



***The Cognashene Cottagers' Association (CCA) is increasingly concerned about certain trends in shoreline development that are negatively impacting the fragile environment of our very unique water-access community. Therefore the CCA has established a Strategic Planning Group to steer the process of creating a community plan for Cognashene. The first step in such a process is for the community to articulate the vision and the values that define Cognashene.***

***Draft***

***AUGUST 27, 2005***

## **COGNASHENE COMMUNITY PLAN**

### **VISION STATEMENT**

For generations, Cognashene has been a rare and special place where spirits are renewed and memories forged. It is our abiding duty to foster and protect those values which will best preserve Cognashene as this unique place of our past memories and inspiration of new memories for generations to come.

Our vision recognizes the unique character of the Cognashene area of Georgian Bay and its water based community of lakeshore residents. Located within the largest freshwater archipelago in North America, the distinctive landscapes, island complexes and biological features of this region provide the foundation of our community. These have been recognized in the Great Lakes Heritage Coast and UNESCO Biosphere Reserve designations. We place a special value on the historical and cultural features of our area, from early aboriginal people to exploration, the fur trade, logging industries, and present-day recreational use. This history, combined with our water-based access, has molded a distinctive community character and value system. Our community plan seeks to protect and preserve this unique natural ecosystem and the traditions and values of our community for future generations

## ***GUIDING PRINCIPLES***

In order to achieve and remain true to the vision and value system outlined above, the following principles are intended to guide future land and water-use planning and policy.

1. The unique character of this water-access community is strongly linked to the absence of road access and commercial developments. This should continue to be an essential element of all future planning.
2. Protection of the natural environment including vistas is the cornerstone of all future planning and policies.
3. Human presence and structures should complement and blend with our distinctive landscape, not dominate and alter it. This will require policies on the size and placement of structures, as well as ultimate densities of residences. Variances affecting the shoreline will be discouraged.
4. Sensitive and critical natural habitats and environmental features require special protection. These include wetlands and habitats for fish spawning and rare or threatened species, wildlife corridors and littoral.
5. Historical features, sites and structures should receive special recognition and protection.
6. Community functions and social activities provide a bond of friendship and appreciation of our diverse experiences. Activities such as the summer youth programs, annual regattas and community church should continue to be supported and strengthened.
7. Community cultural activities, such as the garden club, 'Art on the Rocks' and 'Shakespeare (theatre) on the Rocks', should continue to be supported and encouraged.
8. Our community will support larger regional initiatives which will help achieve our vision. Examples include the acquisition and protection of ecologically-significant properties in Cognashene through the Georgian Bay Land Trust (e.g., The Lizard); restoration of local fish populations through the Georgian Bay Fisheries Stewardship Council; protection of rare and threatened species through Parks Canada programs, the Osprey Society and others; environmental research and education through the GBA Foundation etc.
9. The quiet and peaceful enjoyment of properties and the environment may require special planning on boat traffic and noise control.

10. A high priority on protecting water quality may require special planning and regulations regarding septic systems, discharges from pleasure boats, and other sources of contaminants which could facilitate 'algae blooms', elevated bacterial levels and other water quality problems.
11. Lakeshore planning and policies will take into account natural viewscapes and vistas, such as those captured and given to the world by the Group of Seven and other artists. These are cherished features of this region.
12. The Cognashene area has very little lakeshore remaining in public ownership. Our community will favour the retention of all public lands in public ownership and encourage the management of Provincial and Federal Parks and conservation lands as ecological reserves with low levels of human impact.
13. Shore road allowances must continue to be offered for sale to the adjacent landowners at a reasonable price. Stewardship of these allowances should entitle the adjacent landowners to exclusive enjoyment of them.

**WE WELCOME YOUR RESPONSES TO THIS DRAFT.**

**AS THIS IS A WORKING DOCUMENT, THERE WILL BE ONGOING CHANGES AND REVISIONS.**

**IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS, WE WOULD APPRECIATE HEARING FROM YOU PRIOR TO THE NEXT S.P.G. MEETING SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 28, 2005.**

Send your comments to:

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