards (CVCA and EOTA) for approval and necessary funding like Phase II. I have been interviewing ATV enthusiasts for the past year, without prejudice, about the proposed enclosure and the need to protect the environment at Callaghan's. Most are in agreement that a few individuals have ruined it for their sport and are looking forward to controlled access, improved public safety, outdoor education and programs. The most compelling reason anyone visits Callaghan's is the majesty of the Crowe River and substantial wilderness, despite the fact that farms, cottages and homes surround Callaghan's.

I thank the Board for their ongoing support, financial and managerial, and thank the CVCA for logistical and manpower support. The Municipality of Marmora and Lake provided much needed road barricades during Phase II and is in the process of installing a 911 address at the parking lot for emergencies. This is an exemplary multi-partner enterprise that will enrich our communities and provide a significant outdoor education and recreation facility we can all be proud of.

Thank you and sincerely yours,

Marc Thomas Forget

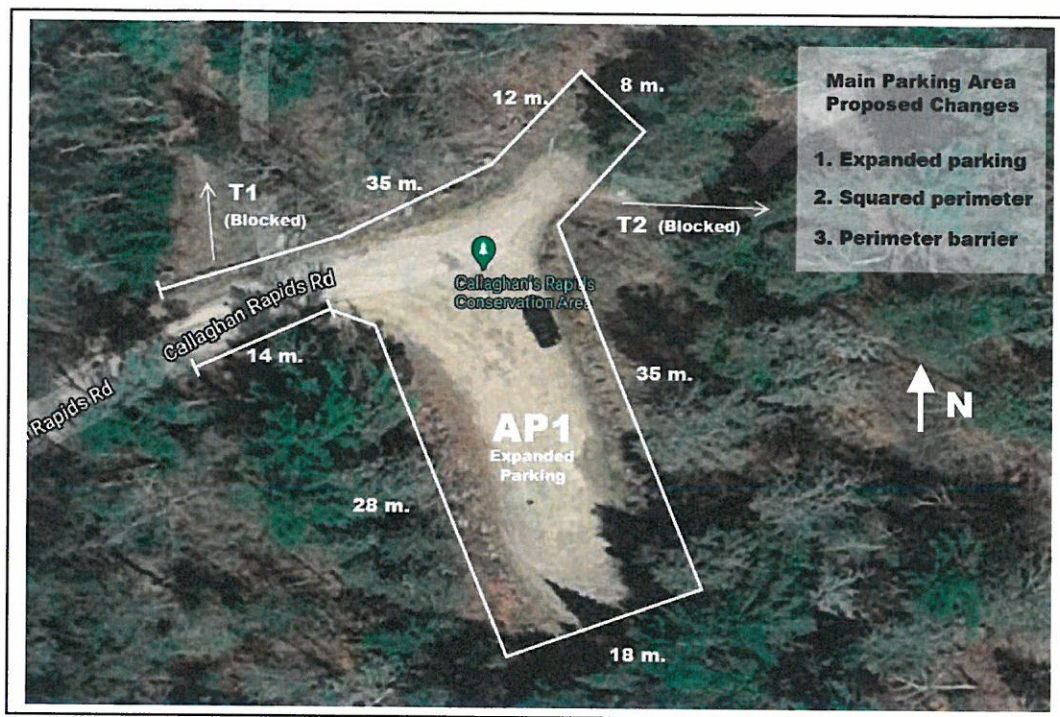


Figure 1: Satellite photo of parking lot prior to modifications

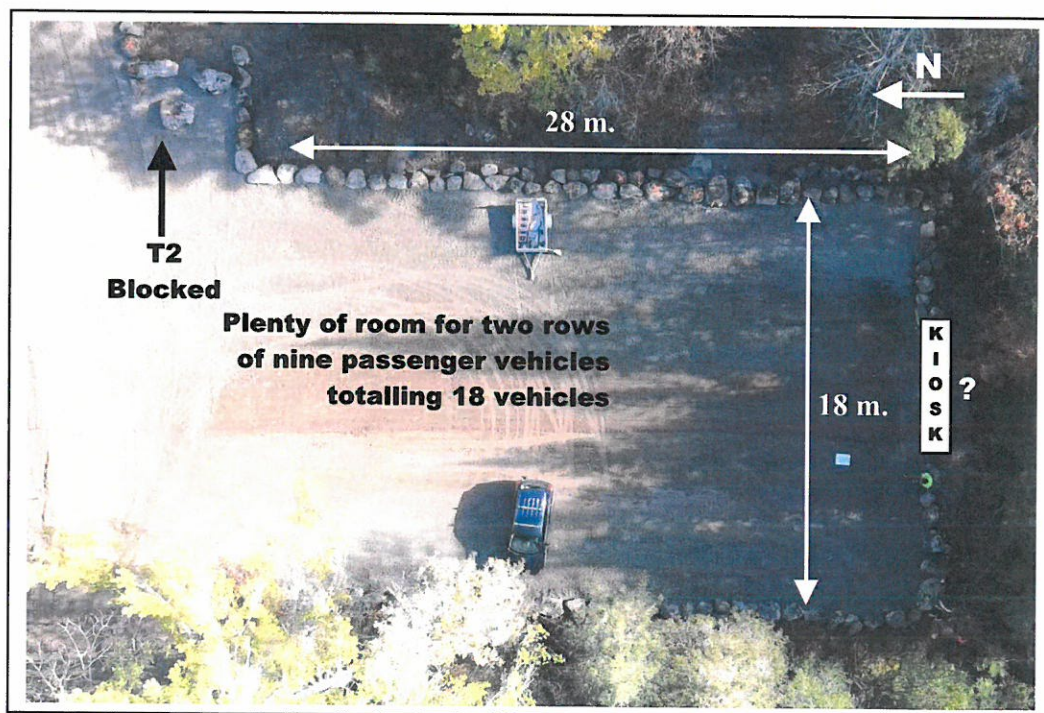


Figure 2: Drone photo of parking lot after modifications

Discussion

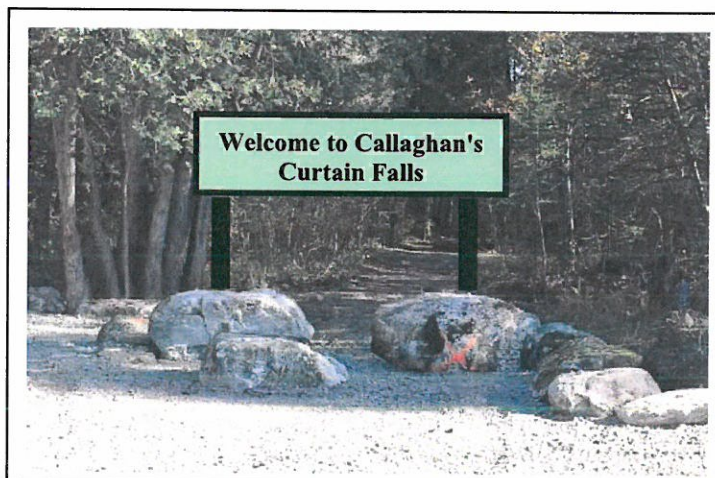
Architects call the two major aspects of design "form and function". The functional objective of Phase II was to enlarge and barricade the parking lot. This has been achieved including improved drainage, public safety (felled trees and new 911 address), Municipal vehicle turn around, and peripheral infrastructure. All of this was identified during the needs analysis phase and specified.

