


CONFIDENTIAL REPORT

CENTRAL LAKE ONTARIO CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

DATE: September 17, 2024
FILE: AINA45 & LALM3
S.R.: 5898-24
MEMO TO: Chair and Members, CLOCA Board of Directors
FROM: R. Perry Sisson, Director, Engineering, Field Operations, and Education
SUBJECT: **Kite Concerns - Heber Down Conservation Area**

APPROVED BY C.A.O.



 Corporate Services Department Legislative Services Division	
Date & Time Received:	September 20, 2024 1:40 pm
Original To:	CIP
Copies To:	
Take Appropriate Action	<input type="checkbox"/> File <input type="checkbox"/>
Notes/Comments:	

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to inform the CLOCA Board of Directors of recent issues with abandoned kite string at Heber Down Conservation Area and related safety concerns.

Background:

CLOCA staff were made aware of an incident that occurred at the Heber Down Conservation Area in August when a cyclist sustained an injury after riding into kite string. The incident occurred approximately 500m from the Heber Down (North) parking lot located at 5000 Cochrane Street, Whitby. We are uncertain if the kite string related to the incident was placed maliciously or if the string drifted onto the trail. Both CLOCA and Durham Region Police Services posted notices warning Conservation Area visitors to be aware and cautious. CLOCA staff completed a thorough inspection of the Heber Down CA trails and although the marked trails were clear, they did find kite string on an unsanctioned trail. Since the incident, a Conservation Area Trail Steward (CATS) volunteer found kite string in the meadow near the Cochrane Street entrance on August 23rd, and on September 2nd, a CATS volunteer observed kite fliers at the Maple Leaf picnic site and collected 4 fallen kites and 5 long strings on the adjacent trails. The picnic sites have not been booked on the evenings that the kite flying has occurred.

Kite Fighting:

Kite fighting is an activity where two or more participants fly kites with the aim of cutting an opponent's kite string. The losing kite and string drifts away uncontrolled. The string used for kite fighting is abrasive or chemically treated to enhance the ability to cut the opponent's string. Abandoned string is hazardous because it drifts until it becomes lodged in tree branches or other vegetation, is difficult to see, and can cut people, pets, and wildlife that become entangled in it. The string also poses a maintenance issue when entangled in mowing and trimming equipment. Kite fighting has been banned in all public and private property in Oakville and in the Town of Mono. In Toronto, a By-Law prohibits flying a kite with hazardous string and competitive kite flying in parks.

Given the safety and environmental concerns, staff recommend implementing a kite flying policy for all CLOCA lands. The policy will ban kite fighting on all CLOCA owned lands and will allow CLOCA staff to reject any day use rental applications related to kite fighting. The policy will enable CLOCA enforcement officers to stop any kite fighting activity or use of hazardous string that is encountered on our Conservation Areas.

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Conclusion:

Our experience demonstrates that kite fighting activity results in abandoned kites and string entangled in vegetation throughout nearby natural areas. Kite fighting and/or the use of hazardous kite string poses a risk to the safety of our Conservation Area visitors, pets, and wildlife. Kite fighting or the use of hazardous string is not an appropriate activity for our Conservation Areas and should be controlled through a kite flying policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

***THAT Staff Report #5898-24 be received for information; and,
THAT staff be directed to implement a kite flying policy for all Central Lake Ontario Conservation Areas that prohibits kite fighting or the use of hazardous kite string; and,
THAT staff circulate this policy to all Durham Region Municipalities.***

ATTACH.

RPS/lv
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Policy for Kite Flying in Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority Lands

Background:

CLOCA owns environmentally important and sensitive land to protect and conserve our watershed health. Where feasible, and without compromising environmental conditions, passive recreation opportunities may be provided for our watershed residents and visitors. Recreation activities are intended to provide environmental education and appreciation as well as physical and mental health benefits.

CLOCA has experienced kite string and kites littered in trees, meadows, and have reports of injuries from trail users that have become entangled with kite string. The string poses a safety concern to trail users and pets, and can entangle wildlife, and vegetation.

Definitions:

Kite Fighting: Kite fighting is an activity where two or more participants fly kites with the aim of cutting an opponent's kite string. The losing kite and string drifts away uncontrolled. The string used for kite fighting is abrasive or chemically treated to enhance the ability to cut the opponent's string. Abandoned string is hazardous because it drifts until it becomes lodged in tree branches or other vegetation, is difficult to see, and can cut people, pets, and wildlife that become entangled in it. The string also poses a maintenance issue when entangled in mowing and trimming equipment.

Competitive Kite Flying: Kite competitions may or may not include kite fighting, and may include competitors being judged on their performance in compulsory figures as well as a ballet-style flying using artistic interpretation of music. Performances are done as individuals, a pair of pilots, or as a team.

Hazardous Kite String: Kite string materials made of metal, wire, piano wire, fishing line or any type of nylon that can be or is chemically treated or contains glass fragments.

Policy:

1. Given the safety and environmental concerns, kite fighting and use of hazardous kite string is prohibited on all CLOCA lands.
2. Competitive kite flying that does not include kite fighting may be allowed by permit only and with strict requirements to immediately retrieve and remove all kite string and damaged kites.



Healthy watersheds for
today and tomorrow.

Permits:

1. Permits may be issued by CLOCA to allow for competitive kite flying or competitions (excluding kite fighting) on CLOCA Lands.
2. The permit holder must provide a Certificate of Insurance for no less than \$5 Million per occurrence. The Certificate of Insurance must specifically name the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority listed as additionally insured.
3. A deposit may be required for any litter (including kite string) removal required by CLOCA staff after the event. In the event no litter is found, the deposit will be returned to the permit holder.

Contravention of Policy:

Any person who contravenes the above policy may be subject to fines and prosecution under the Trespass to Property Act (RSO 1990, c T.21).

End of Policy

**Auth. Res. # 63/24
SEPTEMBER 17, 2024**