The importance and usefulness of peripheral infrastructure cannot be underestimated. In the early nineties, two privies were constructed and installed at Callaghan's as part of a program to develop the Conservation Area. A dramatic change in the funding model and mischief resulting in permanent damage to the privies caused the abandonment of this progressive program. The new peripheral infrastructure affords an opportunity to resurrect the original plan. The new parking lot infrastructure has been designed and implemented with future improvements in mind. Below are samplings:

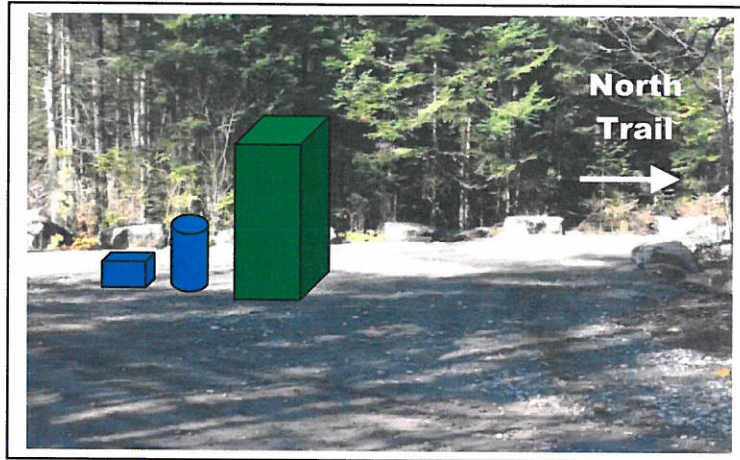
1. An information kiosk could be located at the centre of the south end of the parking lot. This kiosk could be identical to that at the McGeachie Conservation Area. Also see Figure 2 above.



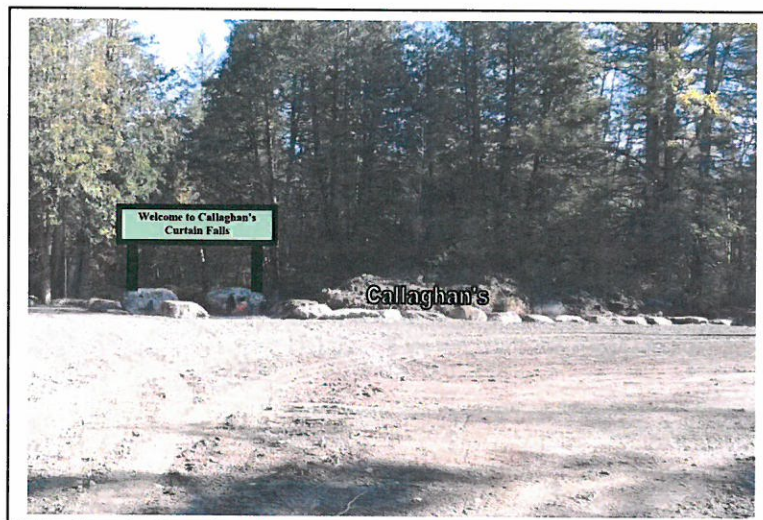
2. South Trail entrance welcome portal. This entrance leads to the beautiful curtain (Rideau in French) falls and is identical in many aspects to the Rideau Falls in Ottawa except for the height. During summer months when water levels are very low and safe, the entire riverbed is a huge wading pool and is by far the single most important public attraction at Callaghan's.



3. The northwest alcove is an excellent location for a rented portable restroom facility and garbage containers because of ease of access, visibility and large enough for a vehicle pull over similar to familiar exits at Provincial Parks. This alcove is also the access point for the north trail (Phase III).



4. A large berm (topsoil from the original parking lot) at the south trail entrance could easily be profiled to accommodate a "rock art" Callaghan's sign. The sign would consist of locally obtained black and light grey river rock⁴ cobbles spelling out the word "Callaghan's". This would be a great public school project and help to recruit some future ambassadors.



⁴ The light grey river rock is tumbled limestone cobbles from nearby limestone deposits. The black rock is tumbled granites and gabbros from the Canadian Shield rocks north of Marmora. They have a characteristic black manganese dioxide patina (coating) that does not coat limestone. The sign would be a good segway to our local geology and limnology.